



**Sister Joseph Nelida Richard, SC**  
Entered eternal life on August 5, 2021

Sister Joseph Nelida Richard lived the dedicated life of a Sister of Charity for 65 years. During this time, 50 years were spent in elementary education initially, as a teacher of several grade levels and eventually as an administrator of two catholic schools, St. Nicholas in Passaic and St. Clare's in Clifton.

At the table she would often reminisce about going into the schools to reevaluate Sister Principals for renewal for their positions. I spoke with Sister Mary who went with Sister Joseph and found out that she evaluated Sister Joseph four times.

When you walked into St. Nicholas or St. Clare's there was a great awareness of this being a beautiful environment for the children - they were open, happy and yet there was a sense of discipline and respect. They had a freedom and spontaneity – the faculty was at ease with her, but certainly professional. Joseph was in command, but with great care and concern. It was easy to approve her appointment as principal.

I met Sister Joseph about six years ago when she became a member of the local community. It wasn't too long after her arrival that she was asked to manage the Sisters of Charity cars. Her administrative skills were a great asset in the finance office where she kept the records for registration, insurance and anything car related. This responsibility rewarded her with the title *Car Czar*. During the pandemic she missed being in the finance office with Sister Ellen, John, Julia and Barbara. Once in a while she would say, "I talked with Sister Ellen today. Do you think I'll ever get back to the office?"

While Sister Joseph was engaged in record keeping it was wisely decided by our Leadership and in concert with the insurance company that all Sisters 70 years of age and older needed to renew their licenses by having their driving skills evaluated. She worked with a committee and set up all the interviews for two years, as I recall. Joseph would reassuringly say, "You'll do fine don't worry but remember STOP means stop...not ROLL through the sign." A representative of the insurance company did the cognitive part of the test and if someone did not pass the written test, no road test was given. It was a very difficult task and emotionally challenging, but Joseph held it all together.

Bernadette Richard was better known to the family as Auntie Bernie. We would be at the table for a meal and Aunt Bernie would appear in a lovely new top. When we would compliment her she would reply, "My nephew sent me this, and I have another." I don't know how many times we would hear, "I just got a package from Pauline"...or a niece or nephew. I guess when you have a large family it is understandable especially when you hear the mutual love of both parties - Auntie Bernie and the family.

About two years ago I had the privilege of meeting you Pauline, Marie and Terry. You came to convent to get Auntie Bernie and the four of you headed to a hotel in Bethlehem, PA. She had such a good time.

This past June Marie, you again came to convent to pick up Aunt Bernie for a home visit after the long separation because of Covid-19. She was so happy to see everyone in the family. What joy she expressed about the home visit. However, after about a week into her visit with you, I received a call. "Will you please see if you can get me an appointment with Dr. Mattie either today or tomorrow? I have a medical emergency. I'm at Barbara's, but Marie and Terry are driving me home today." This would begin her long journey of medical issues. Our nurses, Sister Mary Pat, Sister Angelica and Sister Dianne tended to her in many beautiful ways

while trying to secure her an appointment with a specialist. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> she went to the hospital for tests. That evening at supper when Sister Joseph did not return from the hospital, Sister Marcella asked, “Do you think Joseph went out to eat?” I responded, “After a colonoscopy? I don’t think so!”

Later, we learned that she remained in the hospital for more tests. When I spoke with her, she seemed so good. She asked me if I would do something for her. “Please call Fr. Ron and Fr. Peter and let them know where I am. I’ve told you how Ron was with me at St. Nicholas and we did so much with the youth. Peter was my Pastor and has supported the school and was so very kind to me.” I did as she asked and called both our brother priests about seven o’clock that evening.

Shortly after these calls, Sister Maryanne Campeotto, in such a caring way, shared the news that we had lost Sister Joseph. She had gone home to the Lord. We were in shock and could not believe what we heard. Sister Maryanne said something so profound and yet something we need to believe, “We now have an intercessor in Heaven.”

Sister Joseph we beg you to intercede for all of us with our loving God, as we mourn your loss. VIVA CON DIOS, MY FRIEND.”

Sister Catherine Morrisett, SC