

Name: Sister Mary Felice Wellman
Date of Birth: October 22, 1929
Place of Birth: Cincinnati, Ohio
Parents: Edward and Catherine (Brumley) Wellman
Religious Profession: August 15, 1952
Date of Death: March 5, 2018
Age: 88
Years Professed: 65



Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Jane Helen Wellman was born in Cincinnati, Ohio to Edward and Catherine (Brumley) Wellman on her mother's birthday, October 22, 1929. She was baptized November 10, 1929 at St. Anthony Catholic Church in Cincinnati Ohio. Jane received the name Theresa when she was Confirmed October 16, 1940 in St. Benedict's Church in Cambridge by Bishop James Hartley, Bishop of Columbus. Jane was a middle child having an older sister and a younger brother.

Jane's father was employed by AT&T so the family moved several times. Most of her growing up years were spent in Cambridge, Ohio where she met the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. She attended St. Benedict School from fifth grade through high school. Jane wanted to be a nurse, so after high school she went to Good Samaritan School of Nursing in Zanesville, Ohio, graduating in 1950. While in Nursing School Jane got to know more members of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, since they were her teachers. After graduation Jane worked at St. Francis Hospital in Cambridge.

Jane also was acquainted with the Sisters of Charity from Mount St. Joseph where one of her Aunts, Sister Catherine Therese, was a member. When she felt that God was calling her to be a Sister she wrote the following letter to Mother Edna dated May 27, 1950:

Dear Rev. Mother Edna,

Please may I be permitted to enter your Community? I have prayed, longed and given serious thought to know God's will in my regard. At first I had the consent of my parents. Now I do not and the difficulties and problems appear insurmountable.

My father visited me today and has asked me to wait till I have taken State Board examinations which are in November. His reasons for this request are based primarily on financial embarrassment and the refusal of my mother to acquiesce to my desire. My mother hasn't been herself since I told her what I really want to do. My father feels that if I wait until after November, it will give me a longer time to think about the matter and also give mother more time to see God's holy Will in my regard. These clouds seem to hang heavy over my head.

Mother, I do want to do the right thing regarding my vocation and also my parents and yet I don't want to hurt them. I would appreciate any help you may give me in this matter. Should I continue to work here at Good Samaritan Hospital until November, or would you advise me to go to the Convent in

August without necessary items? In the meantime I will continue to pray to Our Lord for grace to accomplish my main desire to serve Him as a Franciscan Sister. Thank you.

*Sincerely,
Jane Wellman*

Jane eventually did receive permission to enter the Convent after taking her State Boards. She sent her pre-entrance medical record and application to Mother Edna in a letter dated August 14, 1950. In this letter she wrote, "I am eagerly looking forward to my arrival in Wisconsin in November. I have been praying and studying hard that I will write a successful State Board." Jane had her physical for entrance done by Doctor Fred Phillips who was a surgeon on staff at Good Samaritan Hospital. He was described as a gentle, kind-hearted, grandfatherly type of man. His closing comment to Jane was, "I bet you \$5.00 that you will not last five years in the Convent." At the end of five years she received five dollars in the mail from him.

Jane entered Holy Family Convent on November 25, 1950. At the time of her Reception on June 13, 1951 she received the name, Sister Mary Felice. After her Novitiate Sister Mary Felice was missioned at Memorial Hospital, a new hospital, in West Point, Nebraska. She enjoyed getting to know the warm and friendly people and learned much that year about crops, cattle and living in the country. She also learned about the farming accidents and how to take care of the wounds. A memorable experience she had there was helping another nurse in the transport of a young man who had bulbar polio. He was in an iron lung and when they reached Fremont, Nebraska the power went out. From that point to their destination the two of them had to hand pump the iron lung to keep him breathing. This young man did survive and Sister Mary Felice kept in touch with him until his death a few years ago.

Sister Mary Felice earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Catholic University in Washington, D. C. in 1959. She served in healthcare ministry in Ohio, Nebraska and Wisconsin in a variety of roles including: Instructor, Director of Nursing Services, Head Nurse, Staff Nurse, Clinic Nurse, Nursing Care and as driver assist and medical companion for patients. Sister Mary Felice enjoyed reading and was known for her collection of angels! She was an avid supporter and helper in sewing projects for cancer patients and the poor including The Crossing, Linus Project, Pregnancy Center and South Field. Items donated with prayer, in the name of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity, included fleece blankets with a stuffed animal in the blanket pocket, caps and bibs.

At the time of her 60th Jubilee Sister Mary Felice wrote, My religious life has helped me to accept people as they are, to help others when they need it and to be the person through whom others could see God working.....God has gifted me with many enriching experiences and I treasure every moment of my life. In my retirement years I am doing what I can to be a witness, never forgetting, 'once a nurse, always a nurse.' I am grateful to the Community for all that has been done for me and all that was entrusted to me. This is a time to express praise and thanks for all God has done in my life."

The Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity also thank God for the gift of Sister Mary Felice's life with us. Eternal Rest grant to Sister Mary Felice, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her, may she rest in peace. AMEN!