



BENEDICTINE SISTERS

SACRED HEART MONASTERY
in CULLMAN, ALABAMA

916 Convent Road NE, Cullman, AL 35055 ~ www.shmon.org ~ (256)734-4622

August 1, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

CULLMAN—Sister Mary Jude Clark, O.S.B., a Benedictine Sister of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, AL, died on Thursday, July 28, 2016, at the monastery, at the age of 88. Sister Tonette Sperando, Prioress, led the prayers at her bedside, with Sisters gathered around her.

Reception of the Body with Vespers for the Dead will be held Monday, August 1, at 4:45 PM in Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel in Cullman, followed by Visitation until 8:00 PM. The Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday, August 2, at 3:00 PM with Marcus Voss, O.S.B., presiding. Abbot Victor Clark, O.S.B., will concelebrate the Mass. Interment in the monastery cemetery will follow.

Born in 1927 in Cullman to Marcus Rene and Anna Maria (Schwann) Clark, Frances Alida Clark was baptized at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church. She spent her childhood in Cullman, walking to nearby Sacred Heart School for her first eight years of education. She later attended Sacred Heart Academy in Cullman, graduating in 1945.

Having sensed a religious vocation from an early age, Sister entered Sacred Heart Monastery as a Postulant soon after high school graduation and entered the Novitiate in 1946, receiving the name Mary Jude. She made her Temporary Monastic Profession in 1947 and her Perpetual Profession in 1950.

In preparation for the ministry of education, Sister Mary Jude earned degrees from Sacred Heart Junior College and St. Bernard College in Cullman, with additional later studies at the University of Notre Dame.

In 1947, soon after making her Temporary Profession, Sister Mary Jude took the helm in a 2nd grade classroom at St. Stephen School in Pensacola, FL, embarking on a ministry of teaching that lasted for the next 58 years and during which countless students learned, grew, and flourished under her caring eye. In addition to serving in Pensacola, Sister also taught at St Joseph School in Florence, at Sacred Heart School in Cullman, and for

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23 years as teacher and principal at St. Paul's School in Birmingham. In addition to her roles as teacher and principal, Sister Mary Jude also served on accreditation committees and on the diocesan Board of Education.

Sister Mary Jude loved her students, and in turn was loved by them. Always an encourager who believed in her students, Sister Mary Jude drew out the best in the young people under her care. The high regard in which former students held her was evident in the steady stream of visits, calls, and letters that came to her over the years from those whom she had taught.

Sister was a beloved member of her monastic community, and was as encouraging to her Sisters as she was to her students. Faithful in her presence at the Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass, and community events up until a few weeks before she died, Sister Mary Jude cherished her Benedictine heritage. She especially enjoyed sharing community history with new members. As a proud Cullman native, Sister Mary Jude was also eager to share her knowledge of local lore and never tired of driving around town to see the sights, especially at Christmastime.

A special source of joy for Sister Mary Jude was her large extended family. She once wrote, "I was born into a beautiful Catholic family – a gift to cherish all my life!" She did, indeed, cherish her family until the end, graced as she was with visits from many of her extended family during her final illness.

Sister Mary Jude loved her years of teaching, but her instruction did not end with her retirement from the classroom. Indeed, she taught until the end. During her final days the monastic community was on its annual retreat, which this year was on the theme of resurrection. As her Sisters took turns sitting with her, Sr. Mary Jude imparted her final lesson to them: teaching by example how to die in the hope of Christ.

Sister Mary Jude was preceded in death by her parents; by brothers Rene Marcus Clark and Patrick Hervey Clark; and by her sisters Catherine Clark Voss, Ida Mae Clark

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Cleghorn, Ruth Clark Germann, and Margaret Clark Kauffman.

Survivors include her Benedictine Sisters; her brother Abbot Victor Clark, O.S.B. of St. Bernard Abbey; brother-in-law Deacon Al Germann; sister-in-law Mary Clark; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, AL, 916 Convent Rd., Cullman, AL, 35055.

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