

Sister Clarice Sevegney, OP



Born to Earthly Life on January 25, 1941

First Profession on August 15, 1960

Entered Eternal Life on July 20, 2024

CLARICE MARIE SEVEGNEY was born January 25, 1941 to Clarence and Elizabeth Sevegney in Michigamme, Michigan. She and her sister Virginia grew up in a loving and faith-filled home.

She felt the call to religious life early. “At age four or five, I knew I wanted to be like the Sisters who taught in my town,” she said. Her dream was to be a full faithful disciple of Jesus Christ in community. She professed her first vows in 1960 and her final vows in 1966, taking the religious name S. Estelle.

S. Clarice received a Bachelor’s Degree from Dominican College and a Master’s Degree in Theology from St. John University in Collegeville, Minnesota. She began her ministry work as a teacher for nearly 8 years, including at St. Mary in Racine. She loved working with young people, saying, “I’ve always enjoyed teaching, especially about faith. It deepens my own faith.” In addition, she was the Director of the RENEW Program in the diocese of Marquette, Michigan, a program designed to bring spiritual renewal to parishes and develop leaders who could bring the wider message of God’s love through service in the community.

S. Clarice began what she would say was the most meaningful work of her life when she began ministering and walking with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. After moving to Berkeley, California and listening to where the call would lead her next, the LGBTQ+ community captured her attention, heart and soul. She began the important work of LGBTQ+ ministry in California and continued when she returned to Racine. S. Clarice believed that God wonderfully made each person and that the uniqueness of each human person – regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender or in any other way - is what makes human beings so beautiful. She said, “they are on the margins, not because of who they are, but because of who we are.”

S. Clarice was fiercely inclusive - she accepted everyone just as they were and wanted others to do the same. Her work took many forms – grant writing and leadership for LGBTQ+ organizations, being an outspoken advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and sharing the message of acceptance far and wide. But what stood out to so many was her ability to listen, support and walk with those in the LGBTQ+ community. As one member of the LGBTQ+ center said, “she makes you feel like you are the only person in the room. Her wise counsel not only gave me my faith back, but it saved my life.” She was a friend, an educator and an advocate in the LGBTQ+ community.

S. Clarice truly lived what the gospel said about welcoming all to the table. As she said, “Diversity is the Holy One’s gift to us!” Thank you S. Clarice, for your tireless work to make this world a more just place for all, and for encouraging us to welcome all people to the table. We pledge to continue your work of loving all with an open heart.

