



Veronica Grover, SHCJ
Teacher, Administrator, Author, Pastoral Assistant
February 16, 1930 – April 11, 2017

Rosemont, Pennsylvania – Veronica Grover, SHCJ, who was a Sister of the Holy Child Jesus for 66 years, died of heart failure on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, at Holy Child Center in Rosemont, PA.

Born and raised in West Philadelphia, Sister Veronica was the daughter of Catherine (Reddy) and James Grover. Her mother was born in Donegal, Ireland, and came to America at the age of 17. Her father was the son of Irish immigrants and attended St. James School in Philadelphia where he was taught by Holy Child Sisters.



In 1940, the family faced considerable challenges when Sister Veronica's father suffered a heart attack. She never forgot the love and devotion that her mother gave to her invalid husband. At her father's wake two years later, Sister Veronica met the Holy Child Sisters for the first time. They were from West Catholic Girls' High School. She was struck by their compassion as they listened to her mother share details of her husband's suffering. Sister Veronica experienced this same humanity and compassion when she attended West Catholic. These qualities drew her to enter the Society of the Holy Child Jesus after high school graduation. She made her final vows in 1955 and became well known by her religious name Mother Mary Agnese.

Sister Veronica's first nine years of teaching were spent in St. Mary School in Melrose, MA; St. James School in Philadelphia; Our Lady of Lourdes School in New York City; and St. Edward School in Philadelphia. After receiving an M.A. in History from Villanova University in 1959, she began teaching history at West Catholic. As an alumna, she was excited to be on the faculty which included 21 Holy Child Sisters. She enjoyed her 13 years teaching there during which she witnessed many changes – Vatican II, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War. Sister Veronica introduced African-American history into the school's curriculum and attended workshops on race relations. Her strong commitment to social justice and peace stemmed from these years. She also organized a committee to educate the Holy Child Sisters in justice and peace issues. In 1971, Sister Veronica started teaching at John W. Hallahan Girls' Catholic High School where she introduced an alternative program promoting race relations. 1976



marked a decisive point in her ministry as she began to work for the National Catholic Education Association as director of the newly-established Office for Justice and Peace Education. With Brother Edward van Merrienboer, O.P., she developed the first curriculum for justice and peace education titled *Seeking A Just Society*. Her ministry included extensive travel to present workshops. During a memorable visit to Bogota, Colombia, for a meeting of the International Organization of Catholic Educators, she delivered the official paper for the United States.

Having received an invitation from Father Les Schmidt, a Glenmary priest, to educate the people in the South about the social teachings of the Catholic Church, Sister Veronica was missioned to Charlotte, NC. In 1982, she helped to establish a justice and peace center named *Pacem in Terris*. She traveled throughout North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi giving workshops and providing resources to schools and parishes. She authored *Achieving Social Justice*, a textbook for high school students that was widely used in schools throughout the country.

As more Holy Child Sisters began to minister in the South, Sister Veronica was named area superior. She became a vital part of a small faith community called "The Friday Night Apostles." In 1985, she was invited to attend the West African Provincial Chapter. She called those eight weeks in Nigeria a life-changing experience.

In 1987, St. Luke Catholic Church was established in Charlotte, NC, with Father Joseph Mulligan as pastor. The nephew of Helen Mulligan, SHCJ, Father Joe invited Sister Veronica to join this exciting new project as director of education. For seven years, in a storefront location, these two pioneers gradually built a community noted for its hospitality and outreach to the poor. This welcoming spirit prevailed when they moved to a large well-planned church/community center. In 1990, Sister Veronica was commissioned by the Glenmary Research Center to write a case study *Human Life in the Service of Profit*. This was based on the experiences of women textile workers and detailed the injustices of the mill system as well as the silence of the larger civic and church communities. On the diocesan level, she taught two courses in the lay ministry training program and until 2004, chaired the Diocesan Justice and Peace Committee.

While at St. Luke's Sister Veronica gathered a large number of SHCJ Associates. Much of her time and energy centered on their formation; she was convinced that the voices of the laity needed to be heard. The Outreach Program there extends to the Holy Child ministries in the Dominican Republic where parishioners volunteer their time each year.

Failing health in 2014 made it necessary for Sister Veronica to move to Holy Child Center in Rosemont, PA, where her family and friends visited her frequently. Despite

the distance, she remained well connected and loved by many parishioners, friends and the SHCJ Associates in Charlotte, NC.

She joins her parents and siblings in eternal life. She is survived by many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Friends and family are invited to a prayer service of remembrance on Wednesday, April 19, at 4:00 p.m., and to the Mass of Christian Burial on Thursday, April 20, at 11:00 a.m., at New Sharon Chapel, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA, 19010. Preceding Mass, friends and family are welcome to attend the wake at 10:00 a.m. Funeral arrangements are handled by Donohue Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to Society of the Holy Child Jesus – American Province, 1341 Montgomery Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010, or make a gift online at www.shcj.org/american/donate.