

Sister Mary Paschal Hocum, OSF
1930 – 2022

Sister Mary Paschal was born on February 5, 1930, in Minneapolis, MN, the third of four children of George Allen and Helen Catherine (Daggett) Hocum. She was baptized Mary Louise on March 2, 1930, at St. Thomas Church in Minneapolis. She had one brother, George, and two sisters, Sarah “Sally” and Patricia.



Mary Louise attended five elementary schools in California and graduated from Ramona Convent High School in Alhambra, CA. She obtained a BA in mathematics and English from the College of Holy Names, Oakland, CA, in 1952. Before coming to Clinton, she was employed as a mathematician in the space program at Aerojet-General Corporation in California.

She joined the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, IA, on October 4, 1958, and received the name Mary Paschal at her reception on June 15, 1959. She made first profession of vows on August 12, 1961, and final profession on August 12, 1964. Her novitiate classmates were Sisters Dorothy Ann Donovan, Jude Mary (Patricia) Moran, Kathleen Cleary, Christine (Marilyn Green) Jesswein, Evelyn McKenna, Judith McKenna, Mary Ann Phelan, Dorothy Mae Stolmeier, and Shawn Kelley.

Sister Paschal began her ministry as a math instructor at Mount St. Clare College and Academy. During the next seventeen years, besides spending one year teaching math and science at St. Justin the Martyr School in St. Louis, MO, she alternately served as head of the Mount St. Clare College math department and pursued further education.

She earned two master’s degrees - a Master of Arts in Teaching Mathematics from the University of Detroit, Detroit, MI, in 1964, and a Master of Theological Studies from Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA, in 1982. She received National Science Foundation grants at universities in Milwaukee, WI; Denver and Colorado Springs, CO; and at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. She was a recipient of the Shell Merit Fellowship at Stanford University as well as the Carnegie-Mellon grant for mathematical studies at the University of Iowa. She also completed a Spiritual Direction Certificate program at Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA.

After graduation from the Franciscan School of Theology, she spent one year teaching math at St. Anthony Seminary in Santa Barbara, CA, followed by two years as Pastoral Associate at St. Paul's Parish in Macomb, IL, and as a part-time mathematics faculty member at Western Illinois University.

In 1985, she was invited to return to the Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA, where she served for nineteen years, primarily as Registrar. She initiated the first spiritual formation program for lay students in 2000 and became Director of Spiritual Formation. After retiring from her full-time position in 2002, she remained another two years as Director of Alumni Affairs, spiritual director, and assistant to the Registrar.

She returned to Clinton and served as Vice-President of the Sisters of St. Francis from 2004 to 2008 and as administrator of The Canticle for three years. During the years she was retired at The Canticle, she led book discussions for the sisters and assisted with retreats and days of recollection on Franciscan spirituality. She moved to The Alverno on April 6, 2021, and remained there until her death on February 10, 2022.

Sister Paschal's life and ministry were marked by her welcoming manner and joyful presence. Her infectious laughter and spirit of concern for others and all creatures will be greatly missed.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brother, George; and sister, Patricia. She is survived by her sister, Sarah "Sally" Lindenskov, of Pico Rivera, CA; many nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she made her life for 63 years.