



***In Memory of***  
***Sr. Virginia Marie Dunne, DW***  
***Sr. Virginia Marie de Noel***  
***11/15/29 - 4/ 30/17***

**By Sr. Ann Casagrande, DW**

Today, we celebrate Sr. Virginia Marie Dunne's life and her entrance into new life. Virginia Marie, also known to many of us as "Honey," was born in Brooklyn, NY on November 15, 1929, to James and Helen Dunne. She was the 3rd of 7 children. Legend has it that there was a neighbor, who was from the South, and every time he saw Virginia Marie, he said, "She is a real Honey." He said it so often that her older brother, Joe, started calling her Honey and that name stuck – probably because it fit so well!



She entered the Daughters of Wisdom novitiate in Ottawa, Canada on July 30, 1947, and made her first vows on February 2, 1949.

Honey attended St. John's University where she attained a BS in English and later an MS in Guidance Counseling. She also attained a certificate in Pastoral Ministry from Immaculate Conception Seminary.

With this background, Virginia taught in our grammar and high schools in Ozone Park, NY, Fredericksburg, VA, and Madawaska, MA. She taught various grades and was principal at times. In 1968, she was the Treasurer of the Daughters of Wisdom until 1977. One of the things she was most proud of during that time was that she hired John Tortolani as our Financial Advisor and he remains with us to this day with his fidelity and expertise. In 1977, she began Pastoral Care in St Mark's in Shoreham and did that until 1998.

At that time, on her file, Honey had written in "retired" in 1998. Not on your life!! There was much that lay before her, including being the Coordinator of our convent in Sound Beach for the next 6 years. Many of our retired, older and ill sisters resided there.

Around 2006, the Daughters of Wisdom realized that we could not provide the care for our sisters that skilled nursing homes were providing and we began to use the services of Maria Regina Residence, a skilled nursing facility run by the Sisters of St. Joseph. This was new for us



and our concern was to keep the sisters feeling part of the family, even though they were a distance away.

We asked Honey if she would consider being a “sister visitor” for our sisters in Maria Regina. I’ll never forget her response: “I just want to be good to our sisters” and that was the beginning of another wonderful ministry. Honey did this for the next 11 years very faithfully. I cannot stress the fidelity part enough – she was at Maria Regina at least 5 days a week and often more. The sisters loved her visits. Sometimes, I would visit a sister who was a little disgruntled. I’d mention Virginia Marie and they would beam – “Oh she visits me every day and I love her visits!”

During these years, Honey teamed up with her two dear friends, Virginia and Phyllis. Together, they visited sisters on the weekend. This friendship had been for many years. Later, these dear friends faithfully visited Honey during her year in Litchfield and her year at Sound Beach.

Her ministry with our sisters at Maria Regina was renowned for her kind and gentle presence. Around 2014, Honey was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. She could no longer manage all the walking entailed in her ministry.



It was then that Honey came to live with us in Litchfield, CT. The big attraction was that her dear brother, Frank, lived down the road. Frank visited every day. Sometimes, Honey went for a ride with Frank and Gerri and always enjoyed some ice cream with them! That year was special for all of us. Many of Honey’s family and friends came to visit. She also enjoyed the atmosphere in Litchfield – surrounded by nature, watching the birds come to the feeders outside her window and of course Mindy, the dog, and the two cats that always kept her company. Sometimes, we’d hear her talking and think she had company – she did but of the 4 legged variety!

Honey’s condition deteriorated and by the end of the year, Honey knew that she needed the care of our wonderful staff at Sound Beach. She moved to L.I. and she was enveloped into the loving embrace of our staff and sisters at the convent. I would be remiss if I did not mention the extraordinary care that Virginia received at Sound Beach, coupled with the compassion and expertise of Good Shepherd Hospice.

Virginia Marie, Honey, in your inclusive love for all, your gentleness and compassion, we have seen the face of God!

***And for this, we say, Thank You!***