



We commend to your charity the soul of our beloved

Sr. Jean René Seiler

Who departed this life on October 17, 2026

In the sixty-sixth year of her religious life

Birthdate: November 27, 1942 Age: 83 years, 10 months and 21 days

It is with sadness that we announce the death of our beloved Sister Jean René Seiler. As we commend her to God's loving embrace, we give thanks for her faithful presence to her family and religious community and for a life devoted to God's service.

Born Sarah Ann Seiler, she was the eldest of eight children of Lawrence Seiler, a German immigrant, and Nancy (née Burke) Seiler. Although baptized Sarah Ann, she was known to her family as Sally and later as Sister Sal.

At thirteen, having just completed the eighth grade, Sally left her home in Springdale, Pennsylvania, to begin her journey with the Sisters of Divine Providence. In time, she would become known as Sister Jean René. Her youngest brother, David, was born the year she entered the novitiate at age seventeen.

Sr. Jean René began her ministerial life in education, earning a reputation as an excellent teacher who connected easily with students. The Sisters also recognized her willingness to encourage and mentor beginning teachers. Over the years, her ministries expanded to include parish work, vocation and formation ministry, hospice care, spiritual direction, and service as chaplain to the Sisters at St. Joseph's Center.

From 1984 to 1991, Sr. Jean René worked in vocation and formation ministry in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Father Timothy Hayes, Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Columbus, held her in particularly high regard, describing her as "a joyful witness of the gift of religious vocation and of the Providential love of God." He continued, "I found, in working with Sr. Jean René, that it is possible to achieve oneness in spirit and purpose in a way that bears great fruit."

Those who knew Sr. Jean René best recall a woman who was unfailingly herself. Her friend, Sr. Sandra Denardis, described her as "straight as an arrow" and quite unfiltered. Yet she was also without guile, compassionate, and deeply committed to serving God. Jean René had a genuine appreciation for the life she had been given. She once remarked to her classmate, Sr. Janet Folkl, how much she loved having a November birthday so close to Thanksgiving.

Family remained central to Sr. Jean René's life. She frequently visited her sister, Kathy Duda, and Kathy's husband, Tom. She particularly enjoyed playing cards with Tom and the lively, thoughtful conversations they shared. As Kathy simply observed, "They were both so smart."

In her later years, Sr. Jean René faced the increasing limitations imposed by Parkinson's disease. Its effects became especially severe during her final year. In a poignant coincidence, she died on the anniversary of her beloved mother's burial in 1981.

Reflecting on her sister's final days, Kathy shared, "I have never experienced a week like this in my life... to see the care, the love she received from the Sisters and the nursing staff... their prayers and their love. It changed my life."

She continued, "I hope that when I come close to dying, I can experience the love that she did. I always knew Sally, but I feel like I now know Jean René." Whether one knew the Sally her family knew or the Jean René known by her community, it was indeed a privilege to know her.

Indeed, Sr. Jean René was deeply loved by her family, her Providence community, and the many people whose lives intersected with hers through ministry. Above all, she was loved by the God to whom she had devoted sixty-six years of her life as a Sister of Divine Providence.

As we imagine the moment when Sr. Jean René was finally freed from the limitations of her body, we give thanks for her life and bid farewell to our dear Sister and friend.

Sister Judith Connor