

REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SISTER MARY TAYLOR

January 6, 1923 – January 30, 2026

by Roisin Gannon, pbvm

PBVM NL Unit Leader

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“Come to me all you who are heavily burdened and I will give you rest”.

We gather this evening to welcome the mortal remains of Sr. Mary Taylor, who died Friday 30th January. We sympathise with our Presentation family, and with Mary’s nieces, nephews, great and grand nieces and nephews, whom she loved dearly. Know that Aunt Mary (Mae) will always walk with you and guide you.

Sr. Mary Taylor, born on January 6th, 1933, to Catherine nee Tobin and William Taylor, in Trepassey, Newfoundland. She was one of eight children, Clara, Rita, Alice, Margaret, Gertrude, Allan, and Albert. She was the last of her siblings.

Mary joined the Presentation Sisters in September 1953 and made her final commitment of Poverty, Celibacy and Obedience in 1963. She was given the religious name of Sister Louis Marie. Mary was very much involved in the education ministry in many communities throughout the island of Newfoundland.... Renew's, Ferryland, Badger, Buchans, Stephenville, St. Bride's, St. Mary's, Carbonear, St. John's . She also taught at T.I. Murphy Center (1988- 95) and the Brophy Center (1996 -2004) here in St. John's. Mary, like our own Nano Nagle, believed “to educate is to liberate”. This liberation was not only from prohibitive laws but liberation from the uneducated self. Bro. Barry Lynch, who was Director of the Murphy Centre during Mary's time there wrote, (and I quote)

“Sister Mary Taylor was a very dedicated and gifted member of the teaching staff at the T.I. Murphy Centre on Water Street, St. John's NL. I was the Director of the Centre from 1990 -1993 and Sister Mary was truly a gift to the young men and women who attended the Murphy Centre. I recall that one of the young students at the Centre who had dropped out of high school in St. John's told me that Sister Mary believed in him and helped him feel that he could succeed in his life and achieve his high school education. That student and many other students whom I came to know at

the Murphy Centre felt they were failures. Sister Mary showed her belief in them, affirming them in their person and in their learning.

I remember one student telling me that Sister Mary would accept her written assignments in English class and would initially use the assignment to compliment her choice of certain words and phrases. Sister Mary would write her compliments in pencil if the student had written in pencil and in pen if the student had written in pen. Mary did not want her comments to appear too critical and when she had gained the confidence of the students with whom she interacted, she would then encourage the students more directly in changing their writing style.

Sister Mary was warmly regarded by our staff at the Murphy Centre. She was often approached by her colleagues for suggestions on how best to approach the students they found challenging. Sister Mary's encouraging presence and her generous heart were deeply appreciated".

The condolences written on her obituary recognize Mary for who she was as a committed Teacher, Guide and Mentor. "Those who teach will shine like stars for all eternity".

When Nano founded the Presentation Sisters in 1775, Ireland was in the clutches of the Penal Laws, forbidding Irish Catholics the basic rights of education and life. Nano and her companions taught secretly because as I have already said...to educate is to liberate. Mary continued Nano's dream...teaching the most vulnerable and helpless of society. She will be remembered by many of her students as someone who helped them believe in themselves and achieve aspired goals in their lives.

Mary's health has been deteriorating over the past several months. There were some days when she found it hard to cope with the infirmities of old age. But in saying that, her mind was very alert, and she was interested in everything going on in our Presentation life. She liked to know the news and liked to be able to direct operations. She even spoke of how she wanted to die ... no trumpet sound ... no fuss ... just sleep into heaven. And God listened to Mary.....she just slipped away.

Mary, like all those gone before us, has passed through the thin veil separating earth and our next life. No doubt Mary is catching up with all the news among all those she loved. We believe in the Communion of Saints

and Mary is now one of them. May we be open to their guidance and help at all times.

Mary... Thank you for who you are/were and till we meet again, in that vast Communion of Saints, may God hold you in the palm of his hand. God bless you on your journey.