



Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROMINENT SISTER OF NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR DIES IN MARYLAND

Ipswich MA, USA – January 29, 2010 Sister Mary Daniel Turner, 84 years of age, died after a long-term illness on January 27, 2010 at Holy Cross Sanctuary in Burtonsville, MD. She was a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN), recognized internationally and throughout the USA not only for her commitment to her own religious congregation but also as one of the great leaders among Congregations of Women Religious, especially in the United States.

Sr. Mary Daniel was a scholar, teacher and a woman of vision. She championed human dignity and justice for all; she was a strong advocate for those living in poverty. She confronted tirelessly the inequality of women in the Church and in the world. Her life and leadership demonstrate the power and influence of one person. Her prophetic message impacts religious and social change not only for this but for future generations.

Born in Baltimore, MD in 1925, young Margaret Turner first met the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in elementary and high schools directed by them in the District of Columbia. In 1943, she entered this religious congregation in which her spiritual and intellectual gifts became evident to those in leadership. She studied in Washington, D.C. received two degrees in Philosophy, her BA from Trinity College (now University) and her MA degree from The Catholic University of America. Sr. Mary Daniel's teaching years prepared her for administration as a school principal and then for leadership roles in her Congregation. She became Provincial Superior in the Maryland Province of the Sisters of Notre Dame (1962-1969). In 1972, after receiving her MA in Theology from St. Michael College, University of Toronto in Canada, she served for six years as Executive Director of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). She was elected in 1978 for a six-year term as Superior General in the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (1978-1984). In 1984, Trinity College (now University) in Washington, D.C. gave her an honorary doctorate, LL.D., Doctor of Humane Letters, with a citation that "she has empowered women to believe in the possibility of a transformed world that is inclusive, collaborative and pluralistic."

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For more than forty years, she was associated with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). Throughout several years, Sr. Mary Daniel worked also with the Religious Formation Conference, the Association of Contemplative Sisters, the National Black Sisters Conference and the United States Mission Conference. In 2005, LCWR honored her with its Outstanding Leadership Award in recognition of “her extraordinary contributions to religious life and her work for the common good of all peoples.” She wrote many articles on leadership, power and authority and co-authored, with Sister of Divine Providence Lora Ann Quinonez, *The Transformation of American Catholic Sisters: Women in the Political Economy* (Temple University Press, 1992).

In more recent years, Sr. Mary Daniel responded to invitations to be guest speaker, lecturer, consultant, facilitator, etc. at the many gatherings of religious communities. Her knowledge and conviction enabled her to communicate an inner fire for the mission of women religious today. With gentleness and courage, she touched numerous audiences in her pleas for those suffering from injustice. With her “heart as wide as the world,” she heard the cries of the world’s impoverished and advocated for them through her leadership role with religious congregations. Throughout her life, her vowed commitment to God, the Church and her religious community impelled her to proclaim constantly the Gospel message of love and justice.

Mary Daniel still speaks to the 21st century in her video message at the exhibit of “Women in Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America,” currently displayed at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Quoting St. Julie Billiart, the foundress of her religious congregation, Mary Daniel says: “Give me 12 women. If I have only 12 women, we can do anything.”

Sister Teresita Weind, Congregational Leader, speaking for the religious Congregation praised the life commitment of Sr. Mary Daniel to the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and to women religious in general. Her Sisters worldwide mourn the loss of this courageous woman of wisdom whose tireless efforts and service contributed greatly to Catholic Renewal in the years following Vatican II.

Sr. Mary Daniel will be waked at the Collins Funeral Home in Silver Spring, Maryland on Sunday January 31. After the celebration of her life at a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Camillus Church in Silver Spring, MD on February 1, she will be buried at the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Cemetery in Ilchester, MD.

Sr. Mary Daniel Turner was a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, an international congregation of women religious founded in France in 1804 by St. Julie Billiart. Sisters serve in Belgium, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Italy, Japan, Haiti, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe, and in 29 states throughout the USA.

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We, SNDdeN, commit ourselves to make known God's goodness through education in a variety of ministries. We staff offices/centers in Rome, ITALY, Namur, BELGIUM and Ipswich, MA, USA. We work to change lives by "our fundamental commitment to stand with our sisters and brothers who live in poverty and accompany them in their struggle." We maintain a web site at: www.sndden.org.

Contributions in memory of Sr. Mary Daniel Turner may be sent to:

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