



Sisters of St. Casimir

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Sister Regina Marie Dubickas, SSC June 25, 1946 – March 26, 2022



Danutė (Diane) Dubickas, the second daughter of Jonas and Veronika (Saldūnas) Dubickas, was born in Schleswig, Germany on June 25, 1946, and baptized in a small chapel in one of the refugee camps. Her younger sister, Genovaitė (Jean), was also born in Germany. Eventually the young Dubickas family was able to connect with a sponsor in the United States through the Red Cross who arranged for their transportation to America in 1950, housing in Springfield, IL, and jobs for the parents. A short time later the family moved to East St. Louis, IL. The

family understood that eventually they would be responsible for repaying the sponsor. Her mother worked cleaning the church and her father worked for the railroad. Often, on Sunday afternoons, while her mother was busy with church duties, Danutė and her sister spent time in the parish convent watching “Lassie” on TV and reading the comics so they could learn English.

The family belonged to Immaculate Conception Parish, which ministered to Lithuanian immigrants in East St. Louis. It is there that Danutė made her first communion and confirmation. It is there that she tried to change her name to Diane because her teachers and other students said it incorrectly. Her mother did not care what they called her, but officially her name was Danutė and she must use that on all her papers. Growing up she was very involved in her parish community, the Lithuanian youth group, and her school community at St. Teresa Academy, where she was very proud of her work as editorial editor of the school’s paper as well as high school correspondent for the city newspaper.

All the while, the seeds of her vocation were being planted – through her contact with the Franciscan Sisters in her parish and her teachers, the Sister Adorers of the Most Precious Blood, at St. Teresa Academy. In fact, she applied to enter the

community of the Adorers, but, when she went to her pastor, Msgr. Deksnys, for a letter of recommendation, he asked her if she had ever considered a religious congregation of Lithuanian heritage and suggested a visit to the Sisters of St. Casimir in Chicago. She and her mother went to Chicago to visit the Sisters of St. Casimir. After the visit, she said to her mother, "I think I am going to come here." And she did. The year was 1964 and she entered the Congregation as a postulant on that September 8th.

After completing one year as a postulant, Danutė became a novice on August 14, 1965, receiving the name, Sister Regina Marie. On August 15, 1967, Sister Regina Marie made her first vows. Thus began her life of ministry and service within the Church, serving as elementary school teacher, high school guidance counselor, formation directress, and psychologist. She began serving as Congregational leader when she was elected as a General Counselor in 1998 and continued on the Leadership Team until her death in 2022, while in her second term as General Superior (2013-2022).

She was well prepared for her ministries, having received her B.A. in Theology from St. Xavier College in Chicago, a year of studies for formation ministry at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, Licentiate in Psychology from the Gregorian Institute in Rome, Italy, and her PsyD in Clinical Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

In all the schools where Sister Regina ministered, she is remembered as an excellent teacher and guidance counselor and a faith-filled, loving, and caring person who helped her students to grow and become their best selves. She taught in 3 elementary schools in Chicago – Immaculate Conception in Brighton Park, Nativity BVM in Chicago Lawn, and Providence of God in Pilsen. She also ministered as guidance counselor at Maria High School in Chicago, and psychologist at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago and in private practice in Westchester, IL.

In her role of leadership, Sister Regina had a very wide circle of people with whom she related professionally and more importantly personally: Holy Cross Hospital Board of Directors, HCH Catholic Monitoring Committee, Maria High School Board of Directors, Maria Kaupas Center Board of Directors, Southwest Organizing Project, Illinois Catholic Health Association, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Villa Joseph Marie Board of Directors, Cluster of Parishes on the Southwest Side of Chicago (Deanery V-A), the Mother Maria Kaupas Center in Mount Carmel, PA. In addition to these organizations, Sister Regina had

wonderful relationships with many Sisters from other Congregations, especially our IHM Sisters in Scranton, PA, and the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, from Danville, PA.

In 2017, Sister Regina celebrated her 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Casimir. In her reflection on that occasion, she wrote: “It has been a wonderful journey, and I am grateful for all that God has done for me and through me for the good of others...I am grateful to all who have been part of my life and from whom I have learned so much and been inspired by their commitment and love for their sisters and brothers and their desire to make a difference in our world.” The words on her jubilee remembrance card sum it all up: from Eph 3:20 “Glory to God whose power at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine.”

Little did Sister Regina know what God would be asking of her. She had first been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016. She had surgery and was treated with radiation and chemotherapy. And all was well. But not really. She was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer in the fall of 2018. She was treated with various chemotherapies and radiation, but the cancer still grew and spread – to her bones, to her skin. Her journey became different. Sister Regina gave several of us a quote to ponder: “We’re all just walking each other home.”
Rumi

Excerpts from Sister Regina’s letters –to family, sisters, associates, faithful friends

March 4, 2022

I have learned much about what illness can teach us; I have experienced love and sacrifice on the part of caregivers and have thanked God for every day as it is a gift. I am grateful to each of you for your prayers, your understanding, your love. We continue the journey together for a great love! There is always hope! Miracles still happen and they are happening all the time, maybe not in the way we wanted or thought, but in the way God gives.

March 18, 2022

I ask you to continue to keep me in your prayers and want you to know that I continue to pray for each of you. I love you and truly feel that “we’re all walking each other home.” (Rumi)

Thank you for being with me on my journey.

Regina

The outpouring of love and support that has come after these letters were sent and after Sister Regina's death has been overwhelming and speaks so much of Sister Regina's faith in God and deep love for others – on all the people she connected with wherever she was until her dying day. She often mentioned that a cloud of witnesses was surrounding her with their love and their prayers. That was so true.

Sister Regina, you have finally arrived home. May God be praised and thanked for the gift and blessing you have been to so many! We have been blessed to have been able to walk with you on your way home.



Sister Regina is survived by her sister, Jean Zilliox, her brother-in-law, Jack Zilliox, her nephews Michael (Melvina) Zilliox, Matthew (Jeanne) Zilliox, John Zilliox (Madeline Hartman), and niece, Karen (Zach) Brown, as well as two grandnieces (Clara Marie Zilliox and Eleanor Veronika Brown) and two grandnephews (Luke and Sam Zilliox).

She is also survived by the Sisters of St. Casimir.

Her parents, Jonas and Veronika (Saldūnas) Dubickas and her infant sister, Johanna, preceded Sister Regina in death.

Rites of Christian Burial

April 1, 2022

Franciscan Village Chapel
1270 Village Drive
Lemont, IL 60439

Wake Service: 10:15 am

Visitation: 10:15 am – 11:15 am

Mass of the Resurrection: 11:15 am

Celebrant: Rev. Homero Sanchez, OSA

Concelebrants: Rev. Joseph Stobba, OSA

Rev. Ray Flores, OSA

Homilist: Rev. Ray Flores, OSA

Organist/Cantor: Gia Sokas

Flutist: Anna Belle O'Shea

Interment: Saint Casimir Cemetery

Funeral Director: Lack and Sons

Livestreaming available –

<https://www.lackfuneralhome.com/>

Rites of Christian Burial

April 1-2, 2022

St. Casimir Center Chapel
2601 W Marquette Road
Chicago, IL 60629

Wake Service: April 1 – 4:00 pm

Visitation: April 1 – 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Visitation: April 2 – 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Mass of the Resurrection: 10:30 am

Celebrant: Rev. Anthony Pizzo, OSA

Concelebrant: Rev. Jaunius Kelpsas

Organist: Richard Sokas

Cantor: Gia Sokas

Flutist: Anna Belle O'Shea

Interment: Saint Casimir Cemetery

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