



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sister Joan Hart, SSND**  
**July 19, 1930 – Jan. 1, 2018**



BALTIMORE - Sister Joan Hart, SSND, died peacefully at Maria Health Care Center, Baltimore, on Jan. 1, 2018. Sister Joan was a vowed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 20 years and prior to that, a vowed member of the Ursuline Sisters for 38 years. Sister Joan's spirit and vision were global, and she brought her gifts to programs in several African countries and at the United Nation's 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Sister Joan continued to present justice and peace workshops until she retired to Villa Assumpta.

Joan Yvonne Hart, daughter of Margaret Edith Devitt and William Francis Xavier Hart, was born on July 19, 1930 in New York City. Joan's parents were natives of New York City and of Irish descent. Joan had two brothers who died in infancy.

Joan was baptized at Resurrection Church, New York City. Joan attended public elementary school, Bronx, N.Y. and received instruction for sacramental preparation through Catechism classes. Her first experiences with Catholic school were her high school years at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula, Bronx, N.Y. (1943-1947). She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in French and minor in Latin from the College of Mount St. Vincent, New York, in 1951. Joan later studied French literature at Fordham University, New York, where she graduated with a Master of Arts degree in 1957.

Joan was a teacher in the Catholic schools of the New York area before entering the Ursuline Community as a postulant in 1953. She became a novice in 1954 and professed her first and final vows in 1956 and 1959. As an Ursuline sister, Joan worked in their schools as a teacher and principal in New York and Maryland until her interest shifted to peace, justice and social ministry areas. This commitment was brought to fruition through her work at Catholic Relief Services and with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

After living with School Sisters of Notre Dame for several years in Baltimore and Wilmington, DE, Sister Joan said that she had “unsuspectingly entered a process of transformation which brought her in contact with the living charism of SSND.” She was so impressed with the SSND vision and community experience that she declared herself, “a woman willing to lose everything again, so inspired am I by SSND.” Sister Joan began the transfer process in February 1994 and professed final vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame on Sept. 13, 1997. She commented, “I’ve never had a moment’s hesitation that this was right for me, and everything has ratified the choice I made in 1994.”

Sister Joan ministered as the coordinator of the Common Ground for the Common Good, a social development project for the U.S. Catholic Conference (1995-96), then she became the coordinator of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation activities for the Baltimore Province. Sister Joan exercised extraordinary leadership as she worked tirelessly to keep issues in the forefront of deliberations and to encourage the participation of all sisters (1996-2003). Sister Joan authored numerous articles published for Catholic Relief Services and for *Momentum*, the magazine of the National Catholic Education Association.

Sister Joan was dedicated to every aspect of service. She was sincere in her efforts to live a generous and spirited ministry and to maintain a strong community life. As a teacher she had inspired a generation of girls and later she invigorated sisters and colleagues with her passionate commitment to human right issues. Extensive knowledge of the world and fluency in French aided Sister Joan in her travels, as she sought collaboration with national and international groups.

Sister Joan was intelligent, compassionate and had a loving way of relating to others. To be with Joan was to enjoy her humor and wit. It was a time of fun and laughter. A wise and steadfast woman, Sister Joan was not afraid of change. She courageously spent difficult years in Maria Health Care Center, resigned to accepting care.

The Christian Wake Service was held on January 10. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on January 11 with Rev. Roman Kovacheson OSF Cap., Villa Assumpta Chaplain, as presider. Both services were held in the chapel of Villa Assumpta. Interment followed at Villa Maria Cemetery, Glen Arm Road, Glen Arm, MD. Joan is survived by her cousin, Hannah Burling.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic Midwest Province, c/o Development Office, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897 or online: [www.amssnd.org](http://www.amssnd.org)

