

Sister Mary Philip Aaron

July 20, 1932 - January 25, 2026



In September 1950, 28 young women entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. The group was always called the Holy Year Group. Among them was Phyllis Aaron, the daughter of Mary Connor and Paul Aaron and twin of brother Philip. They were born in McKees Rocks on July 20, 1932. Their mother did not know that she was having twins. It was quite a surprise!

The early life of the twins, as they were called, was formed by a very Catholic family, church and school. They found meaning and enjoyment in being part of the neighborhood where their ancestors had lived. In 1938, the family moved to Brookline, and the twins attended Resurrection School. They performed well and made many friends. Frequently, with their sister Nancy, and brothers Bud and Jim, they played ball, went swimming, picked berries, hiked, flew kites, and in the winter went ice skating. Often in the evening, Jim played the piano to accompany them singing the latest songs from the radio show "Your Hit Parade." The highlight of the summers was the annual trip to the Knights of Columbus Picnic at Linden Grove. Mrs. Aaron always brought her special home-made cake with marshmallows and nuts on top.

In 1946, Phyllis enrolled in Saint Benedict Academy and Phil enrolled in North Catholic High. The once constant companions spent less time together since they were at different schools along with more homework. In August, 1947, Phil left home to begin his formation as a Marianist Brother. His entire family supported him, especially his mother and Phyllis, who wrote to him often. He encouraged Phyllis to consider religious life. In 1948, her brother Jim entered the seminary.

After graduation, Phyllis made a retreat at Seton Hill during which she decided to enter the Sisters of Charity. Upon returning home, she informed the family of her desire. As had been the case with Phil and Jim, they were very supportive. She then asked Sr. Marie Cecily to

be her sponsor. On September 12, she entered the novitiate. Nine months later, she received the habit and given the name Sister Mary Philip. On June 28, 1953 she professed temporary vows and final vows on July 1, 1956.

After a few years of teaching in elementary schools, and having received a B.A. from Seton Hill, with a major in chemistry, she began to teach in the following high schools, Holy Innocents, St. Luke, Mon Valley Catholic and Bishop Guilfoyle. In 1964, she was missioned to Seton High in Arizona as Vice Principal to coordinate various aspects of student life and to increase parental involvement. In 1971, she returned to Pittsburgh to teach at Sacred Heart. The following year, she was appointed my Vice Principal, which launched an enriching friendship that has lasted more than 50 years.

In 1980 she began 20 years of ministry at Seton Hill. Her first position was Director of Project Forward. Due to her service in educational administration, financial management, program development and community outreach, she was appointed Director of Financial Aid in 1982. Consultation, collaboration, and teamwork characterized her management style. In 1993, she went to teach English as a volunteer at St. Joseph School in Kan Jin, Korea. Returning to the Office of Financial Aid, she continued as Director until 2000. In August, she celebrated her Golden Jubilee. On that occasion she stated, "I am grateful to God for enabling me to fulfill my vocation within the charism of Saint Elizabeth Seton and the example of the Sisters of Charity, past and present. In September, she went to New Hampshire to enjoy a well-deserved sabbatical.

Upon her return, she volunteered to teach again in Korea. Besides the students at St. Joseph, she taught English conversation to about 100 civil employees. As a result, she was featured in 14 newspapers and a TV magazine. During those 2 years, she had time to visit other missions and meet with the sisters. She said, "I experienced the traditions of Elizabeth Seton and Vincent DePaul through Korean eyes."

In 2004, she began to minister in social work. Her first assignment was to manage St. Justin Plaza, 100 apartments building for senior citizens and to keep the residents safe and happy. Beginning in 2007, she joined the staff of Rendu Services that served elderly with low or no income. This non-profit agency was staffed by Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. They offered food pantries, used clothing drives and medical services.

In 2019. She finally retired to Caritas Christi. During her entire life as a Sister of Charity, she followed the words of the prophet Micah, "But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will put my trust in God my Savior; my God will hear me." As I prepared this reflection, I realized what a blessing she was. I could always rely on her wisdom and good judgement. We had similar interests, such as reading, walking, swimming, attending symphonies and ballets, making retreats and vacationing on the Jersey shore. Her friendship blessed my life. So now I say, "well done, good and faithful servant. Enjoy what God has prepared for you," I invite you to join me as we pray; "Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen."

Thank you for being here and may God guide you home safely.

Sister Patrice Hughes, S.C.