

SISTER MARY REGINA DONOVAN, S.S.J. (NORA DONOVAN)

Four of the thirteen children of Michael and Mary Donovan of McKeesport entered religious life. The story of the three priest-brothers is told in an accompanying article. The role of the oldest sibling, Nora, who was the first to enter religious life, bears mention. Her life is chronicled in the Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, from which the following information has been provided:

Sister Regina Donovan (Nora Donovan)

Birth: 1881 in McKeesport, PA

Reception: March 19, 1898

Profession: August 22, 1905

Death: November 19, 1915

Burial: Trinity Cemetery, Erie, PA – Sec. S, Lot 91, No. 9

Assignments:

St. John School, Erie

St. Bernard School, Bradford

St. Brigid School, Meadville

Remarks:

Sister Regina Donovan was noted for her beautiful singing voice. She was a sister of Father Gerard Donovan, martyred Maryknoll priest whose life as a missionary is portrayed in *When the Sorghum Was High*. Sister is mentioned in the early pages of the book.

Sister was a talented and energetic sister whose personal qualities and faithfulness gladdened those with whom she labored. Sister died in Spencer Hospital, but her funeral services were held at the Villa Maria Motherhouse.

From the *Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania Datebook Volume 2:*

March 19, 1898

Reception ceremonies were held at Villa Maria Chapel, with the Very Reverend Bishop John E. Fitzmaurice presiding. The young ladies who received the Habit were: ... Miss Nora Donovan, of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, as Sister M. Regina.

August 22, 1905

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Fitzmaurice offered Holy Mass and officiated at the ceremonies of investiture and profession at Villa Maria. Father Dwyer and Father Driscoll attended the Bishop.

The Sisters who made Final Vows were: ... Sister Mary Regina Donovan....

November 19, 1915

Sister Regina Donovan died at Spencer Hospital, Meadville, at 11:30 a.m. in the eighteenth year of her religious life.

Sister Regina was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Donovan of McKeesport. Sister was well known in Erie having taught at St. Peter's Cathedral School,

St. John's School, St. Mary's Home, St. Bernard's, Bradford and previous to her death was actively engaged at St. Brigid's School. She was an active, talented and energetic Sister whose personal qualities and faithfulness gladdened those with whom she labored.

The High Mass of Requiem was celebrated in the Chapel of Villa Maria on November 22 by Rev. Father Tully of St. Peter's Cathedral. Present in the sanctuary were Rev. F. J. Bender, Rev. Stephen Cauley, Rev. F. Wiersbinski, and Rev. Joseph Hurley.

The following relatives were present: Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Donovan, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Donovan, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John F. Kelly, Miss Catherine Donovan, Mr. Thomas Donovan of McKeesport; Mr. Joseph Donovan of St. Vincent's Seminary, Mrs. Mary Barry and Mr. Edward Barry of Bradford.

Interment was made in Trinity Cemetery.

From *The Christian Home and School* (Friday, November 26, 1915):

Sister M. Regina Donovan (Nora Donovan)

Died: November 19, 2016

Sr. M. Regina a former teacher in the local Cathedral School and a most highly esteemed member of the Sisterhood of St. Joseph for the last 18 years succumbed to the inevitable at Spencer Hospital, Meadville, last Friday morning, aged 34 years. The remains were laid to rest in Trinity Cemetery after a Solemn Requiem Mass and funeral service in the Villa Maria Chapel, this city, on Monday. Rev. Francis I. Tully officiated at the obsequies attended by Frs. F.J. Bender, Stephen Cauley, Felix Wiersbinski and Joseph Hurley. Deceased was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael M. Donovan of McKeesport, PA and was a woman of unusual talents and culture. Her early passing has occasioned deep grief to her surviving relatives, her Sisters in religion, and all with whom she was acquainted. May she rest in peace.



Tombstone of
Sr. Mary Regina Donovan in
Trinity Cemetery, Erie, PA.