

Sister Connie Baker, former pastoral life director, dies at 75

A funeral Mass was offered for School Sister of Notre Dame Mary Constance “Connie” Baker Jan. 11 at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore. She died Dec. 29, 2018, at age 75.

A Baltimore native, Sister Connie first encountered the School Sisters while attending St. Mark School in Catonsville. She graduated from Notre Dame Preparatory School in Towson in 1961, and then entered the order, professing her vows in 1962.

Sister Connie earned a bachelor’s degree in education from what is now Notre Dame of Maryland University in 1968, and a master’s degree in education and guidance counseling from Villanova University in 1974.

She taught at St. Mary of the Assumption School in Govans beginning in 1964. From 1971 to 1982, Sister Connie taught at a school and served as a prefect, social worker and director of group living at an orphanage in Philadelphia.

In 1982, Sister Connie became assistant principal at St. Maria Goretti High School in Hagerstown, where she also served as a teacher, religious counselor and campus minister. She was on the faculty at Delone Catholic High School in McSherrystown, Pa., from 1997 to 2000.

From 2000 to 2008, Sister Connie served as a pastoral associate, pastoral care minister, parish administrator and pastoral life director at St. Charles Borromeo in Pikesville. She assumed leadership of the parish after the pastor, Father Thomas Gills, a reserve chaplain in the U.S. Air Force, was called to active duty following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

In an interview with the Catholic Review on the fifth anniversary of Sept. 11, Sister Connie remembered the days after the attack as a time when people came together and reached out to others. It was also the beginning of a renewed movement to work for world peace, she said.

“I think it has shown us how frail human life is and how much we took for granted our freedom,” she said. “I think it’s a challenge as a people of God to be able to forgive and love our enemy as Jesus has called us to do.”

Sister Connie was a volunteer at Sisters Academy of Baltimore and the Caroline Center in Baltimore from 2008 until her retirement in 2015.