



Leontine O'Gorman, RSCJ

Leontine O'Gorman was the only child of a French mother and an Irish father who both made an indelible mark on their precocious daughter. Attending public school #15 in Crestwood, a suburb of New York City, she first met the Society of the Sacred Heart at Newton Country Day School, then, for college, at Manhattanville. Inspired by the work of Sr. Kathryn Sullivan, Leontine helped with the care of the poor in close-by Harlem. This experience deepened in her a love for the poor which directed her entire life. She entered the noviceship at Kenwood in 1954, and almost directly after her 1st vows, she went to Korea to work with garment workers in a nearby silk factory. She loved this work and only reluctantly returned to New York, finding her passion in East Harlem where she spent, almost without interruption, the next 45 years! She lived, alternately, with the community at our school on 91st Street, then in the 5th Avenue Community, all the while working with the Shared Food program. In 1968 she founded the Fifth Avenue Community Center and thus began her legacy to the present. In 1980, her mother set up a trust fund for the Center, the first gift being \$75,000, a huge boost for her work. Years passed with Leontine meeting many other people instrumental in advancing the Center. Skilled with the pen, Leontine, began to write letters (thousands!) to important people in the City to ask for donations to support the growing works of the Center and they came through! Who could refuse her powerful prose and phone calls--she was on the spot and knew of what she wrote! Forty-six years ago, Leontine chose the Society of the Sacred Heart as her way to give--the gift of prayer for the world, the work of education and now the work of feeding the hungry, helping the homeless and finding medical care for those in need. How lucky we are to have her here at Oakwood! Welcome, Leontine!

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