

Sister Clare Lawlor, CSA

Sister Clare Lawlor, CSA, died peacefully July 9, 2025, at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Clare was born September 14, 1950, in White Plains, New York, to Walter Edward and Irene Kerr Lawlor. She met the Sisters of St. Agnes while attending Sacred Heart Elementary School, Yonkers, New York, and through her older sister, Sister Gilmory Lawlor, CSA. Growing up in the 1960s, Clare was keenly aware of the impact of the Vietnam War and related social issues of the day. During high school, she decided that she wanted to be an educator, an activist, and join the Peace Corps. She chose to attend Marian College, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. After her first year at Marian, Clare saw that the CSA Sisters were engaging in the types of peace and justice advocacy that she could do in the Peace Corps. She entered St. Agnes Convent in September 1969. She made her first profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes on June 19, 1972, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



Sister Clare's hopes of being an educator and an activist evolved as she lived out her life in ministry and community as a Sister of St. Agnes. She earned a B.S. in Elementary Education from Marian College in 1972. For the next eleven years, Sister Clare was a gifted and creative elementary teacher at parish schools in Wisconsin and Illinois. Working with her students, she realized that the difficulty some had with learning was due not to their level of intelligence; it was due to what was happening in their lives. In 1983, she left the classroom and enrolled in graduate school at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, focusing on children and adolescents. Earning her Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) degree in 1990, she became a licensed clinical psychologist providing clinical services in Illinois at Maryville Academy, Des Plaines, a residential treatment facility for children and adolescents, and at The Children's Place Association, Chicago, an inpatient, respite foster care agency for HIV affected children and families.

From 1995 – 2005, Sister Clare was a professor at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology serving in various roles on the doctoral faculty including chair of 20 dissertations and an appointment as co-Director of Clinical Training. During this time, she and Sister Julie Ann Krahle, her CSA living companion, provided foster care for four children.

In 2005, Sister Clare joined the faculty in the Psychology Department at Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois. She attained the status of tenured full professor, serving in numerous teaching, supervision, and administrative roles and culminating in her appointment as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. At Lewis she seriously pursued her artistic interests taking art courses at the University. Her creativity and natural abilities were showcased in several art shows including Marian University in 2018 and Thelma Sadoff Center for the Arts, Fond du Lac, in 2023.

In 2015, Sister Clare and Sister Julie Ann joined the NETWORK Nuns on the Bus Tours begun by Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, to give national visibility to the efforts of women religious in promoting the principles of Catholic Social Justice Teaching. Their daily rallies, community agency visits, and public town halls were designed especially to impact the political arena by educating

voters and advocating for legislation and policies to advance the common good. They continued to participate in tours in 2016 and 2018. This experience was life-changing for Sister Clare and led her to retire from her administrative position at Lewis University and return to Fond du Lac to provide advocacy and direct mental health services to the vulnerable.

Beginning in 2017, Sister Clare worked for ten months as a Clinical Psychologist in the Behavioral Outpatient Department at Agnesian HealthCare. In 2019 Sister Clare worked with Catholic Charities Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas, providing basic services for incoming refugees and asylum seekers. She then began to volunteer with St. Vincent de Paul in Fond du Lac in the Getting Ahead Program by creating "Art in a Cart," an art-based alternative mental health program for residents of the Katharine Drexel Homeless Shelter. Sister also served on the CSA Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Committee.

Sister Clare's efforts were cut short when she began facing serious health issues in 2021. She continued serving as she was able until she needed greater care for herself. She joined her CSA sisters at Nazareth Court & Center on March 24, 2025. She participated as she could with the sisters and shared her artistic talents by providing art classes. She received the support of her sisters and the devoted care of the nursing staff until the time of her death.

Sister Clare was preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Sister Gilmary Lawlor, CSA.

Sister is survived by her brothers Christopher (Sally) Lawlor and Mark Lawlor; her nephews, grandnephews, and families; and by the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Cremation has taken place.

All services for Sister Clare will be held on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

Visitation will be held from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

A Prayer Service will be held at 11:00 a.m. in Nazareth Center Chapel, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial will be offered at 2:00 p.m. in St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Fr. Thomas Zelinski, OFM, Cap., presiding.

Burial of cremains will follow in St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Memorials may be directed to the CSA Mission Advancement Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes and the Lawlor family are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and Hospice Hope for their care of Sister Clare.

Zacherl Funeral Home is serving the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.