

# Sister Vera Sheenan



*Hello, from the Medical Mission Sisters and Associates! You're receiving this email from us simply because we appreciate you as a consistent supporter and partner in mission.*

*Our intention is to regularly share news from the world of MMS that you will find inspiring and valuable. We hope that you, as a supporter of MMS, feel engaged and kept up to date with all that we are doing.*

This month we are pleased to introduce to you Sister Vera Sheenan, a nurse, a social justice advocate, a teacher, and an advocate against gun violence. Sister Vera was born in Dunellen, New Jersey in 1937. She entered MMS in 1955 and made her final vows in 1963. In the six decades that she has been a part of MMS, Sister Vera spent a large portion of time serving in Ghana as a cook, teacher, and a nurse. Her social justice passion was born there, when she was a part of a boycott against a large corporation that advertised the use of baby formula as opposed to breastfeeding. She stated that many of the women could not afford the amount of formula needed to adequately feed a growing baby and they had limited access to clean water.

In 1979, Sister Vera returned to the U.S. and worked at a shelter for battered women in St. Petersburg, FL, bringing that same passion with her. She earned an Associate's degree in religious studies from LaSalle University. She then began helping at Linda's Kids are Special (a childcare service in Philadelphia), where she helped to provide a "safe, loving, and nurturing environment" for children with difficult home lives in inner city Philadelphia.

Sister Vera is widely known by her peaceable persona. She finds joy in serving, which she does for some of our Sisters living on campus in Philadelphia. She plays a part in planning birthday celebrations for the Sisters, who can be reluctant to take time for those celebrations. She has said she sees people as "works of God", to be seen and appreciated. This philosophy is congruent with her work in the social justice arena, locally and globally.

How Sister Vera views people also compelled her to be an active voice against gun violence. She lived in the Germantown section of Philadelphia for over a decade. While there, she spoke with the mothers of gun violence victims. She ministered to people who directly and indirectly deal with the trauma that comes with experiencing gun violence, including families who have lost a loved one to gun violence. She describes this time as a healing experience for her as well as for those who she ministered to.

Today Sister Vera is still a passionate social justice advocate. She recently had a Letter to the Editor published in the Northeast Times, advocating for a ban of assault weapons. We are grateful for Sister Vera's healing presence and we honor her ongoing commitment to peace and nonviolence locally and nationally.



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