



## Sister Joan Chatfield

October 7, 1932 - March 1, 2019

Sister Joan Chatfield, a Maryknoll nun who brought together people of all faiths and advocated for those on the margins of society, has died at age 86.

“She knew how to connect people, and she knew how to connect with people — those are two different things,” said sociologist Joy Lacanienta, a close friend who became like a daughter to her.

Chatfield died at 2:14 p.m. Friday at Straub Medical Center, after falling and hitting her head the day before at the Manoa home she shared with other nuns, according to Sister Bitrina Kirway, the Maryknoll Sisters’ regional coordinator for the Central Pacific.

“We’re still very much in shock,” Kirway said Monday. “She really was very selfless. Of the gifts that she was given, her upbringing, all she learned through the years, she not only put back, but put back a hundredfold.”

Known for her compassion and altruism, Chatfield was named a “Living Treasure of Hawaii.” She was executive director of the Institute for Religion and Social Change, helped lead The Interfaith Alliance and chaired the All Believers Network.

“What she always brought to the table was heartfelt sincerity,” said Merritt Sakata, co-facilitator of the network. “She was a treasure.”

Her goal was to bridge differences and promote a universal love for humankind.

“Just like we’re perfectly tolerant of people having different food likes, why aren’t we tolerant of people having different religious likes?” she asked at a recent gathering of the network. “We should be!”

Chatfield was unafraid to speak out for what she felt was right, working with victims of domestic violence and people with disabilities, and offering her support to Dignity/Honolulu, the organization of Catholics promoting equality regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

“It’s not about popularity for her; it’s about what is just,” Kirway said. “She lived her vows ... with Maryknoll Sisters. That’s what we are about: to speak for those who for some reason cannot speak for themselves.”

Born on Oct. 7, 1932, in Elizabeth, N.J., Chatfield joined the Maryknoll Sisters in 1950, right out of high school. She earned a bachelor’s in biology and chemistry from Manhattanville College and was assigned to Hawaii in 1956.

She taught in local Catholic schools for 36 years and served as dean of humanities and fine arts at Chaminade University. She shared her leadership skills with a range of organizations, including the Honolulu Commission on the Status for Women, Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii, Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii and the Hawaii Committee for the Humanities.

“She believed that everyone has a place in society,” Lacanienta said. “She is a firm, clear advocate for people with disabilities, underrepresented communities. ... She’s a strong feminist if I’ve ever seen one, and she’s the smartest person I’ve ever known, bar none.”

Services will be held March 21 at Sacred Heart Church, 1701 Wilder Ave. Viewing is 9-10 a.m., Mass at 10:30 a.m. A reception will follow from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Maryknoll Grade School campus, 1722 Dole St. Burial is at 2 p.m. at Diamond Head Memorial Park.

Arrangements handled by: Diamond Head Mortuary

# Events

---

**MAR** **Visitation** 09:00AM

**12**

---

Sacred Heart Church

1701 Wilder Avenue, Honolulu, HI, US, 96822

**MAR** **Letter of Appreciation & Eulogy** 10:05AM

**12**

---

Sacred Heart Church

1701 Wilder Avenue, Honolulu, HI, US, 96822

**MAR** **Mass** 10:30AM

**12**

---

Sacred Heart Church

1701 Wilder Avenue, Honolulu, HI, US, 96822

**MAR** **Burial** 02:00PM

**12**

---

Diamond Head Memorial Park Cemetery; 529 18th Avenue; Honolulu, Hawaii

96816

US

# Comments

---



“ Laurie Hope sent a virtual gift in memory of Sister Joan Chatfield



**Laurie Hope** - April 27, 2019 at 11:22 PM