

Mary Ann Walsh, longtime Catholic bishops' spokeswoman, dies at 68

by [David Gibson](#) in the [May 27, 2015](#) issue

Mary Ann Walsh, 68, a longtime spokeswoman for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, died on April 28.

She spent her final days in a hospice in Albany, New York, next to the regional convent of the Sisters of Mercy, the religious order she entered as a 17-year-old novice drawn to their commitment to serving the poor. She had cancer.

She worked at the communications office of the U.S. hierarchy for 20 years, a time of internal divisions among the bishops and, after 2002, the explosion of the clergy sexual abuse scandal. Walsh joked that her service at the USCCB would cut years off her time in purgatory.

Walsh earned a master's degree in English from the College of St. Rose and a master's degree in pastoral counseling from Loyola College of Maryland.

"I entered media because I wanted to help people," Walsh said earlier this year in a video posted by her community. "I saw people over here who had great needs, and I saw people over here who were willing to meet needs. I thought I could be the bridge."

She worked as a correspondent for Catholic News Service in Rome and Washington before taking the USCCB job. Last July, the Jesuit-run America magazine announced that Walsh would leave the USCCB to join the publication as a columnist and blogger.

In March, she received the St. Francis de Sales Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement in Catholic media. Sister Patricia McDermott, president of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, praised her "extraordinary commitment to pursuing integrity of word and deed through her writing." —Religion News Service

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