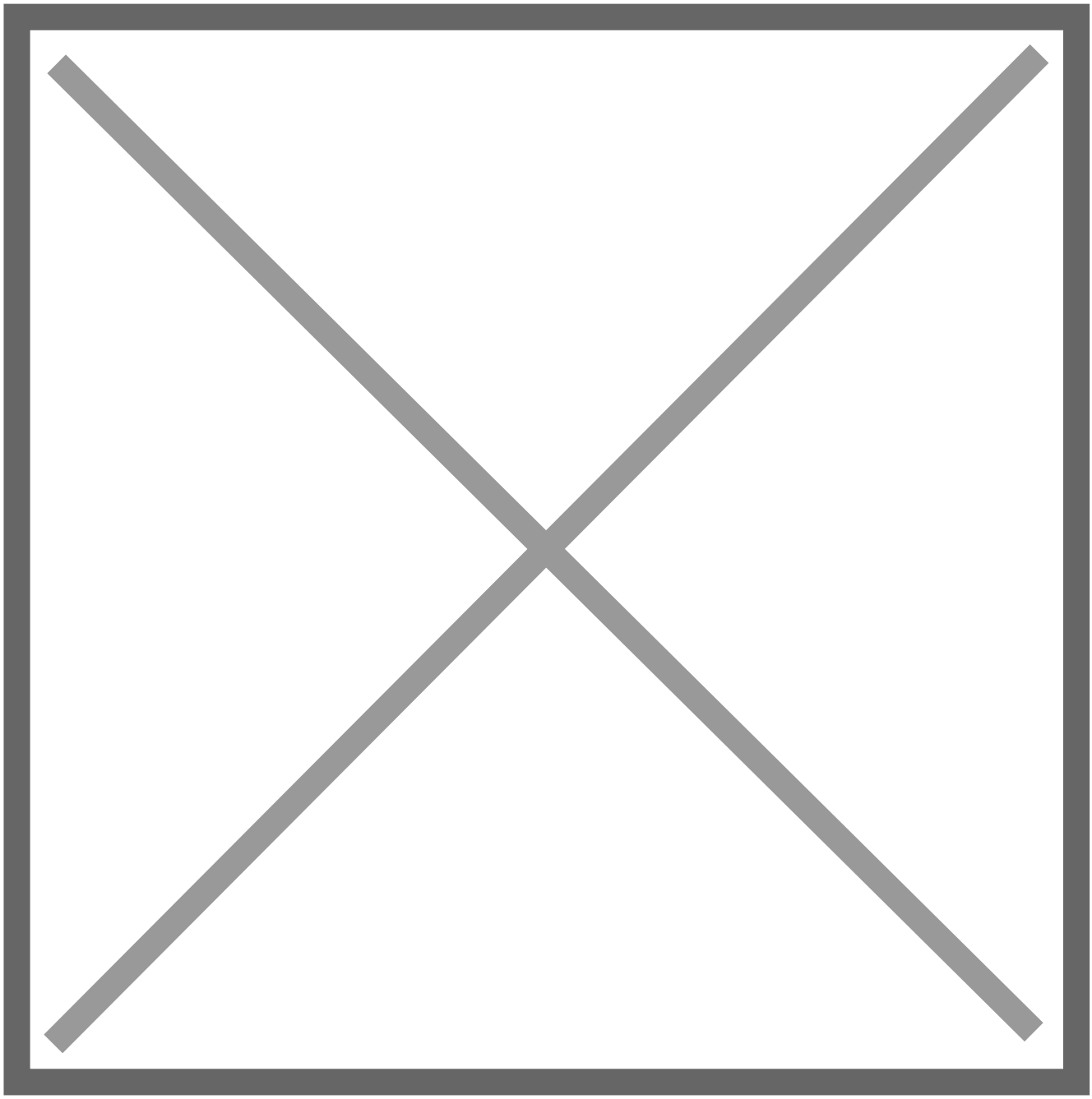
News
Spirituality



Sr. Mary Craig, left, and Sr. Margaret Lewis of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia talk in the parlor at the Convent of our Lady of Angels in Aston, Pennsylvania. Both women have been living with cancer for years. (Elizabeth Eisenstadt Evans)



by Elizabeth Eisenstadt Evans

Contributor

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Editor's note: *The declining numbers of Catholic sisters in America will come as no surprise to GSR readers. But every loss is significant in itself. In Part 1 of "A Good Death," a two-part series, we asked sisters how their communities address the death of a member. Today, we profile two sisters who face the possibility of death as a daily reality.*

Sr. Margaret Lewis, who was first diagnosed with cancer almost 25 years ago, can't take anything stronger than Tylenol for pain due to her allergies, she says. A formidable presence at 90, the Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia tells other cancer sufferers that the best remedy for pain is not feeling sorry for yourself.

That, and the divine petitions of the women around her, she said in a conversation at Our Lady of Angels Convent in Aston, Pennsylvania, where she now resides after decades of crisscrossing the Mid-Atlantic region when her community needed her. Undeterred by the chronic pain that accompanies her illness, Lewis spends three days a week working next door at Neumann University, which was founded by the sisters. She is a receptionist in the president's office and volunteers with the Institutional Advancement Department.

"The beauty is for me to always be around sisters who are prayer-filled. When they say, 'I'm praying for you," I know they are, and I know I can go the next few feet. It's that support that you feel."

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