



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Marie Francis Biver, SSND

On a beautiful Sunday morning, October 8, 1922, the third of 10 children was born in the family home on her grandparents' farm near Belleville, Ill. Frances [Loyet] and Frank Biver welcomed this newest member into the family. The little girl was baptized on October 15, 1922 at St. Peter Cathedral Church in Belleville, Ill. and named Virginia Regina. She grew up with seven sisters and two brothers in an atmosphere of faith, prayer, love and sharing. Her father led a daily consecration to the Holy Family at the beginning of each evening meal.

Birth  
October 8, 1922

Baptism  
October 15, 1922

Profession  
July 27, 1945

Death  
December 23, 2013

Burial  
Sancta Maria  
in Ripa Cemetery  
St. Louis, Missouri

Virginia was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Mary's Grade School and the Academy of Notre Dame in Belleville. After graduation from high school, Virginia was employed as a dental assistant and receptionist for two years. She was encouraged by her parents, Mother Loretta Degenhardt, superior at the Academy of Notre Dame, and the parish assistant to pray about her future. Sensing that it was the right moment, she responded to the call of God to enter religious life. She resigned her position and entered the candidature at Ripa on August 26, 1942. She was received into the novitiate on July 26, 1944 and given the name Marie Francis in honor of her parents. Profession of first vows was on July 27, 1945 and final vows on July 27, 1951.

Sister Marie Francis earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Webster College, St. Louis, Mo. in 1954 and a Master of Education degree in secondary education from St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo. in 1960.

Sister Marie Francis taught elementary children for nine years at Our Lady of Good Counsel, New Orleans, LA; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Herrin, Ill. and St. Raphael, St. Louis, Mo. She taught secondary students for 20 years at Notre Dame, Quincy, Ill.; St. Joseph, Farmington, Mo.; Rosary High School, St. Louis, Mo.; St. Paul High School, Santa Fe Springs, CA; Academy of Notre Dame and Althoff Catholic High School, Belleville, Ill. She was administrator for four years at St. Alphonsus [Rock] High School, St. Louis; Mater Dei High School, Breese, Ill. and St. Anthony High School, Effingham, Ill. She was a guidance counselor for 12 years at Notre Dame, Quincy, Ill. and Althoff Catholic High School, Belleville, Ill.

In April 1990, after 45 years in education, she responded to a request for community service in the Generalate in Rome. For four and a half years, she ministered in community service while being local leader for three of those years. This experience of internationality and ministry in Rome was the realization of a 25-year dream for she had envisioned a "second career" in ministry at the Generalate.

Returning to the United States, she volunteered for four years at Notre Dame High School, Cape Girardeau, Mo. She moved into the motherhouse in July 1999 and volunteered at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis, Mo. for five years.

After two years of community service at the motherhouse, she retired at Veronica House in 2006. She was transferred to Anna House in 2010. After a

*continued*

*Precious and blessed is  
the death of the faithful  
before God... for  
they die in union with  
their dear Jesus, in the  
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger  
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

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short stay in the hospital, Sister Marie Francis returned to Anna House and was placed on hospice in mid-December 2013. She died peacefully at Anna House on December 23, 2013 at 9:20 a.m.

The wake/vigil was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on December 26, 2013. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Paul Rothschild presiding. Burial was in the Ripa cemetery.

Sister Marie Francis was preceded in death by her parents; her brothers, Cletus (Catherine) and Leon; her sisters, Bernie (Harold) Schoen and Helen Biver. She is survived by five sisters: Loretta Oehler of St. Louis, Mo.; Bea Haas, Alice (George) Hasenstab, Rita Buehler and Joan Geolat all of Belleville, Ill.; many nieces, nephews and other relatives. Family members, friends and SSNDs came together to celebrate the gift of her life.

During her 54 years in Catholic education, Sister Marie Francis ministered in large cities and in small towns, in suburbia and in inner city, in teaching, administration and in counseling. She greatly influenced her students over these many years. Although she experienced a loss of hearing during the past years, she remained cheerful and greeted others with a warm smile. She treasured time spent with family members and prayed for them frequently.

May she now rejoice with the angels as she celebrates Christmas with her God and family members who have gone before her!

*By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*