



Birth
November 28, 1922

Baptism
December 24, 1922

Profession
July 23, 1942

Death
November 17, 2014

Burial
Notre Dame of
Elm Grove Cemetery

*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

In Loving Memory

Sister Cecile Marie Lubniewska, SSND

As we adjust to the physical departure of our Sister Cecile Marie, our SSND community extends our sympathy to the family, relatives and friends and we promise you our prayers.

How appropriate the cover of her Eucharistic Liturgy: “Life is a song and God’s love is the music.” What a daunting task to capture briefly Cecile Marie’s full life. When I think of Cecile Marie, I think of the words from the song, “Maria” in the “Sound of Music”: “How do you hold a moonbeam in your hand? How do you catch a cloud and pin it down?”

She writes in her short autobiography: “Midnight had just struck. It was November 28, 1922. A baby girl was delivered to Valeria and Joseph Lubniewska. Since it wasn’t the will of God that I would be a Christmas baby, I was baptized as close to Christmas as possible ... Irene Josephine. Josephine was a tribute to my dear dad whose name is Joseph but where Irene came from ... no one knows.”

Irene’s father was born in Poland and when he was 11 years old, he came to America where he found work as a barber. Her mother was the oldest in her family and it was up to her to help support her family. Irene’s mother wanted to enter the convent but Irene’s grandmother refused to let her go. Much of her mother’s life before her marriage was spent working in a dry goods store and teaching music.

When Irene was about three years old, she was scalded with boiling starch. Her mother claims the healing was all due to her being washed at the Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill in Hubertus, Wis. Irene started in public school but transferred to St. Casimir School in Kenosha. Most of Irene’s subjects were in Polish. At school, she also took piano lessons ... basically to please her mother. In addition to the school music teachers, her mother gave her lessons. She noted in her autobiography that “I have the greatest happiness to say that I just love it. My ambition is to be a music teacher.”

“While attending grade school, I never did think seriously about being a teacher or a sister. I did spend time with the Sisters but that was it. At eighth grade graduation it was customary for the two students having the highest averages to receive a scholarship. I had the second highest and after the first girl made her selection for St. Catherine’s in Racine, I was given the one for Prairie du Chien. It was a great distance away from home and mother thought I was too young but she promised if my dad kept working, I could go. In the meantime, the superior asked me if I had thought about being a teacher ... a sister ... entering the convent. She told me about the candidature as the first step to being a sister. I was very interested. She then asked me to come to the convent that evening with my mother. But that evening, my mother went to the Sister’s house alone ... for I was too shy to tell my mother. Mother came home and smiled at me and said, ‘Why didn’t you tell me?’”

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Cecile Marie
Lubniewska*



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www.ssndcentralpacific.org



**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Upon finishing elementary school, Irene entered the SSND juniorate at the Milwaukee motherhouse, where she completed high school and one-half year of college. At her reception as a novice, in 1941, she was given the religious name Cecile Marie. She professed her first vows on July 23, 1942. Sister Cecile Marie earned a bachelor's degree with a major in education and minors in music and English from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1960 and a master's degree in administration and supervision from Marquette University, Milwaukee, in 1973.

Sister Cecile Marie served as an educator and church musician for 43 years. Her first assignment as a professed sister was as an organist for St. Stanislaus, Berlin, Wis. Her subsequent missions, included combined roles of church musician, teacher and principal in Indiana at St. Hyacinth, Fort Wayne and in Wisconsin at St. John Kanty, Milwaukee and St. Casimir, Kenosha. From 1986-1989, she did community service for the SSND community in Elm Grove and from 1989-1992, served as the convent's community leader. In 1992, she began serving in volunteer ministry to the elderly with Adult Interfaith in Milwaukee. She was a member of the Notre Dame of Elm Grove retirement community and also served by her prayers and presence.

Her volunteer ministry included delivering sandwiches for several agencies. She loved serving through visiting the elderly and was faithful to her volunteer schedule. In 2012, she was honored by the Social Development Commission for 20 years of service as a senior companion. Her recognition reads: "Sister Cecile Marie ... Thank you for thousands of visits to our seniors. You have brought them joy and laughter, compassion and understanding."

Sister Cecile Marie loved spreading joy. Often she said she was grateful for the opportunity to use her talents of music and teaching. She prayed that she would serve as Mary served — and show love, joy and graciousness to the people she would meet. Her heart seemed to be always singing God's praises.

When we talked, she told me she wanted to be ready for any time God would call her home. Her quick departure from this world was the way she would have wanted to go. Yes. God did catch this moonbeam in his hand. Can you imagine her joy?

Sister Cecile Marie is survived by loving nieces and nephews, cousins, dear friends and the SSND Community. May she rest in peace.

By Sister Marilyn Kesler, SSND