

In Loving Memory

Sister Grace Marie Curtin, SSND



Birth
March 22, 1928

Baptism
April 1, 1928

Profession
August 6, 1948

Death
January 15, 2012

Burial
Notre Dame of
Elm Grove Cemetery
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

*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

“*J*t’s a girl!” begins the autobiography of Sister Grace Marie, repeating the words of her father that echoed in the crisp country air of a new spring on March 22, 1928. That girl, baptized on April 1 and named Virginia Margaret, was the second girl and the sixth child in a family which would number fourteen children. They grew up on a large farm near Marshfield, Wisconsin, where the whole family needed to pitch in to get everything done. Virjean was a lively, fun-loving and carefree youngster, who held her own against her four older brothers. She wasn’t afraid of work.

When she was in fourth grade, Virjean transferred from a rural school to Sacred Heart School in Marshfield, where she met the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She soon decided that she would become one of them. She began her high school education at the SSND aspiranture at Longwood Academy in Chicago. Two years later on September 5, 1944, she entered the candidature, finished high school and began her teaching career.

On August 5, 1947, Sister Grace Marie was received into the community of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Milwaukee and the following year, on August 6, she professed her first vows.

Many of Sister Grace Marie’s teaching assignments were in rural areas. Because she herself was a farm girl, she felt called to serve this special type of parish community. She enjoyed each of the various levels of education and the different positions in which she was called to serve.

Sister Grace Marie’s mission experiences and assignments include:

1948: St. Aloysius, West Allis, Wis.: Teacher-Primary

1954: St. Mary, Neillsville, Wis.: Teacher-Intermediate

1963: St. Peter, Chippewa Falls, Wis.: Superior, Principal, Teacher-Junior High

1969: Holy Ghost, Chippewa Falls, Wis.: Principal, Teacher-Junior High

1972: St. Malachy, Horicon, Wis.: Teacher-Intermediate

1974: St. Joseph, Appleton, Wis.: Principal

1976: St. Sebastian, Bessemer, Wis.: Teacher-Intermediate

1985: St. Vincent de Paul, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.: Principal

1992: Pauline Memorial Catholic School, Colorado Springs, Colo.:
Teacher-Elementary

1993: Benet Hill Center, Colorado Springs, Colo.: Sabbatical

1994: St. Mary Central High School, Menasha, Wis.: Librarian

1998: St. Mary: Child Care Worker and Fox Valley Literacy Coalition:
Volunteer, Menasha, Wis.

continued

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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

In 2001, Sister Grace Marie moved to Loyal, Wis., where she was a companion to Sister Carol Schnitzler. There Sister Grace helped out in whatever way she could in the school – as substitute teacher, and general help in the religious education program. In 2009, she retired to Notre Dame of Elm Grove, where she enjoyed being a part of her new community.

In early 2011, Sister Grace Marie was diagnosed with cancer. She had determined earlier that, if she learned of a serious illness she would not have surgery, but would accept the illness – and that is what she did. Later that year, she moved to Our Lady of the Angels. She always tried to be cheery in the midst of suffering and her sense of humor lifted the spirits of her caretakers. When her family learned about her condition they gathered around and she was comforted by their presence. She died peacefully on Sunday morning, January 12, with her friends and her sisters – Maxine and Sister Naomi – standing by.

If there's anything Sister Grace Marie wanted others to know, it is that she loved her family. The many framed pictures, which adorned her bedroom, attested to that fact. She was always happy to tell a visitor about each one of them. Sister Grace Marie's life might be summarized in this way: she loved being right in the middle of things, and from there she reached out to help by bringing joy, energy, support and inspiration to every place and community in which she served. May she now rest in the peace in the heart of God.

By Sister Elise Zettel, SSND