



Birth
April 5, 1943

Baptism
June 13, 1943

Profession
July 31, 1963

Death
October 10, 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 Jean Paul Zagorski, SSND

Born in Chicago on April 5, 1943, to Michael and Virginia (Lucas) Zagorski, she was baptized Diane Virginia at St. Mary of Perpetual Help Church in Chicago. She was the second of three children. Following the arrival of her baby brother Bill, just before her seventh birthday, the family moved to Wisconsin Rapids, where her father bought a tavern and restaurant called the Golden Gate. The children attended SS. Peter and Paul in Wisconsin Rapids, staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Older brother, Mike, Diane and Bill enjoyed the outdoors – the woods and lake, and they helped with the family business. Diane was influenced to consider a vocation to religious life because of her SSND teachers and learning about the Catholic missions. After graduating from grade school in 1957, she entered the SSND aspiranture at St. Mary's Academy in Prairie du Chien, Wis. She completed her high school studies at Caroline Academy in Mequon, Wis. in 1961. As a novice she received the religious name Mary Jean Paul in 1962, and she professed her first vows on July 31, 1963.

Sister Jean Paul received a bachelor's degree with a double major in German and English and a minor in education from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1969. She earned a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, in 1977. In 1981, she took the Aid to Cross Cultural Studies mission preparation program in Boston, cosponsored that year by SSND and Maryknoll. In 1994, she completed massage therapy studies with the Blue Sky Educational Foundation, Brown Deer, Wis.

Her first mission was teaching at St. Augustine, Milwaukee. Other teaching assignments included: St. Joseph Home, Green Bay, Wis.; Holy Childhood, Harbor Springs, Mich.; St. William, Walled Lake, Mich.; Sacred Heart, Emmonak, Alaska; St. Nicholas, Milwaukee; Queen of Peace, Ebeye, Marshall Islands; and Our Lady of Guadalupe, Laredo, Texas. In addition to serving in primary and special education, she worked as a physical therapy rehabilitation aide and a massage therapist. She was a life-long writer of poetry and served for 11 years on the staff of "The School Sister," a magazine of the former Milwaukee Province. A book with a collection of her poems, "Songs for Sometime Saints" was published in 2013.

Jean Paul was called in 1982, to serve with the Yup'ik Eskimo in Alaska. She helped the native catechists with lesson planning, taught the junior and senior high religious education classes, and assisted with the catechist and parish faith formation. She had a good experience of living simply. However, with her Dad's death in 1984, and her Mom's health problems in 1985, she moved back to Milwaukee to be closer to her Mom.

Following her Mom's death in 1996, Jean Paul heard God's call in a circular she received from the provincial leader, asking for someone to go to Ebeye in the Marshall Islands. She served there for five years, doing special education and teacher training.

Upon her return to Milwaukee, she prepared for full-time work in massage therapy. Her ministry included one afternoon a week at CORE/El Centro, a

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Jean Paul Zagorski



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

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low-cost clinic for the poor. Also, she tutored as a volunteer at Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services and said, “Through the learners I learn much about other cultures. It’s a little bit of a Pentecost experience.”

A new request came in 2010, asking sisters to form a community and minister in Laredo, Texas. Jean Paul responded. Her last call took the form of pancreatic cancer. Jean Paul returned to Wisconsin in 2012, moved to Notre Dame of Elm and began medical treatment. She participated in as many activities as her health allowed.

“I’m coming home. I want to be there to share again your love and hope, to feel again your care.” – Jean Paul’s words clearly reflect not only her poetic expressiveness, which has touched us over and over throughout her lifetime, but, more importantly, they reflect the intimate relationship she has shared with her God and now enjoys for all eternity in God’s loving embrace. Yes, Jean Paul is truly home. Her journey was not only an adventure, but a life given freely to love, to share and to serve God again and again and again...

As we School Sisters of Notre Dame know, bringing all to that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent is our primary call, the mission upon which we stand and what we strive to live out each and every day. How easy it is to see that exemplified in Jean Paul’s life. No matter if she was teaching, providing care for a loved one, healing others through massage therapy, growing veggies in her garden, or writing poetry, Jean Paul had a way of bringing others together, accepting differences and learning from those she was with no matter where she was at any given time.

It bothered her to see the divisions present in our world today and, although it is a challenge to be a unifier in that type of divisive climate, Jean Paul showed us how we can be healers, listeners, educators and peacemakers, and love others wholeheartedly, one person at a time, which ultimately leads us to that oneness we yearn for with all our hearts.

Jean Paul’s desire from childhood on was to be close to God in this life and the next, and to touch others with God’s love. She believed in the goodness of others and found beauty in all of God’s creation. She took to heart the words of our foundress, Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, “With the Lord, what we do is less important than how we do it.” And the manner in which she grew up, ministered to others, lived in community and was present to people throughout her life made a huge impact on the lives of so many.

Sister Jean Paul is survived by her brother, Bill, and his wife, Sharon Zagorski, her uncle, Ray Zagorski, nieces, nephews, dear friends and the SSND Community.

We celebrate with Jean Paul as one family who believes in the power of love to bring us together and we believe, as she did in the resurrection and the promise of new life to come. Her life can be an inspiration to us as we are called and sent to serve one another and those in need. We thank you for sharing your life with us, Jean Paul, and ask for God’s blessings upon you always. May you rest in peace and be happy in your new life with God.

This remembrance is compiled from the eulogy presented by Sister Helen Marie Skierkowski, SSND and the reflection given by Sister Debra Marie Sciano, SSND