

In Loving Memory

Sister Lydia Kikuchi, SSND



Birth
January 10, 1934

Baptism
April 17, 1954

Profession
April 8, 1959

Death
May 16, 2012

Burial
Kinugasa Cemetery
Kyoto, Japan

*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

On January 10, 1934, a second daughter was born in Tokyo to Shiro and Masako Kikuchi. Bright like the sun and a carefree baby, she was given the name Yoko (literally, bright-like-the-sun child). When she was six years old, her father's work took him and his family to Peking: his wife, Yoko and the two other children, Junko, a daughter three years older than Yoko, and Masaru, a boy two years younger. There Yoko and the family lived a blessed life with the addition of a new little sister, Nakako, bringing the family to six. Unfortunately, after some time her father became ill so they all had to return to Tokyo.

Yoko entered a public elementary school. When she was in the fourth grade, she went to a school in Miyagi Prefecture with a group of children who were sent to live there for their safety during the war. Later, she returned to Tokyo and entered the Musashino Buddhist Middle School for girls, and from there to a high school where she came in contact with a Japanese language teacher whom she respected. He was a Communist, and she joined the group of students he gathered to think and discuss matters, to sing, and to help the poor. It was around that time that she began to question the gap between the rich and the poor. In her heart she began to become aware of a number of questions; e.g., the purpose of life, where truth could be found, etc. She looked into Buddhism and Communism, yet the questions remained, especially "Where is truth?"

Once in awhile she went to Mass at the Catholic Church where her brother was baptized. She began to think "This is where I belong." There, through God's providence, she met Father Barbaro, a Salesian, who was in charge of the Legion of Mary. Father sometimes visited the Kikuchi's and eventually the whole family chose the same path and entered the Catholic Church.

Yoko was baptized on April 17, 1954, and received the name Catarina Maria. Her faith was deepened in the midst of such a zealous Catholic family. After her Baptism, and because of her respect for Fr. Barbaro, she expressed a desire to work for the poor.

During the month of May, the month of our Lady, she felt it was time to choose the path laid out for her, so she prayed for a vocation to religious life. She decided to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame, which she did on September 15, 1956. On April 7, 1958, she was received into the Novitiate and given the name Sister Mary Lydia. On April 8, 1959, Sister Lydia made her first vows and professed final vows on April 8, 1965.

From her first profession until her move to the Karasaki House of Prayer in April 2001, she served in a variety of ministries: religion teacher at our elementary school in Kyoto, teacher of lay people in parishes, member of the Regional Council. She was in charge of formation, spent time as a missionary in Nepal, was a member of the formation staff of the Japan Catholic Church's training program for young lay missionaries to other countries, and served the staff of the Kyoto Catechetical Center in a variety of roles.

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Lydia Kikuchi



To make a memorial gift,
please visit our secure
online donation page [here](#)>

For more information,
contact info@ssndcp.org.

www.ssndcentralpacific.org



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Sister Lydia always took up new challenges with courage, love and faith. She lived out the words of our Constitution which directs us to “... go wherever we are called, conscious that we share in Christ’s mission.” (*You Are Sent GD #32*)

No matter when or where, in health or in sickness, Sister Lydia continued to spread the Gospel. She looked out for those with emotional problems or suffering of any kind, pointing out to them the way of Christ, listening to them, and guiding them. Through little messages, through letters, by phone, her strength and zeal encouraged those who were searching for something.

She continued to spread the Gospel until her death. From her sick room, she spoke with those who came to visit her, exerting herself for those who were troubled, and spoke of God’s love and the joy of faith in Christ. It was her joy and desire to see all of us stay connected with Christ with one heart, as the branches on the vine.

It was during Our Lady’s month of May that Sister Lydia sought to dedicate herself to God and live a life of service here on earth. How fitting that she offered her life back to God during May, Our Lady’s month. Sister Lydia died at Kyoto Prefectural Hospital in Kyoto on May 16, 2012.

A memorial sharing was held on May 17, the wake service was on May 18 and the funeral liturgy on May 19, at the Iwakura convent in Kyoto. Her remains were buried in Kinugasa Cemetery, Kyoto. A memorial liturgy was held at Theresa Center, St. Louis, on May 30.

Sister Lydia is free now, her heart in tune with and open to the Spirit, knowing that nothing is impossible with God as she continues to guide others from her heavenly home.

We are grateful to Sister Lydia who was a light of hope and the warmth of the sun. May she continue to touch us like the refreshing breeze she always was. And may she rest in peace as a beloved daughter of our God.

*By Sister Celine Matsumoto, SSND
Translated by Sister Jean Schmid, SSND*