



# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Mary Grace [Tokuko] Wada, SSND

Sister Mary Grace was born in Dairen City in Manchuria on August 27, 1928, as the second daughter of her father, Yoshizo Wada, and her mother, Ume Hayashi. She was named Tokuko, meaning “virtuous child.” She attended Dairen Myojin Girls’ High School for four years, enjoying dancing and mathematics.

Following the end of World War II, Russia governed Dairen. The family came back to Kyoto, Japan in 1947. She learned English typewriting and worked at a company for several months. However, she was not satisfied because she wanted to study and could not do so while holding this job. Tokuko was able to get employment at Kyoto University as a typist and studied science and mathematics.

While living in Darien, her older sister had gone to the Maryknoll school to learn English. In Japan, her sister continued to go to the Catholic Church but Tokuko had no interest in the Catholic religion. One day at the University, a friend of Tokuko mentioned that there was instruction at the Takano Catholic Church and asked if she would like to go to find out what it was all about. Through these bi-weekly instructions and Sunday Mass, she found the truth that she sought.

On September 17, 1948, she was baptized at Takano Catholic Church in Kyoto City and given the name Mary Helen. Her sister had been baptized a month earlier at the Maryknoll convent. Gradually, there arose in Tokuko’s heart a desire to become a religious sister. She visited several convents, prayed for guidance and joined the Legion of Mary.

After working at Kyoto University as a Western language typist for two years and through her work with the Legion of Mary and with the advice of Maryknoll, she entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame on September 12, 1950, responding to the call to religious life.

She was received into the novitiate on September 12, 1953, and given the name Mary Grace. On September 13, 1954, she professed her first vows and professed final vows on September 13, 1960.

Sister Mary Grace ministered as an office staff member and in other ministries at Notre Dame Jogakuin and Notre Dame Elementary School. This was followed by pastoral ministry work at the Kusatsu Catholic Parish for three years.

In 1967, she received a bachelor’s degree from Sophia University in Tokyo. She continued her studies on the history of Western philosophy at the graduate school of Kyoto University, receiving a master’s degree in 1970 and doctoral degree in 1973. She was involved in the preparation for the establishment of the former Notre Dame Women’s College, now Kyoto Notre Dame University. During this time, she served as a superintendent of the dormitory.

**Birth**  
August 27, 1928

**Baptism**  
September 17, 1948

**Profession**  
September 13, 1954

**Death**  
May 14, 2015

**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

*continued*

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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

In 1973, she started teaching ethics and philosophy at Notre Dame Women's College. In 1988, she went to study the life of Saint Augustine at the University of Munich, Germany. In 1989, she established a counseling program for the students and their academic life. She served as a full-time professor until her retirement in 1999.

She served as the community leader of each SSND convent to which she was assigned – in Kusatsu, at Kyoto Notre Dame University, the Elementary School, and at Iwakura. With her generosity, quiet demeanor and kindness, she was a good leader of her sisters.

With her active brain and excellent talents, Sister Mary Grace continued her activities after retirement as translator of German literature and assistant of ongoing formation in religious life.

Sister Mary Grace dedicated the remaining days of her religious life to overcoming her trials, such as an illness from an early stage of religious life, her life in the hospital, her surgeries, etc. She continued her efforts throughout her daily life and during her later years, even though she was in a physically inconvenient situation from Parkinson's disease. She had a positive attitude towards everything – a good memory for the sisters who shared their lives with her.

She quietly entered into eternal life on May 14, 2015, at Iwakura convent, leaving behind for us her beautiful smile. The funeral liturgy was held on May 15 at Kinugasa Church. Her remains will be buried in Kinugasa Cemetery in Kyoto.

We picture with our minds' eye the figure of Sister Mary Grace who may now be dancing with the angels near God, whom she loved so much.

*By Sisters Anne Miriam Kimura, SSND and Carol Marie Wildt, SSND  
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