

## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Mary Cecil Rickert, SSND



**Birth**  
February 24, 1920

**Baptism**  
February 29, 1920

**Profession**  
July 20, 1939

**Death**  
September 19, 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

Anna Rickert, the second of six children, was born to John and Anna (Hartmann) Rickert, immigrants from Hungary, on February 24, 1920 on a farm in Rubicon, Wis. Anna was baptized at St. Kilian Church in Hartford, Wis., where she began school, but when her dad lost the farm, the family moved to Milwaukee where she attended St. Joseph School. When she was in fifth grade, due to another move, she finished her elementary education at St. Boniface School.

Since the time of her First Holy Communion, Anna wanted to be a Sister. When she was in eighth grade she decided that she would be a Franciscan Sister. On the 26th of August she entered the St. Joseph Convent, but everything seemed so strange; she felt queer inside — and it wasn't homesickness. She just knew she didn't belong there. When her mother came to see her, she told her to ask her eighth grade teacher if she could enter at Notre Dame. Since the SSND entrance day was the 2nd of September, it was agreed that she could join them. She left the St. Joseph Convent the next day and got to the Notre Dames on their entrance day. God spoke pretty clearly to this young woman about to begin high school.

At her reception into the novitiate, Anna was given the religious name, Mary Cecil. She professed first vows on July 20, 1939. Sister Mary Cecil and four others from her class were then missioned to St. Elizabeth's School in Milwaukee. They called themselves the "quints." A picture of the five, labeled "New future pillars of the Order," was found in Sister's desk drawer — 73 years later!

Sister Mary Cecil received a bachelor's degree in math from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee and a master's in math from the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. She ministered as an educator in elementary and high schools for 40 years, serving in the following locations: St. Elizabeth, Milwaukee, 1939-46; St. Peter, Fort Wayne, Ind., 1946-47; St. Leo, Milwaukee, 1948-53; Holy Name Central High School, Escanaba, Mich., 1953-61; Messmer High School, Milwaukee, 1961-79. "Teaching, I feel, is my life's work," she wrote in her autobiography. "I am happy to be able to deal with teen-agers. My greatest satisfaction is to be able, at times, to touch souls. It is also a great joy to see former pupils grown and carrying on."

In 1979, asked to look into getting a computer for the motherhouse, she began 12 years of service to the SSND community as a computer specialist — first at Notre Dame of the Lake, Mequon, Wis., 1979-83 and then in Milwaukee, 1983-91. "When we moved to Marshall Street," she said, "we walked the streets Mother Caroline walked, but *we* were looking for computer stores."

Sister's family loves to tell stories of her athletic prowess. Playing baseball in the garden as a candidate, she hit a nice fly ball right into a window. Her sister comments, "Was that a home run? I'll bet she wanted to run home and tell Mom and Dad!" While in Escanaba she learned to ride a bicycle

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Cecil Rickert*



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

For more information,  
contact [info@ssndcp.org](mailto:info@ssndcp.org).

[www.ssndcentralpacific.org](http://www.ssndcentralpacific.org)



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

and drive a car. At Messmer she roller-skated in the gym, played tennis, and learned to swim in the school pool. It was there that she became a certified lifeguard and taught many sisters how to swim. At Mequon she began to cross-country ski on the open fields around her and back in the city of Milwaukee she did some ice-skating at Lincoln Park. Other interests that she developed over time were: doing needlework, sewing her own clothes, painting with water colors and learning to play the trumpet, piano and violin — the last of which she used to wish the sisters a happy birthday.

In December of 1991, Sister Mary Cecil retired to Notre Dame of Elm Grove. There she discovered that the sisters wanted to know how to use the computer. “We started out with one computer for 19 sisters, who received an hour of lessons a week,” she recalled. “I really felt it was good for the retired sisters to keep their minds active so they could keep up what was happening in education, increase their self-esteem, and also pray better.” Later they inherited six computers and then were in big business, teaching six sisters at one time!

In September 2011, she moved to Our Lady of the Angels Community, Greenfield, Wis. All of us, who got to know Sister Cecil, marvel at her consistently gentle and caring presence to others. She brought so much joy to her family, her community of sisters, her students and her friends. Sister Mary Cecil is survived by her sister Helen Vetter, her brother John, other relatives, friends and the SSND Community.

*By Sister Mary Elise Zettel, SSND*