



In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Ella Francis Hirth, SSND

Born in Milwaukee, Wis. on September 17, 1924, to Frank and Eleanor (Schmitz) Hirth, she was baptized Dolores Ludmilla on October 12, 1924 at St. Ann Church in Milwaukee. Dolores began her autobiography by quoting words of her mother, “Oh, I hope it is going to be a little boy!” Even though I was a girl, my mother wasn’t in the least way disappointed.”

She attended St. Ann for her elementary education. After her eighth grade graduation, when she was 13-years-old, she entered the SSND juniorate at the Academy of Our Lady, in Chicago, which she attended for her first two years of high school. She noted that being an only child, the parting was quite difficult for her and her parents. Dolores entered the candidature and completed her high school education at the Milwaukee motherhouse.

In 1942, at her reception as a novice, she received the name Ella Francis: Ella after her mother, Eleanor, and Francis after her father. Sister wrote that her year in the novitiate was heaven on earth. She professed her first vows on July 29, 1943. Sister Ella Francis earned a bachelor’s degree with a major in education and minors in history and English from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1957.

Sister Ella Francis served in education for 62 years, teaching primary level students for all but two of those years. Her teaching missions were all in Wisconsin – the first two schools were St. Augustine, Milwaukee and St. Peter, Beaver Dam. Her subsequent teaching missions were in Milwaukee at St. Stanislaus, St. Mary Czestochowa, St. Hyacinth, St. John Kanty and a second stint at St. Augustine. When she left full-time classroom teaching in 2000, she served as a volunteer tutor until 2005.

She was big-hearted and willing to help everyone in need – especially young children and seniors. Sister was an expert in teaching cursive writing to the children who would practice so that someday they would write like sister. Preparing the children for their first Communion was as special for Sister Ella Francis as it was for them.

Sister Ella Francis shared love and joy with all who became part of her journey. She was a woman of prayer, and a woman of adventure. One of the highlights of sister’s life was the Jubilee trip to Rome. Sister often expressed that she had a happy religious life and was grateful to the community for the privilege of traveling to the place of Blessed Theresa’s heritage. She served as a sister companion for associates of SSND and was proud to share SSND spirituality and mission.

Sister Ella Francis was a loyal and faithful friend of mine since we met in 1983. She was generous and good-hearted to everyone she met. She lost both her parents in the course of three weeks during the holiday season. Her mom died in mid-December and her dad in early January. Christmas was her favorite time of the year. I invited her to spend the Christmas holidays with my family in 1984, since she would be celebrating her favorite time of the year, grieving and praying for her parents. She loved her adopted family

continued

Birth
September 17, 1924

Baptism
October 12, 1924

Profession
July 29, 1943

Death
December 3, 2014

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

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Ella Francis
Hirth*



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

so much that for more than 25 years, she spent additional vacation time at Easter and in the summer with my family.

When health concerns became a challenge in 2009, she moved to Notre Dame of Elm Grove. In 2012, she was chosen to go to a special place – Our Lady of the Angels. Sister Ella Francis loved her new convent home. The concern and compassion that was extended to her by the staff at Our Lady of the Angels was exceptional. Sister Ella shared gratitude, joy and delight to all by her very being. She truly shared love within the congregation, with friends, and especially with all who cared for her these past two years.

It is divine grace that sister's journey to heaven happened during the Christmas season, the time of year when her parents died. Sister died in her 90th year, but the final celebration when God called her home was December 3, her name day. Sister Mary Ella Francis is survived by her loving SSND Community and other friends.

Today's readings and songs reflect her journey in life. Now we take and eat in remembrance of Sister Ella Francis who has entered the banquet of eternal life to celebrate Christmas joy with Jesus and her loved ones. We thank you for showing us how to live life to the fullest in peace and joy.

By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND