



Birth
January 7, 1930

Baptism
February 9, 1930

Profession
July 20, 1950

Death
April 28, 2015

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 Gregory Smith, SSND

Born in Arcadia, Wis. on January 7, 1930, to William and Paula (Venus) Smith, she was baptized Eloda Marie at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Arcadia. She was the second of four children in the family. She attended Oak Grove Rural School for the first six years and St. Aloysius for grades 7 and 8. Eloda received her secondary education at Arcadia Public High School.

After graduating from high school in May 1947, she entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame candidature at the Milwaukee motherhouse in the fall. She professed her first vows on July 20, 1950. Sister Mary Gregory received her bachelor's with a major in education and minors in social studies and English from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, Wis. in 1961. She earned her master's in Scripture from St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo. in 1972.

Sister Mary Gregory served in education for 45 years. Her missions included elementary schools in Wisconsin at St. Aloysius in West Allis, St. Francis Xavier in DePere, St. John Nepomucene and St. Gabriel in Prairie du Chien, St. Mary in Neillsville and St. Joseph in Wauwatosa; and in Illinois at St. Mary in Kickapoo and St. Anthony in Chicago.

Following completion of her master's degree in Scripture, she taught from 1973-1976 at Mount Mary College (now university) in Milwaukee, where she served as associate professor in the theology department. She served SSND as director of ongoing formation at Notre Dame of the Lake in Mequon, Wis. from 1976-1980. Returning to Mount Mary, she taught from 1980-1981 and then took time for a sabbatical and personal renewal.

The two archeological digs Sister Mary Gregory did in Israel were extremely rewarding, both academically and experientially. A brief educational tour in 1973 lasted two weeks and stimulated her desire for further study. She returned in the summer of 1981 to work with a team of 48 Americans for six weeks. The expedition was sponsored by the Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem.

The work was demanding, with long days digging followed by evening lectures on biblical history, geography and archeology. Participants had opportunities for sightseeing and independent exploration on the weekends. She commented for an article in *The School Sister* magazine: "I loved those moments when I could get away and reflect on how much the geography and climate influenced the Hebrew's concept of God."

"I could just imagine the fear of the apostles as I watched the calm Sea of Galilee suddenly change to a churning frenzy of 30-foot waves," she said. "The desert impressed me most of all. It was a place to go to know God and my utter dependence on him. The stark desolate beauty and silence forces you to turn inward, to get to the essence of who you are and where you are going. I could just picture Jesus coming to grips with his mission in the desert and Paul experiencing a change of heart there.

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Mary Gregory Smith



“It was in the desert that I had my first deathly fright as we ran out of gas, miles from help. On the other hand, I enjoyed the unexpected lushness of an oasis in the midst of barren sands.

“Water, too, has great significance for the Jews. It is both unpredictable and rare. A localized torrential downpour may occur without warning sending people scurrying for a means to collect it. Even today oil and sand are used for cleansing the skin because of the water shortage. The relentless heat of the day, the dust on one’s feet and the cool of the acacia tree are biblical expressions which now have new meaning for me. From these contrasting faces of nature I can see how Jews might image God, now as a gentle breeze, and then as an angry king meting out punishment,” she said.

From 1986-1993, Sister Mary Gregory coordinated religious education for Divine Word Parish in Cedarburg, Wis. She returned to Mount Mary in 1993 to serve in dual roles as director of archives/heritage and on the staff of school services. She retired in 2001 but continued to serve through volunteer parish ministry and by her prayer and presence in Blair, Wis.

She found a very enjoyable pastime in quilting, which she picked up through a one-semester class in the early 1970s. Sister Mary Gregory liked the creative aspects of playing with different blocks of fabric to make patterns and especially enjoyed sharing the quilts with many nieces and nephews who were happy recipients of her handiwork.

Sister Mary Gregory Smith died on April 28, 2015 at Gunderson Health System, La Crosse, Wis. She was 85.

Sister Mary Gregory “Lodie” is survived by her brother, Claraton “CJ” (Janet) Smith of Arcadia; 11 nieces and nephews; many great nieces and nephews; and several great-great nieces and nephews; and the SSND Community. She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Paula Smith, brother, Gordon Smith and sister, Doris Sonsalla.

This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information.

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

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