



Birth
March 30, 1921

Baptism
April 10, 1921

Profession
July 23, 1942

Death
September 13, 2013

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 Jean Raymond McBride, SSND

Although it has been over four years since Sister Jean Raymond left Mount Mary, it was not unusual for the sisters on campus, to be stopped in the hall and asked: “How is Sister Jean Raymond?” This, of course, was due to her over 40 years at Mount Mary and of showing interest in and genuine concern for all the people she met daily. This caring extended to the sisters with whom she lived, her colleagues, her students and her family.

This life of service of Margie McBride began in Superior, Wisconsin, 92 years ago. She was only two years old when her mother died – but her dad, a dad who seemed very much in her thoughts during these last weeks, took on the role of father and mother and clearly played that role well – considering what a closely bonded family the McBrides have continued to be as is evidenced by the number of them here to say goodbye to Aunt Margie.

John McBride was more than a father in his influence, for as a teacher, he was her role model and Margie took every opportunity to visit his classroom to watch him teach. She always remembered his words, “Margie, if you want to be a teacher, you have to love children.” It was this love that led her to the School Sisters of Notre Dame and was so much a part of her life – as a first grade teacher, later as a teacher of teachers and as a person who showed her love for children, and they for her, wherever she went.

Her life as an SSND began with her profession of vows in 1942. Whenever she talked about this time, she mentioned her dad, her sister and brothers, none of whom could be with her on this special day because of commitments related to the war. The day meant being ready to be “sent.” She recalled Mother Aquinata saying, “Sisters, whenever you receive a transfer, be sure to take your heart with you.”

For Sister Jean Raymond’s first 30 years, this meant moving to Illinois [St. Alphonsus, Chicago and St. James Belvidere], Indiana [St. Mary, Alexandria], and Wisconsin [St. George, Kenosha; St. Boniface, Milwaukee; St. Joseph, Milwaukee; St. Dominic, Brookfield, Notre Dame, Chippewa Falls; St. Patrick, Elkhorn] to teach first or second grade or to serve as principal in schools there. Listening to her stories of convent fun with the sisters with whom she lived and to anecdotes related to her little ones, it seems that it wasn’t always easy to not leave her heart behind. And this was certainly true when she was sent to Mount Mary – which meant leaving those precious first graders.

Sister Jean Raymond received a bachelor’s degree in English from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1958 and a master’s degree in Education-Curriculum from Marquette University, Milwaukee, in 1965. When she arrived at Mount Mary in 1969, she brought a background of experience of teaching teachers – for she had been a member of a team who taught summer school courses in colleges across the country from Washington State, to California, to Ohio – introducing teachers to the “New Math.” That background would seem good preparation for teaching at Mount

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Jean Raymond
McBride*



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Mary. However, after settling in, she was told that what the college really needed was someone to be specialized in reading. So each summer she packed up and added to her previous degrees – doing graduate work at the University of Minnesota to become certified as a reading specialist. That led to serving on task forces on reading improvement both for Milwaukee Public Schools and the Milwaukee Archdiocese as well as contributing to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) curriculum guide. In addition to preparing hundreds of undergraduates to teach reading, she went on to administer and teach in the reading teacher certification program which she established.

While these professional accomplishments are important for her carrying out her mission as a School Sister of Notre Dame, the way she did this is attested to by the many students who continued to keep in contact with her after they left the college. Among her things was a letter from one of her student that voices her impact: “I have always appreciated how you’ve been available to talk to me, no matter what I’ve needed. Even though I’m now a former student, you are still interested in my life and what I am doing, and you have been so very supportive. I’ve always appreciated that. Thank you so much for being such a great teacher, mentor, and friend.”

Among the attributes that characterized Sister Jean Raymond were her remarkably beautiful and perfect handwriting – which she used to write kind notes of praise and gratitude to friends and family; her remarkable memory – for poetry and past events; and her love for walking – which gave her a chance to greet and talk with everyone she met. Just last week, I met one of the maintenance staff and I asked her how she was and she responded “Well, I’m am-bu-la-to-ry” and then she laughed and said “I got that from Sister Jean Raymond – she used to say when she met me in the morning: learn a new word every day, pronounce it, define it and use it in a sentence – I’m am-bu-la-to-ry today.”

She gradually had to detach herself from all these favorites – with blindness impeding her writing, as well as her walking. She experienced confinement to a wheelchair and then finally the memory loss. Through all the losses, I never heard her complain nor as I understand did any of the healthcare staff, at Our Lady of the Angels, who cared for her so lovingly these past weeks.

I am reminded of Viktor Frankl’s words about the meaning of suffering and the last of human freedoms – to choose our attitude toward suffering: “He who has a ‘why’ to live for – can bear any ‘how.’”

We know that Sister Jean Raymond’s “why” was her beloved God, who enabled her to accept the “how’s.”

And so our prayer for Sister Jean Raymond is...

May she, with her vision restored, enjoy the beauty and love that God has prepared for her. Amen!

By Sister Ellen Lorenz, SSND