

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Magdalen Shinako Nomoto, SSND



Birth
February 27, 1927

Baptism
April 15, 1933

Profession
August 27, 1955

Death
November 21, 2012

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

Sister Mary Magdalen Shinako Nomoto was born to Sumihiko and Waka Nomoto as their first daughter on February 27, 1927 in Shanghai, China. Due to her father's occupation, the family had to move quite frequently. When the family was in Tokyo, the second daughter Setsu was born. Before Setsu became two years old, she got Septicemia and her physician could do nothing to help her. Just at the same time, the Franciscan Hospital Sisters built their hospital right in front the Nomoto house. Thanks to the excellent procedures and the devoted care of the sisters, Setsu recovered from the illness. Her parents were deeply touched by the strong faith and loving care of the sisters and her mother immediately started take catechetical instructions.

In 1933, when Shinako was six years old, the family moved to Taiwan and the mother was baptized there as a Catholic Christian together with Shinako, Setsu, and her oldest son, two years older than Shinako. Shinako completed her elementary education in Taiwan. When she graduated from elementary school, her mother sent her to a Catholic high school, Fuji Senior Girls' High School in Shizuoka, Japan, as a boarding student. Even though her mother wanted her to develop as a good Catholic there was no chance in Taiwan those days.

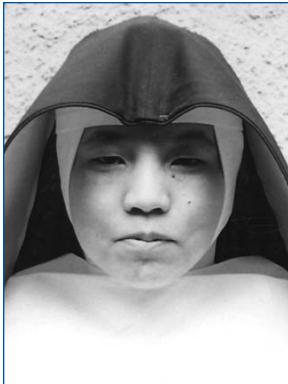
While she was still studying at the high school, the Pacific War broke out and she lost contact with her family. After high school graduation, she supported herself and continued to study at the National Teachers' College for Women in Tokyo. Until her graduation from college, she worked in various kinds of jobs for four years to support herself. After the war she also worked at the PX of the occupation army. In 1947, her family returned from Taiwan to Kagoshima, Japan, where her father's home was. In 1948, when Shinako graduated from college, she returned to her family in Kagoshima and started to teach math at a Catholic junior and senior high school, Kagoshima Junshin-Gakuen. The four years at the high school was a time of grace for her to encounter God personally.

Through her experience of teaching at the Catholic high school, Shinako started to feel God's call to religious life. After a winding path, she was led to the School Sisters of Notre Dame at Shishigatani, Kyoto, Japan, and on August 15, 1953 was accepted as a postulant. She made her first profession on August 27, 1955 and took Mary Magdalen as her religious name. Then she served as a teacher at Notre Dame Girls' High School for 13 years. She was an excellent math teacher and at the same time she had a passion for teaching stage art and religious education. When the high school students presented the Opera "Nayotake" at the Kyoto Public Performance Hall on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the school's foundation, she served as the stage director and also guided the stage setting and costumes.

Sister Mary Magdalen also taught at Nanzan High School in Nagoya, Christ the King School in Okinawa and Notre Dame Elementary School in Kyoto. Altogether, she taught math for 18 years.

continued

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*Sister Mary Magdalen
Shinako Nomoto*



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**School Sisters
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Central Pacific Province

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THROUGH EDUCATION

In the meantime, Sister Mary Magdalen had shifted her area of education from math to art because she felt a deep desire to help students not only in an intellectual growth through math, but also in an inner growth through art work. She had studied creative art herself in the area of photography, drawing, and so on. Besides teaching, she served at the Kyoto Catholic Center and “Sound and Media Center” in Nagoya in the area of art work. Later, when she served as the local leader at Iwakura Community, she opened a children’s art class and a Torn Paper Art Class for adults. Around that time, she had created a *torn paper* art book, “Caroline’s Dream,” a biography of Mother Theresa Gerhardinger, Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She then worked with Sister Marguerite Shioda who translated from German, Mother Theresa’s biography “The Ship Master’s Daughter.”

Sister Mary Magdalen also acquired a certificate to teach Japanese as a second language and taught Japanese and art at Thomas More High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After returning to Japan she taught private Japanese lessons to foreigners in Japan.

During her 57 years as an SSND, except for one year of attending the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila, Philippines, two years for renewal in St. Paul, Minnesota, one-third of her time was dedicated to math education and two-thirds to art work and education.

About eight years ago, she was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. After she fell and broke bones, she was in and out of Hakuikai Hospital. In December 2011, she was admitted to Ohara Nursing Home.

On November 21, the feast of Mary’s Offering, she returned to God peacefully breathing and listening as sisters sat around her reciting the rosary and Psalm 27. She was 85 years old.

By Sister Judith Kamada, SSND