



Birth
January 16, 1921

Baptism
January 30, 1921

Profession
July 17, 1941

Death
January 1, 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 Magdalese Oleniczak, SSND

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan on January 16, 1921, to Joseph and Bernice (Bialkowski) Oleniczak, she was baptized Evelyn at St. Adalbert Church in Grand Rapids. She noted in her autobiography: “Never did my parents ever realize that the pair of twins was in the making, but they were overjoyed when I arrived and then shortly after – my dear brother, Robert. My aunts and uncles always kidded me that I was born in a hurry because I had to make way for Robert. In later life they understood that this, no doubt, was the reason I did things so fast.”

Evelyn and her twin brother, Robert had two older brothers, John and Roman. When she and Robert were three-years-old, their mother died, leaving her father with four young children. Her father eventually married Helen Czerwinski.

Having a stepmother proved to be a very good experience as they had a happy and loving home. She said the thing she remembered most was the love her Mom and Dad had for each other. – “They certainly had their differences, but we children never saw anything but greatest love for one another.” After a year, her parents began to have children, and three more added to the household. – “Even though some of us were not Helen’s own children, all were treated in the same manner, which was deeply appreciated.”

She recounted an amusing story about the birthday she and Robert celebrated as sixth graders. – “Since all the classmates invited us to their birthday parties, we both decided to have a birthday party unbeknown to my parents. We both wrote out the invitations – 15 to the boys and 15 to the girls. On a Saturday afternoon all our classmates came over to the party. Mom and Dad rushed to the stores to get all the needs for the party: cake, ice cream, soft drinks, snacks and candy, plus prizes for the games we played. My Mom and Dad didn’t say anything until all the guests were gone. After that we both got a party – and never forgot it either. We had a good time anyway. This was during the Great Depression.”

Evelyn’s elementary schooling was at St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids. She also attended St. Adalbert’s for 9th and 10th grades. At the age of 16, she worked in the dining room of Mount Mercy Academy in Grand Rapids for a year. She felt called to religious life and entered the SSND candidature. At reception, she was given the religious name Mary Magdalese.

Sister Mary Magdalese professed first vows on July 17, 1941. She was sent on mission as a homemaker. In 1950 she was missioned to St. Philip in Reed City, Mich. where in addition to homemaking, she was asked to teach. With assistance from sisters in her community, she prepared and all went well! As a result, she was called by the Reverend Mother to change to teaching ministry. She completed her secondary education in summer school and earned a bachelor’s degree in social studies from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1975.

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Magdalese
Oleniczak*



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Sister Mary Magdalese ministered for 14 years in homemaking and for 44 year in education. She served as homemaker at Messmer High School, Milwaukee; Holy Rosary, Lake Linden, Mich.; St. Alphonsus, Chicago; St. Casimir, Milwaukee; St. James, Mukwonago, Wis.; St. Philip, Reed City, Ill.; and St. Mary, Galena, Ill. She taught in Grand Rapids at St. Adalbert, St. Isidore and St. Mary. She also taught in Indiana at St. Peter, Fort Wayne and St. John Evangelist in Goshen.

With semiretirement in 1990, she worked part-time for eight years as school librarian at St. Adalbert in Grand Rapids. She began full retirement in 1998, joining the SSND community at Notre Dame of Elm Grove where she continued to share her gifts of service, prayer and presence.

Sister Mary Magdalese said this about her life as a School Sister of Notre Dame: "All my years have been very happy and filled with God's blessing. Doing God's will has brought me great blessing."

Sister Mary Magdalese Oleniczak died at the age of 92 on January 1, 2014 at St. Mary's Hospice in Mequon, Wisconsin. She is survived by her loving extended family of nieces and nephews, other relatives, friends and the SSND Community.

By SSND Central Pacific Province Community Engagement