



# In Loving Memory

## Sister Mary-Roman Obremski, SSND

Birth  
January 28, 1915

Baptism  
February 14, 1915

Profession  
August 5, 1936

Death  
April 16, 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 Sister Mary-Roman's own words, it all began: "During a raging blizzard on January 28, 1915, on a Wisconsin farm near Crivitz, I was born as the fourth child of nine to Adam and Joanna [Dybinski] Obremski. My mother told me years later that the midwife feared for the lives of both mother and children, but by the grace of God, both of us survived. The grace was still with me when a few days after my birth my parents were carrying me in a sleigh to church to be baptized. In the deep drifts the sleigh overturned, and I was thrown clear into the snow. I was retrieved unhurt."

The family moved to Milwaukee before she was two years old. Alexandra received her elementary education at St. Vincent de Paul School in Milwaukee, where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Her first great sorrow in life occurred at the age 12 when her father died of a heart ailment. Shortly after his death, she made her first Communion. After completing elementary school, Alexandra received a partial scholarship and went to Mercy High School where she attended her first retreat and almost became a Sister of Mercy.

Because of family finances – it was still the Great Depression, she transferred to South Division public school for her last two years of secondary education. She wrote: "...in the busy years following, including my involvement in parish activities as a member of the adult choir and drama club, the thought of becoming a sister faded into the background. It was only when my older sister Hedwig [Hattie] entered Notre Dame that the aspiration surfaced again."

On the day in 1933 when her sister was received as Novice Mary Vincent de Paul, Alexandra announced her intention of becoming a sister also. She said, "My mother cried; the rest of the family except Novice Mary Vincent, were astonished because I was so different from Hattie."

In the fall of 1933, at the age of 18: "I, the oh-so-different one, became Candidate Alexandra, and two years later, after a year of practice teaching, I became Novice Mary-Roman."

Sister Mary-Roman professed her first vows on August 5, 1936. She earned her bachelor's in art and English from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1946 and her master's in communication arts (speech and drama) from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana in 1957. Her degrees were augmented by several study grants in linguistics at Illinois Teachers College North, Chicago and at Wisconsin State University, Eau Claire and in journalism at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Sister Mary-Roman also took the following courses: 1) art at The Art Institute of Chicago; 2) philosophy at De Paul University, Chicago; 3) drafting at Stout Institute, Menomonie, Wisconsin; 4) theology at St. Norbert College, De Pere, Wisconsin; 5) Shakespeare and writing for radio at Marquette University, Milwaukee; 6) speech at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; and 7) public speaking at the University of Michigan, Detroit.

*continued*

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*Sister Mary-Roman  
Obremski*



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TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

Sister Mary-Roman served in education for 50 years. Her missions included: elementary schools at St. Michael, SS. Cyril & Methodius and St. Vincent de Paul in Milwaukee; secondary schools at St. Stanislaus, Messmer, Notre Dame, Divine Savior-Holy Angels in Milwaukee, St. Anthony in Detroit and St. Francis in Yona, Guam; and Mount Mary College in Milwaukee.

Her extracurricular activities included art – painting murals and panels for an interprovincial vocations exhibit, a Corpus Christi procession and first Mass of a newly ordained Guamanian priest; and her preliminary sketches of the Mysteries of the Rosary were used as the basis for stained glass windows for the Mequon motherhouse chapel. She directed stage productions at Notre Dame High, Messmer, St. Anthony's, Mount Mary and Guam.

When she retired from full-time teaching in 1984, Sister Mary-Roman served as a tutor with Milwaukee Achiever, teaching English to immigrants. She moved to the Notre Dame of Elm Grove community in 1988 where she cared for her sister, Sister Vincent de Paul and served through her prayer and presence.

Looking back at her life, Sister Mary-Roman noted in her autobiographical narrative of 1997, “I feel nothing but gratitude for all the wonderful experience I lived through. ... Many more things could be written about what a Notre Dame Sister did in a lifetime but the book would stretch around the globe — almost. God be praised for all!”

She died at the age of 100, on April 16, 2015 at Notre Dame of Elm Grove in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. Sister Mary-Roman is survived by her sister Cecilia McFatridge, nephews and nieces, especially Sister Patricia Obermski, SSND, other relatives, dear friends, former students and the SSND Community.

I can hear her saying to me now, “Patty Ann, you don’t want to tell them more.” But I will share a few choice tidbits:

- Mary-Roman was part of the original Nun’s Study.
- She enjoyed her family and friends and her religious sisters and her former students.
- She liked sardines in oil and French onion soup and pizza with pepperoni and onions and peppers and black olives.
- The share shop was a must when we came to visit.
- Mary-Roman was interesting, funny, and a lady, in the true sense of the word.
- But above all else, she was a woman of prayer. She will always be an advocate for those who loved her.

Mary-Roman: We may lay your body to rest — to return to the universe from which it came, but we know your spirit is in God’s space where you are in your element.

*This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information  
and the eulogy presented by Sister Patricia Ann Obremski, SSND*