



Birth
May 1, 1932

Baptism
May 15, 1932

Profession
July 19, 1953

Death
August 31, 2016

Burial
Our Lady of Good
Counsel Cemetery
Mankato, Minnesota

*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 M. Joanna Illg, SSND

Sister M. Joanna Illg, 84, died suddenly Wednesday evening, Aug. 31, 2016, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. A member of Good Counsel's Isidore Community, she was recovering from a broken hip at the time of her death. Health care staff members were with her when she died.

Sister Joanna was born May 1, 1932, near Hazelwood, Minnesota, and was baptized Marjorie Ann at the Church of the Annunciation, Hazelwood, two weeks later. Several months later, the Illg family moved to Northfield. At age five, Marjorie contracted polio and was paralyzed. It was feared that she would never walk again. She later wrote, "But I had a mother who refused to believe it. She subsequently spent hours massaging, exercising and praying with me for wellness. Thirteen months later, as a strong, healthy child, I was able to begin Rosary School in Northfield, and during the next eight years I was blessed with a wonderful education from the School Sisters of Notre Dame."

Marjorie loved the sisters and began to think about becoming a sister during her elementary school years. She commented, "When I was in seventh grade, I went to Mankato with a classmate whose mom was celebrating her 25th graduation anniversary from Good Counsel Academy. Everything about the Hill was magic, and it was love at first sight. Although I spent most of my eighth grade denying my secret desire of becoming a sister, after graduation in May 1946, I relented and asked Sister Bertha Nosbush at Rosary School to help me apply for admission to the aspiranture." Marjorie spent four happy years at Good Counsel Academy and graduated in 1950.

Marjorie entered the SSND candidature in August 1950. She was received into the novitiate in July 1949, and given the name Sister M. Joanna. She professed first vows in July 1953, and began an 18-year elementary and high school teaching ministry. Her first mission was St. Mark, Shakopee, where she stayed until 1960. During her first year there, she experienced an after-effect of her childhood polio: her right heel cord shrunk, which limited her foot movement. Orthopedic surgery relieved some of the stress, and, although she lived with weakness in her right leg from that time on, it did not slow her down.

In 1960, Sister Joanna moved to St. Mary, Worthington, and stayed until 1963. She then became principal and upper-grade teacher at St. Nicholas, New Market, for two years. Because of her minor in mathematics, she was called on to assist others in learning how to teach the "New Math." She moved to Corpus Christi, St. Paul, in 1965 with plans to give math workshops for Twin City area sisters. In October, however, she was asked to exchange places with the high school math teacher at Don Bosco, Gilbertville, Iowa, who was unable to get Iowa certification in math. She wrote, "So on Friday afternoon I left a seventh-grade classroom and on Monday morning I was in a senior high calculus class!" She finished the year at Gilbertville and then taught math at Good Counsel Academy (1966-68) and Loyola High School, Mankato (1968-71). She earned a bachelor's degree in education and mathematics from Mount Mary College in 1964, and a master's degree in business from Notre Dame University in 1974.

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Joanna Illg



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

The Mankato Province began a team governmental structure in 1971. Sister Joanna was elected the Coordinator of Temporalities, which included the provincial treasurer position. During her years as treasurer, she had significant involvement in several local and national projects in the post-Vatican II era of religious community development. She did extensive research on Social Security for religious and helped the Mankato Province and other groups implement the program. She also organized treasurers of religious communities in the five-state area and formed the regional Conference of Religious Treasurers (CORT) to discuss items of finance, investments, social justice and other topics. She was also significant in the development of the national CORT group. At the 1978 annual meeting of the Lykes Steel Corporation, as a minority shareholder she presented a resolution calling for accountability, which received 47.8 percent of the total shareholder vote.

In 1979, following two terms in provincial leadership, Sister Joanna became the parish business administrator at the Basilica of St. Mary, Minneapolis, a position she held until 1989. She wrote, “I loved the parish work and had great plans for continuing in the implementation of some exciting renewal and expansion programs. But a call from Sister Patricia Flynn, our SSND General Superior, invited me to discern about the position of General Treasurer in Rome. Little did I know what a profound ministry God had planned for me!” Her 10-year period of service as general treasurer (1989-99) encompassed the years of the collapse of communism in Europe, which led to great changes in the lives of SSNDs of Eastern Europe and East Berlin. She was part of the Generalate’s mission to assist sisters in those countries “reestablish suitable housing and adequate living conditions in a setting of freedom. There were enormous needs of every kind – physical, emotional, spiritual and economical. To be privileged to walk with these sisters was a blessing and a richness that was indeed incomprehensible.”

Sister Joanna returned to Minnesota in 1999 and lived briefly at St. Andrew’s Convent in St. Paul before joining the formation community at St. Matthew’s. She became the administrator of the SSND Cooperative Investment Fund and was also the accountant for the East Side Learning Center in St. Paul. In 2010, she moved to Good Counsel, where she was active in community service, including the administration of local community accounts. She became the treasurer of the Good Counsel Academy Alumnae Association. She was a member of the task force that studied the future of the Alumnae Association, and during the recent transition between alumnae coordinators, board members were extremely grateful to her for her service to the association. She was also a lector and a member of the Chapel Choir, as well as a volunteer front desk receptionist.

The funeral Mass, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Sept. 8, in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial of her cremains in the Good Counsel Cemetery. An evening prayer service of remembrance was held the night before. She is survived by her sisters, Dorothy Paul, Jean Aberle, Rosemary DeWolfe, and Elizabeth Dittrich, and her brother Paul, nieces and nephews, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Nora (Broderick) Illg, and her brothers Joseph, James and Harold.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND