



Birth
Jan. 31, 1935

Baptism
Feb. 10, 1935

Profession
July 11, 1956

Death
March 1, 2016

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 Raynalda Szyszka, SSND

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Jan. 31, 1935, to Raymond and Alice (Zawistowski) Szyszka, she was baptized Shirley Arlene at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Milwaukee. In the brief autobiography she penned as a novice, Shirley wrote, “When only one and one-half years old, I became very ill, and the doctor said there was no hope of recovery. My parents prayed hard, asking God that if it was His will, He should cure me. My parents always said that Our Lord had some work planned for me to do.”

Shirley was an only child until the age of seven, when her brother Conrad was born. The two children had a happy childhood, shared with their loving parents. She received her elementary education at St. Vincent de Paul School, where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, whom she loved and admired. She said, “It was in first grade that I decided I wanted to be just like them and never changed my mind.”

Following eighth grade graduation, she went to Notre Dame High School in Milwaukee for four years, where she had the opportunity to meet more SSNDs. After her high school graduation, she worked as secretary to Rev. Raymond A. Punda, president of Notre Dame High School for 1 ½ years.

Shirley entered the SSND candidature on Aug. 29, 1954, during the Marian Year. She was received into the novitiate on June 28, 1955 and given her religious name which was taken from her parents’ first names. She professed first vows on July 11, 1956. Sister Raynalda received a bachelor’s degree in education at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1965. She completed a master’s degree in guidance and counseling at Marquette University, Milwaukee in 1974.

Sister Raynalda ministered for 36 years as an educator, serving at these Catholic schools in Wisconsin: St. Casimir, Kenosha; St. Hyacinth, Milwaukee; SS. Cyril & Methodius, Milwaukee; St. Leonard, Muskego; St. John Kanty, Milwaukee; and Holy Cross, Milwaukee. She was called to serve as a secretary for the SSND provincial offices twice – from 1983-1987 at the former Milwaukee motherhouse and from 1996-2010 at the Elm Grove offices. Sister Raynalda retired in 2010 and lived with the Notre Dame of Elm Grove community, where she served through prayer and presence.

In spite of some health challenges and physical difficulties, Sister Raynalda retained her positive attitude and always cheerful outlook on life. She served for more than 25 years as a companion sister with the SSND Associate Program. Sister Raynalda was known for her attitude of gratitude – with her verbal and written expressions of thankfulness. She wrote many, many thank you notes! A special service she offered to the sisters at NDEG was her monthly typing of the Ordo for the daily office of prayer.

Sister Raynalda was concerned about justice issues. The SSNDs have been part of the organization called For Whom the Bell Tolls since 2001. The group keeps track of people scheduled for execution in the United States. For each scheduled execution, Sister Raynalda and other sisters at Notre

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Raynalda
Szyszka*



Dame of Elm Grove have gathered in prayer to remember the person being executed, the victim(s) and their families. They also pray for an end to the death penalty.

This year Sister Raynalda was looking forward to celebrating her 60th jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame. She recently wrote: “The pilgrimage to Rome and Germany in 1981, as a Silver Jubilarian, is one of the wonderful memories I have as an SSND. To have the opportunity to visit the places of our heritage will always be remembered. It bestowed upon me many blessings for the future as I tried to do as Jesus told me to do. May God continue to bless us ... as we teach in all we do, and in our efforts to make one.” She died unexpectedly at 4:25 a.m. on March 1, 2016, in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. She was 81 years old.

Sister Mary Raynalda Szyszka is survived by the loving extended family of her brother Conrad (Rita) Szyszka, dear friends and the SSND Community.

During the wake service and funeral held for Sister Raynalda at Holy Family chapel in Elm Grove on March 4, 2016, the many people present – family members, sisters, associates, friends, former colleagues and current employees of SSND – shared fond memories of how she touched their lives. What resonated in the sharing about Sister Raynalda was LOVE: her marvelous temperament, grateful heart, incredible spirit and devoted life.

*This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information
and the eulogy presented by Sister Carol Lesch, SSND*

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Central Pacific Province

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