



Birth
January 22, 1936

Baptism
January 26, 1936

Profession
July 27, 1969

Death
January 27, 2020

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 Anastacia Baltazar

Sister Anastacia was the youngest girl in a loving family of six girls and two boys. Her sister Victoria, who is currently living in the Philippines, is the only remaining sibling. Some of the most cherished lessons she learned from her parents were unity, loyalty to family and concern for others. These lessons were deeply rooted, especially during WWII, when Anastacia was five years old. She recalled the war years by writing, “Because of food shortage we always had to divide whatever food was available into 10 equal parts. This practice was so ingrained in me that often times when I get something to eat, I always think of how I can share it with someone. I experienced how to be hungry with nothing to eat. We were fortunate enough that we did not go hungry to the extent of begging. Thanks be to God. We were still leading a dignified life, selling everything we owned just to be able to buy some food, and that is when the Americans liberated the Philippines from the Japanese. But at this point, we had already sold our most important possession—our house.”

Anastacia was able to begin first grade only after liberation in the Philippines when she was nine years old. She was a bright student and progressed through grade school, high school and college, earning a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. After working two years at the University of the Philippines, she received an assistantship from Marquette University in Milwaukee, and earned a Master of Science in Chemistry in 1964. It was during this time that she was sponsored by Clara and Chester Sczesny, who became her “American family.” While finishing her master’s thesis, she was also an assistant instructor at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, for one year.

Returning to the Philippines in 1964, Anastacia taught at a Catholic college for women in Manila, but in 1966, she returned to the United States to teach chemistry at Mount Mary College (now University) for one year. She had been thinking about religious life for several years, and on September 3, 1967, she became a postulant with the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). She was 31 years old. In 1969, she pronounced her religious vows and thus began her more than 50-year history as an SSND.

She was missioned to teach on the island of Guam in 1970, where she remained as an educator for 29 years. During that time, she also coordinated the religious education program at a nearby parish, organized groups of young women for prayer and service, and in 1980, became the first councilor to the SSND regional leader. She experienced many challenges throughout her years, such as serious surgeries for cancer. She also received many graces—pronouncing her final vows in her family parish in the Philippines in 1972, tending to her father before his death in 1979, and being with her mother when she died in 1989.

Sister Anastacia requested to return to Milwaukee in 2000, and secured a teaching position at St. Phillip Neri Middle School for the next three years. In 2003, she moved to Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin, where she became involved in the work of sacristan, as well as work promoting justice and peace. In 2010, she began a new role. As she put it, “I was inspired by the

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Mary Anastacia Baltazar



Holy Spirit through the tapes of Dr. Deepak Chopra and Dr. Wayne Dyer to go to Mount Mary every Thursday. Both men are well-known writers, and they take three days off during the week for a Silent Retreat. For me, I thought, since I am not a writer, a day will be sufficient.” For the past 10 years, employees at Mount Mary have waited for their encounter with Sister Anastacia during her Thursday visit. She would carefully write their names, family members, phone numbers, etc. in her book and pray for each one throughout her days and nights.

A while back, Sister Anastacia wrote a message to family and friend, “I wish to thank each one for being the kind of person you have been in my life. You did something to help me become what I am today. You have been a part of the fabric of my life. For this, I ask God to bless you and your loved ones. If you wish to do anything for me, think of a quality that you admired in me and let it shine through you.”

Sister Mary Anastacia was born to eternal life January 27, 2020, age 84. Anastacia often prayed the three o’clock prayer of divine mercy, and she died at the three o’clock hour on the morning of January 27. May the ocean of God’s love, which was so vivid to her, now engulf her in life, love and joy unending.

She is survived by her sister Vicky Pili, nieces, nephews and the SSND Community. Preceded in death by her parents Lucio and Rufina, her two brothers and four sisters. A Wake Service was celebrated Friday, January 31, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at The Holy Family Chapel at Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin.

By Sister Joan Penzenstadler, SSND

To make a memorial gift,
please visit our secure
online donation page
www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world
through education