



In Loving Memory

Sister Deanna (Edmond Mary) Donahue

Sister Deanna (Dee Dee) Donahue, 80, died peacefully at 1:45 a.m. on October 25, 2022, at Benedictine Living Community – St. Gertrude’s, Shakopee, Minnesota. Her community member and good friend, Sister Mary Sue Berg, was with her the evening before her death.

Sister Deanna was born January 24, 1942, in Mankato, Minnesota and was baptized Deanna Kathryn on February 22, 1942, at St. John the Baptist Church, Mankato. She was known as “Dee Dee.” When she was about four, her father, a jeweler, purchased a store in Montevideo, Minnesota. The Donahue family, which would eventually include two daughters and two sons, moved to Montevideo in 1946. Dee Dee entered kindergarten in 1947 at Sibley Public School in Montevideo. As a third grader, she enrolled in the newly opened St. Joseph Catholic School, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. Her high school years were spent at Central Public High School in Montevideo, graduating in 1960.

She described her call to SSND in this way: “I am quite sure that I can trace my vocation back to the happiness I saw in Sister Marcia Burque, my fifth and sixth grade teacher at St. Joseph’s. Actually, throughout grade and high school I thought about becoming a sister many times; but I always put the thought aside, never even realizing I was actually thinking seriously about it.” When she was a senior, a friend asked her if she had ever thought of entering religious life. This caused serious reflection on Dee Dee’s part, who made a novena to St. Joseph and then contacted Sister Marcia. She then told her parents, who were “just wonderful and said if that was what I wanted, that was what I should do.”

Dee Dee entered the SSND candidature at Our Lady of Good Counsel in September 1960, took one year of college classes and learned about SSND life. She was received into the novitiate on July 16, 1961, and given the name Sister Edmond Mary. (She later returned to her baptismal name.) Following profession of vows in 1962, she remained at Good Counsel as a student sister for two years and earned her bachelor’s degree from Mount Mary College in 1964.

In 1964, Sister Deanna began a primary teaching ministry that included the following schools: Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa (1964-67); St. Matthew, St. Paul (1967-69); Trinity, Spokane, Washington (1969-75) and St. Michael, Prior Lake (1975-1982). Enthusiastic, creative and caring, she was loved by her students.

Following a short sabbatical, Sister Deanna was the director of the Mankato Province’s Adsum program until 1985. She then spent two years at Loyola University, Chicago, and earned a master’s degree in pastoral studies in 1987.

A new avenue to share her love was presented in 1987 when Sister Deanna became the director of formation for the Mankato Province, ministering

Birth
January 24, 1942

Baptism
February 22, 1942

Profession
July 17, 1962

Death
October 25, 2022

Burial
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Cemetery

*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

continued

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*Sister Deanna (Edmond
Mary) Donahue*



with women discerning a call to SSND life. She lived in St. Paul and formed community with professed sisters and postulants. She also met regularly with sisters who had not taken final vows. Her commitment to the women in formation had a lasting effect and even women who did not continue SSND membership still considered her a lasting friend. When she left the position in 1994, she wrote to the sisters of the province, "I want to take this opportunity to thank you and say 'May God Reward You' for your support and prayers. I especially thank you for the witness and support you have given to new members. You are so important! The involvement, commitment and joy with which you live your own life choice is what gives them the boldness and courage to do the same."

Sister Deanna's final position, that of pastoral minister at Annunciation Parish in Minneapolis (1994-2014), completed her cycle of ministry to people of all ages: children, young adults, and finally the elderly. She saw her work at the parish as an extension of her educational ministry. In 2009 she was given the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis' Sister Mary Mulheron Ministry Award, which recognized pastoral ministers who "bring competence, compassion, creativity and credibility to the profession of pastoral ministry."

Due to failing health, Sister Deanna retired in 2014 and moved to Good Counsel in 2017. She just recently moved to Benedictine Living Community- St. Gertrude's, Shakopee, with other School Sisters of Notre Dame. In a Jubilee year reflection, she wrote, "Religious life has been such a gift and God has been with me all the way. I have grown through each of my ministry experiences, and I continue to grow."

Throughout her years as a School Sister of Notre Dame, Sister Deanna has committed herself to making Christ visible to those with whom she lived and worked. May she now know and enjoy forever the presence of Christ.

The Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Deanna will be held at 1:00 p.m., Friday, November 4, in the Windermere chapel, Shakopee, with Father Ken Pierre as president. An 11:00 Visitation and 12:15 Sharing of Memories will precede the Liturgy. Burial of her remains in Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato, Minnesota will follow at a later date. We extend our sympathy to Sister Deanna's sister Kathryn (Michael) Macken, and her brothers Richard (Kathleen) and Patrick (Terry), and their families, her friends, former colleagues and students, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents Edmond and Kathryn (Schlick) Donahue.

By Mary Kay Ash, SSND

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