



Birth  
April 9, 1939

Baptism  
June 4, 1939

Profession  
July 14, 1959

Death  
March 22, 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 Diane Marie [Mary Pascal] Ruplinger-Zoeller, SSND

**B**orn in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on April 9, 1939, to Clarence and Virginia (Kort) Ruplinger she was baptized Diane Marie at St. John de Nepomuc Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was the first of three children. Diane attended Christ King School along with her brother Jim and her sister Mary. The School Sisters of Notre Dame were her teachers and she was deeply impressed by the joy and love they shared in community. She knew that someday she wanted to be a sister. Sister Benadette Ruplinger was her father's sister and also one of the SSNDs whom she looked up to, with great respect.

Diane attended Divine Savior High School. During freshman year Diane and her friend Colette Laubach, (the future Sister Jean Arthur Laubach) visited St. Mary's Academy in Prairie du Chien. When she asked her parents if she could join the aspiranture her parents advised her to finish high school first.

Two months following high school graduation in June 1957, she entered the SSND candidature at the former Milwaukee motherhouse. Her class was the last group of novices in that motherhouse because in October 1959 they were the first group of novices to move to the new motherhouse in Mequon.

During her juniorate, she and classmates focused on academics with the second year spent in study at Mount Mary College. At that time Diane's father retired due to poor health so her mother went to work. Sister John Francis Schuh, president of Mount Mary needed a secretary. Her mother applied and for the next 17 years she worked in the president's office, first with Sister John Francis and later Sister Mary Nora Barber. In the process her mother got a closer look at religious life and as a result became supportive of Diane's vocation.

Diane was received into the novitiate on July 2, 1958 and given her religious name, Mary Pascal. Following the Second Vatican Council she returned to her baptismal name. She professed first vows on July 14, 1959. Sister Diane Marie completed a bachelor's degree with a major in English and minor in biology at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1966. She earned a master's degree in library science at Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois in 1974.

Sister Diane Marie taught primary students for 21 years at Catholic schools in Wisconsin: St. Nicholas, Freedom; Our Lady of Lourdes, Marinette; St. Joseph, Wauwatosa; St. Joseph, Oconto; and St. Mary, Elm Grove.

While she was at St. Mary's in Elm Grove her aunt Sister Benadette died and her father followed her to heaven eight months to the day. She met Sister Mercedes Diederich at the Notre Dame Infirmery. In her own words, Sister Diane Marie said, "Sister Mercedes taught me how to live and how to die." In 1982, Sister Diane Marie became a certified nursing assistant for the sisters at Notre Dame of Elm Grove where she learned what total giving means. Staffing on the night shift was minimal, consequently besides nursing, the staff covered phones, housekeeping, pastoral care, dietary, security and maintenance needs.

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Diane Marie  
Ruplinger-Zoeller*



Sister Diane Marie had a great love of butterflies. She would plant flower gardens specifically to attract butterflies. She collected the caterpillars and raised chrysalis in Sister Mercedes' room at NDEG. They would frequently invite people in to witness the different stages of transformation. Sister Diane Marie also loved photography as evidenced by her numerous albums of photographs of flower gardens and walks in the woods. She had a real talent for capturing the beauty of nature.

In 1998, when her parents needed assistance, she cared for them in their Greenfield, Wisconsin home. During this time her mother went to God and Deacon Bill and Lucia Zoeller adopted her as their daughter. They introduced her to a brand new way of ministering to the elderly – pastoral care at Clement Manor. They have both since gone to be with God, having shown her the challenges and joys of countless ways of serving others as a volunteer. With retirement in 2006, Sister Diane Marie offered her volunteer service with the pastoral care department at Clement Manor, a faith-based continuing care retirement community located in Greenfield, Wisconsin, where she also lived. She continued to minister, most recently when her brother Jim went to God just four months ago.

Sister Diane Marie was facing surgery when it was discovered that cancer was invading her entire body. She tried chemo treatments, but the side effects were overwhelming. She decided she would rather do without the side effects even though her life would be shortened by a few weeks. She signed up for hospice in February and had plans to move to NDEG when the time came. Instead she went to inpatient hospice for pain control on March 21. The following morning she met her God.

Sister Diane Marie Ruplinger-Zoeller died on March 22, 2016 at Lawlis Hospice in Mequon, Wisconsin. She was 76. She is survived by her sister, Mary Zetter; relatives; dear friends and the SSND Community.

In her autobiography Sister Diane Marie states, "Was this the plan of God? I came into the world on Easter, received the religious name of Pascal and have been privileged ever since to help those who are preparing for their own resurrections. I thank God, my family and SSND for all I have been given, you will always be in my prayers and in my heart."

And, Diane Marie, you also will always be in our prayers and hearts.

*This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information  
and the eulogy presented by Sister Jean Mary Vrana, SSND*

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