



**Birth**  
Sept. 28, 1926

**Baptism**  
Oct. 17, 1926

**Profession**  
July 15, 1947

**Death**  
Dec. 19, 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 Elaine [Mary Patrick] Fraher, SSND

On Monday, Dec. 19, as the Loyola High School Concert Choir was preparing for a concert in the Good Counsel Chapel, Sister Elaine (Mary Patrick) Fraher, 90, died at 7:45 p.m. in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. Sister Elaine directed many such concerts during her SSND ministry; it seems fitting that concert preparations were part of her final minutes on earth. Sisters had been keeping vigil with her for several days and were with her when she died.

Sister Elaine was born Sept. 28, 1926, at Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. She was named after Sister Elaine, a Springfield, Illinois, Franciscan, the attending nurse at her birth. Elaine was baptized at St. Bridget's Church, Downing, Wisconsin. The youngest of three children, she grew up on the family farm three miles south of Downing. The closest Catholic school was 50 miles away, so Elaine attended a one-room elementary school. Believing in the value of Catholic education, her parents sent first her sister, then Elaine, to Good Counsel Academy in Mankato as boarders.

At the age of nine, Elaine began piano lessons, studying under Freeman Koberstein, a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music. She won first prize in the Dunn County Spring Contest as a sixth, seventh and eighth grader. When Elaine came to Good Counsel in 1940, she continued piano lessons with Sister Sylvia Tembreull and began organ and violin lessons. Elaine described her years with Sister Sylvia, "Through piano, Glee Club, Orchestra, the Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas, Choir in the candidature and novitiate, organ lessons and playing in chapel for Benediction and High Mass, music became my life."

It was during her high school years that Elaine began to hear the call to become a School Sister of Notre Dame. She commented, "Four fruitful years under the guidance of the Notre Dame Sisters had brought me to love and revere every inch of Good Counsel. My vocation to SSND grew gradually and quietly as I experienced daily Mass, the presence of sisters, novices and postulants, frequent Benediction, and Christmas Novena."

Elaine entered the SSND candidature in August 1944. As a second year candidate, she went to St. Agnes Grade School in St. Paul, where she taught classroom music in grades 1-7, gave piano lessons to about 35 or 40 students, and played the organ for school Masses.

In July 1945, she was received into the novitiate and given a name that reflected her Irish heritage, Sister Mary Patrick. (She later returned to her baptismal name.) Following profession of vows in 1947, Sister Mary Patrick began a teaching ministry that always included music. Students in the following schools experienced her musical direction: in Minnesota, SS. Peter & Paul/Loyola High School, and Good Counsel Academy, Mankato; St. Michael, St. Michael; St. Agnes Grade and High School, and St. Matthew, St. Paul; Grace High School, Fridley; and Holy Angels Academy, Richfield;

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Elaine Fraher*



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

in Iowa, SS. Peter & Paul, Springbrook, and Notre Dame, Cresco; and in North Dakota, Emmons Central, Strasburg, and St. Mary, New England. During this time, she earned a bachelor's degree with a major in piano performance from Mount Mary College in 1955, and a master's degree in music from McPhail School of Music, Minneapolis, in 1964. As a teacher, she covered the gamut of school and parish music, including elementary instruction, piano lessons, high school music classes, chorus, voice lessons, orchestra and musicals, and church choirs and organ responsibilities, along with weddings and funerals. In some schools, she also taught history classes. Her choirs performed well in competitions, and she produced choral recordings at several schools. Former students remember her attention to detail and high expectations.

Sister Elaine took a sabbatical during the 1976-77 school year and studied organ with Dr. Edward Berryman from Macalester College. In 1977 she became the music director and organist for Sacred Heart Parish in St. Paul, a position she held until 1983. From 1983 through 2007, she alternated between school music and parish liturgy ministry. Parishes she served included Assumption, Richfield; St. Stanislaus, Winona; St. Gabriel, Chicago; and St. Francis de Sales and St. James, St. Paul.

Throughout her years in ministry, she kept current through participation in classes, workshops, institutes and conventions. She felt that travel was a wonderful way to expand her knowledge and experience. She cited three particular trips: a visit to Ireland in 1970, her Jubilee experience in Rome and Germany in 1972, and three weeks in Brazil in 1984.

Another ministry of Sister Elaine was that of piano teacher. From 1994 through 2003, she taught at K & S Conservatory of Music in Woodbury. She gave private lessons and prepared students for participation in two or three recitals per year.

Sister Elaine participated enthusiastically in many activities of the former Mankato Province. She was a member of the Fine Arts Committee and was also on the committee that directed the renovation of the Johnson and Son organ in 1994. She helped plan and participated in the blessing of the newly renovated organ in 1995. As an organist, she was called on to play for several festive province events, and especially considered it a privilege to play for Jubilee celebrations. She had the ability to play almost any song on request, and entertained gatherings of sisters with this talent.

Sister Elaine retired to Good Counsel Hill in 2007, where she continued her music ministry playing for daily liturgies. Her family was special to her – nieces, nephews, cousins. Her ever-present smile and out-going personality endeared her to sisters and staff, even as increasing dementia took its toll.

The funeral Liturgy, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Tuesday, Dec. 27 in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in the Good Counsel Cemetery. She is survived by nieces and nephews, cousins, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Alice (Lundy) Fraher, her sister, Mary Walentiny and her brother, Robert.

*By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND*