

In Loving Memory

Sister Eleanor (M. Therese Lisieux) Ewertz

Sister Eleanor (M. Therese Lisieux) Ewertz, 84, died peacefully at Anna House, The Sarah Community, in Bridgeton, Missouri, September 20, 2023.

The eldest of three daughters was born to Eleanor (Rahn) and John Ewertz in St. Louis, February 24, 1939. She was baptized at St. Francis de Sales Church, March 19, 1939, and named Eleanor Mathilda. Her two sisters, Virginia (Ginny) and Rosemary, completed the Ewertz family. When Eleanor was 4 years old, the family moved to Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in St. Louis.

Eleanor attended Our Lady of Sorrows Grade School and Notre Dame High School, both in St. Louis, where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). She had a special interest in speech and took part in many parish and high school plays. During the silent retreat in her senior year, she realized God was calling her to religious life.

She entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, August 29, 1957. She was received into the novitiate July 29, 1958, and given the name, Mary Therese Lisieux. She was thrilled to receive this name as she had a great devotion to the Little Flower, as Mary Therese Lisieux is commonly referred to, and a great love for foreign missions. She professed first vows on July 30, 1959, and final vows on July 30, 1965. Later, she returned to her baptismal name.

She received a bachelor's degree in speech from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1962 and a master's degree in elementary administration and a reading specialist certificate from the University of Central Arkansas, Conway, Arkansas, in 1973.

Sister Eleanor taught elementary students at St. Peter, Jefferson City, Missouri; St. George, Linn, Missouri; and Immaculate Conception, Loose Creek, Missouri. She was also principal at Loose Creek. During these 15 years of ministry in the Diocese of Jefferson City, she was choir director and organist for the parishes. In 1976, she became principal at St. Andrew, St. Louis. Three years later, she was asked to be Superintendent of Schools for the rural Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri. She held this position for seven years.

During a 30-day retreat in 1985, Sister Eleanor felt called to minister in and volunteer in Africa. She arrived in Sierra Leone, West Africa, in September 1986. For the next 25 years, West Africa would become her second home. She taught at the Women's Teachers College in Port Loko, Sierra Leone, for three years; spent one year at the Yengema Secondary School; opened a new mission at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Mange Bureh, Sierra Leone; and was one of the first pastoral administrators in Sierra Leone. In Mange Bureh, she oversaw eight primary schools.

In January 1995, the Sierra Leone Civil War necessitated that the SSND living in Sierra Leone, evacuate the country. They spent time at the Generalate in Rome,

continued



Birth
February 24, 1939

Baptism
March 19, 1939

Profession
July 30, 1959

Death
September 20, 2023

Burial
Sancta Maria in Ripa
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

In Loving Memory



*Sister Eleanor (M.
Therese Lisieux) Ewertz*



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and in the United States. In 1996, SSND were invited to return to Port Loko, Sierra Leone, and she again taught at the Women's Teachers College in Port Loko. However, nine months later, SSND had to evacuate again. Sister Eleanor was assigned to teach English at the Sunyani Secondary School in Ghana. She was also the SSND vocation director and a retreat and spiritual director. For four years, she served as the SSND Postulant Directress. In 2005, she returned to the United States for three years. During this time, she worked as a patient ambassador at St. Louis University Hospital and taught English as a second language in the Immigrant and Refugee Women's Program in St. Louis.

In 2008, she responded to a call to return to Sierra Leone and teach at Fatima Institute, the newly established Catholic University of Makeni, in Makeni. She also served as chaplain at the university, was a spiritual director and directed retreats at the Leicester Retreat Center in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In July 2014, the SSND had to evacuate Sierra Leone a third time – this time due to the Ebola outbreak in the country. She spent several months teaching English in the novitiate in Sunyani, Ghana. With the expiration of her visa, she chose to return to St. Louis, in January 2015.

After a year of community service at Theresa Center, St. Louis, she was invited to minister part-time as a retreat and spiritual director in the Jefferson City Diocese, Jefferson City, Missouri. She also continued to do volunteer service at Theresa Center, St. Louis, and The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri. As her health began to fail, she was missioned to Veronica House, The Sarah Community, in January 2020 and to Anna House in January 2023. She was placed in hospice in early September 2023. She died peacefully around 11:30 a.m. September 20, 2023.

A prayer service was held at The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri, September 25, 2023. The following morning funeral services were held at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. Visitation and the sharing of memories preceded the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial. Rev. Michael Quinn, a close friend from the Jefferson City Diocese, Jefferson City, Missouri, was presider. Family members, classmates, SSND, associates and friends were present. She was buried in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery, St. Louis.

Sister Eleanor is survived by her sister, Virginia (Mike) Hughes; relatives; her sisters in community; SSND associates and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Eleanor (Rahn) and John Ewertz; and her sister, Rosemary Schillinger.

Sister Eleanor was an excellent educator and organizer. She was remembered as a sweet, gentle, encouraging, challenging and supportive person. She had a great love for the people of Africa and they highly respected and loved her, as seen by the numerous memories shared by them via email. As a retreat/spiritual director, she companioned numerous individuals in their journey to God. May Sister Eleanor now rejoice in her new and eternal life as she is welcomed by her loving God.

By Carol Marie Wildt, SSND