



# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Florence (Miriam George) Wesselman

On April 2, 1932, the fourth of eight children was born to Catherine (Boeing) and George Wesselmann on their farm near Aviston, Illinois. The next day, April 3, she was baptized at St. Francis Church in Aviston and named Florence Catherine. Florence (Flossy) grew up in a family of four girls and four boys.

In her early childhood, the family moved to a farm near Pierron, Illinois. Prior to going to school, she often helped her mother by taking care of a younger brother. She began her school years at Immaculate Conception School staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis. When Flossy was nine years old, the family moved again to a farm in Mascoutah, Illinois. She completed her elementary and junior high school education at Holy Childhood School. The closest Catholic high school was the Academy of Notre Dame in Belleville, Illinois. Since she could not travel back and forth each day, she became one of the boarders. During these years, she began to think seriously about her future. She was attracted to her teachers, the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), and decided to give religious life a try.

Florence entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa, in St. Louis, on August 31, 1950. She was received into the novitiate on July 30, 1951, and given the name Miriam George in honor of her father. She professed first vows on August 1, 1952, and final vows on August 1, 1958. She was delighted when a younger sister (Sister Miriam Catherine) followed her into the SSND congregation. She later returned to her baptismal name.

Sister Florence earned a bachelor's degree in English from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1961; a master's degree in elementary education from St. Louis University, St. Louis, in 1968 and a master's degree in Spirituality from Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington in 1982. Sister Florence ministered in formal education for 24 years. She taught elementary children at St. Hedwig and St. Gabriel, St. Louis; St. George, Linn, Missouri; Sacred Heart, DuQuoin, Illinois; St. Mary, Keokuk, Iowa. She taught secondary students at Duchesne High School, St. Charles, Missouri; St. Francis Borgia High School, Washington, Missouri; Notre Dame High School, Cape Girardeau, Missouri and Cardinal Stritch High School, Keokuk, Iowa. She was a principal at St. Mary, Keokuk, Iowa, for six years.

Sister Florence was deeply devoted to her family, especially her brother, Robert. When he experienced a very difficult time while living alone, she requested ex-claustration for two years, to be with him to provide companionship and foster wholesome health habits. During this time, she also taught at Turner High School in Kansas City, Missouri.

Sister Florence served as an Area Director of Elementary Education for the Archdiocese of St. Louis for seven years. Following a year of study, she ministered as a Formation Director for the former St. Louis Province for five years. She was a tutor in the former Notre Dame Tutorial/Learning Center at Sancta Maria in Ripa for 19 years. In 2008, she participated in the Japan Summer Program. In her retirement years, she ministered as a spiritual director in Assumption Parish, St. Louis, and with the Bridges Retreat Program in St. Louis.

**Birth**  
April 2, 1932

**Baptism**  
April 3, 1932

**Profession**  
August 1, 1952

**Death**  
November 20, 2020

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria in Ripa  
Cemetery, St. Louis

*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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As she got older, she was missioned to Veronica House, The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri, in 2014 and to Anna House in 2015. She passed away around 3:35 p.m. on November 20, 2020 at Anna House, Bridgeton, Missouri. On December 2, 2020, a bright, sunny but cold morning, a private burial service was held at the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. Attending were her sister, Sister Miriam Catherine, family members and several SSND. She was buried in the Ripa cemetery. A memorial Mass will be celebrated at a later date.

She is survived by her sisters; Sister Miriam Catherine, SSND, and Pat Kassing of Freeburg, Missouri; and a brother, Richard of Moraga, California; relatives, classmates and sisters in community. Sister Florence was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Ann Lang; her brothers: Robert, Edward and George.

As a teacher, Sister Florence found her niche in teaching English literature, which enabled her students to express their insights, creativity and critical thinking. She also treasured her years serving as a music minister in the schools and parishes. Her love of life was evident in her smile and laughter. Sister Florence's retirement years brought her much joy as she witnessed the faith of those with whom she companioned in their relationship with God. Her selfless love and generosity touched the hearts of many of God's people. May she now be embraced by her loving God as she enters her new life!

*By Sister Carol Marie Widlt, SSND*