



Birth
March 7, 1921

Baptism
March 20, 1921

Profession
July 23, 1942

Death
April 9, 2020

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 M. Francele Sherburne

Sister Francele was born on March 7, 1921, at St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee. She is the third of the six children of Cecile and Frank Sherburne. She was baptized Rita Catherine, on March 20, 1921.

It was at Messmer High School in Milwaukee that Sister Francele developed an admiration for her disciplined teachers and wanted to emulate them. When she told her parents that she wanted to be a School Sister of Notre Dame, her mother was unhappy because she worried they were so strict, but her parents did not stand in the way.

Sister Francele entered the candidature in September of 1939, on the day that Germany invaded Poland. She was determined to keep all the regulations. It was during this year that she worked up her signature entertainment specialty, "Father, Dear Father" a maudlin song of a small daughter pleading with her father at 1, 2, and 3 a.m. to come home from the saloon. She had an enlightened directress who encouraged her "lights" and gifts, which seemed to be music and writing. Art also followed her through life, mostly with crafts.

In the novitiate, Rita Catherine received the name Sister Mary Francele which is a blend of her parents' names of Frank and Cecile. As she relates, "this was a period of spiritual relish." It was during this time that she took her first organ lessons. She had taken piano lessons from second grade through high school.

After teaching middle school students for a number of years, it was obvious that this was not where Sister Francele thrived. She finished her studies at Mount Mary College (now University) and taught high school English at the Academy of Our Lady in Chicago. During these years, she also studied at DePaul University, Chicago, and received a Master's degree in English. Her next 34 years were spent at Mount Mary teaching English, working with students on the college magazine, and as moderator of the Honors Program. Also during these years, she studied linguistics at the University of Michigan.

Besides her ministry at Mount Mary, Sister Francele volunteered at Milwaukee Achiever every Tuesday evening for 20 years to teach adults English as a second language. As she stated, "fatigue fell away as I sat with them." She served on the staff of the School Sister magazine as editor. She had a passion for kite flying. She belonged to a professional group who specialized in kite making in elementary schools.

The seventies and eighties decades were marked by the brave battle of Sister Francele's bipolar affective disorder. Her illness came and went periodically, a state that increasingly affected her teaching and sometimes her quality of living. She had bouts of depression and was hospitalized four times.

Sister Francele retired at Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin, in 1996. Of her years at Elm Grove, she writes "I close with an observation about

continued

In Loving Memory

Page 2

the most meaningful part of my life, my soul's growth because of the spiritual opportunities that abound in this house...The opportunities for touching God right here are boundless...my life has been full...This narrative is only a smidgeon of it.”

Sister moved to our memory care facility, Our Lady of the Angels, Greenfield, Wisconsin, in 2015. She died on April 9, 2020 at the age of 99. Now she is happily united with those who preceded her into heaven.

Sister Francele Sherburne

By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

To make a memorial gift,
please visit our secure
online donation page
www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world
through education