



In Loving Memory

Sister Helen (Mary Gabriel) Fick, SSND

Three days after her 88th birthday and as the Church celebrated the feast of the Epiphany, Sister Helen peacefully concluded her earthly journey at 6:25 a.m. at Anna House, Bridgeton, MO on January 8, 2017. She was born on the eve of Epiphany, January 5, 1929 to Cunigunda (Boes) and Anton Fick in Rich Fountain, MO. She was baptized the next day at Sacred Heart Church in Rich Fountain and given the name Helen Teresa. Helen was the fifth of nine children. She had four sisters and four brothers; two of her sisters died in infancy. Helen almost died from a severe attack of whooping cough prior to her first birthday.

Birth
January 5, 1929

Baptism
Jan. 6, 1929

Profession
Aug. 2, 1951

Death
Jan. 8, 2017

Burial
Santca Maria in Ripa
Cemetery

St. Louis, MO

Helen entered Sacred Heart Grade School and Sacred Heart Junior High School where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Upon completion of her junior high school years, she became a boarder with the SSNDs at St. Joseph, Westphalia to complete the last two years of high school. Here she was greatly influenced by the zeal and example of the sisters and desired to enter the convent. However, shortly after graduation, her older sister became seriously ill and she was needed at home. During this year, she experienced uncertainty and doubts, but God's grace enabled her to make a decision.

Helen entered the candidature at Ripa on September 1, 1948. Following a year of college courses, she was missioned to St. Mary of Victories, St. Louis, MO to teach grades four and five. After a month, she was re-assigned to St. Hedwig's School, St. Louis. In April, 1950 she had eye surgery which was successful. She was received into the novitiate on August 1, 1950 and given the name, Mary Gabriel. Profession of first vows was on August 2, 1951 and final vows was on August 2, 1957.

S. Helen received a bachelor's degree in English in 1960 from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis and a master's degree in elementary education in 1975 from Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, IL.

She was an elementary educator for 35 years. In Missouri, she taught at St. Clare, St. Clair; St. Ignatius, Marthasville; St. George, Linn; St. Joseph, Scott City (Illmo); Holy Ghost and St. Martin of Tours, St. Louis; and St. Joseph, Westphalia. In Illinois, she taught at Sacred Heart, Effingham and St. Martin of Tours, Washington Park. She was a tutor for 18 years at Notre Dame Tutorial/Learning Center, St. Louis. She also tutored at St. Boniface, St. Louis for 7 years during this time. She was a receptionist at Ripa for 5 ½ years.

*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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In 2008, S. Helen was missioned to Veronica House. After several months, it was evident that she needed more care and she was transferred to Anna House. God called her on January 8, 2017 to a new journey after 65 years of consecrated life.

Prayer services were held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on January 16. The Mass of Christian Burial was the following morning with Rev. Robert Leibrecht presiding. Interment was in the Ripa cemetery. Relatives, friends and SSNDs attended the funeral services.

S. Helen is survived by a sister, Mary (Leo) Scheuler of Mexico, MO, and a brother Bernard (Chris) of Rich Fountain, MO. She was preceded in death by her parents, two infant sisters and her sister, S. Catherine Mary, SSM; her brothers, William, Frank and John.

S. Helen loved music. In most of her missions, she was the parish organist and taught piano lessons in addition to classroom teaching. At Ripa, she was a choir member and although shy, she used her beautiful voice as a cantor. She delighted in singing in the annual Holiday Concert and welcoming her family to this event. She dearly loved her family and enjoyed family get-togethers. She was a great help to her brother, John. She enjoyed nature, especially visiting the Missouri Botanical Gardens. S. Helen was a quiet, gentle, gracious and friendly person. When memory loss and confusion affected her last years, she would still give a smile to those who visited and cared for her. May she now rejoice with the angel choirs as she is welcomed by her God into eternal life!!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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Central Pacific Province

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