

# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Irene Stanczyk



**Birth**  
**January 18, 1930**

**Baptism**  
**January 26, 1930**

**Profession**  
**July 18, 1952**

**Death**  
**February 16, 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

**S**ister Irene was born, the fifth of six children, to John Stanczyk and Lucy Piechota, on January 18, 1930. Two of her siblings died at the age of one. Her mother was born in Poland, and her father in Germany, but both spoke Polish. She noted that when she was five years old, her mother taught her how to say a few words in Polish, starting with how to give the Holy Salutation upon entering and leaving the house. She could also say a few common prayers in Polish before she started school.

The family belonged to St. John Kanty Church in Milwaukee, where she was baptized and where she attended school. On May 12, 1940, she received her Eucharistic Lord for the first time at age ten and she believes that this was one of the happiest days of her life. It was also on that day that she decided to be a sister. Four years later, on June 9, 1944, she graduated from grade school. She says, "From that day on my whole heart and soul would be put to the study of music. I played the saxophone for nine years, and also the piano. I tried to play the violin for three years."

After graduation from high school she entered the convent on September 4, 1948. Then, in the following June, she was sent home on account of her health. She knew that the Lord would bring her to good health again, and she returned to the convent on June 24, 1950. That September, she went on mission to St. John Cantius in Chicago, as a music teacher and also as a teacher of kindergarten. She claims that she had more music pupils than kindergarten children.

After a year of teaching, she returned to the motherhouse and on July 17, 1951, she was "received into the portals of the novitiate, a day that will never be forgotten."

Sister Irene's love and gift for music filled her whole life's ministry, as she predicted at her eighth grade graduation. After her novitiate, she taught music in schools until 1986. She then opened her own studio for students which she continued until she became ill. She maintained her excitement about music until the end. In reflecting on facing death, she said, "I wonder when I will play the last key on the organ."

In addition, she offered her services as organist for the Veteran's hospital every Sunday from 1984 until New Year's Day of this year. She loved that ministry and made many friends there. It was hard for her to let that go when she no longer had the strength to continue.

Another very important aspect of her life was her close relationship with the family of her brother, Raymond. His two daughters stayed close to her until the very end. They remember that S. Irene and her mother would come over every Sunday with bakery. They also fondly recall that she was their babysitter, both when they were young and when they had children of their own. She would

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have inside jokes with them; they played ping pong and cards; they decorated Christmas cookies together and colored Easter eggs. She even attended their athletic events. They characterize her as someone who never complained about things and she was always there for anyone who needed her.

Thank you S. Irene for bringing the joy of music to so many people in your lifetime. What a gift you have given to the world, and what a wonderful time you are having as you carry on in your eternal embrace of God's love for you.

Sister Irene was born to Eternal Life on February 16, 2020, at age 90. She is survived by her nieces, Jan (Kurt) Kappler and Janine Consentino. Preceded in death by her parents John and Lucy. A Wake Service was celebrated Monday, February 24, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at The Holy Family Chapel at Notre Dame of Elm Grove, 13105 Watertown Plank Rd., Elm Grove.



*By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND*

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