

In Loving Memory

Sister Jean Marie (Miriam Josanne) Grefenkamp

Sister Jean Marie Grefenkamp, formerly known as Sister Miriam Josanne, 77, died peacefully at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, November 21, 2023.

The second of six children was born to Mary Catherine (Hoffman) and Bernard Grefenkamp June 12, 1946, at St. Mary's Hospital in St. Louis. She was baptized at St. James Catholic Church, St. Louis, July 14, 1946 and named Jean Marie. Three sisters and two brothers completed the Grefenkamp family.

Jean began her education with the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Bernadette in Jefferson Barracks, Lemay, Missouri. In November of her first grade, the family moved to Woodson Terrace in St. Louis County, Missouri and she attended St. Gregory Grade School staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. After her seventh grade, the family moved again and she completed her elementary education at Christ the King Grade School, St. Louis, under the guidance of the Sisters of Mercy. She attended Mercy High School, St. Louis, for her freshman and sophomore years and then enrolled at University City Senior High School, St. Louis for her last two years.

Jean had a desire to become a religious sister since her early school years and that desire got stronger as she grew older. She entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis and received the postulant veil August 23, 1964. She was received into the novitiate July 29, 1965, and given the name Miriam Josanne. Later, she returned to her baptismal name, Sister Jean Marie. She professed first vows July 30, 1966, and final vows July 30, 1971.

Sister Jean Marie was granted a bachelor's degree in American Studies from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri in 1975.

During her years as a School Sister of Notre Dame, Sister Jean Marie served in a variety of ministries.

She began her ministry career as a child care worker at St. Elizabeth's Day Nursery in St. Louis. She was an elementary teacher at Notre Dame Elementary and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in St. Louis and St. Jude Academy in San Diego, California.

In 1986, she studied to become an emergency medical technician (EMT). For five years, she served as an EMT for Abbott Ambulance Service and 911 Emergency Medical Services in St. Louis. In 1993, she spent a year teaching English at Instituto Notre Dame in El Progreso, Honduras. She then was a driver for Care Cab in St. Louis. After two years as a cab driver, she returned to Honduras and ministered to women at Immaculate Conception in Sulaco. In 1998, she became a bus driver for Ryder Transportation in St. Louis. Three years later, she served as a staff member at Gateway Community Blood Center,

continued



Birth
June 12, 1946

Baptism
July 14, 1946

Profession
July 30, 1966

Death
November 21, 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

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Josanne) Grefenkamp*

St. Louis. In 2003, she continued this ministry as a phlebotomist at Community Blood Center of St. Louis and then at Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center, St. Louis.

Sister Jean Marie was a joyful person who generously gave of herself and shared her gifts with others. She was a person who loved life, especially driving. She rode a motorcycle and was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan. Her own experience of receiving a lung transplant enabled her to patiently wait with other recipients and their families. By listening and being present to these vulnerable persons, she helped to alleviate their fears and anxieties. May she now rejoice with her God as she enters eternal life.

In December 2011, she had surgery and received a lung transplant. Since that time, she has been a mentor to lung transplant patients at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and continued to volunteer at the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center, both in St. Louis. In early November 2023, she was hospitalized with pneumonia. She died peacefully at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in the early afternoon of November 21, 2023, with SSND and family members praying with her.

On December 6, 2023, funeral services were held at Theresa Center, St. Louis. They included visitation, the reading of her biography, sharing of memories and the celebration of the Mass of Resurrection. Rev. Brad Modde, a friend of Sister Jean Marie, was the presider. Family members, classmates, SSND and associates attended the services. Also present were numerous friends from her ministry with Mid-America Transplant Services, the blood centers, Barnes-Jewish Hospital and her outreach to Honduras. Interment was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa Cemetery.

Sister Jean Marie is survived by her sisters, Joan Carraway, Jane (David) Teichman and Mary Rose Miller. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers, Joseph and Gregory.

By Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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