



In Loving Memory

Sister M. Agnes Therese Ayd

Sister M. Agnes Therese Ayd, 90, passed away peacefully in the early morning of January 27, 2020, at Anna House, The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri.

On April 17, 1929, the first child of Catherine [Rubenacker] and Charles Ayd was born in Piopolis, a small town in southern Illinois. She was baptized a week later, on April 24, at St. John the Baptist Church in Piopolis and named Norma Jean. Three brothers would be born to complete the Ayd family. The family lived on a small farm about two miles from church.

Norma attended elementary school at St. John the Baptist where she was taught by the Adorers of the Precious Blood. She and her brothers walked to school each morning, arriving in time for daily Mass. After graduation, her pastor suggested that she attend the Academy of Notre Dame in Belleville, Illinois, and helped to make arrangements for her. Norma was a resident student for four years. She was so impressed with the thoughtfulness, cheerfulness and peace of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who staffed the Academy that she applied to enter at the end of her senior year. Because of a health condition, she was advised to wait a year. Therefore, she entered the candidature on October 7, 1948, at Sancta Maria in Ripa in St. Louis.

After a year of college courses, Norma began her second year in the candidature teaching third grade at Holy Angels, East St. Louis, Illinois. In January, she was transferred to St. Mary's, New Orleans, Louisiana, to complete the school year. She was received into the novitiate on August 1, 1950, and given the name M. Agnes Therese. Profession of first vows was on August 2, 1951, and final vows on August 2, 1957.

She earned a bachelor's degree in English from the former Notre Dame College, in St. Louis, in 1961 and a master's degree in elementary education from St. Louis University in 1968.

Following profession in 1951, Sister Agnes Therese spent the next 10 years teaching primary children at St. Mary of Victories, St. Louis; St. John the Baptist, Burlington, Iowa; St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles, Missouri; and St. Clare, St. Clair, Missouri. For the next 41 years, she taught the older children at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Louis; St. Mary, Cape Girardeau, Missouri; St. Peter, Belleville, Illinois; St. Dominic, Breese, Illinois; St. Agatha, New Athens, Illinois. She was also principal at St. Mary's in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and St. Agatha in New Athens, Illinois.

In 1986, Sister Agnes Therese was asked to reopen St. Francis Xavier School in Sikeston, Missouri. The school had been closed 18 years earlier due to low enrollment. Sister Agnes Therese ministered as principal for 12 years. When she left, the school was still growing. Her last years of active ministry were spent as pastoral minister at Immaculate Conception, Loose Creek, Missouri. She

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Birth
April 17, 1929

Baptism
April 24, 1929

Profession
August 2, 1951

Death
January 27, 2020

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

*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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retired to Veronica House, the Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri, in 2008 and was transferred to Anna House in 2014. She passed away peacefully in the early morning of January 27, 2020, at Anna House.

Vigil service was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on January 30, 2020. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Ralph Parthie, OFM as celebrant. She is survived by her brother, Leo (Patsy) of McLeansboro, Illinois. Family members, classmates, SSND, Associates, former students and colleagues attended the funeral services. She was buried in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. Sister Agnes Therese was preceded in death by her parents and her two brothers, Alfred and Robert.

Recalling her years in the classroom, Sister Agnes Therese said, “I get excited watching student reactions when what is being taught takes on meaning for them. I continually marvel at how creatively God gifts each individual, treats each individual, works within each individual and the various ways in which He draws them close to Himself.” As a principal in a Catholic school, Sister Agnes Therese described her role as, “the person who has the responsibility for leadership in developing a faith community and a sound educational program whether that involves being the initiator or working with the initiative that may come from a faculty member.”

One of her former pastors described Sister Agnes Therese as a dedicated teacher who, “goes to great lengths to plan classes that are educational and keep the students’ interest. She’s always thinking of others – whether they be hungry children in a foreign nation, people suffering from an earthquake or disaster, parishioners who are sick or in the hospital, or her students.”

She is remembered as a happy, joyful person with a wonderful smile. She was a thoughtful person, expected the best from those she taught and an excellent mentor to beginning teachers. In her unassuming way, she revived the school in Sikeston, Missouri.

In her spare time, Sister Agnes Therese enjoyed sewing, family tree research, flower arranging and crafts. May she now rejoice in her new life with her God!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

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