

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Petrann Sieben



Birth
September 4, 1932

Baptism
September 4, 1932

Profession
July 19, 1953

Death
April 23, 2024

Burial
Our Lady of Good Counsel
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

Sister M. Petrann Sieben, SSND, 91, died at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, on April 23, 2024. Her death came just two days following that of Sister Evelyn Dangel, her classmate, Good Counsel Hill community member, friend and partner in Ceramic Haven.

Sister Petrann began her autobiography: "In 1932 God blessed the already happy Peter and Catharine Sieben family of three boys with a girl, Mary Eleanor, who was born and baptized on September 4." Another son and twin daughters later completed the family. The Sieben family lived on a farm south of New Trier, Minnesota, and were members of St. Mary's Parish in New Trier. When Mary was in first grade, the family moved into New Trier and the children attended St. Mary's School where they were taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). Sister Petrann's autobiography continued, "A familiar sight was to see one of the seven Siebens running errands for the sisters. This privilege often required our mother's decision as to who would be the lucky one to run the errand."

Sister Petrann traced her call to become a SSND to her attendance at the funeral of her second grade teacher, Sister M. Bertilla Dvorak, who died in 1939 at the young age of 25. As a seventh grader, Mary moved with her family to Hastings, Minnesota, where her father was employed in an implement factory. Mary spent her last two years of grade school with Benedictine Sisters as her teachers, but she stayed firm in her commitment to SSND by entering the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, Minnesota, following her graduation from eighth grade in June 1946.

Mary graduated from Good Counsel Academy in June of 1950 and entered the SSND candidature in August. As a second-year candidate, she taught 43 second and third graders at St. Felix School, Wabasha, Minnesota. She was received into the novitiate on July 18, 1952, and given the name Mary Petrann, a combination of her father's first name and her mother's middle name. She professed first vows on July 19, 1953, and was missioned to St. Felix in Wabasha. Other primary grade teaching assignments included St. Joseph, Grenville, South Dakota; St. Matthew and St. Andrew, St. Paul; St. John Nepomucene, Winona; St. Francis, Buffalo; St. John the Baptist, Jordan; St. Peter, Hokah; St. John, Vermillion; St. Joseph, Red Wing; Silver Lake Catholic Schools, Silver Lake; and SS. Peter & Paul, Loretto - all in Minnesota.

She earned her bachelor's degree from St. Catherine's College in 1962 and a master's degree with a specialization in reading from Mankato State College in 1973.

Preparing children for their first confession and communion brought joy to Sister Petrann. She spent seventeen summers working with Sister Giovanni Gouhran in the Guadalupe Area Project in St. Paul and wrote later: "Sister Giovanni's dedication to those who were poor, shunned or disadvantaged was a deep inspiration to me. She welcomed students with chemical dependencies and challenged them to make better life choices. I was both privileged and blessed to be able to work with her."

continued

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**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world
through education

Sister Petrann taught in Silver Lake from 1980 through 1991 and came to know the Silver Lake residents well. One couple with whom she formed a special relationship was Ed and Betty Maresh. Ed and Betty owned a small cabin on Lake Manuella, northwest of Hutchinson, Minnesota, which they gave to the sisters for their use. Sister Petrann became the SSND contact and caretaker for the cabin for several years.

In June 1994, Sister Petrann moved to Good Counsel Hill from Loretto. Sister Mary Donald Miller, principal of Holy Rosary Intermediate School, part of the Mankato Area Catholic Schools, invited Sister Petrann to tutor students in need of help with reading. With her degree and experience of tutoring in the Good Counsel Learning Center, she saw this invitation as a way to continue her educational ministry.

In her free time, she began to visit Sister Irene Federspiel in Ceramic Haven, a craft and ceramic studio, where, in Sister Petrann's words, "Sister Irene always had a paintbrush and a paint bottle for ready hands." Sister Petrann continued tutoring and working in Ceramic Haven until 2002 when she became Sister Irene's full-time partner.

Through the years Ceramic Haven branched out from painting and firing ceramic images to statue repair and restoration. A number of retired or semi-retired sisters did the basic painting of ceramic figures, while Sisters Irene and Petrann spent more time working with parishes and others to restore and repair statues. They traveled by car as far as New Mexico to work on statues there or to bring them back to the Ceramic Haven studio. Several articles were written about their partnership. One of these articles detailed their trip to Gallup, New Mexico, where they had been invited to "visit and bring their repair material."

As Sister Irene aged and was no longer able to continue in the work she loved, Sister Petrann was very willing and able to take responsibility for Ceramic Haven. Beginning in 2011, she was the face of the ministry, joined by Sister Evelyn Dangel and a number of volunteers, both sisters and lay people. One of their final projects was restoring the fourteen Stations of the Cross that were located in Immaculate Conception Church, St. Clair, Minnesota. When the project was finished, the parish published a commemorative booklet detailing the work. Sisters Petrann, Evelyn and Marguerite Churilla brought Ceramic Haven to close just a few weeks before moving to Shakopee in the fall of 2022.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Petrann was celebrated April 29, in the Windermere chapel with Father Joe Fogal as president. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the Liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato followed.

Sister Petrann is survived by her sister, Lorraine (Ted) Johnson, her brothers, Al (Betty Lou) and Tony (Carol), nieces and nephews and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND Associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Peter and Catharine (Bauer) Sieben, her brothers, Clarence and Leander, and her sister, Loretta Sieben.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND