

# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Margaret Ellen (Marie Gerard) Buscher



Sister Margaret Ellen Buscher (formerly known as Marie Gerard), 83, died unexpectedly on the morning of May 26, 2023, at Anna House, The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri.

Born on June 15, 1939, in Washington, Missouri, Sister Margaret Ellen was the youngest of three children of Gerard and Ellen (Sheerin) Buscher. She was baptized as Margaret Ellen at St. James Church in Catawissa, Missouri, on June 25, 1939. She grew up with her brother, Robert, and sister, Patricia, in Robertsville, Missouri, until the age of four when her family relocated to Benton City, Washington, due to her father's job.

**Birth**  
June 15, 1939

**Baptism**  
June 25, 1939

**Profession**  
July 31, 1958

**Death**  
May 26, 2023

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria in Ripa  
Cemetery

In Benton City, Sister Margaret Ellen attended a public school for several years. In the fourth grade, she stayed with relatives in Pacific, Missouri, and attended St. Bridget's School, which was staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). She then returned to Washington for the beginning of her high school education, attending Holy Name Academy in Spokane as a boarding student for her freshman and sophomore years. She later transferred to St. Francis Borgia High School in Washington, Missouri, where she boarded with a family living near her sister's home.

During her freshman year, Sister Margaret Ellen felt a calling to religious life but initially gave it little thought. However, during Lent of her junior year, she attended a Day of Recollection at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, Missouri, which affirmed her decision to enter religious life. After Easter, she joined classmates on a tour of New York and Washington, D.C., where she met a girl planning to enter the candidature in St. Louis. This encounter resolved any doubts she had about her calling.

On August 29, 1956, Sister Margaret Ellen received the candidate's bonnet at St. Francis Borgia Church. She entered the novitiate on July 30, 1957, and took the name Marie Gerard in honor of her father. She professed first vows on July 31, 1958, and final vows on July 31, 1964. However, she later returned to using her baptismal name.

Sister Margaret Ellen obtained a bachelor's degree in theology from the former Notre Dame College in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1961. She also earned a master's degree in library science from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, in 1970, and a master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University of Chicago in Illinois, in 1991.

Throughout her 65 years as a School Sister of Notre Dame, Sister Margaret Ellen served in various ministries. She taught elementary students for five years at Holy Ghost in St. Louis, Missouri; Sacred Heart in Rich Fountain, Missouri; St. Gabriel in St. Louis, Missouri; and St. Francis Borgia Grade School in Washington, Missouri. She also taught secondary students for seven years at St. Alphonsus (Rock) High School in St. Louis, Missouri; Quincy Notre Dame

*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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(Marie Gerard) Buscher*



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in Quincy, Illinois; and Rosary High School in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition, she worked as an aide in the former Notre Dame College Library in St. Louis, Missouri, and served as a librarian for eight years at Duchesne High School in St. Charles, Missouri; Notre Dame High School in St. Louis, Missouri; and the Academy of Notre Dame in Belleville, Illinois.

In 1978, Sister Margaret Ellen began serving as a pastoral minister at St. Francis Xavier in Sikeston, Missouri, and St. Mary in Belleville, Illinois. After seven years, she became the director of religious education at St. Mary in Litchfield, Illinois, and later served as parish administrator at Queen of Peace in Ewing, Missouri. Following a sabbatical in 1990, she spent a year as a driver at Theresa Center and then worked as a campus minister at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois, for five years. In 1997, she became the Director of Religious Education at Holy Trinity in Springfield, Missouri, and later served as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults director at Immaculate Conception Parish in Springfield, Missouri. During her last years of active ministry, she worked as the director of pastoral services and chaplain for The Kitchen, Inc. in Springfield, Missouri.

In 2014, Sister Margaret Ellen retired in Springfield and moved to Theresa Center in 2017. In October 2022, she was assigned to Anna House, The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri. She passed away unexpectedly at around 10:30 a.m. on May 26, 2023, at Anna House.

A prayer service was held on June 6, 2023, at The Sarah Community, followed by funeral services the next morning at the Theresa Center chapel. The funeral included the reading of Sister Margaret Ellen's biography, sharing of memories, and the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial, presided by Rev. Ralph Parthie, OFM. Relatives, friends, classmates, SSNDs, and Associates attended the services. Sister Margaret Ellen was laid to rest in Sancta Maria in Ripa Cemetery, St. Louis.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Gerard and Ellen Buscher, her brother Robert, and her sister Patricia Walde Kopp. Sister Margaret Ellen is survived by nephews, nieces, cousins, friends, classmates, SSND and associates.

Sister Margaret Ellen was remembered for her love of fishing, traveling, and dining out. She possessed a sense of humor and demonstrated generosity and sensitivity toward those who were suffering or in need. Her years of pastoral ministry were particularly rewarding, as she led youth retreats, parish prayer days, scripture-prayer workshops, and coordinated religious services. She considered her nine years of ministry at The Kitchen as the most significant, as she and the staff provided programs and services for the homeless and disadvantaged. May she find joy in her new life with God and her departed family members.

*By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*