



In Loving Memory

Sister Margaret Karas

Sister Margaret Karas was born May 27, 1932 at home on Milwaukee Street in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to Stanly Karas and Josephine Wabich both of Polish decent.

She wrote in her autobiography, "I was the fifth child and the first girl of four brothers who taught me how to live life. When the Karas family was complete, I was blessed with eight brothers and one sister. When I was brought for Baptism-my reverend uncle asked what name. My parents said, Petrinilla after grandma but my Reverend uncle said, 'Oh no we can't name her that!' He looked up at the stain glass windows in Sacred Heart Church and said, 'Let's name her Margaret Mary.'"

Because of the musical talent in the Karas family, my mom and dad thought I should learn how to play the piano. For five years, I took piano lessons. During one of the recitals, I was so nervous in front of an audience, I played a refrain over and over until Sister Benedicta said, "You can stop now!" My hands flew off the keyboard - that was it!

When I was 14 years old, my uncle Joe, a priest, was dying during the Christmas holidays of 1946. My parents sent me to be with Father Joe. My uncle died in January of 1947 and I grieved his loss. I cherished this memory and it awakened in me the desire to become a nurse.

After the ninth grade at St. Adalbert's School, I entered the Juniorate.

On entrance day into the Novitiate the priest asked me why I entered. My mother spoke up and said, "I'll tell you. I had four boys and when pregnant again I prayed to Mary for nine months for a girl and promised I would return her to Mary!"

I entered the convent to become a nurse. At every opportunity I let my wish be heard. I was given charge of the infirmary in the candidature and also in the novitiate. In my formative years the sisters attempted to prepare me to be an organist. Once when I played for Benediction, I was put off the organ bench by Sister Cecilia! I was happy that was the end of my musical career!

When it came to obediences I was sent out to teach. After 30 some years in education, I again expressed my desire to be a nurse and got the permission. After checking the nursing schools and finding out the year of study, I decided to become a nursing assistant. I went to the public school and became a nursing assistant doing my practice work at the veterans hospital.

I was a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) at Notre Dame of Elm Grove for about two years. Then I was appointed local leader at Notre Dame Health Care Center in Elm Grove, Wisconsin.

After six years, I went to the Marshall Street Motherhouse where I worked in hospitality. I went with a willing and joyful heart ready to start a new ministry.

Birth
May 27, 1932

Baptism
June 5, 1932

Profession
July 30, 1951

Death
September 29, 2017

Burial
Notre Dame of Elm Grove
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

continued

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When St. Helen's, on the south side of Milwaukee, was opened as a house of hospitality for an interim stay for SSND's in transition, I was invited to be the coordinator of hospitality.

I also worked for the Kentucky Nun's Study for 10 years taking care of the finances between the province and the study."

Known for her compassion and love for others in remarkable ways. Sister Margaret knew how to balance prayer, ministry, and fun. She loved to cook and often tried new recipes for the community or guests. She was well appreciated for her jokes. An avid sports fan, she loved to keep the scores of the Brewers and Packers games. Her other interests were crocheting, needle work, word searches, reading and being involved in other community activities.

Sister Margaret became part of the dialysis community on a weekly basis in 2009. Her presence was important to other dialysis patients because she listened to them with a loving heart. She often provided knitted sleeves or neck pillows for other patients. Sister Margaret listened to their stories with the promise of prayers. She was forever grateful for all the care that was given to her including those who drove her to appointments.

Sister Margaret had a tenacious will power which enabled her to endure everything with gratitude and joy. She often shared her insights on daily Mass, the SSND charism and reflections with others at the dialysis community.

She passed away on September 29, 2017. She is survived by her brothers, Stanley, Jerome, Charles and Edmund, sister-in laws Dorothy Karas, Bernie Karas, Pauline Karas, Mary LeMieux, and brother-in-law Frank Budnick, 37 nieces and nephews and the SSND community and friends. Preceded in death by her parents and her brothers Merv, Ray, Bernard, Richard, and sister Dorothy and sister-in-laws Mary, Dolores, Joan, Christa and brother-in-law Gerald Sokol.

This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information and the eulogy written by Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

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of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

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THROUGH EDUCATION