



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Marie Michelle Emmerich

Sister Marie Michelle Emmerich, 73, passed away peacefully at DePaul Hospital, Bridgeton, Missouri in the early evening of October 31, 2022.

The first of six children was born to Rose (Esler) and Franklin Emmerich on April 18, 1949, in Mattoon, Illinois. She was baptized at Sacred Heart Church, Effingham, Illinois on May 1, 1949, and named Phyllis Rose. She shared her youth with two sisters and three brothers.

Phyllis attended Sacred Heart Grade School in Effingham. She enrolled at St. Anthony High School in Effingham because Sacred Heart did not have a high school. Both of these schools were staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. During her high school years, she took small jobs to help with the tuition and cost of books. She was employed as a housekeeper for elderly women, a nursing assistant in the local hospital, worked in the laundry and was a receptionist at a Holiday Inn and provided childcare for a private family.

Even as a child, Phyllis wanted to become a sister. However, her parents wanted her to wait until she had completed high school. After graduation, she entered as a postulant on August 24, 1967, at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, Missouri. She was received as a novice on July 27, 1968, and given the name Marie Michelle. She made promises on July 28, 1969, and professed final vows on August 3, 1975, at St. Boniface, Quincy, Illinois.

She earned a bachelor's degree in English from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1971; a master's degree in communication arts from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana in 1978 and a doctoral degree in education from St. Louis University in 2004.

Sister Marie Michelle was a secondary teacher for six years at Notre Dame High School, Quincy, Illinois. Following a year of teaching at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis, Missouri, she served as director of communications at Maria Center for Lifelong Learning on the Sancta Maria in Ripa campus for nine years. She then was the director of pastoral planning and vice-chancellor for the diocese of Belleville, Illinois. From 1994-1997, she was a staff member to the SSND Leadership for the North American Major Area (NAMA) coordinating long-range planning. She then became principal of Notre Dame High School, St. Louis until 2016. Following a sabbatical, she served as a grant writer for St. Vincent de Paul Council in East St. Louis, Illinois.

She was remembered as a person who deeply loved her family and after the death of her parents and as the oldest was often seen as a matriarchal figure for the family. She had a great love of the poor and her ministry as a grant writer for St. Vincent de Paul secured many needed funds for the Council to continue to carry out their mission. She had a brilliant mind but was also gentle, patient, persistent when required and present to her colleagues and co-workers.

**Birth**  
April 18, 1949

**Baptism**  
May 1, 1949

**Profession**  
July 28, 1969

**Death**  
October 31, 2022

**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

*continued*

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*Sister Marie Michelle  
Emmerich*

In her last full-time ministry, Sister Marie Michelle served as principal at Notre Dame High School for 19 years. During her tenure, the school transitioned to an iPad school and a focus on science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM). She facilitated many parish processes, parish council meetings, and assisted in the development of lay leadership in the Church. She also facilitated cross-cultural SSND meetings in Italy, Germany, Hungary, Guam and Japan. She was a facilitator at the SSND 18th General Chapter in 1987, held in Rome. She served on numerous committees and boards, using her expertise as an educator, facilitator, grant writer and long-range planner. She described her ministry as “giving persons a sense of hope by sowing the seeds of hope and laying the groundwork for a future full of hope.” May she now rest in the loving embrace of her God in whom she placed so much hope during her lifetime.

Sister Marie Michelle passed away peacefully on October 31, 2022, around 6:00 p.m. at DePaul Hospital, Bridgeton, Missouri following complications from surgery. Family members and SSND community members were keeping vigil and praying with her as she gave her life back to her God.

Funeral services were held at Theresa Center, Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, Missouri on November 5, 2022. Following a viewing of her body, the reading of her biography and sharing of memories, the Mass of Resurrection was celebrated. Rev. Ralph Parthie, OFM, was presider, assisted by Sister Marie Michelle’s brother, Deacon Joseph Emmerich. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. Family members, colleagues, classmates, former students, friends, SSNDs and Associates attended the funeral services. A luncheon was served to the guests in Theresa Center auditorium.

Sister Marie Michelle was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her sisters, Patti Devall and Linda Gruenwald; her brothers, Deacon Joseph, James and Gerald.

*By Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*

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