

# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Mary Ann Srnka



**Birth**  
June 13, 1944

**Baptism**  
July 2, 1944

**Profession**  
July 30, 1964

**Death**  
August 9, 2020

**Burial**  
Spalding, Michigan

*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 Mary Ann was born on June 13, 1944 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is the only girl of the family, blessed with her two brothers, Emil and Lester. She was born to Lester and Margaret (Ott) Srnka. A month before her fifth birthday the family moved to a farm near Spalding, Michigan.

During Sister Mary Ann's 76 years of life her spirit was alive and awake, seeking the presence of God whether she was not yet fully aware of it or deeply focused on it. The love of the risen Jesus was alive and present in her family on the farm cooking and sewing with her Mom, berry picking with her Dad, fishing with Les or ice fishing with Richard.

The power and love of Jesus was alive in her self-gift as she entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) and professed on July 30, 1964. Sister Mary Ann earned a bachelor's degree in education from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee and a master's degree in education from Michigan State University in East Lansing. She served in secondary education for 13 years at West Catholic High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was elected to leadership with the former Milwaukee Province, serving as a provincial councilor for eight years.

She had a spirit of discovery, of risking, of embracing challenges, of encouraging those she taught to use their gifts...whether in home economics and cooking classes, religious education or the many forms of crafts in adult courses. The spirit of Jesus was alive in her as she spent time and energy on the Provincial Council and in her leadership role at Mt. Calvary with the retired sisters. Sister Mary Ann inspired and nourished others with her love of creation, flowers and vegetable gardens. But she just couldn't outsmart those squirrels in her backyard from feeding on the bird seeds! Her concern for the care of the earth for future generations manifested itself in our SSND Land Ethic Statement, on which she worked so diligently.

Her friends want to remember how she made them smile with creative meals and were thankful she taught them how to cook fish and venison. She gave joy to others through her beautiful creations, always using the things of nature in delicate cards, mini ornaments and vases made from the bark of trees, corn husk wreaths and so much more. She tried to pour her love of beauty into each piece, sometimes it worked well and sometimes she had to start over again or abandon her dream. She believed each one of us must struggle to become all we are called to be, to use the gifts with which God has graced everyone of us.

During the past months she was deeply inspired by the reflection on the Trinity in George Maloney's book, "Called to Intimacy." Each one of us struggles, as she did, to draw closer to the Trinity, to somehow understand that "All we have to do is simply allow ourselves to be carried along in each hour, surrendering to the "insideness" of God's energies of love." (pp. 49-50) She often said, "I don't understand it, but I love it!" May we be inspired by her life to cooperate with the Father, the Son and the Spirit - the Creator, Redeemer, the Spirit - who dwell within us so we may one day be fully united with Sister Mary Ann and all of our loved ones. The power of God's love was alive in her whether she was

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visiting with nieces and nephews in Las Vegas, in the valleys and mountains of Guatemala or searching for hidden treasures at rummage sales with her niece, Wendy, or her friend, Sister Pat. Somehow she always found some treasure, something for the next project!

Our dear Sister Mary Ann, we mourn your loss among us. Yet you dwell in that safe place in our hearts where no struggle or pain can reach you. There was a saying that you wrote on a card from the book “Called to Intimacy” that touched you so these past months. “...Jesus is truly risen and lives totally in his infinite power and love within me.” (p. 22)

Sister Mary Ann Srnka was born to eternal life on Sunday, August 9, 2020. Sister Mary Ann is survived by her brother, Leslie (Mayme) Srnka; nieces, Wendy (Richard) Sexton, Lisa (Mark) Fisher, and Kelly (Edward) Castellanos; numerous grand and great-grand nieces and nephews and her SSND Community. She was preceded in death by her parents and a brother, Emil. On Wednesday, August 12, 2020, the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Joseph’s Church in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

*Sister Mary Ann Srnka*

*By Sister Marie Rose Van Duerzen, SSND*

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