



**Birth**  
June 24, 1926

**Baptism**  
June 27, 1926

**Profession**  
July 31, 1946

**Death**  
January 10, 2022

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria in Ripa  
Cemetery, St. Louis

*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

## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Mary Berenice Hartke

On June 24, 1926, the fifth of ten children was born to Clara (Cremer) and Aloysius Hartke on a farm near Dieterich, Illinois. She was baptized three days later, on June 27, at St. Aloysius Church, Bishop Creek, Illinois, and named Veronica Marie. The family of five girls and five boys included her two older sisters who both became School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND), Sister Mary Claritus and Sister Mary Lois, and a brother who became a Franciscan priest, Father Simon.

Veronica began school at the age of five. She was taught by the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. From early childhood, she desired to follow her two older sisters into religious life. When she completed elementary school, her parents permitted her to enter the aspiranture at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. During these high school years, her desire to become a SSND was deepened.

Veronica entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa on August 25, 1943. As a second-year candidate, she was sent to teach the third and fourth grades at St. Aloysius School, St. Louis. She was received into the novitiate on July 30, 1945, and given the name, Mary Berenice. She pronounced her first vows on July 31, 1946, and final vows on July 31, 1952.

Sister Berenice received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Webster College (now University), St. Louis, in 1955, and a master's degree in education from St. Louis University, St. Louis, in 1973.

Sister Berenice ministered in formal Catholic education for 58 years. She taught at St. Joseph, Conway, Arkansas; St. Aloysius Gonzaga, St. Louis; St. Boniface, Koelztown, Missouri; St. Henry, Belleville, Illinois; Immaculate Conception, Marrero, Louisiana; Immaculate Conception, West Alton, Missouri; All Souls, Overland, Missouri; St. Marianne, Pico Rivera, California; St. Anthony, Quincy, Illinois; and St. Anthony, Effingham, Illinois.

She also served as principal at Immaculate Conception, West Alton, Missouri; Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Louis; St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles, Missouri; and St. Anthony, Quincy, Illinois. In her retirement years, she tutored at Notre Dame Tutorial/Learning Center at Sancta Maria in Ripa for six years. Sister Berenice was missioned to Veronica House, The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri, in 2009, and Anna House in 2018. She celebrated 75 years of religious profession in 2021. She passed away peacefully in the early evening of January 10, 2022, at Anna House.

The reading of the biography, sharing of memories and Mass of Resurrection, with Father Thomas Santen as presider, were held at Theresa Center chapel on January 14, 2022. The funeral services were attended by her sister, Catherine Hardick, nieces, nephews, extended family members, friends and SSND. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa Cemetery. A luncheon was served for the guests in the Theresa Center auditorium.

Sister Berenice's childhood years were greatly influenced by her parents' strong

*continued*

# *In Loving Memory*



*Sister Mary Berenice Hartke*



faith and spirituality, which she sought to imitate in her own life. She was a very successful teacher and principal. She was an excellent mentor to younger teachers. She cherished her ministry of educating hundreds of children during her years as an educator. She was known for her many acts of kindness, her loving care for others and her sensitivity to the needs of others. She was a gentle, grateful woman with a ready smile.

Sister Berenice is survived by her sister, Catherine Hardick; nieces, nephews, extended family members and SSND in community. She was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters: Sister Mary Claritus, SSND, Sister Mary Lois, SSND, and Martha Wentz; her brothers: Father Simon, OFM, Henry, Richard, Herman and Jerome.

May Sister Berenice now rejoice as she is welcomed into eternal life by her God whom she served so faithfully during her many years as a School Sister of Notre Dame.

*By Sister Carol Marie Willdt, SSND*

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