



In Loving Memory

Sister Mary DeMontfort Berchtold

Sister Mary DeMontfort Berchtold, 95, passed away peacefully on September 15, 2019 at Anna House, The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri. The third child and daughter of Mary Elizabeth (Gier) and Stephen Berchtold was born in Alexander, Illinois, on October 21, 1923. She was baptized on October 28, 1923, at Visitation Church in Alexander, Illinois, and named Gertrude Frances. Three years later, the family moved to Sigel, Illinois, her mother's home town, so the children could attend a Catholic school. Gertrude had two brothers and three sisters.

Birth
October 21, 1923

Baptism
October 28, 1923

Profession
July 31, 1946

Death
September 15, 2019

Burial
Sancta Maria in Ripa
Cemetery, St, Louis, MO

Gertrude received her elementary education at St. Michael's Grade School, staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois. She enrolled in Sigel High School, a 3-year public high school located in the parish school building. Two of the three faculty members were Sisters of St. Francis. Her fourth year of secondary education was at Teutopolis Township High School staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

After graduation, Gertrude was employed as an office girl at Teutopolis Township High School and then at Kingwood Oil Company in Effingham, Illinois. Three months later, she began work in Shelbyville, Illinois, after successfully competing for a state position in the Welfare Office for Old Age Assistance in the county. She resigned this position after 17 months and followed her grade school dream of becoming a sister.

Gertrude entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa in St. Louis on October 15, 1943. She was received into the novitiate on July 30, 1945 and given the name, Mary DeMontfort. Profession of first vows was on July 31, 1946 and final vows on July 31, 1952.

For 13 years, she taught elementary children at St. Francis de Sales in St. Louis and St. Francis of Assisi in Teutopolis, Illinois. She taught high school at St. Joseph in Cairo, Illinois, for one year.

She earned a bachelor's degree in English from Webster College, now University in St. Louis, in 1955 and a master's degree in higher education from St. Louis University in 1964.

In 1960, Sister DeMontfort was appointed registrar at the former Notre Dame College in St. Louis. When the college closed in 1977, she served on the secretarial staff for eleven years at the former St. Louis Province's vocation office and spiritual development office, which included a tape library. She served on the secretarial staff for Maria Center for five years and as a development staff member at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis for seven years. She then volunteered in the Notre Dame High School library until her transfer to Veronica House in June 2016. As her health declined, she was admitted to Anna House in September 2018. She passed away peacefully around 11:45 p.m. on September 15, 2019, the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, as a Sister prayed with

*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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Berchtold*



her. Four days earlier, her sister, Marie Knoke in Champaign, Illinois, was also called home to God.

The wake/prayer service was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on September 19, 2019. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Bruce Forman as president. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. A niece, Mary McFadden, from the state of Washington represented the family. Parishioners from St. Michael, Shrewsbury, MO; friends, colleagues and SSNDs attended the funeral services.

Sister DeMontfort is survived by her brother Leo Berchtold of Rathdrum, Idaho, nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother; Albert Berchtold and her sisters; Monica McFadden, Isabel Richards and Marie Knoke.

Sister DeMontfort lived for over 40 years at St. Michael's convent, Shrewsbury, Missouri, and was very active in the parish. She served on the liturgy committee, was a lector, choir member, Eucharistic minister and coordinated Eucharistic adoration in the parish. She found beauty in many places, especially in nature and her garden and flowers. She often designed floral arrangements for the church and the convent chapel. She was a member of the Young Catholic Musicians choral group.

Sister DeMontfort was a spiritual director for the Legion of Mary. The Legion's fundamental Marian devotion is that of St. Louis DeMontfort, whose name she was given when she was received into the novitiate. Her great devotion to Our Lady was honored by her death on one of Mary's feast days.

She was a very gentle, compassionate person who had an intuitive gift for another person's needs and creatively responded to them. She was a good community member. Her witness of loving service and her prayerful attitude enabled her to help build up the Body of Christ in her many contacts. May she now rejoice with Mary and her family members as she enters into her new life with her God.

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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