



Birth
Nov. 30, 1915

Baptism
Dec. 2, 1915

Profession
July 20, 1939

Death
Aug. 8, 2016

Burial
Notre Dame of
Elm Grove Cemetery
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

*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 DePaul Olszewski, SSND

This story begins in Poland where Sister DePaul's parents were born. Her father, Joseph was a descendant from Polish royalty and born in Tarnow. He served in the Polish army and was engaged to Hedwig Wantuch. Being a brilliant young man, he began to see the distressing future of Europe and he made a plan to escape from the army and flee to America. He told Hedwig to wait and he would send for her. He left the army and traveled to America. On his arrival, he was imprisoned for a time but eventually released. He found work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania but later moved to Michigan City, Indiana. Hedwig joined him there and they were married at St. Stanislaus Church.

The Olszewski family had four girls and were hoping the new baby they were expecting in 1915 would be a boy. However, the child was another girl whom they named Elizabeth. Sister DePaul noted in her autobiography, "...their 'boy' desire was somehow imbibed into my being, because no truer 'tomboy' could be found." Four sons were born to the family after her. During her childhood, Elizabeth was called Elk, Liz and Lizzie. It was only the School Sisters of Notre Dame, her teachers at St. Stanislaus School, who correctly pronounced and called her by her given name.

Elizabeth was 6 years old when she began her elementary schooling at St. Stanislaus. She said, "From the very first day, I liked the sisters and I grew up with the hope of being a sister." She enjoyed helping the sisters in school, in church and even assisted them with grocery shopping. After graduating from eighth grade, she attended public high school for one year. She could not make up her mind what to do in regard to her vocation.

Because of her mother's poor health, Elizabeth helped at home and also worked at different jobs until 1935, when at the age of 20, she entered the SSND candidature at the motherhouse in Milwaukee. She completed her high school studies there. As a candidate, she taught first graders at St. Casimir School in Milwaukee. Received as a novice in 1938, she was given the religious name, Mary Vincent DePaul. Later she changed her name to Mary DePaul. She professed first vows July 20, 1939. She received a bachelor's degree in education at Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1956 and earned a master's degree in education at DePaul University, Chicago in 1967.

Sister DePaul served in education for 54 years. At the beginning of her teaching career, she taught first and second grades at St. Paul, Chicago; St. Mary, Fort Wayne, Indiana; and SS Cyril and Methodius, Milwaukee. In 1961, she began teaching fifth and sixth grades. Later she taught seventh and eighth grades and also served as school principal. Those schools were St. John Cantius, Chicago; St. Joseph, West Allis, Wisconsin; St. Henry, Rosebush, Michigan; St. Mary and St. Isidore, Grand Rapids, Michigan; St. Joseph, Logansport, Indiana; and her alma mater, St. Stanislaus, Michigan City, Indiana.

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary DePaul
Olszewski*



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**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

She commented about her lifetime ministry in education, “I must honestly say I enjoyed teaching very much. I liked all the grades, but my favorite grade was eighth grade. Book study was important but so were various other activities such as sports and field trips.” One of Sister DePaul’s special stories was about the time she took her eighth graders on a field trip to the Indianapolis 500. When they got there, she was told that she didn’t have enough chaperones and that she had to leave with her 29 students. She made a deal with the guard. She said that if only one child was out of order, he could send them home. At the end of the tour, he told her that he never saw such orderly students.

In addition to her service as an educator, Sister Mary De Paul was one of 678 School Sisters of Notre Dame from across the United States who participated in “The Nun Study,” a longitudinal study of aging and Alzheimer’s disease to determine the causes and prevention of Alzheimer’s disease, other brain diseases, and the mental and physical disability associated with old age. All of the participants agreed to donate their brains upon death for neuropathologic studies.

She retired briefly in 1986 but then served for six years as a substitute teacher. In 1993, Sister DePaul joined the Notre Dame of Elm Grove community, where she ministered by her prayer and presence. Her ministry continued when she moved in 2011 to Our Lady of the Angels Convent, Greenfield, Wisconsin. A special memory for many of the sisters are the summertime community picnics when Sister DePaul would dress up as the Candy Lady with pockets full of sweet treats she’d share with everyone.

Sister Mary DePaul Olszewski died Aug. 8, 2016 at Our Lady of the Angels, Greenfield, Wisconsin. She was 100. She is survived by her dear sister Vern Skierkowski, loving extended family of nieces and nephews, cousins, dear friends and the SSND Community.

We thank you, Sister DePaul, for your steadfast faithfulness in teaching and encouraging so many students through the years, helping them to be all that they could be. We are also grateful not only for what you taught us in community about being energetic and generous about life in service to others, but also how to balance the seriousness of life with good humor.

This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information and the eulogy presented by Sister Mary Elise Zettel, SSND