



**Birth**  
January 27, 1922

**Baptism**  
February 5, 1922

**Profession**  
July 28, 1944

**Death**  
March 3, 2018

**Burial**  
Chatawa 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

## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Mary Jo Hofmeier

Sister Mary Jo Hofmeier, 96, died Saturday, March 3, 2018, at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi. She was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, the fourth of five children to William and Brigid (O'Shaughnessy) Hofmeier.

Sister Mary Jo's mother taught elementary school children in West Virginia until her doctor advised the family to move to a drier climate, so when Mary Jo was four years old, the family moved to Breckenridge, Texas. In 1932, the Hofmeiers moved again and established their family home in San Antonio.

Of the Hofmeier household setting, Sister Mary Jo mused, "With my brother and sisters my upbringing was in a usually peaceful, loving environment. Naturally, this experience in 'getting along' affected my relationships during school days and community living. I have been blessed with the example of the positive attitude of my parents, their energy and enthusiasm. I do feel that the challenge of my family's early moves had an impact on my later life. From these I learned that God is with me wherever I go. God always blessed me with supporting family and friends. The joy always dominated the pain."

In her writings, Sister Mary Jo related, "I began fourth grade at St. Gerard's with the School Sisters of Notre Dame. All my teachers were good teachers and good friends. I could feel their love and concern for us students. Gradually, I began to feel that I, too, would like to be a sister. My parents and my teachers, especially Sister Theoda Eversman, encouraged me." She continued, "After the eighth grade, I shyly asked Mother if I could go to St. Louis to be a sister the next year. Both my mother and the sisters advised me to finish high school at St. Gerard's."

It was after her junior year at St. Gerard's that Mary Jo, with her parents' approval, applied and was accepted to Notre Dame High School as a candidate of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

"After three happy years of candidature, I was received as a novice and was given the name Mary Brigid—a happy surprise to my family—for it was my mother's name." Novice Mary Brigid looked forward to her final profession, but emergency surgery and recovery required her to be away from the novitiate for longer than canon law allowed. The following year, she began her second year of novitiate. Finally, in the summer of 1944, she pronounced her vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame.

During the following years, Sister Brigid received degrees from Webster College in St. Louis, Xavier University in New Orleans, San Diego College for Women and Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology in New Orleans. She stated, "My education had a marked influence on my life. I might say my future life and ministry flowed from and was enriched by the opportunities given me for a well-rounded education."

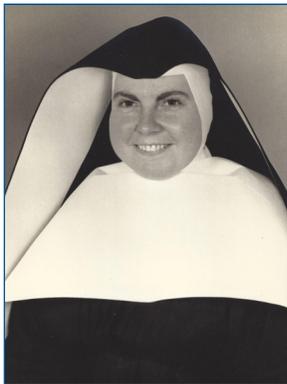
Sister Mary Jo continues, "After the loving care of my God, my family and my friends, what I enjoy most in life is teaching and sharing the good news and

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Jo Hofmeier*



To make a memorial gift,  
please visit our secure  
online donation page  
[www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate](http://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate)



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

Transforming the world  
through education

surfacing leadership to carry on God's work. I thrive on freedom of movement and find most change refreshing." Page 2

Sister Brigid's teaching life began in Conway, Arkansas. It seems as though she applied a favorite subject, geography, as her education missions took her to classrooms in many states in the west and in the south—in Tyler, Texas, New Orleans, St. Louis, San Diego, Albuquerque, then back to the New Orleans area. In the last two schools: San Jose in Albuquerque and St. Philip Neri in Metairie, Louisiana, Sister Brigid was the school principal.

Sharing the good news through adult programs gained more prominence as she moved from the school in Metairie, Louisiana, to become the Associate Director of the Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Almost 1,000 religion teachers were the beneficiaries of the plans she developed and implemented for in-service programs and certification in the archdiocese. It was at the end of this service in 1975, that Sister Brigid returned to her baptismal name, Mary Jo.

Developing leaders to carry on God's work was central to the goals of the pastoral teams that Sister Mary Jo joined in the mid-70s. As a result, she helped Texas parishes in Plano, Duncanville and Texarkana meet these leadership needs. For ten years in this setting, Sister Mary Jo's additional duties ranged from moderating marriage encounter circles to visiting the federal prison for the Catholic Bible Hour.

Early in her religious life, Sister Mary Jo had heard Father Tom Potts speak of the mission in Ghana and the needs of the Ghanaians, which made an impact on her. Decades later, she related, "When I was 62, I volunteered in Ghana, West Africa. For the next eight years, I used all my educational skills as I organized catechesis for teachers, catechists and seminarians throughout the Archdiocese of Accra." When Sister Mary Jo was asked to name her most interesting ministry, she responded, "My ministry in Ghana was by far the most interesting, enjoyable and rewarding of my career. I found that the Ghanians lead such simple lives; they make the most of each day."

On her return to the United States, Sister Mary Jo volunteered her services in parishes in San Antonio, which brought her nearer to her much-loved family. She attended to them along with hosting Bible studies, working in minority housing arrangements and visiting old friends.

Sister Mary Jo dreamed of being a hospitality and resource person. She stated, "I'd like to be with people who really need an understanding heart, someone who believes in them, who affirms them and encourages them in getting on with their lives." She fulfilled that dream by responding to an SSND call to minister to the elderly in a retirement community in Sun City, Arizona.

From Sun City, Sister Mary Jo did retire to St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa in 2007. Throughout her life, even while she dealt with the ups and downs of her last illness, she lived her dream of being supportive and responsive to others. Sharing scripture was also very important to her. She died peacefully late in the evening of March 3, 2018. Faithful friends, Angie and Gene Johnson, along with her SSND family were there to pray with and comfort her during her last hours. May Sister Mary Jo rest in peace.

*By Sister MarieClare Powell, SSND*