



Birth
Jan. 14, 1912

Baptism
Jan. 21, 1912

Profession
Aug. 21, 1936

Death
Oct. 13, 2016

Burial
Sancta Maria
in Ripa Cemetery
St. Louis, Missouri

*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 Joleen Huelsmann, SSND

On Jan. 14, 1912, the fifth girl was born to Joseph and Charlotta [Anderson] Huelsmann in St. Louis, Missouri. Baptized at St. Francis de Sales Church on Jan. 21, she was named Kathryn Bernardine. In the family, Kathryn filled a gap left by the death of an infant sister, Charlotta, one and a half years earlier. A brother, two years younger, was a constant playmate as she grew up.

Kathryn attended Grant's Public School for six years. In seventh grade, she registered at St. Francis de Sales Grade School. She was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame and immediately fell in love with the sisters. They prepared her for her first Communion on Christmas day in 1924. After graduation, she enrolled in a two-year commercial course at Roosevelt High School. When she completed the course, she was employed at Daybrite Reflector Company as a receptionist/secretary.

During her five years of employment Kathryn often thought of doing something higher and better with her life. She was an active member of the sodality, attended Mass daily, and often made lunch hour visits to the church. A priest, who was a family friend, suggested that she might want to serve God as a woman religious. She sought her parents' permission and they asked her to wait a year because of the Great Depression. Her job was secure but her father's and sister's jobs were not. Seeing her desire, her parents eventually relented. Two weeks after they gave her permission to enter, both her father's and sister's jobs became secure.

Kathryn received the candidate's bonnet on April 18, 1933, from Mother General Mary Almeda Schricker who was visiting the North American provinces during the centennial celebration of the foundation of SSND. Kathryn spent the first year in studies. She was missioned to St. Mary in Cape Girardeau, Missouri during her second year of candidature. She was received into the novitiate on Aug. 20, 1935, and given the name Mary Joleen. Profession of first vows was Aug. 21, 1936 and final vows on Aug. 21, 1942.

She received a bachelor's degree in geography from St. Louis University in 1951 and a master's degree in elementary education from St. Louis University in 1957.

Four days after her first profession, Sister Joleen was missioned to All Souls, Overland, Missouri. After 10 years, she was assigned to St. Anthony, Sullivan, Missouri as principal and teacher of five grades. Five years later, she was transferred back to All Souls as principal and eighth grade teacher. She remained there for six years and then was missioned to Immaculate Conception School, Marrero, Louisiana for one year.

She returned to St. Louis as supervisor of SSND schools in the province. Two years later, she was elected a provincial councilor for the former St. Louis Province. Upon the completion of two terms in provincial leadership, she became the second director of the Notre Dame Mission Crusade for 12 years. During the next 17 years, she ministered as switchboard operator

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Mary Joleen Huelsmann



and receptionist at the former St. Louis motherhouse. At the age of 88, she “retired.” Her retirement years consisted of caring for family members, prayer, and volunteering in various community service roles.

Sister Joleen suffered a painful neck disorder and had to wear a collar to support her neck and head. In September 2004, she was missioned to Anna House following a stroke. She celebrated her 80 years of religious profession in 2016. At the age of 104, she died peacefully at Anna House at 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 13, 2016.

The wake/vigil was held at Anna House and Theresa Center on Oct. 25, 2016. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Edmond Fitzgibbon as presider. Nieces, relatives, former students, close friends and SSNDs were present to celebrate her life. She was preceded in death by her parents; her sisters Anna Wilson, Jean Anderlini, Elizabeth Daniel and Charlotta Huelsmann; and her brother Anton who was killed in World War II.

Sister Joleen was a generous, gracious and cheerful person who gave of her time and energy wherever possible. An excellent educator, she inspired her students and colleagues. She furthered the work of the Notre Dame Mission Crusade and would often respond to requests with a handwritten note. She also helped in packing the barrels of clothing for the poor in Honduras and Sierra Leone. She was a true missionary offering her talents in a supportive role to our sisters.

A deeply prayerful person, she accompanied many on their journey to eternity. Her interest in people, world events and SSND happenings was maintained until her death. An appreciative and grateful woman, she thanked many during the days preceding her death. She gave of herself with joy and love. May she now rejoice with family and friends who have gone before her as she is welcomed into eternal life and receives the reward God has ready for her!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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Central Pacific Province

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