



Birth
November 7, 1923

Baptism
November 11, 1923

Profession
July 28, 1944

Death
November 2, 2019

Burial
Santa Maria in Ripa
Cemetery, St. Louis, MO

*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 Madeleine Sophie Witt

Sister Mary Madeleine Sophie Witt, 95, died peacefully at Anna House, The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri on All Souls Day, November 2, 2019. The second child of Marie Teresa [Ullman] and Carl Witt was born in Quincy, Illinois on November 7, 1923. Four days later, she was baptized at St. Mary's Church and named Mary Carlene. An older brother and two younger sisters completed the Witt family.

Mary Carlene began her formal education when she was enrolled a public shool kindergarten at the age of four. She completed her elementary education at St. Peter's Parochial School in Quincy staffed by the Sisters of the Precious Blood from O'Fallon, Missouri. At the reception of her first Holy Communion, she promised Jesus that she would become a nun. During her high school years at Notre Dame High School in Quincy, she became acquainted with the School Sisters of Notre Dame and grew to know and love this congregation.

Mary Carlene entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa on August 27, 1941. After two years in the candidature, she was received into the novitiate on July 27, 1943, and given the name Mary Madeleine Sophie. Profession of first vows was on July 28, 1944, and final vows on July 28, 1950.

She received a bachelor's degree in biology for the former LeClerc College, Belleville, Illinois in 1949; a master's degree in Theology from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana in 1963; a master's degree in Spirituality from the University of San Francisco in 1980.

Sister Madeleine Sophie taught for five years in elementary schools: St. John Nepomuk and St. Alphonsus [Rock] in St. Louis and St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles, Missouri. She taught secondary students at Loose Creek Public High School, Loose Creek, Missouri; St. Joseph, Conway, Arkansas; Notre Dame High School, St. Louis, Missouri; St. Paul High School, Santa Fe Springs, California; and Helias High School, Jefferson, City, Missouri.

She was directress of the aspirants from 1955-1964, and directress of the junior sisters from 1964-1968. After a sabbatical in the early 1990s, she began ten years of pastoral ministry at St. George, Linn and St. Thomas, St. Thomas, Missouri.

In 2002, she retired for several months at Mary, Queen of the Universe convent in St. Louis. When the convent closed in 2003, she was missioned to the motherhouse where she became involved in a variety of volunteer ministries. As her health failed, she was transferred to Veronica House in 2006 and to Anna House in 2010. She passed away peacefully and quietly in Anna House after taking a few sips of water at the lunch table on All Souls Day, November 2, 2019 – five days before her 96th birthday.

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Madeleine
Sophie Witt*



A wake service was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on November 7, 2019. During the service at Theresa Center, those in attendance sang “Happy Birthday.” The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Ralph Parthie, OFM as presider. Burial was in the Ripa cemetery. Her nephew, Charles Gilter of Florida; a cousin, Dave Ullman and his wife Theresa and another cousin were present for the funeral services as well as friends and Sisters. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother John Joseph and her sisters: Patricia Ann Hertig and Norma Mae Gilter.

During her 75 years of religious profession, Sister Madeleine Sophie touched all age groups from teaching elementary children and high school students to director of college-age students who entered SSND to working with adult parishioners as a pastoral minister. In these various ministries, she aided persons of all ages to grow to love God and one another.

Sister Madeleine Sophie saw service to others as very important and tried to instill this conviction in those to whom she ministered. During her years at Helias High School in Jefferson City, she taught two elective courses for seniors: Christian Service, which gave the students an opportunity to be of service in the community and Religious Education Teacher Training for students interested in learning the skills and content of religious education. She saw this course as a need for future parents.

She was remembered as a person with a twinkle in her eye and a welcoming smile. As a community member, she was sensitive to the needs of others, frequently encouraging a picnic lunch at the end of a long week of teaching. She was a life-long learner who continued to update herself in the areas of theology and ministry. A kind, gentle person, she touched the lives of many during her years of ministry and retirement.

The heart of Sister Madeleine Sophie’s ministry was knowing God as the “Great Giver of Love” and desiring to share God’s love with others. May she now rejoice in that love of her God as she is welcomed into her new and eternal life!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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