



In Loving Memory

Sister M. Regine Collins

Sister Regine was born May 4, 1924, the third of 12 children, to Richard and Jennie Collins. Three weeks later she was baptized and named Frances Monica and was called Monica. The family home was on a large farm in upper Michigan about a mile from the small fishing town of Fairport, Michigan.

When Regine was five, she began attending the rural school in Fairport with her two older sisters in a one room classroom. The teacher taught 40 pupils from kindergarten through eighth grade. Her mother gave the family religious training from home because they lived 20 miles from their church and were not always able to travel. She and her sister received their First Holy Communion and Confirmation at the same time.

Sister Regine attended high school at St. Joseph's in Escanaba, Michigan, with her sisters. "We worked for our room and board since our home was 60 miles away. This involved light housework and caring for children of young couples." It was at St. Joseph's that Sister Regine made her first acquaintance with sisters and began thinking about a vocation to religious life. "In my junior year I had a few talks with the sisters which settled my mind. My parents gave me willing consent and I entered the Candidature after graduating from high school."

When Sister Regine was a Candidate she made a snow sculpture of a Candidate sitting on a chair. When her superiors decided she should study for a Master's in fine art, they remembered the snow sculpture she made. Sister Regine received her Master's with a major in art from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, in 1962. Her Master's thesis was a five-foot woodcarving of Blessed Mother Mary and the child Jesus, inspired by Mary's words to Blessed Alix Le Clerc, "Take this Child and make him grow."

This statue is now in the lobby of Notre Dame of Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin. In 1967, Sister Regine began to teach art at Mount Mary College (now University) and completed her career there in 1981. While at Mount Mary she created a Mary carving for the church at St. James in Franklin, Wisconsin. In 1982, she created a carving of the Nativity for the same parish.

In 1981, Sister Regine was called to leave Mount Mary University and begin a much-needed service of financial management for St. Leo parish and school in Milwaukee. In June of 1984, she became executive director of Milwaukee Spectrum, a new high school for troubled girls in the inner city.

In 1992, Sister Regine became the administrator of the three buildings at the former Milwaukee Province campus on Marshall Street in Milwaukee until 2001. "During this time the Baltimore Province asked me to do a wood carving of Blessed Theresa for the cathedral there. My design was a central panel portraying Blessed Theresa in a relief carving with a small panel on each side with carved letters stating our mission and our call."

Birth
May 4, 1924

Baptism
May 11, 1924

Profession
August 5, 1944

Death
April 6, 2020

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

continued

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Always the artist, when Sister Regine retired to the newly renovated retirement home of Notre Dame of Elm Grove in 2005, she found places for all the pictures that had been stored in the basement. Gradually, she began to experience trouble beginning with her knees and shoulders and moving to her memory. In 2012, she was sent to the community of Our Lady of the Angels, Greenfield, Wisconsin, a memory care facility.

On April 6, 2020 Sister Regine entered her final home. Truly, sister is celebrating her 96th year with her loving God. Survived by her sisters Rosalie, Rita, Pauline, Eleanor and Miriam, brothers Jim and Jude, nieces, nephews. Preceded in death by her parents Richard and Jenny, brother Gerard and sisters Catherine, Teresa and Virginia. A Memorial Mass and celebration of life will be planned at a later date.

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By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

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