



In Loving Memory

Sister Maureen Brinker

Sister Maureen Brinker, 94, passed away in the early evening of September 24, 2022, at Veronica House, Bridgeton, Missouri.

The sixth of nine children, and the fifth daughter, was born to Mary Elizabeth (Schlitt) and Charles Brinker on July 30, 1928, in St. Louis, Missouri. She was baptized at St. Francis de Sales Church, St. Louis, on August 12, 1928, and named Shirley Mae Margaret. A younger brother died when he was four months old. Shirley grew up with five sisters and two brothers. The eight living Brinker children had a happy childhood even though there were difficult times during the depression.

During ages four through twelve, Shirley spent time at the Little Flower Retirement and Retreat House, St. Louis, staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. She helped the sisters and her aunt and uncle, who were employees, assisting in the care of the residents.

Shirley attended St. Francis de Sales Elementary School, St. Louis, staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, (SSND). She would often help the sisters at school or in the convent. After graduation, she entered the Aspiranture at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. During these years, it became clear to her that God's call – her vocation - was to become like her SSND educators.

Shirley entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa on August 28, 1946. She was received into the novitiate on August 2, 1948, and was given the name Maureen. She professed first vows on August 3, 1949, and final vows on August 3, 1955.

Sister Maureen earned a bachelor's degree in Language Arts from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1957, and a master's degree in English from St Louis University in 1966.

Sister Maureen ministered in education for 51 years as an elementary, secondary and college teacher. As a second-year candidate, she was sent to teach 56 second graders at St. Mary's, New Orleans, Louisiana. After profession, she taught at All Souls, Overland, Missouri, for 7 years. She was a secondary teacher for 18 years, teaching at Notre Dame High School and St. Alphonsus (Rock) High School in St. Louis, Missouri; St. Francis Borgia High School, Washington, Missouri; St. Paul High School, Santa Fe Springs, California; Notre Dame High School, Burlington, Iowa; Teutopolis High School, Teutopolis, Illinois and St. Paul High School, Highland, Illinois. She spent four years as a college teacher at the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri. Following the closing of Notre Dame College, she taught for 21 years at Notre Dame Women's College (now University) in Kyoto, Japan, until her mandatory retirement in 1999.

Returning to the United States, she enjoyed a sabbatical. Sister Maureen then served as a receptionist and office manager for Catholic Family Counseling, and

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Birth
July 30, 1928

Baptism
August 12, 1928

Profession
August 3, 1949

Death
September 24, 2022

Burial
Sancta Maria in Ripa
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

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later, as an office manager for National Catholic Ministry to the Bereaved in St. Louis. From 2005-2018, she was a bookkeeper in the Finance Office of the former St. Louis Province. She performed voluntary service at Theresa Center, Sancta Maria in Ripa, until she was missioned to Veronica House, Bridgeton, Missouri, in 2020.

She passed away, unexpectedly, in the early evening of September 24, 2022, at Veronica House, Bridgeton, Missouri.

A prayer service was held at The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri, on September 29, 2022. The following morning, the funeral services were held at Theresa Center Chapel, St. Louis, with the reading of her biography, sharing of memories and the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial with her nephew, Rev. David Pfeiffer, MM, as presider. Attending the funeral services were her sister-in-law, Peggy Brinker, many nieces and nephews, extended family members, former students, friends, SSND and associates. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery, St. Louis.

In the early 1970s, Sister Maureen directed the *Focus on the Future* summer program for SSND at Sancta Maria in Ripa and Villa Gesu, the former SSND Retirement Home in St. Louis. She was one of the coordinators of the summer program in Japan and often was a translator for the non-Japanese speaking participants. She provided the English translation of *Caroline's Dream* authored by Sister Mary Magdalen Nomoto, SSND. She was a member of the Sancta Maria in Ripa choir and a participant in the annual SSND holiday concerts at Ripa.

Sister Maureen was very devoted to her family and often called them together to enjoy one another. She had a ready smile and a grateful heart, exemplified by the many thank you notes she sent to family members and others. She was a gifted linguist, knowing Latin, French and Japanese. She was especially appreciative of her years in Japan. She was grateful for sisters in community, her students, her friends, the cultural exchanges with alumnae and the many opportunities she had during her years of ministry in another culture. She concluded her autobiography with the conviction; "I know that the One who sent me on the Mission will be waiting for me to come home and tell the story of what I have learned. In this perception of death, dying will be my greatest act of love." May she now rest in peace and rejoice as she tells the story of her life to her Beloved God and is welcomed by her family members into eternal life.

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND



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