



In Loving Memory

Sister Rita Ann Eisner

Sister Rita Ann Eisner was born April 3, 1928, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin as the first child to her parents Francis and Olga Eisner. Three years later, her brother came along and later two more girls.

In Sister Rita Ann's early years, she helped her dad around the farm. She often told the funny memory, "A headless chicken took off chasing me around the yard. When I reached daddy safely, I couldn't figure out why he was laughing and crying." Rita Ann spent two years in kindergarten because "I couldn't get old enough for first grade." Sister Rita Ann spent two and a half years with the Dominican Sisters at Merrill. The family moved to their grandpa's farm in Bakerville, Wisconsin because her dad couldn't make enough money to keep the home.

The next two and a half years she studied with the Sorrowful Mother sisters in Corpus Christi School. She felt she had a vocation at that time. The family then moved to Marshfield, Wisconsin, so her dad could be near his barber shop. Before entering third grade, Sister Rita Ann took religious instructions with the country children so she could make her First Holy Communion. Her mom made her dress.

Sister Rita Ann entered the third grade at St. John's in Marshfield. Already in fourth grade she began her four year career as "assistant" sacristan. Every Saturday morning was spent with the sisters in Church.

Sister entered the convent after eighth grade. She had an aunt, Sister Rubena, that was a Notre Dame and she captivated her even though she only saw her five times. Sewing classes were her favorite at Longwood but she also liked math and science. She also played violin in the orchestra. As a candidate Sister Rita Ann already played music for a high Mass. Sister Rita Ann's favorite missions were the ones in small towns or villages: Amboy, Tilden, Rudolph, Crystal Falls and Calumet.

She began as an organist and teacher in the late 1940s in Rockford, Illinois, followed by similar assignments at St. Henry in Watertown, Wisconsin, and Holy Rosary in Chicago. By the late 1960s, she concluded her years in the classroom with an assignment at St. Phillip in the Diocese of La Crosse. Sister Rita Ann turned to parish work, serving across the Dioceses of Marquette, La Crosse and Chicago as a pastoral associate and director of religious education. Beginning in 1988, she served for a decade at Notre Dame Health Care Center in Elm Grove, first as an occupational therapy aide, then as an art therapist.

When joining the retired community both at Mount Calvary, Wisconsin and Elm Grove Sister Rita Ann wanted a prayerful experience, "teaching me slowly how to enter into the final lap of my journey to God." Sister had the privilege of making a 30 day retreat at the Christine Center at Willard and participated in the Chatawa Program.

Sister Rita Ann worked many hours with card designing and did pottery. In 1998, Sister Rita Ann retired. In November of 2006, she was invited to

continued

Birth
April 3, 1928

Baptism
May 6, 1928

Profession
July 31, 1947

Death
May 5, 2020

Burial
Notre Dame of Elm Grove,
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

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Mt. Calvary to give the sisters some guidance in art once a month. After doing this for three months she knew she had to continue because of the sisters' enthusiasm and gratitude. Sister also felt called to be part of the Earth Spirituality Center at Mt. Calvary. Sister enjoyed five years there and said of the experience, "In all of this, God is."

When Mt. Calvary closed once again, Sister formed community at Elm Grove. She continued making cards, planting flowers and enjoyed each and every sister she lived with. Sister's life has been busy, happy and varied.

Sister Rita was born to Eternal Life May 5, 2020, age 92. Survived by her sisters Carolyn Landing and Marlene Hoffman, her brother James, nieces, nephews, and the SSND community. Preceded in death by her parents Francis and Olga. A Memorial Mass and celebration of life will be planned at a later date.

Sister Rita Ann Eisner

By Sister Marie Rose Van Duren, SSND

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