



Birth
April 29, 1929

Baptism
May 5, 1929

Profession
July 22, 1953

Death
December 9, 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

In Loving Memory

Sister Rose (Mary Steven) Feess

Sister Rose was born to her parents, Edmund and Mildred Feess in Appleton, Wisconsin. She had a sister who was three years older named Janet. Sister Rose Marie always shared that she believed she was named after her sister's rag doll.

The family moved quite a bit around Wisconsin and so she was in three different schools. For the first grade, she was at St. Mary, Kaukauna, second grade was at Sacred Heart, Sherwood, and sixth grade through high school were at St. Mary School in Menasha. In second grade, she developed a love for the Franciscan Sisters who taught her. She met the School Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Mary School and her attraction for religious life gradually grew. Her years through school were happy ones. She says, "I loved life with all its fun and frolic." But she was continually haunted by the conviction of a call to something higher. Finally, the "Hound of Heaven," a Poem by Francis Thompson, tracked her down and she entered the candidature on September 3, 1950, when she was 21-years-old.

Through all these years another thought plagued her. She found herself at a very young age bargaining with God. The pain for this little seven-year-old was due to the fact that her parents had fallen away from the Church. She scared herself by promising God to be a sister, if He would bring her parents back into the Church. Through the years her parents supported the practice of faith for their two little girls, encouraging them to take active part in the life of the Catholic schools they attended. She was also prefect of the Sodality of Our Lady at different levels: intermediate, junior high and high school. Sister Rose Marie says that the spiritual benefits she enjoyed in Catholic school influenced her call to religious life.

Sister Rose spent most of her years in ministry as a junior high school teacher. She taught this level for 17 years and was gifted in calling out the best from her students. She was firm with them but they understood that she loved them and wanted them to do their best. She thoroughly enjoyed her years of retirement working as a volunteer at Notre Dame Middle School in Milwaukee. She finally retired at Notre Dame of Elm Grove, in Elm Grove, Wisconsin, at the age of 87.

A Private Funeral Mass and burial took place at Elm Grove on December 18, 2020. She is survived by nieces, cousins and the SSND community. Preceded in death by her parents, Edmund and Mildred, and her sister, Janet Restivo.

By Sister Elise Zettle, SSND

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