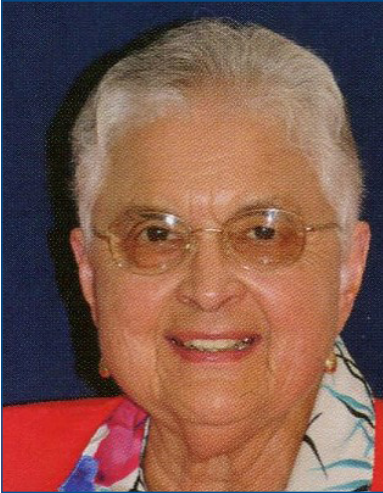


# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Sylvia (Mary Arthur) Provost



Birth  
August 5, 1933

Baptism  
August 27, 1933

Profession  
July 31, 1953

Death  
April 1, 2023

Burial  
Chatawa 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

Sister Sylvia Provost (formerly Mary Arthur) 89, passed away peacefully at Lakeview Regional Hospital, Covington, Louisiana, on April 1, 2023.

She was the second of three daughters born to Ethel Lee Travasos and Lazard Joseph Provost on August 5, 1933, in Port Arthur, Texas. She was baptized at St. Mary's Church on August 27, 1933, and named Sylvia Marie.

When Sylvia was three years old, the family moved to Galena Park, Texas, where her father was employed by the Texas Company refinery. Since there was no Catholic Church in the town, the family attended Mass at other country churches. Most of their neighbors were Baptist and the Baptist church was on the same block as their home, so Sylvia would go to their Bible classes and enjoyed their activities with the other children of the neighborhood.

Sylvia attended Galena Park Elementary School, Galena Park, for her first five years of elementary education. The family then moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, where relatives owned small grocery stores. Her father bought a corner grocery store located several blocks from Redemptorist Grade and High Schools. Sylvia delivered groceries to nearby residents and helped with many of the chores required to operate the store. She completed her elementary and secondary education at Redemptorist. She was very active in sports and other school activities. During this time, she injured her knee which would affect her for the rest of her life.

At Redemptorist, Sylvia was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). Earlier concerns related to stories of the "strict nuns" were soon dispelled and she grew to love the sisters. She helped in the classrooms and convent, even during the summers.

During her junior year, Sylvia expressed the desire to skip her senior year and enter the candidature. The sisters helped her by teaching her several courses in the summer to fulfill graduation requirements. Therefore, she and a friend, Ann Semel, (Sister Edmond Ann) entered the candidature on August 30, 1950, at Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, Missouri. As a second-year candidate, she was sent to teach 5th graders at St. Peter, St. Charles, Missouri. She was received into the novitiate on July 29, 1952, and given the name Mary Arthur. She professed first vows on July 31, 1953, and final vows on July 31, 1959. She later returned to her baptismal name.

Sister Sylvia received a bachelor's degree in history from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1961, and a master's degree in elementary administration from Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas, in 1972.

Following profession, she taught elementary children at Our Lady of Fatima, Galena Park, Texas; St. Philip, East St. Louis, Illinois; St. Francis Solanus,

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Sylvia (Mary  
Arthur) Provost*



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Quincy, Illinois; and Immaculate Conception, Marrero, Louisiana. She taught secondary students at Redemptorist High School, New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1966, was assigned as principal at St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Dallas, Texas.

In 1973, she responded to the call for volunteers to go to Africa. After six months of preparation, she was among the first five SSND from the former Dallas Province to go to Ghana, West Africa. She taught at St. Martin's Secondary School in Nsawam, Ghana. Returning to the U.S., she began teaching at Redemptorist Senior High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She soon realized that she needed time to interiorize her African experience. She spent the remainder of the year at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi. After this short sabbatical, she was principal at Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Chalmette, Louisiana, and at St. Gabriel, New Orleans, followed by teaching elementary children at St. Anthony, Bunkie, Louisiana.

By 1984, Sister Sylvia realized that she needed to leave the classroom and to pursue parish ministry. For the next 25 years, she and a friend, Sister Carol Nishke, ministered at St. Augustine Parish, an African American parish, in North Little Rock, Arkansas. During these years, Sister Sylvia served in a variety of ways which included: visiting parishioners, conducting workshops, delivering food to the poor, working with senior citizens and preschool children, initiating a Learning Center for children and singing in the choir.

In 2009, she returned to St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi, to assume a less strenuous ministry. She was assigned as the community bursar working in the finance office. Ten years later, she moved with the sisters to St. Anthony's Gardens, Covington, Louisiana. She suffered a heart episode on March 31, 2023. She died peacefully the following morning, April 1, 2023, with five sisters praying with her. Sister Sylvia chose to be cremated.

A funeral Mass was celebrated at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Covington, Louisiana, on April 11, 2023. A prayer service, the reading of her biography and sharing of memories preceded the Mass. Rev. Warren Harvey, a former pastor at St. Augustine's, North Little Rock, Arkansas, was president. The burial of the cremains was in the Chatawa Cemetery, Chatawa, Mississippi.

Sister Sylvia is survived by her sisters, Peggy Hyde of Pearl River, Louisiana, and Nancy Dillon of Abita Springs, Louisiana, and nieces and nephews; relatives; her long-time friend and companion, Sister Carol Nishke; friends and SSND sisters and associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ethel Lee and Lazard Provost.

Sister Sylvia would have celebrated her 70th year of religious profession this summer. During these 70 years, she lived her vows by ministering to elementary and secondary students, serving in West Africa, to the African American parish in Arkansas and by performing community service. She always maintained a welcoming and friendly disposition. May she rejoice as she is welcomed by the God she served so faithfully and experience the joys of her new life with her God.

*By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*