

In Loving Memory

Sister Therese Marie Everts



Birth

January 10, 1939

Baptism

January 22, 1939

Profession

July 14, 1959

Death

March 29, 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

Sister Therese Marie, was born Barbara Lee on January 10, 1939, in Appleton, Wisconsin, the first of five children of Lee and Lucille Hinkley Everts. Her siblings; Lyle, Therese, Paul and Michael followed.

She received her childhood education at St. Joseph School in Appleton, Wisconsin. Therese Marie's grade school days passed quite uneventfully except for a tragic accident which brought sorrow to the whole family. At the age of six her younger sister, Therese who was born with Down Syndrome drowned in the Fox River, which was relatively close to the family home. She later wrote, "Needless to say this terrible tragedy affected us all and was a very painful experience for everyone, especially my parents."

Sister Therese Marie entered St. Mary's High School in Menasha, Wisconsin, for her sophomore year and then entered the Aspiranture in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. She grew up wanting to enter religious life. "By the time I entered high school I had decided what I wanted to do and where to go."

Sister Therese Marie taught for 12 years before her life took a number of unexpected turns. When the Mequon Province began reorganization, Sister Therese Marie was called to be a district coordinator. The next phase was a new form of provincial leadership with a provincial leader and nine councilors. Sister Therese Marie was a provincial councilor of the Mequon Province for eight years.

After provincial councilor leadership, Mount Mary University was blessed with her ministry for a year as assistant to the President, Sister Ellen Lorenz. After a renewal program at the Jesuit School of Theology, Sister Therese Marie returned to Mount Mary University as campus minister but was not there for very long.

The next phase of her life was the longest and in a sense, the most unusual. In November of 1986, Sister Therese Marie received a call from Sister Mary Margaret, the General Superior with the question if she would be willing to go to Germany for three years to fill a personnel need there. "That was the beginning of an odyssey with God which has lasted not three but 23 years." During that time Sister Therese Marie worked in formation, in provincial leadership and in spiritual direction.

Sister Therese Marie went to Rome in the summer of 1987 to discuss with Sister Mary Margaret her assignment in the Westfalen Province. She then visited the province, clarifying her ministry in formation with the provincial council and meeting many of the sisters. When she returned to Rome and was sharing her visit, she mentioned that she was measured for a habit. "My reaction was surprise, to say the least, I am jumping in with both feet." Sister Therese Marie was giving herself entirely to the mission at hand. Indeed, "Love gives everything."

continued

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Sister Therese Marie was dearly loved by the sisters in the Westfalen Province, and rightly so. She was an example of the excellence of living interculturality and with no other former Americans with whom to share.

The sisters of the Westfalen Province asked her to serve in provincial leadership. In order to do that she had to give up her membership in the Milwaukee Province. She did it to respond to the need. At what cost? “Love gives everything.” She served as a provincial councilor and then as provincial leader of the Westfalen Province.

There were many changes in the world, the church, the congregation, the United States, even in Milwaukee, during the 23 years she was overseas, it was almost a life-time. There was indeed a lot of catching up to do when Sister Therese Marie returned to the Milwaukee area in October of 2010. Yet, her newness and lack of current experience turned into what was later understood as the beginning of memory loss, only in hind-sight did she and her community understand.

Sister Therese Marie Everts

Less than four years after her return to the United States, Sister Therese Marie accepted the call to go to Our Lady of the Angels in Greenfield, Wisconsin. At Our Lady of the Angels, Sister Therese Marie kept in her hearts the sisters whom she served for 23 years in the Westfalen Province, as they kept her in their hearts. They never forgot her with phone calls, cards, letters, even visits.

On Sunday, March 29, 2020, at 5:35 a.m. Sister Therese Marie knew she was home. Sister Therese Marie gave the example of love giving everything even before the 24th general chapter.

By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

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