Birth
August 27, 1923

Baptism
September 9, 1923

Profession
August 9, 1945

Death
March 17, 2025

Burial
Notre Dame of Elm Grove

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 Marie (John Louis) Grellinger

Sister Marie Grellinger, 101, died peacefully on March 17, 2025, at Our Lady of the Angels, Greenfield, Wisconsin. She had patiently awaited full union with God.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on August 27, 1923, Nicholas and Luella Grellinger welcomed their second child, Marie. Marie already had an older sister, Doris, waiting for her, and younger brother, George, would complete the family. Marie was baptized September 9, 1923, at St. Michael Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Living in Milwaukee, Marie attended St. Michael's parish school and Mercy High School for her secondary education. She attended business college after graduation and then worked for one year.

Marie entered the candidature on September 9, 1942, in Milwaukee. On August 8, 1944, she received the name John Louis. August 9, 1945, she pronounced her first vows and her final vows in 1950.

Marie earned a bachelor's degree in secretarial science from Mount Mary College (now University), Milwaukee, in 1953 and a master's degree in library science, from St. Catherine College (now University), St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1959.

Sister Marie's ministry experience began in 1944 as an intermediate teacher at St. Mary, Burlington, Wisconsin.

From there, Sister Marie taught eight years at St. Alphonsus in Chicago. Her next assignment was at a small high school in Laurium, Michigan. After a year and a half, she took her experience to teaching for a much larger high school, Catholic Central, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her next assignment took brought her to Marinette Catholic Central High School, Marinette, Wisconsin, where she both taught and served as the school librarian.

With the SSND legacy for educating women to guide her, Sister Marie and several others founded an alternative high school for girls in Milwaukee in the 1970s. Named Spectrum, the school was founded as an alternative response to a law of the time which stated public school students had to meet specific attendance requirements. Students who exceeded this

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In Loving Memory

Sister Marie (John Louis) Grellinger

number of missed days were considered truant, expelled from class and sent to a reformatory. The state permitted girls in this situation to attend Spectrum High School in place of the reformatory, allowing the students to continue their academic curriculum, as well as work on their own personal growth and development. She was co-administrator and teacher there from 1975-1982.

The next year brought new opportunities as she ventured on her first international ministry, serving at St. Francis Teacher Training College in Nyabururu, Kenya, where she instructed from late 1983 until the summer of 1986. Upon her departure from Africa, she opened another new chapter in her ministry, focusing on pastoral care for nursing home residents, first in Poteau, Missouri and then Sallisaw, Oklahoma. From 1988 until 1997, she remained in Oklahoma and held several roles with Charities Helping Center in Sallisaw, including pastoral ministry, social work and case work.

She returned home to Wisconsin once again in 1997, and served in various volunteer ministries in Milwaukee. Starting in 2001, she was a senior aide for Interfaith, Inc. in Milwaukee until her retirement in 2005. She continued to volunteer in locations throughout Milwaukee up until 2015, including a five-year tutoring position with Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services, where she had ministered once before. In the second half of 2015, she was ministered to Our Lady of the Angels in Greenfield, Wisconsin, where she lived in ongoing prayer and presence.

Sister Marie was truly a pioneer who had a heart for the underserved. She knew she was sent in the power of the Spirit to continue Christ's mission to transform and be transformed.

She would have celebrated her 80-year Jubilee this summer, marking the eight decades since her first profession as a SSND.

Her funeral Mass was held, Monday, March 24, 2025 at the Mother Caroline Chapel at Trinity Woods, Milwaukee, with Father Leonard Barbian, as presider. A prayer of remembrance preceded the funeral. Burial followed in the Notre Dame of Elm Grove cemetery. Sister Marie is survived by nieces, nephews, cousins, and the SSND community. She was preceded in death by her parents, Nicholas and Lulu, her brother George and her sister Doris.

By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

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