



In Loving Memory

Sister Mary [Padraic] McGreevy, SSND

Sister Mary [Padraic] McGreevy, 76, died Thursday, February 20, 2014, at The Terraces Rehabilitation Center, Phoenix, Arizona. She had been hospitalized in early February and had been released to The Terraces in order to rebuild her strength.

Sister Mary was born on the family farm in Pullman, Washington, on July 3, 1937. Eight days later she was baptized Mary Alice at Sacred Heart Parish, Pullman. Her father worked a rented farm, and her mother was a teacher. As a child, Mary attended Guardian Angel elementary school, Colton, Washington, taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She attributed her lifetime ministry in Catholic education to her second grade teacher: "I remember her telling us that there were youngsters in our world who didn't even have a chance at a Catholic education. I thought that was so unfair."

Mary first thought seriously of religious life in second grade and then again in eighth grade. She attended Colton public school as a freshman and then spent the next three years at Notre Dame Academy, Colton, where she again considered religious life in her senior year, 1955. However, due to her father's illness at that time, an older brother being in service, and two much younger brothers still at home, another family member was needed to help at home. Since Mary had received several scholarships for Washington State University in Pullman, it was decided that she would stay at home and commute to classes. She was able to work as a lab technician at the college, which paid the rest of her expenses. In 1960 Mary graduated with a degree in biological sciences and social studies.

Following graduation, Mary taught for two years in the Granger, Washington school. Mary later commented about the school with approximately one-third Mexican, one-third Native American, and one-third white students, "This was really hard work, but it was grand in serving God's poor. I loved it and miss it very much."

While teaching in Granger, Mary applied for and was selected to take part in a cultural exchange program in Poland in 1962. She lived and worked with Polish farm families for seven months, returning to the U.S. in early 1963. At that time, Mary's mother was teaching at Guardian Angel, where Sister Thomas Marie LeBlanc was one of the sisters on staff. Sister Thomas Marie told Mary about an upper age limit to enter SSND and encouraged her "to get going!" Mary taught during the 1963-64 school year at Benton City, Washington, and applied for SSND membership in January, 1964.

She entered SSND in September, 1964. Because she had her degree, she taught at Good Counsel Academy while the rest of her class took college courses. At reception into the novitiate in 1965, she was given the name Sister Mary Padraic, but later returned to her baptismal name. Following profession in 1966, she taught at the Academy for another year.

Birth
July 3, 1937

Baptism
July 11, 1937

First Profession
July 17, 1966

Death
February 20, 2014

Burial
Our Lady of
Good Counsel Cemetery
Mankato, Minnesota

*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

continued

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**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Sister Mary spent the next 44 years actively involved in Catholic education as a teacher, administrator and student. She taught at Trinity High School, Dickinson, N.D. (1967-69), and Marycliff High School, Spokane, Wash. (1969-72). She served as administrator/assistant administrator and teacher at St. Mary High School, New England, N.D. (1972-77); Good Counsel Academy (1977-80); DeSales High School, Walla Walla, Wash., where she was also system superintendent (1980-90); Bishop Heelan High School, Sioux City, Iowa (1992-94); Notre Dame High School, Burlington, Iowa (1994-96); and Bourgade Catholic High School, Phoenix, Ariz. (1997-2011). After retiring from full-time work in 2011, she volunteered at St. Jerome School in Phoenix. She earned a master's degree in sociology from Gonzaga in Spokane in 1975, and was a full-time student at Boston College 1990-92, earning a second master's degree in education and education/curriculum.

Wherever she served, Sister Mary immersed herself into the life of the school, often putting in 14-16 hours a day. A strong proponent of Catholic identity, she emphasized the faith community aspect of Catholic schools. Describing Bourgade in a newspaper article, she stated, "The school is more than a school. It's a faith community. It's a faith community which would include the faculty, staff, students and parents." A staff member was quoted in the same article, "We're Catholics first. Everything else follows. We talk about being a Catholic community and teach our students to be a positive Catholic force in the Catholic community when they leave here."

Sister Mary also tremendously enjoyed being teacher. While serving at Walla Walla DeSales, she was quoted, "Most exciting to me as I'm teaching is to watch a student really grasp and put things together... you can see it in their eyes, their body language." She also gained a reputation as a builder, and completed major projects in New England, Walla Walla, Burlington and Phoenix.

Sister Mary will be remembered for her compassionate outreach to others – students, faculty, staff, and poor and underprivileged people. A former staff member commented, "While working with her, I witnessed some of the most altruistic behavior I have ever seen in another human being. Sister Mary could be tough as nails when she needed to be, but I saw her go above and beyond for so many of her employees." The director of Boys Hope Girls Hope of Arizona wrote to Sister Mary when he heard of her retirement: "For many years you have promoted the cause of the underprivileged and have provided our scholars a safe, nurturing, caring environment at Bourgade. . . . You have championed a very important cause."

The funeral Mass for Sister Mary, with Father Ted Hottinger, S.J., as president, was held Tuesday, March 4, in Good Counsel Chapel. A vigil service was held the evening before. Memorial services were also held in Phoenix on February 23 and 24. She is survived by one sister Jane (John) Morgan, one brother Mike (Maureen), one sister-in-law, Maggie McGreevy, nieces and nephews and their families, and by her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, James and Helen (Hogan) McGreevy, her brothers Dan and Patrick, and her sisters Claire Emerick and Donna Freeman.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND