

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Miranda Buesseler, SSND



Birth
November 28, 1914

Baptism
December 6, 1914

Profession
August 10, 1934

Death
June 22, 2012

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

Gerda Marie Buesseler was born on November 28, 1914 in Madison, Wisconsin, the first-born to John and Gerda (Aure) Buesseler. She received a unique gift on her second birthday — the birth of a little sister named Miranda. A brother, John, was born three years later. Gerda's elementary schooling was at St. James School, Madison, where she learned to love her teachers, the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

After graduation from eighth grade in 1928, she entered the SSND juniorate and completed her high school studies at the old motherhouse in Milwaukee. At reception, she received the religious name Mary Miranda. Her little sister Miranda joined the SSND community a couple of years later and was given the religious name Gerda! (One can imagine how the family dealt with this name confusion.) Sister Mary Miranda professed her first vows on August 10, 1938.

Sister received a bachelor of science in biology and chemistry from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee in 1950 and a master of arts in guidance and counseling from Loras College, Dubuque in 1968. She served as an educator for 60 years, teaching elementary students for 23 years and high school students for 37 years.

Twenty of those teaching years were spent at Columbus High School in Marshfield, Wis. During that time, Sister was awarded the 1985 Outstanding Teacher Award for science instruction by the U.S. Army Research Office during a Junior Science and Humanities symposium in Madison. Not one to boast of her own achievements, Sister Miranda could sing the praises of a great number of her students, who received National Science Foundation scholarships, as well as advanced college placements and other honors.

A list of her ministry locations included: St. Francis, Milwaukee, 1932-33 and 1934-36; St. Anthony, Detroit, 1936-45; St. Boniface, Milwaukee, 1945-50; St. Mary High School, Menasha, Wis., 1950-62; St. Mary High School, Burlington, Wis., 1962-67; and Columbus High School, Marshfield, Wis., 1967-87.

In 1987, Sister Mary Miranda retired and joined the Notre Dame of Elm Grove community. The following year, she came out of retirement when St. Mary Visitation School, Elm Grove, Wis., needed a science teacher. She initiated the school's first chemistry classes, providing eighth grade students with a rare learning opportunity. For the students who did well, some could skip their first year of high school chemistry and take accelerated classes. Sister Mary Miranda taught at St. Mary's for six years. She finally retired from classroom teaching in 1994, but continued to serve through prayer and presence.

Community members tell of a recollection of her little sister, Sister Gerda — a story about being dismissed early from grade school during a sudden blizzard. Little Miranda kept falling down, so big sister Gerda put the little girl's arms around a telephone pole and told her to hold on tightly while

continued

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Buessler*



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she went to get their father. This big sister's watchful care over her siblings was exemplified during their retirement years as Sister Miranda faithfully visited her little sister, whose health was frail. How proudly they both spoke of their brother John, a famous eye surgeon who performed the first corneal transplant in Wisconsin.

A notebook among Sister Miranda's belongings contained the quotation:

*"To live – is to go on a journey,
To die – is to come back home."*

Sister Mary Miranda, 97, died unexpectedly at Notre Dame of Elm Grove on June 22, 2012. Now at home with her God, may Sister Miranda rest in peace.

Sister Mary Miranda is survived by her brother Dr. John (Catherine) Buessler, other relatives, friends and the SSND Community.

By Sister Lucy Nigh, SSND