



In Loving Memory

Sister Marie Estelle Kuczynski

Sister Marie Estelle Kuczynski, 87, passed away on September 7, 2022, at St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Birth
June 20, 1935

Baptism
July 7, 1935

Profession
July 11, 1956

Death
September 7, 2022

Burial
Notre Dame of Elm Grove
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

On June 20, 1935, Dolores Mary was the first child born to Steve and Stella (Bendyk) Kuczynski, Polish immigrants who settled in the south side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. While pregnant, Dolores' mother worked for the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) in the SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish, Milwaukee, so sisters prayed for her before she was even born! Dolores was born on the Feast of Corpus Christi. She held a special reverence for ritual, incense, candles, the Holy Eucharist. Her birth name, Dolores, meant "sorrows," so Dolores Mary also had special devotion to Mary and the seven sorrows. Dolores Mary was baptized two weeks later at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Milwaukee, on July 7, 1935. She had a brother, Romuald, who was seven years older.

Dolores attended SS. Cyril and Methodius Elementary School, Milwaukee, and Pulaski High School, Milwaukee, in the Polish neighborhood where she grew up. Dolores was in grade school during World War II. The war years were hard on her family, especially her mother whose parents and siblings still lived in Poland. Three of her mother's siblings and their families were killed during the war. They lived near the Russian border and were thought to be helping others with the Polish underground, although the exact facts are not known. The death of her mother's family brought great sorrow to her mother and Dolores often wished she had grandparents she knew. Her father died in 1965, her mother in 1993 and her brother in 2000. She remained close to her brother Romuald's family, all of whom fondly called her Auntie Dodo.

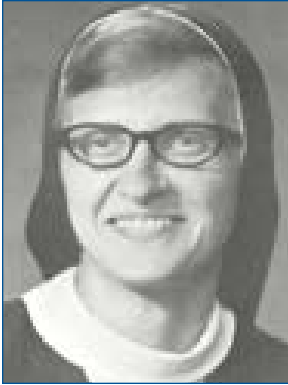
Dolores was especially close to her first-grade teacher, Sister Alferia Muszkiewicz, who prayed for her. After graduating from Pulaski High School, Milwaukee, Dolores worked for a year before entering the convent on August 29, 1954. Sister Alferia, who had remained close to Dolores, was most instrumental in her vocation and dressed Dolores on reception day, June 28, 1955. Sister Marie Estelle was professed on July 11, 1956 and pronounced final vows on July 10, 1962.

When Dolores lived in the Milwaukee Street Motherhouse, one of her favorite spots was the Sorrowful Mother Chapel and the Adoration Chapel. When she learned that Blessed Mother Theresa, the SSND foundress, had the same birthday, she became devoted to Mother Theresa and continually learned as much as she could about her. Over her years of religious life, she saw many changes and moved gracefully through those changes with a special love for You Are Sent.

She received a bachelor's degree in education from Mount Mary College, (now University), Milwaukee, in 1965 and a master's degree in administration from Marquette University, Milwaukee, in 1974. Over the course of her career, she served at seven different schools totaling 49 years, 34 years of which she was a

continued

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principal and 11/2 years as a vice-principal. She first taught elementary school at St. John de Nepomuc Catholic, Milwaukee, (1956-1965). From 1965-1968, she taught Junior High School at St. Hyacinth, Milwaukee. She was a principal and part-time teacher at St. Stanislaus, Berlin, Wisconsin, (1968-1975); taught at Holy Rosary, Darlington, Wisconsin, (1975-1977); served as both a part time teacher and principal at St. Vincent de Paul, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, (1977-1987); a principal at St. Veronica, Milwaukee, (1989-2004); and finally, as assistant principal at Holy Wisdom Academy, Milwaukee, (2005-2006), when she retired.

After Sister Marie Estelle's retirement of a few months, she was called to be assistant local leader on Theresa II, (2005-2006), and then as a community leader, (2006-2012), at Notre Dame Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin, totaling another seven years of ministry, retiring again in 2012. Sister Marie Estelle then enjoyed some much-deserved sabbatical time as a guest in the Bavarian Province, Germany. As a great lover of history and the SSND family, she enjoyed connecting with the SSND she met internationally and the many heritage trips.

The joy of Sister Marie Estelle's life was serving others, the people of God. She enjoyed life, enjoyed celebrating with others at gatherings and having a good time. Sister Marie Estelle volunteered in the Heritage room at Notre Dame Elm Grove, Elm Grove, Wisconsin, working in the archives from 2013-2018. She recorded every picture that was on the walls at Elm Grove before getting ready for the move to Trinity Woods. Sister moved to Trinity Woods in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on December 16, 2021.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Marie Estelle was held on September 13, 2022, in the Mother Caroline Chapel, at Trinity Woods, Milwaukee, with Father Tom Eichenberger as president. A time of remembrance preceded the funeral. Burial followed in the Elm Grove Cemetery, Elm Grove, Wisconsin. She is survived by nieces and a nephew, her sisters in community and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Steve and Stella; and her brother, Romuald.

By Sister Marie Rose Van Deurzen, SSND

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