

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Ancilla Sakaguchi

Sister Mary Ancilla Sakaguchi, 96, passed away peacefully on May 23, 2024, in Kyoto, Japan.

Sister Ancilla Toshiko Sakaguchi was born on June 15, 1927, in Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan to Kitu (Ito) and Tomesaku Sakaguchi. She was the oldest of five children and the only girl among four brothers.

She attended Hosui Primary School and Meguro Girl's Commercial School in Tokyo. Following graduation, she was employed as an office worker at a manufacturing company and later as a typist for a bank in Tokyo. Her faith journey led her from Buddhism to a Presbyterian Church and finally to the Catholic Church. She was baptized on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1949, at St. Francis Xavier Church in Tokyo and given the name Teresa.

She entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) on April 18, 1950. When she was a postulant, Notre Dame Jogakuin Jr. and Sr. High School was established. During postulancy, in her candidate dress, she was a member of the office staff of the newly established school from April to June in 1952. She entered the novitiate on September 12, 1952, and received the name Mary Ancilla. Her first profession was on September 13, 1953. She professed final vows on September 13, 1959.

Sister Ancilla served as an accountant and was a great help to Sister Mary Paul Niemann in the 1950's and 1960's, during a time that Japan was in financial difficulty.

Sister Ancilla was an elementary school homeroom teacher from 1954 to 1957. She returned to Notre Dame Jogakuin Jr. and Sr. High School a member of the office staff from 1957 to 1964. From 1965 until 1969, she studied Japanese literature at Sophia University (Jesuit University in Tokyo), receiving a bachelor's degree in language arts.

From 1969 until 1971, she was a financial manager for Notre Dame Women's College (now Kyoto Notre Dame University). She returned to a ministry of education in 1974 when she taught English and typing to the college students. From 1975 until 1978, she was a vice principal of Notre Dame Jogakuin Jr. and Sr. High School. For the year after that, she continued her work there, but as a part time calligraphy teacher, as well as a part time finance office staff member at the college. From 1979 until 1987, she continued to work in the college finance office, while also leading a "Sentence Making" class in the Culture Living Department of the college for four years.



Birth
June 15, 1927

Baptism
April 17, 1949

Profession
September 13, 1953

Death
May 23, 2024

Burial
Kinugasa Cemetery,
Kyoto, Japan

*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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*Sister Mary Ancilla
Sakaguchi*



From 1989 until 1998, Sister Ancilla was a part time financial staff member for “A Hand of Friendship to India,” a education funding program for the poor started by Sister Jean Schmid, SSND.

From 2001 until 2011, she served at the Regional Office for SSND in Japan as a part time financial staff member. She also continued her work as a member of the financial staff of “A Hand of Friendship to India.”

Since 2017, Sister Ancilla served in the ministry of prayer and presence. She baked bread and worked very hard gardening in the convent yard. She always made her community members happy.

Sister Ancilla was a very talented woman. She wrote the lyrics for the School Songs of the Elementary School and Junior and Senior High School. Her calligraphy was beautiful. Sister Ancilla enjoyed the experience of travel and visited various locations throughout Japan with fellow sisters. She also went to India twice to observe how the donations for "A Hand of Friendship to India" were being used. She enjoyed sharing meals of sushi with sisters.

She completed her 71-years of religious life on May 23, 2024. The burial of her remains will be in the Kinugasa Cemetery in Kyoto. She was the second oldest Japanese SSND at the time of her death.

She fully lived her spiritual life as a servant of the Lord, which she chose as her religious name, “Ancilla Domini.” May Our Lady welcome Sister Ancilla and join her in heavenly joy. May she pray for us, who had a great older sister in Sister Ancilla.

By Sister Maureen Wada, SSND and Sister Maria Dominica Sento, SSND

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