

In Loving Memory

Sister Monica (Mary Linus) Grathwohl



Birth

February 22, 1932

Baptism

February 28, 1932

Profession

July 19, 1953

Death

September 2, 2024

Burial

Good Counsel 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

Sister Monica (Mary Linus) Grathwohl, 92, died Monday, September 2, 2024, at Benedictine Living Community in Shakopee, Minnesota.

Sister Monica was proud of the fact that she shared a birthday with George Washington, and even more so because she was born on his 200th birthday, February 22, 1932. The fourth child of five, and the second daughter in the family, she was baptized Monica Agnes at St. John the Baptist church in Searles, Minnesota. She wrote, “The Catholic faith was vital to our family life on the farm near the small town of Searles, Minnesota, which was steeped in the German-Bohemian culture and tradition prevalent in the surrounding area.”

At the age of six, Monica enrolled at St. John’s School in Searles, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). Concerning her call to SSND life, Sister Monica wrote, “I always wanted to be a sister, and after spending a weekend in the aspiranture when I was in eighth grade, my desire increased and I made a definite decision. My family was very glad, and I spent my high school years as an aspirant at Good Counsel Academy where I made many lifelong friends.” She graduated from Good Counsel Academy in 1950 and entered the SSND candidature a few months later, on August 28.

As a first-year candidate, Monica took college classes in preparation for an elementary school teaching ministry. As a second-year candidate, she taught twenty-five second grade students at St. Mary’s, New England, North Dakota, and helped to care for the children who boarded at the school. She was received into the novitiate on July 18, 1952, and given the name Sister Mary Linus, her brother’s name. She later returned to her baptismal name. She professed first vows on July 19, 1953.

As a newly-professed sister, Sister Mary Linus was sent to St. Mary School, Shakopee, where she taught intermediate grades until 1957. She then moved to St. Anne School in Wabasso, Minnesota, where she continued to work with intermediate grade students. She completed her bachelor’s degree from St. Catherine’s College (now University), St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1963 and began a new teaching ministry at Christ the King School in Omak, Washington, where she stayed until 1965. She then served in Iowa (1965-73) as principal and teacher at St. Joseph, Cresco (1965-68) and St. Donatus, St. Donatus (1968-69). After she earned her master’s degree in elementary education from St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1969, she was the full-time administrator at Immaculate Conception-St. Joseph in Gilbertville and Raymond, Iowa (1969-73).

Sister Monica’s next years of service were in Minnesota and included the roles of: principal and teacher at St. Casimir, Wells (1973-76); junior high teacher at St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul (1976-77); and principal and teacher at Saints Peter & Paul, Loretto (1977-78).

continued

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*Sister Monica (Mary
Linus) Grathwohl*



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She returned to Iowa in 1978 as principal at Blessed Sacrament in Waterloo (1978-83). Here she directed the Individually Guided Education (IGE) program, an innovative educational system that featured instructional programming for

individual students including multi-aged grouping. She regularly attended workshops to keep herself current in IGE concepts.

In 1983, Sister Monica became the principal at Holy Childhood School in St. Paul and then continued in the ministry of administration at St. Alphonsus School in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota (1989-93). Her final years in Catholic education involved another return to Iowa, this time to Pocahontas Catholic School in Pocahontas (1993-99). She was active in several educational and parish organizations, as well as in organizations of religious women. She was a member of the SSND Development Board and, for years, she served at the apple pie booth during the annual Craft Fair at Good Counsel. At times, she also gave piano lessons after school.

After her long service in education, Sister Monica found a new ministry in 1999, that of evening receptionist at Guardian Angels Parish in Oakdale, Minnesota. In an SSND Mankato Magazine article, she described what that involved: "For four evenings a week I am the evening receptionist for the parish church. Besides answering the phone and many inquiries, I keep busy placing labels, 'stuffing' letters, sealing envelopes or collating materials." She kept the parish kitchen clean and well-supplied. She was involved in the parish as a Eucharistic minister, a weekday lector and a member of various committees. She also tended flower gardens and commented, "Working with the soil and flowers is a relaxing and meditative occupation for me." Guardian Angels was the home of the SSND Folk Art Program, and although Sister Monica did not consider herself a "crafter," she supported those who were. Sister Monica gradually reduced her Guardian Angels activity and moved to Good Counsel Hill in 2011.

At Good Counsel, Sister Monica served the community in a variety of ways. Her family members were important to her and she enjoyed visiting with and hearing from them. With other SSND, she moved to Shakopee in 2022 and continued to participate in community activities there.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Monica was held September 9, in the Windermere chapel, with Father John Kunz as presider. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the liturgy. Burial in the Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato followed. She is survived by brother, Peter, and his wife, Barbara, nieces and nephews and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND Associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Peter and Bertha (Lieb) Grathwohl, her sister, Grace Windler, and her brothers, Norman and Linus.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND