



Birth
August 13, 1926

Baptism
August 15, 1926

Profession
July 17, 1948

Death
November 9, 2022

Burial
Our Lady of 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

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Vianney Saumweber

Sister M. Vianney Saumweber, 96, died on November 9, 2022, at Benedictine Living Community – St. Gertrude’s, Shakopee, Minnesota. The youngest of four School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) siblings, whose names all began with V, has joined her sisters in eternal life.

Sister Vianney was born at home in St. Paul, Minnesota, on Friday, the 13th of August, 1926, and two days later, carried across the street, to Sacred Heart Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, for her baptism. As with her older sisters, she was given a form of the name Mary, in her case, Marilyn Theresa. The youngest of the family’s eight children, she was especially close to her three older sisters, Marie, Dolores, and Miriam. Her brothers, Gene and Clem, were about ten years older than the girls, and Gervaise and Jerome, had died as young children, before the girls were born.

In 1932, Marilyn followed her sisters to Sacred Heart School, St. Paul, Minnesota, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. In first grade, a serious defect in her eyesight was discovered, which caused Marilyn to repeat the grade. She remembered, “My good teacher had to put up with me for another year.” Describing her call to religious life, she wrote, “Since I lived a short distance from school, it was often my privilege to help the sisters with the cleaning and other little things after school. It was here, that the first seed of a religious vocation was planted in my young heart. After attending Sacred Heart School throughout the grades, I eagerly followed in the footsteps of my sisters by being an aspirant at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota.”

Marilyn graduated from Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, Minnesota, in 1945, and entered the SSND candidature on August 28, 1945. As a second-year candidate, she taught first and second grades at Sacred Heart School, Heron Lake. She was received into the novitiate in July 1947, and given the name, Sister M. Vianney. She professed first vows in 1948, and wrote, “It was a happiness for me to be present at my three Notre Dame sisters’ reception, profession and final vow ceremonies, and also having all three present at those same occasions for myself.”

In 1948, Sister Vianney’s first teaching assignment was grades two and three, at Holy Childhood, St. Paul, Minnesota, where her sister, Sister Verone, was also stationed. The next year, she moved to St. Matthew, St. Paul, where her sister, Sister Valine, was on the teaching staff. At St. Matthew, she filled in for teachers who were taking classes to complete their degree. After Thanksgiving, one of the first-grade teachers became ill, and Sister Vianney took over her class of 58 children for the rest of the year. She remained at St. Matthew, teaching first grade until 1954. During this time, she also took classes from Diocesan Teachers College, and received a teacher’s certificate. She continued her education in summer classes, through Mount Mary College (now University), and graduated with her B. A. in 1958. After leaving St. Matthew in 1954, she taught at St. Joseph, Silver Lake, Minnesota, (1954-56) and St. Joseph, Red Wing, Minnesota (1956-59).

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister M. Vianney
Saumweber*



In the late 1950s, dioceses began establishing catechetical schools as a means to further religious education. Sister Vianney began a ministry of elementary teaching at St. John Catechetical School, Minnesota Lake, Minnesota, in 1959, and remained there until 1970. She spent the next two years, caring for her parents in St. Paul while assisting with religious education at Sacred Heart Parish, St. Paul. After some years as a teacher's aide, at Sacred Heart and St. Matthew, she was a pastoral minister at St. Matthew Parish, St. Paul, a position she held from 1975 until 1990. Her primary responsibility was parish visitor/Eucharistic minister, and she commented in the parish bulletin, "I come to serve, but you in turn give much to me by your genuine Christian spirit." She earned certification in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in 1980, and also attended classes in a program of aging and human development.

Beginning in 1990, Sister Vianney continued her work with the elderly in a different setting – St. Anne Hospice in Winona, Minnesota. A 1995 Hospice newsletter reported, "Sister Vianney Saumweber, SSND, has been a member of the Hospice Pastoral Team for five years. To everyone her life touches, she has brought an aura of peace and contentment. Holiness is her life, and it's a wonderful comfort to others – residents and staff." The article also emphasized Sister Vianney's love of learning and listed the many courses she had taken in preparation for her role in pastoral care. Sister Vianney remained at St. Anne's until 1996.

In 1996, Sister Vianney moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota, where she gave community service in a variety of ways. She returned to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1999, this time to St. Francis de Sales, where she served first, as a community driver and then, provided community service. She visited with parishioners as well. Sister Vianney moved back to Our Lady of Good Counsel in 2008 to fully retire and continued her interests in Scrabble and visiting. She remained close to her nephew and his family and looked forward to their visits.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Vianney, was held Wednesday, November 16, in the Windermere chapel, Shakopee, Minnesota, with Father John Kunz as presider. Sharing of memories preceded the liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato followed. She is survived by her nephew, Jim Saumweber and his family; and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Valentine and Marie (Griesgraber) Saumweber; her three SSND sisters, Verna (Marie), Valine (Dolores), and Miriam (Verone); and four brothers, Gervaise, Jerome, Gene and Clem.

By Mary Kay Ash, SSND

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