

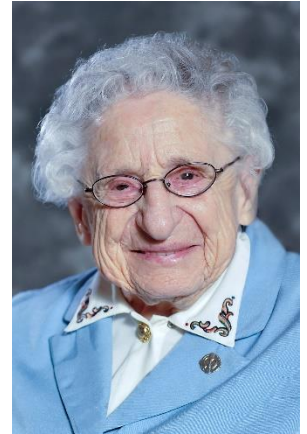


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 14, 2017

**Mary Elsa Metternich, SSND
Teacher, Missionary, Nurse**

Elm Grove, Wisconsin – Sister Mary Elsa Metternich, 101, died August 4, 2017. She was born Florence Isabelle Metternich to Henry and Clara in Milwaukee Wisconsin, on December 3, 1915 she was the fourth of seven children.

She attended St. Anthony’s and St. Augustine Schools in Milwaukee, where she was taught by SSNDs. According to her autobiography, in grade 8, she began to have doubts about her vocation and wished her parents had said “no” when she had asked to go. But they gave her the freedom to choose, perhaps thinking she wouldn’t stay since she liked to have fun and engage in sports. She was inspired though by pictures of missionary sisters on horseback gave her an interest in foreign missions. She professed First Vows on August 2, 1935.



Her desire for missionary work was fulfilled after teaching for 18 years in Michigan, when she was assigned to Holy Childhood Boarding School in Harbor Springs.

In 1956, Sister Elsa was missioned to Guam. She taught in several schools on the island and became principal and superior at Mount Carmel, Agat. Typhoon Karen, in November of 1962, destroyed the church, school, convent and almost all of the village of Agat. With the help of the military things were cleaned up, rebuilt and classes continued.

She returned to the United States in 1966 to teach in Wisconsin. She taught and was the organist at St. Gabriel in Prairie Du Chien and Holy Name in Sheboygan.

She returned to Guam in 1971, she recalled in her autobiography that the highlight of that time was the fall of Vietnam in 1975 and her work with the Vietnam refugees.

After another devastating typhoon in 1976, Sister Elsa was asked to go to Yap. She was asked to come back to Yap to work with a school health program. After some training as a practical nurse, she joined a team that vaccinated and delivered health education to children on neighboring islands. She then started began work in education, training, and supervising of the practical nurses at Yap Memorial Hospital.

Her next missionary call, at the age of 72, was to Ebeye, in the Marshall Islands. She left after a year due to vision problems. Upon her return to the U.S., she continued in ministry through volunteering in nursing homes and other senior programs in Wisconsin and Arizona. While in retirement, Sister Elsa kept her interest in daily happenings, walked every day, and participated in most of the activities, even playing Bingo.

She was preceded in death by her parents Henry and Clara Metternich, sisters Elizabeth and Claire and brothers Robert, Hank and Norbert. She is survived by her sister Virginia Hughes, and many nieces and nephews. Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Retirement Fund, c/o Resource Development, 13105 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122 or online at www.ssndcentralpacific.org/Partner/Donation.

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