



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Atlantic-Midwest Province

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sister Bernadetta Staab, SSND
May 14, 1927 – June 16, 2018



Sister Bernadetta Staab died peacefully at Maria Health Care Center on June 16, 2018. She celebrated 70 years as a School Sister of Notre Dame at her jubilee on June 2, 2018. Talented and gifted, Sister Bernadetta began her career teaching business and elementary school classes, including two years in Puerto Rico where the need to speak Spanish opened a new phase in her life. With an ability for languages, she became fluent in Spanish and was an advocate for persons learning English as a second language. She used her extensive talents in Spanish, religious education and early learning education, completing 22 years of “stellar service” in Florida.

Catherine was baptized at St. Anthony’s church and began her education at the parish school in September, 1933. She made her first Holy Communion at St. Anthony’s in May, 1934 and was confirmed there by Bishop McNamara on Oct. 22, 1939. After graduation in 1941, Catherine enrolled in high school at the Institute of Notre Dame. She said, “It was during my second year of high school that I first felt the urge to leave the world and enter religion.” Catherine graduated from IND on June 13, 1945. On Aug. 28 of that year, she left “her dear family” to become a School Sister of Notre Dame. Catherine said that God gave her tremendous graces, and that she received only encouragement from her parents.

As a candidate, Catherine began classes as a freshman at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now Notre Dame of Maryland University). But soon she was sent to St. Michael’s Business School to replace a sister who had become ill. The next year she attended Teacher Training School with the Junior Candidates. Catherine was received into the novitiate on July 16, 1947 and was given the name, Sister Mary Bernadetta. She professed her first vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame on August 3, 1948.

Sister Bernadetta began her many faceted career teaching grade 7 at St. Patrick's School, Cumberland, Md. (1948-52). She taught grades 7 and 8 at the Academy of San Alfonso in Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico, where she acquired a love of the Spanish language (1952-54). Sister continued teaching elementary grades at St. Peter School, Newark, N.J.; St. Patrick School, Glen Cove Long Island, N.Y.; Sacred Heart School, Baltimore, Md.; and Christ the King School, Tampa, Fla. (1954-63).

Returning to her alma mater, the Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore, Sister Bernadetta taught Spanish (1963-65). Cathedral Academy in Camden, N.J. was her next mission, as high school teacher of Spanish, Religion and Business (1965-71). Though she had gone to St. Peter's Parish, Philadelphia, for pastoral work, Bernadetta's Spanish language skills made her a perfect match for the fledgling bilingual kindergarten (1971-81). After providing end-of-life care for her mother, she became the secretary and treasurer of the Interprovincial Renewal Program at Chatawa, Miss. (1982-83). From Mississippi, Bernadetta headed to Florida "seeking a job in ministry." There she used her extensive talents in Spanish, religious education and early learning education at the parishes of St. Catherine, Kendall; St. Luke, Coconut Creek; and Epiphany Cathedral, Venice (1985-2007). Completing 22 years of ministry in Florida, Sister Bernadetta quietly left that life for one of prayer and presence at Villa Assumpta.

Sister Bernadetta's education included a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and elementary education from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now University) in 1961 and a Master of Arts in Spanish from Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt., in 1968.

A Christian Wake Service was held on June 20, and the Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on June 21. Both services were held in the chapel of Villa Assumpta. The liturgy was celebrated by Rev. Roman Kovacheson OFM Cap., Chaplain of Villa Assumpta. Interment followed at Villa Maria Cemetery, Glen Arm, Md. Sister Bernadetta is survived by nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic Midwest Province, c/o Development Office, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897 or online: www.amssnd.org