



School Sisters of Notre Dame  
*Atlantic-Midwest Province*

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**Sister Mary Grace Diebolt, SSND**  
**January 9, 1934 – January 10, 2019**



**Waterdown, Ontario** - Sister Mary Grace died unexpectedly on January 10, the day after her 85th birthday.

Therese was born in Kitchener, the seventh child in a family of eight. Her parents were Emil and Rose (Freiburger) Diebolt. She attended St. Mary's School, Kitchener, and graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1951. As a child, she preferred to read books rather than play with dolls. A favourite pastime was singing and listening to stories.

During her school years, Theresa talked about becoming a sister. In 1947 a play was presented to commemorate the centenary of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in America. Therese impersonated a sister and took the part of Mother Theresa in a pageant. This increased her desire to become an SSND.

Her plan was to return to St. Mary's High School for Gr.13 and enter the convent after going to Teachers' College. However, one of her teachers asked her, "Why not enter this year?"

In September 1951, Therese entered the candidature. In July 1952, she was received as Novice Mary Grace, and the following year she professed her vows.

After completing teacher training at Hamilton Teachers' College, Sister Mary Grace taught at several schools: Immaculate Conception, Chepstow, St. Helen and Basilica, Hamilton, and St. Mary's, Kitchener. In 1963 she was appointed principal of Our Lady of Grace School, Aurora; in 1965, St. John School, Kitchener, and in 1969, St. Kevin School, Welland.

Sister Mary Grace attained her B.A. from McMaster University, Hamilton in 1968. She took several summer school courses related to education from the Ontario Department of Education.

From 1973-1975 she was principal at Sacred Heart School, Ladner, British Columbia. On her return to Ontario, Sister Mary Grace lived at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown, assisting with the Notre Dame Academy boarders. In 1978 she moved to Notre Dame Children's Village, St. Agatha, where she was a child care worker. From 1980-1983 Sister Mary Grace served on the Board of Directors for RAISE (Retirees Assisting In Serving Each other).

Beginning in 1988, Sister Mary Grace was involved in pastoral care, visiting the sick and elderly. She received certificates of appreciation for her volunteer services at Freeport Hospital Health Care Village, Kitchener. In Kenora she visited patients in the hospital and nursing homes and senior residences. An article in the local newspaper headlined her as "*Sister full of grace, humour and compassion.*" Sister Mary Grace showed a special interest in each person. She enjoyed chatting with the residents and listening to their stories.

In 2003 she returned to Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown, where she accompanied the senior sisters.

Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Grace was celebrated on January 15 at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown. The presider and homilist was Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Episcopal Vicar for Consecrated Life. A large number of nieces and nephews attended the funeral. During the luncheon following the burial, a group of her nephews and nieces entertained with Sister Mary Grace's favorite song, "Write this Down" by George Strait.

- S. Joan Helm