

Name: Sister Mary Josephine Schmitt
Date of Birth: November 28, 1923
Place of Birth: Cleveland, Wisconsin
Parents: Frank and Mary Josephine (Leonhard) Schmitt
Religious Profession: August 15, 1941
Date of Death: April 24, 2017
Age: 93
Years Professed: 75



Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Emma Marie Schmitt was the youngest of ten children born to Frank and Mary Josephine (Leonhard) Schmitt on November 28, 1923. She was baptized in St. Wendel Catholic Church in Cleveland, Wisconsin on December 2, 1923.

She grew up on a farm near Cleveland, Wisconsin with her parents, seven brothers and two sisters. Religion was important in the Schmitt home. Praying the Rosary daily and Lenten Sunday Devotions were a must. The kitchen chairs were the pews. Saturday morning Mass became part of the routine. Emma always took eggs, fresh fruit or meat for the four Sisters. Delivering these items always gave her an opportunity for an extra visit with the Sisters.

Emma had the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity as teachers at St. Wendel School. She had Sister Concepta and Sister Olga for teachers. When she was in third grade Sister Berchmans died. When Sister Concepta told the class she added, "Now we need someone to go to the Convent and replace her." Emma answered, "Don't worry, I will." The following year there was a class play with a Sister in it. Emma was chosen for the part. Her Mom sewed a simple coif and complete habit. Her Dad was pleased when he saw her dressed up since he always wanted one of his girls to be a Sister. Her vocation was nurtured at home and at school so after she graduated from eighth grade she did leave home to become a Sister.

Emma entered Holy Family Convent on August 25, 1937. As she was getting ready for Reception and thinking of name suggestions, Emma talked to Sister Concepta about wanting her Mother's name, Mary Josephine. Sister Concepta told her to put the name down three times and the Holy Spirit would take care of it! On Reception Day, June 14, 1939, Emma received the name, Sister Mary Josephine! The Holy Spirit did take care of it!

Sister Mary Josephine completed her High School in 1941 at Holy Family Academy. She earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Holy Family College in 1956 with a Major in Education and a

Minor in History. Additional classes over the years were taken at Marquette University in Milwaukee and St. Norbert College. Sister Mary Josephine spent 41 of her active ministry years teaching grades one through five. She loved teaching and especially enjoyed the Fifth Graders because they were more mature and could do most things on their own.

After her teaching years Sister Mary Josephine ministered to the elderly at New Berlin, West Point, Nebraska and Kaukauna. She ministered at Holy Family Memorial as Sponsor Presence in Manitowoc and was a helper at St. Francis Convent. She was active in the Prayer Apostolate Ministry praying for the Omro and Winneconne Ministries and in the last three years she participated in Christ's Work of Redemption in St. Rita Health Center.

At the time of her Jubilee Sister Mary Josephine wrote, "I am most grateful for the gift of life that makes my vocation possible. I try to remember that God is in charge and see how very merciful He has been over the years, giving me strength in weakness and courage to persevere with humble trust and submission through obstacles that came my way. I thank Him and my Community for my growth in the spiritual life and the chance given to me to work for Him and His Kingdom. How I thank God for choosing me for a life of faithful service! There is no end to the litany of thanks and praise for everything I have and am – love, joy, peace – all come from God. My sense of humor comes from God, too, however, living with my brothers helped to develop it! I just enjoy having a good time and I enjoy life! I have loved being a Sister. I see the kindness in each Sister. If a young woman would ask me if they should be a Sister I would tell them that it definitely brought me lots of peace and happiness."

We thank Sister Mary Josephine for answering the call she received from God to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. She was joy-filled and always had a wave and a smile for everyone. May her example of Franciscan Joy be made fruitful in all of our lives. Eternal rest grant to Sister Mary Josephine, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her, may she rest in peace. AMEN!