

Name: Sister Ronald Held
Date of Birth: April 14, 1925
Place of Birth: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Parents: Frank and Veronica (Hartmann) Held
Religious Profession: August 15, 1943
Date of Death: May 6, 2018
Age: 93
Years Professed: 74



Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Dolores Marie Held was born on April 14, 1925 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Frank and Veronica (Hartmann) Held. She was Baptized at St. Michael's Church in Milwaukee on April 19, 1925 and received the Sacrament of Confirmation there on October 7, 1938 by Bishop Samuel A. Stritch, later to be known as Cardinal Stritch.

Dolores was the oldest of six children. She attended St. Michael's Elementary School and was taught by the Notre Dame Sisters whom she admired very much. Her vocation story is rooted in her infancy. As a very small child, she was choking and turning blue. Her mother told God that she would give Dolores to Him if He saved her life. God took her up on that promise. Dolores did not know of her Mother's prayer until many years after her profession. Her strong desire to become a Sister was first realized when she was in the Third Grade. Her mother supported and nurtured her vocational desire, however, she told Dolores that she would have to wait until she was 18 if she wanted to be a Notre Dame Sister.

Dolores' Mother had been educated by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity in Kiel, Wisconsin. She told Dolores how wonderful the Sisters were and what a beautiful Motherhouse they had. So at the age of 14, Dolores wrote to Mother Generose on May 12, 1939:

Dear Mother Generose,

I am in the eighth grade at St. Michael School in Milwaukee and would like to join the Franciscan Order after I have completed the eighth grade. I would like very much to become a nun who teaches school, although it does not necessarily have to be teaching school.

My father is only on the W. P. A. (Works Projects Administration – an American New Deal Agency that employed unskilled men to carry out public works projects) and there are six children in our family, so I suppose you can see I will not be able to pay anything, but I will bring most of my clothes if possible, that is, if I am allowed to enter. Do you take girls from Milwaukee or must I enter a Convent in Milwaukee? If I may, will you please send me a list of clothes and regulations for entering? I have heard some things about your order from my cousin, Cecilia Hartmann, who is in your order. I am sure I will like it. Please pray for me. Yours truly, Dolores Held

Mother Generose did respond to Dolores' letter and on July 21, 1939 Dolores sent the following letter to Mother Generose:

Dear Mother Generose,

I received your letter and slips and was very glad to hear that my doctor's and dentist's forms were satisfactory. I am very glad that I may enter, but my Mother said to write to you and let you know that she is not able to furnish me all the clothes. Mother would like to do the best she can. Would the blankets and spreads have to be new? She is almost sure she will not be able to furnish the pillows. She will not be able to furnish the material for my dresses.

I am planning on coming the 20th of August, if everything turns out all right.

Yours truly, Dolores Held

Her Pastor, Rev. Msgr. Sabastian Bernard, wrote the following letter of recommendation dated July 7, 1939:

Venerable Mother,

In reply to your inquiry of July 2nd, I beg to state that Dolores Marie Held graduated from St. Michael School. She is studious, has normal talents and was always well behaved. In spite of her youth and inexperience, I think she could well be trained to become a useful member of a Religious Community. Respectfully yours, S. Bernard

Dolores did enter Holy Family Convent on August 20, 1939. On her day of Reception, June 11, 1941 Dolores received the name, Sister Ronald, after her youngest brother whose name was Ronald. He was five years old when she left home and she missed him more than she missed her parents.

Sister Ronald earned her Diploma from Holy Family Academy graduating in 1943. She attended Holy Family College earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree on July 27, 1962 with a Major in Education and a Minor in Latin. In 1971 she earned a Master's Degree of Education with Specialization in Reading Education from Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan.

Sister Ronald was a primary grade teacher. She taught First Graders for 40 of her 46 years of full time classroom teaching. She loved teaching. In her early years her students would sometimes forget and call her "mama." As the years went on she would be called "grandma," which was not exactly to her liking. However, even worse was when a little boy said to her, "You sound just like my great-grandma!" She tutored for another ten years before moving to St. Francis Convent to begin her retirement and became a member of the Prayer Apostolate praying especially for the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries, Inc. She will continue to intercede for all our Sponsored Ministries.

Sister Ronald lived a full life! She was looking forward to her 75th Jubilee celebration on May 20th. Of late she did not always feel well and seemed to have a premonition that she may not live to enjoy the celebration. She had the CNA's in St. Rita Health Center praying for her, too. God did answer her prayer in His way. In a Jubilee reflection Sister Ronald expressed gratitude to the Community for all the experiences and blessings of being a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. We thank her, too, for being a blessing to us! She was grateful to her family and appreciated the privilege and honor she had to care for her mother in her Mother's last years of life. Sister Ronald lived and died as a Spouse of Jesus Christ. She enjoyed the hundred-fold promised and now knows the promise of life everlasting. Eternal rest grant to Sister Ronald O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace, AMEN!