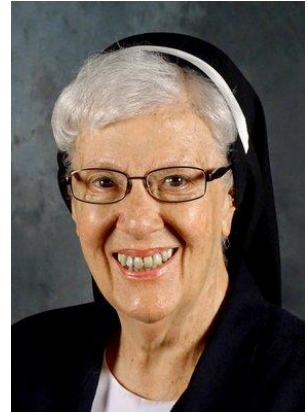


Name: Sister Monica Mary DeQuardo
Date of Birth: August 14, 1940
Place of Birth: Waukesha, Wisconsin
Parents: John and Elsie (Ossman) DeQuardo
Religious Profession: June 14, 1966
Date of Death: May 2, 2020
Age: 79
Years Professed: 53



Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Kathleen Margaret DeQuardo was born on August 14, 1940 to John and Elsie (Ossman) DeQuardo in Waukesha, Wisconsin. She was baptized in St. Joseph's Church in Waukesha on October 20, 1940. Kathleen Margaret was named after two aunts, Aunt Kate and Aunt Margaret on her Father's side of the family. Kathy, as she was called, had an older brother John, Jr. and a younger brother Donnie, who died when he was two years old.

Kathy attended St. Joseph's Parish School and Catholic Memorial High School in Waukesha. Her teachers those twelve years were the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. She got to know the Sisters not only as teachers, but as friends. She and her girlfriend, Margaret, would help clean the classroom after school, polish the vigil lights in Church or just visit. Kathy liked the Sisters because they were friendly, kind and good teachers. Kathy thought that someday she would like to be a Sister, too, however, she could not conceive herself leaving home.

When she was a Junior at Catholic Memorial High School, Kathy was leaning toward a nursing career. She was elected President of the Future Nurses Club and was hired at Waukesha Memorial Hospital as a Nurse's Aide where she worked on the Medical Floor, in the Emergency Room and Central Services for the next five years. During that time, she completed courses for her High School Diploma and attended Mount Mary College, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a Major in Latin/Classics and Minors in History and English. Kathy credited Sister Isaac Jogues, SSND, one of the faculty members at Mount Mary College, staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, with mentoring her study skills, challenging her to develop critical thinking skills, which have served her well all her life.

Kathy had good Catholic friends who shared in her full, carefree, fruitful life. She knew that this life style would not sustain her in the future. Attending Mass and receiving the Eucharist was a weekly priority. She was actively involved in Catholic Action, the Cursillo Movement and Discernment of Spirits prayer.

In 1964, after experiences of teaching at Divine Savior High School in Milwaukee, St. Joseph's Academy in Green Bay and working at Holy Family Memorial in Manitowoc, Kathy knew it was time to respond to God's call to live for Him as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity.

In a letter written to Mother Agna dated May 4, 1964, Kathy wrote:

Dear Mother Agna,

I am writing to you concerning application to Holy Family Convent for this coming year. In September of 1961, I asked to enter the Convent. I was accepted, but then because of my parents' objection, I declined your acceptance. I have wanted to enter Holy Family convent for many years, eight to be exact, but an obstacle always stood in the way. For some reason or other I always had to put Holy Family Convent to the side, hoping the next year would bring it closer. An opportunity may now be at hand!

I am twenty-three years old and at present am teaching high school Latin. I graduated from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee in 1962. That same year I took a teaching position in Milwaukee. This year I am at Saint Joseph's Academy in Green Bay.

Is it possible that I be re-considered? If you wish, I would be glad to send you references or you could consult Sister Elizabeth Ann at Holy Name High School in Escanaba, Michigan. She has been a great inspiration to me since I met her many years ago. She is truly a wonderful example of the Franciscan family. Thank you for your consideration.

*Sincerely,
Kathleen DeQuardo*

Application papers were sent to Kathy on May 8, 1964. One of her references was her Pastor from St. Joseph's Church in DePere, Wisconsin. Father Blaise wrote on May 22, 1964 that Kathy had an excellent reputation, was a wonderful and likable person. He went on to write, *I believe Kathy is sincere in her religious vocation. I believe that she would have been with you several years ago already if her parents had approved. I sincerely believe she will adapt herself well to the religious life and that she will make a worthy and happy member of your family.*

Kathy was accepted and on her reception day she received the name Sister Monica Mary. As a Postulant and Novice, Sister Monica Mary taught in the Academy at the Motherhouse and at Holy Family College. Sister then taught six years at Bishop Rosecrans High School in Zanesville and four years at Central Catholic High School in West Point, Nebraska. During the summers she studied at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey where she earned a Master's Degree in General Professional Education.

It was at this time that Sister Monica Mary was called to serve in Community leadership positions. Sister served as Southern Regional Coordinator for seven years. After one year of teaching at St. Charles Lwanga in Chicago, Sister Monica Mary was asked to be the Director of Education for the Congregation. Other Community positions served were as General Administration Councilor, Affiliate Director, Directress of Vocations, Directress of Education and Director of Mission at Silver Lake College of the Holy Family. Throughout her life, Sister Monica Mary shared her organizational and scholarship skills.

Sister Monica Mary has had a wide variety of ministry opportunities that enriched her life as she served God's people. Wherever she went, she met people and kept those connections and relationships throughout her life. She loved to cook and be hostess for guests. She treasured her time in Rome being

the homemaker at the Domus and later the Coordinator of the House of Studies. Being Assistant Director of Religious Education in the Diocese of Lincoln was one of her dream ministries. After responding to the need to fill the position of Executive Director of St. Gabriel Mercy Center, Inc. in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, Sister Monica Mary returned to the Diocese of Lincoln to serve in St. Patrick's Parish in Imperial, Nebraska and the Grant Deanery.

Even though Sister Monica Mary needed to leave Imperial, because of her health, she still had the deep desire to return. She was very appreciative of the many people who supported her along the way throughout her Religious life. She believed strongly in the ministry of letter-writing, although her preferred way to communicate was face to face.

At the time of her Golden Jubilee Sister Monica Mary wrote,
*Hopefully, with feet on the ground and anchored with a sense of contemplation in action,
my respect for and interaction with all kinds of people whom God has given to me,
intertwine a wholeness and an integrity of person reflecting Catholic-Christian virtue.
With a sense of right-relationship,
a fitting professional and spiritual soundness begun at home with my mother, father and family,
the good company of friends,
and the Congregation that afforded opportunities of education,
enrichment, experience and Franciscan influence,
I will finish out a life lived for the One Who has called and chosen me.*

Sister Monica Mary did finish out her earthly life on Saturday night, when the One Who called her years before, now called her one last time to enjoy her eternal reward. Sister Monica Mary, thank you for the many ways you served God's people as a Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Thank you for being our Sister in Community.

May you rest in peace!