



Name: Sister Delia Gaber
Date of Birth: June 3, 1943
Place of Birth: Rhinelander, Wisconsin
Parents: Sylvester Joseph and Eleanore F. (Pecore) Gaber
Religious Profession: June 14, 1963
Date of Death: September 11, 2021
Age: 78
Years Professed: 58

Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Janice Ann Gaber was the fourth child born to Sylvester Joseph and Eleanore F. (Pecore) Gaber in Rhinelander, Wisconsin on June 3, 1943. Besides her three older brothers, Janice also had two younger brothers. Janice was Baptized at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Rhinelander, WI on July 18, 1943 by Father Francis Bertram. She received the Sacrament of Confirmation there on September 26, 1954.

Janice grew up in Rhinelander where her father was a mill worker and her mother was a homemaker. Growing up, she tended to be a tomboy to keep up with her brothers. Janice attended St. Mary's Elementary School where she was taught by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. A memorable year was Second Grade when she was preparing for the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. Janice had a profound experience of God's presence in her life and God's love for her when she received her First Holy Communion. This memory was held sacred all of her life.

As Janice got to know the Sisters during her Elementary school years, she wanted to be a Sister and have the joy and peace that she saw in them. She had a conversation with her Mother, who told her that she could go to the Convent after she completed High School. While Janice was living at home she was a sought-after babysitter for neighbors and friends of the family. She worked a short time as a waitress at Camp Sandy Lakes and ministered as a Catechist in the Parish.

The desire to serve God as a Sister stayed in the heart and mind of Janice as she attended Rhinelander Union High School. She wrote the following letter to Mother Agna dated May 31, 1961.

My dear Reverend Mother:

I am very interested in entering your Order. I have talked with the Sisters here and would desire specific information in regard to entrance requirements. I should also appreciate it, if you would give me additional information concerning the daily routine and activities.

I am going to be a June 7th graduate of Rhinelander Union High School. I am 18 years old. I have talked it over with one of the priests in our parish and he advised me to enter.

I taught catechism classes for two weeks last summer, and also on Thursdays of this year for those unable to come on Saturdays. I enjoy this work very much.

*Respectfully,
Janice Gaber*

Janice received and submitted the application papers. The following letter dated August 10, 1961 was addressed to Mother Agna from Janice's Pastor.

Dear Mother Agna:

It gives me pleasure to make a recommendation for Janice Gaber of this parish on the occasion of her request for entrance to the Franciscan Order. Regarding her intellectual and physical fitness, I have nothing to say, believing that you have her school and doctor's reports. My report has to do only with her spiritual qualifications, and on this basis, I recommend her very highly. She seems to have a realization of spiritual values. She was very willing to teach catechism to the youngsters during the course of the past year. She is no stranger to weekday Mass and Holy Communion. Her reputation is of the finest. I have no hesitation in recommending her to you.

*Sincerely yours in Christ,
Father Joseph Himmelsbach, Pastor*

Janice was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent, 60 years ago, on September 3, 1961. On her Reception Day, June 13, 1962, she was given the name Sister Delia. Sister Delia took classes at Holy Family College during her formation years. Recognizing skills that she had learned from her Mother, Sister Delia was asked to be a homemaker. Her first assignment was at Marist Seminary in Washington, D.C. Although she was there only two years, she appreciated the cultural opportunities of visiting historical sites and educational opportunities of auditing classes. The remainder of her ministry years were spent in Wisconsin. Sister Delia took to heart the title "Homemaker" and tried to be a Home-Maker for her Sisters, wherever she was missioned. Sister Delia was an excellent cook and a superb baker of bread. She was a laundress and sacristan.

Sister Delia was also a driver and a good conversationalist. She loved to drive Sisters to appointments and enjoyed long distance driving to meet Sisters at the Airport or the Amtrak Station. While being missioned at San Damiano Convent in Slinger, WI, a unique opportunity

was given to Sister Delia to participate in an outreach project. For five years she was the caregiver for a gentleman in his home.

Sister Delia returned to Holy Family Convent in 2003. She continued to assist with driving trips as long as she was able to drive. Sister Delia enjoyed being receptionist and telephone operator. Other enjoyments included: being outside in nature, playing cards, sewing, typing, knitting, reading, going to the Cottage, making edible treats and card-making. Sister Delia was an avid Brewer Baseball Fan. She spoke often of fishing with her brother Don and always looked forward to another fishing adventure!

Over the years, pain and suffering were not strangers to Sister Delia. It was on July 30, 2021 that her rapid health decline made it necessary to move to St. Rita Health Center. Her Mission Assignment read: *You are called to live the Gospel in our Franciscan Community and to serve God's people in St. Rita Health Center by lovingly accepting your sufferings and limitations so as to participate in Christ's work of redemption. As a member of the Prayer Apostolate please pray for our Sisters and the Staff of the Motherhouse.*

Sister Delia did embrace her pain and suffering for many years and made them a prayer offering. She was peaceful and appreciative of all the care she received. She knew that her time on earth was ending and she wanted to really live out the title of her Reception Crowd, to be an "Echo of the Word." She wanted to reflect the love of Jesus. Sister Delia was appreciative of the recent visits from her family, friends and the phone calls.

No earthly person was with Sister Delia when her physical journey ended. Seeing her peaceful face, after her death, we trust that she gave herself up completely and handed herself over to Our Lord when He came to take her home. Thank you, Sister Delia, for being our Sister, a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity.

Eternal life grant to Sister Delia, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.
May she rest in peace,
Amen!