



Name: Sister Mary Bodwin (Sister Mary Richard)  
Date of Birth: October 21, 1925  
Place of Birth: Rhinelander, Wisconsin  
Parents: Joseph Eugene and Myrtle (McLaughlin) Bodwin  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1945  
Date of Death: November 10, 2023  
Age: 98  
Years Professed: 78

Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Jeanne Myrtle Bodwin was born in Rhinelander Wisconsin to Joseph Eugene and Myrtle (McLaughlin) Bodwin on October 21, 1925. Jeanne had two sisters and four brothers and was the fifth of seven children. She was baptized on November 1, 1925 at Immaculate Conception Church in Rhinelander. It was there that she received her First Holy Communion on May 17, 1936 and the Sacrament of Confirmation on December 9, 1939.

Her father owned the Rendezvous Restaurant in Rhinelander, until the Depression forced it to close. After that, he worked for the Rhinelander papermill. The family lived on the south side of town. There were many children in their neighborhood. They loved to play softball, basketball and Jeanne played a bugle in the girls Drum Corp.

Jeanne attended kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Mary's Grade School in Rhinelander where she met the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Jeanne thought seriously about being a Sister. In particular, Sister Claude De Mario, her 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, and Sister De Carmel Loehr, her 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, influenced her in the desire to serve God as a Sister. Her Mother was a very religious woman who attended Mass daily. She was another source of inspiration for Jeanne in confirming her desire to be a Sister. When Jeanne talked with her Mother about going to the Convent her Mother thought she was too young and told her if she still wished to enter the Convent after two years she would receive her Mother's and Father's blessing.

Jeanne attended the public high school for two years. Her desire to be a Sister only deepened and her Mother and Father gave their blessing for her to apply to enter the Convent in Manitowoc. Jeanne, along with her classmate and friend, who became Sister Mary Peter Harvey, was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent at the age of 17 on August 17, 1942. She completed her last two years of High School in Holy Family Academy, receiving her Diploma in 1944.

On the day of her Reception into the Novitiate on June 10, 1943, Jeanne was given the name Sister Mary Richard. When Vatican Council II allowed a Sister to return to her Baptismal Name or drop the masculine part of their Religious name, Sister Mary Richard chose to be Sister Mary because of her love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

Sister Mary continued her education at Holy Family College receiving a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1957 with a Major in History and a Minor in English. In 1964, she received a Master of Arts degree in History from Notre Dame University in Indiana. Sister Mary did post graduate work at the University of Connecticut at Storrs taking courses in Economics. Through course work at the University of San Francisco in California, Loras College and Clark College in Dubuque, Iowa, Sister Mary received a Master's equivalency in Administration. She took an on-line course in World Religions and completed six weeks of "street work" on Social Problems done at George Williams College in Downers Grove, Illinois.

Sister Mary had a passion for teaching, for she came from a family of teachers. Her Mother, an Aunt and three of her sisters were all teachers. Following in her family's tradition her main apostolate was teaching. Sister Mary taught 65 years. Her first 18 years were in elementary grades in Wisconsin and in Ohio and two additional years teaching History in St. Willibrord High School in Chicago. For the next five years, she taught History at Holy Family College. Upon completion of those years, Sister Mary was assigned to various teaching and Administrative positions in California, Ohio and Wisconsin. In 1984, she was named to the Silver Lake College of the Holy Family Faculty.

During the years that Sister Mary taught at Silver Lake College she was a member of many Committees. While teaching at the College she was influential in broadening students' experiences in many ways. For a period of seven years, she and Sister Andrée Du Charme conducted tours to Europe, visiting nine different countries involving over 200 students, faculty, staff and alumni. She conducted ten tours within the United States. The most rewarding experience in all of the travel years was when Sister Mary and Sister Andrée were privileged to attend, now, Saint Pope John Paul II's Mass in the Vatican Chapel. After the Mass they were able to meet him, shake his hand and receive his blessing.

Sister Mary always looked for opportunities to help people. She taught a Senior Citizens Bible Study Class and for about six years continued her outreach at the Senior Center teaching American and World History Classes. Sister Mary was on call as a member of the Speakers Bureau and taught a course on Social Problems at various locations throughout Wisconsin.

When Sister Mary was asked about her special talents, skills, hobbies and interests her list included organization, public speaking, reading, knitting, listening to good music, sports, education and telling funny stories! Anyone who had Sister Mary for a teacher or anyone who knew her, would acknowledge her keen sense of humor.

At the time of her Jubilee, Sister Mary reflected on her fruitful life. "My Consecrated Life as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity has been blessed! If someone would ask me what the key to a 'successful' life is, as a religious Sister, I would say that Jesus needs to be the center of your life. No matter how busy you are, you need to take time to pray. The busier you are, the more one needs to pray! If a person wishes to join our Franciscan Community, she needs to come with the proper motive. She needs to have been called by God and be willing to live Community life embracing our Franciscan Charism." She also believed that the person needed to have a sense of humor, be able to laugh and even participate in 'Tom-foolery' at times!

After her retirement, Sister Mary helped in various ways in St. Rita Health Center and St. Francis Convent. She became a resident in St. Rita's in 2021 when her health declined. She was a member of the Prayer Apostolate, praying for all those involved in Formation. Sister Mary was grateful for her family, her Sisters in Community, her colleagues, her friends and all her students who helped her to grow closer to God because of their witness. Thank you, Sister Mary, for your joyful witness as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. We pray for the repose of your soul and trust that you will continue to intercede for all those involved in Formation, those God is calling to our Community and for the special needs and intentions of our Community.

Eternal Life grant to Sister Mary, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace.  
AMEN!