



PRECIOUS  
& BLESSED

*is the death of the*

*faithful*  
*before*  
GOD.



School Sisters of Notre Dame  
of St. Louis

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Saint Louis, MO 63125

[www.ssnd-sl.org](http://www.ssnd-sl.org)



*Sister Mary Ellen Burrus, SSND*

*Born*

*July 27, 1931*

*Professed*

*August 1, 1952*

*Ministry*

*elementary educator; musician; laundress;  
clerical and community service ~  
California, Illinois, Missouri*

*Died*

*July 20, 2008*

# *Sister Mary Ellen Burrus, SSND*



Jeanne Anne, the eighth daughter and youngest child of Mary Ellen [Grant] and Anton Gabriel Burrus, was born on July 27, 1931, in St. Louis, Mo. She was baptized at St. Mary Magdalen Church on August 9, 1931. Three brothers also were members of this large and happy family.



She attended St. Mary Magdalen Grade School. Her father died when she was nine years old and her mother died during her sophomore year at Rosati-Kain High School. A brother, two sisters and Jeanne moved to an apartment as older members of the family had already married and moved away. Influenced by her SSND teachers in high school and the prayer of her mother

that one of her daughters would become a nun, she entered the candidature on August 31, 1949. During her second year of candidature, she taught second grade at Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Louis. Received into the novitiate on July 30, 1951, she was given the name, Mary Ellen, in memory of her mother. She professed first vows on August 1, 1952, and final vows on August 1, 1958.



Sister Mary Ellen taught for 30 years in elementary education: in Illinois at St. Boniface, Quincy; St. Joseph and St. Philip, East St. Louis; St. Luke, Belleville; St. Charles, DuBois; St. Francis, Teutopolis. In California, she taught at: St. Jude Academy and St. Rita, San Diego; St. Helen, Fresno. She also taught at St. Lucy, St. Louis. In most of these missions, in addition to the

classroom teaching, Sister Mary Ellen was the organist, choir director and librarian, and she gave music lessons. When knee injuries and pain

necessitated her leaving the classroom, she ministered in community service as a clerical assistant to the Retreat Team at Notre Dame Hall, Catholic Education Office, Caroline Conference and Retreat Center, Notre Dame Travel, and St. Louis University; laundress at Villa Gesu and the motherhouse; and aide in the motherhouse infirmary. Since 1997, she organized and was in charge of the tape/media library at the motherhouse. She also assisted in typing for the Sturdy Roots project.

After two knee replacements and hip surgery, all were amazed at her determination to walk without using a motorized vehicle. On May 24, 2008, she suffered a stroke, which affected her left side. She underwent extensive therapy to regain movement in her leg and hand. Her leg did not respond to therapy, leaving her paralyzed on that side. On July 20, 2008, her heart finally gave out and she died peacefully at 1:05 p.m. at St. Anthony Medical Center, St. Louis.

A wake was held on July 22, 2008, in the motherhouse chapel. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with burial in the motherhouse cemetery. Her sisters and brothers preceded her in death. Relatives, classmates, friends and SSNDs attended the funeral services.

An extremely gifted person, Sister Mary Ellen painted, did needlework, created poetry and wrote parodies. Her reminders for overdue media or lost items were delightful to read. She was extremely organized, loved chocolate, and enjoyed reading, listening to music and caring for flowers. Her quick wit and sense of humor, honesty, prayerfulness and willingness to serve made her a valued community member. Freed from suffering, may she now rejoice with her family members who have gone before her into eternal life. May her new life in God exceed all she had imagined!

*Precious and blessed is the death of the faithful before God.*