



**In death,
we say our ultimate yes
to our Creator.
Trusting in God's power
to bring us to fulfillment of life,
we see death as an act of worship:
in dying, we proclaim God, God;
and ourselves, creatures.**

**Although in grief,
the community gratefully affirms this,
our final earthly proclamation
of the good news...
In hope and peace,
we enter into the joy of the Lord!**

You Are Sent #47



Sister Mary Gemma Maschek

Born
January 3, 1925

Professed
July 30, 1947

Ministry
**elementary educator, pastoral minister,
community service;
California, Illinois, Missouri, Texas**

Died
March 3, 2008



**School Sisters of Notre Dame
of St. Louis**

The oldest of seven children was born to Victoria (Sindelar) and Edward Maschek in St. Louis, MO, on January 3, 1925. Eight days later, she was baptized at St. Wenceslaus Church and named Genevieve Mary. Four brothers and two sisters joined her in this family of Czech origin, including our deceased S. Catherine.

Genevieve attended St. Wenceslaus Grade School where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Already in first grade, she had a desire to become one of them. With the help of the sisters, she was able to enter the aspiranture at Ripa but discontinued after her junior year to assist the family as a nurse aide at St. Mary Hospital in the maternity ward and nursery. After a year, she returned to the aspiranture and completed her high school studies. For another year, she worked in the cardiology department at Desloge Hospital.

Genevieve entered the candidature on August 30, 1944. She was received as a novice on July 29, 1946, and given the name Mary Gemma. Profession of first vows was on July 30, 1947, and final vows on July 30, 1953.

Following profession, S. Gemma taught for 28 years in elementary education at St. Joseph, Freeburg, IL; St. Martin of Tours, St. Louis, MO; Blessed Sacrament, Hannibal, MO; St. Charles Borromeo, St. Charles, MO; St. Joseph, Farmington, MO; St. Francis Borgia, Washington, MO; and Christ the King, Corpus Christi, TX. In California, she taught at St. Aloysius, Tulare; St. Joseph, Holtville; St. Martin, LaMesa; and St. Rita, San Diego. She gave community service at Villa Gesu and the motherhouse,



tutored at St. Charles, DuBois, IL, and was a pastoral minister at Sacred Heart, DuQuoin, IL.



From 1982 to 1993, S. Gemma cared for her mother while continuing to give community service on a limited basis. In 1993, she began working in pastoral care with women prisoners at the Medium Security Prison in St. Louis. This affiliation with the St. Vincent de Paul Criminal Justice Ministry opened for her a new way of putting her spiritual life into action. She retired in 1996. After suffering a compressed fracture, she was

missioned to Anna House in 2004. She was diagnosed with cancer and placed on hospice in January 2008. She died peacefully at Anna House on March 3, 2008, at 3:48 a.m. while S. Anita Marie Lischwe prayed at her bedside. S. Gemma donated her body to St. Louis University School of Medicine.

A memorial Mass was celebrated on March 8, 2008, in the motherhouse chapel. Many relatives, friends and SSNDs were present. She is survived by a sister, Letitia Schaefer; three brothers, Edward, Michael and Herman; and nieces and nephews.

S. Gemma was remembered as a loving, compassionate and spiritual person who readily shared with others her life with God. She was a woman of conviction and found joy in serving the poor and praying with them. She embodied the charism of SSND in her ministry to women, children and the poor. May she now rejoice in eternal peace and happiness with our faithful God!