



**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 M. Dominica Pagano

***Born*
August 29, 1926**

***Professed*
July 31, 1946**

***Ministry*
elementary educator/administrator;
director of religious education;
community service ~
California, Illinois, Missouri**

***Died*
May 25, 2008**



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

On August 29, 1926, in St. Louis, Mo., the fifth of six living children, was born to Italian immigrants, Domenica and Leo Pagano. The little girl was not expected to live and her mother promised Our Lady of Grace a namesake if she lived. According to family traditions, her name was to be Domenica after her mother and aunt. When she was baptized on October 3, 1926, at St. Charles Borromeo (an Italian church) in St. Louis, she was named Grace Marie, in keeping with her mother's promise. Two children had died in infancy and Grace grew up with two brothers and three sisters, two of whom were hearing-impaired.

Grace attended Jackson Public School from kindergarten to grade 2. After attending the summer religious education classes at St. Liborius in preparation for her First Holy Communion, she begged to go to school there. St. Liborius, a German parish, had recently opened its doors to all ethnic groups. Her parents gave her permission to complete her elementary education under the guidance of the SSNDs whom she admired and desired to join. She intended to go to Rock High School but one of the sisters suggested she and her parents visit Ripa. Grace entered the aspiranture two days later. After three years, she entered the candidature on August 25, 1943. She was received into the novitiate on July 30, 1945, and given the name, Mary Dominica, the name she had not received at her baptism. Profession of first vows was July 31, 1946, and final vows was July 31, 1952.



S. Dominica spent 45 years in elementary education. She taught for 41 years at: St. Augustine, Breese, Ill.; St. Philip, East St. Louis, Ill.; St. Louis, Nokomis, Ill.; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Herrin, Ill.; St. Rita, San Diego, Calif.; St. Liborius and St. Dominic Savio, St. Louis; St. George, Linn, Mo.; and St. Gertrude, Krakow, Mo. She was also

principal for 26 years, serving a teacher/administrator role in Herrin, Ill.; Linn and Krakow, Mo.; and full-time principal at St. Gabriel, St. Louis. Her years in the classroom were followed by 11 years as director of religious education at



St. Mary, Taylorville, Ill. Retiring at the motherhouse in 2003, she continued to serve by sewing for and visiting the sisters at Anna House, receptionist at Caroline Center and volunteering in the RDO department.

In April 2008, she was diagnosed with a malignant tumor between the stomach and pancreas. Following a chemotherapy treatment, she was placed on hospice. Sisters and family members sat and prayed with her. She peacefully went home to God in the motherhouse infirmary, around 1:30 a.m. on May 25, 2008, the feast of Corpus Christi.

The wake was held at the motherhouse on May 27. Rev. Charles Deister and Rev. Joe Welschmeyer concelebrated the Mass of Christian Burial on May 28. Burial was in the motherhouse cemetery. She is survived by three sisters: Anna Berry of Wright City, Mo.; Frances Lafata of Ballwin, Mo.; Josephine Sapienza of Fenton, Mo. Many relatives, friends, classmates, colleagues and sisters attended the funeral services.

An excellent educator, she taught in all elementary grades. As principal, she mentored many beginning teachers with encouragement and understanding. She was a prayerful, humble, kind, gentle and loving person who won the hearts of her students, parents, colleagues and her companion sisters. Her closing remarks for her wake and funeral liturgy were: *"My wish is that all continue to grow in Unity and Love. Thank you and serve the Lord in gladness as you follow in His footsteps."* May S. Dominica now rejoice in total union with the God who loves her and whom she served so faithfully with gladness and gratitude!