

Sister Grace Miller, CSA

Sister Grace (formerly Mathias) Miller, 87, died on Thursday, September 17, 2009, in St. Francis Home where she resided.

Cecelia Anna Grace was the only daughter of six children born to Peter and Amelia (Spangler) Miller in Decatur, Indiana, two days after Christmas 1921. She was baptized the same day. A child of the “roaring twenties” and the depression, Grace grew up on a farm in a family where she learned to love life and the God of life. Because of her five brothers, she claimed that she learned to face any challenge. She attended grade school and a year of high school in Decatur, where her teachers were Sisters of St. Agnes. Following their example, she entered the Congregation of St. Agnes in 1936.



In 1941 Grace Miller made her first vows as Sister Mathias and began a ministry of service that would last, in one form or another, for some fifty years. She earned a B.S. in Education from Marian College of Fond du Lac; an M.S. in Education from St. Francis College in Fort Wayne, Indiana; a library science certificate from Marian; and a CPE certificate from St. Joseph Hospital in St. Joseph, Missouri. Some thirty years of elementary teaching, afternoon and evening religious education classes, and a stint as principal took her to schools in Indiana, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The next twelve years found her splitting time between teaching and library work, eventually moving to full-time library work in Illinois and later Wisconsin. In the 1980's she turned to pastoral ministry work in Wisconsin and Indiana until failing health brought her to retirement in Fond du Lac.

After Vatican Council II, Sister Mathias chose to return to her baptismal name of Grace, in honor of Mary, the Mother of God, whom the angel had greeted as “full of grace.” Mary was a special love of Sister Grace, who made, repaired, and prayed innumerable rosaries. In spite of physical limitations in her retirement years, Sister Grace continued to minister to her sisters in community, visiting them and cheering them up. All her life, she had a tender heart for and sought out those who were overlooked, ignored, or helpless. She was sensitive to the feelings of others and often tried to brighten a gloomy atmosphere or lighten a tense moment. She knew herself well, both her limitations and her strengths, and was honest and direct in conversation. Her brothers and their families were always close to her. She was a woman of deep faith and prayer who never lost her love for life and for the God of life that she learned on the farm. She was ready and eager to meet her God who gently called her home on Thursday night.

Sister Grace is survived by a brother, Joseph (Barbara) Miller of Fort Wayne, IN; a sister-in-law, Mary Kay Miller also of Fort Wayne, IN; nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Agnes with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Preceding her in death are her parents, Peter and Amelia and four brothers: David, Daniel, William, and Thomas.

Visitation: Visitation for Sister Grace will be held on Monday, September 21 from 9:30 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac. A prayer service will be held at 11:00 a.m.

Services: A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on September 21, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. in the St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac. Father Ken Smits, OFM.Cap., will preside. Burial will follow at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery.

Memorials may be directed to the Sisters of St. Agnes Development Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54935.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of St. Francis Home, Hospice Hope, and Nazareth Court and Center for their care of Sister Grace in her retirement years.