

Sister Stella Marie Karls, CSA

Sister Stella Marie Karls, CSA, baptized Rita Emma, died peacefully December 9, 2024, at Nazareth Court, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Rita was born September 16, 1930, in Waunakee, Wisconsin, to Joseph and Magdalena (Miller) Karls. She was the twelfth of thirteen children, five boys and eight girls, who grew up together on their family farm. Rita attended St. John the Baptist Catholic Elementary School in Waunakee where she first met the Sisters of St. Agnes. After eighth grade, Rita delayed her high school education to assist her mother who was ill and to work for several years as a telephone operator in Waunakee. She entered St. Agnes Convent in January of 1953 at the age of twenty-two and attended St. Agnes High School. Rita made her first profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes as Sister Stella Marie on August 15, 1957, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



Sister Stella Marie received a BS in Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She dedicated thirty-seven years to the ministry of education serving as an elementary teacher and as a building principal. Throughout her years in ministry, she continually updated her professional skills taking courses in education, scripture and pastoral ministry. Sister Stella Marie taught in parish schools in Des Plaines, Illinois; Bronx, New York; and Kewaskum, Marytown, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her final seventeen years of teaching were at St. Joseph's School in Fond du Lac. A love for children, especially first graders, has been the hallmark of Sister Stella Marie's life as an educator. She is fondly remembered by her students to this day.

Sister retired from teaching in 1995 and began serving as a Minister of Care at St. Joseph Parish and at Holy Family Parish in Fond du Lac. She spent her days taking Communion to the homebound and visiting parishioners in area nursing homes. She also taught parish religious education classes when needed. Her gracious presence brought comfort to all whom she visited.

In September of 2016, Sister Stella Marie joined her CSA sisters living at Nazareth Court and Center where she actively engaged in community life and received loving care until the time of her death.

Preceding Sister Stella Marie in death were her parents, her brothers Sylvester, Wilbert, Thomas, Arnold, and Joseph; her sisters Martha Meffert, Ann Karls, Delphine Petranek, Johanna Schwab, Margaret Hellenbrand, and Mary Hellenbrand.

Sister Stella Marie is survived by her sister Dorothy Maly, several nieces and nephews and their families and the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed and ministered.

Visitation will be held on Friday, December 20, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

A Prayer-Service in honor of Sister Stella Marie will be held at 11:00 a.m. December 20, 2024, in Nazareth Center Chapel, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial will be offered at 2:00 p.m. on December 20, 2024, at St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Father Thomas Zelinski, OFM, Cap., presiding. Burial will follow at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Memorials may be directed to the CSA Mission Advancement Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes and the Karls family are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and Hospice Hope for their devoted care of Sister Stella Marie.

Zacherl Funeral Home is serving the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.