

## **Sister Miriam Therese Putzer, CSA**

Sister Miriam Therese Putzer, CSA, baptized Catherine Mary Smick, died peacefully January 30, 2026, at St. Francis Home, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Catherine was born October 2, 1931, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, the daughter of Matthew and Cecilia Binder Smick. Her mother died in childbirth, along with baby Susan, when Catherine was three years old and her brother, Eugene, was five. Their father, feeling unable to care for his young children, placed them in the care of Cecilia's two sisters, Verona Binder and Emma Binder Putzer, who lived together close to Matthew's home. With their father's consent, Emma legally adopted Catherine and Eugene in 1937 giving them her married name, Putzer. All of their lives, Catherine and her brother spoke of the loving childhood that their aunts provided for them, easing the loss of their mother. Catherine graduated from St. Mary's Grade School in Oshkosh, staffed by the Sisters of St. Agnes. While a freshman in high school, she began feeling a tug at her heart to become a Sister. After resisting for a time, she tells of the moment of grace that occurred during a time of prayer in which she said yes to the call from God. She entered St. Agnes Convent in 1946, graduated from St. Agnes High School, and continued in the CSA formation program. She made her first profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes as Sister Miriam Therese on August 15, 1951, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



2026 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of Sister Miriam Therese's profession of vows. She faithfully spent her life of consecration and service as an educator, a CSA formation director in the United States and in Nicaragua, a member of the CSA general council, and as a local coordinator and spiritual companion for the elderly and infirm members of the congregation. She also served as a Spanish translator for patients at St. Agnes Hospital, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Her compassionate presence and ministry were enhanced by her profound spirituality, her graceful elegance, and her gifts as a writer and poet.

Sister began her studies toward a degree in elementary education at Marian College, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and completed her BS in Education at Fordham University, Bronx, New York. She earned a Masters in English from Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1965. Her first years before and after religious profession, (1950-1967) were spent as an elementary teacher and principal in schools in Pennsylvania, New York, and Wisconsin, including St. Peter Claver School, Sheboygan, and St. Mary and St. Joseph Schools in Fond du Lac. In 1967, Sister Miriam Therese was appointed director of the CSA aspirancy, a live-in high school program for young girls considering religious life. While serving in this role she taught English at St. Mary's Springs High School, the same school that the aspirants under her care attended. In 1969, Sister was elected to a four-year term as a member of the CSA general council. Upon completion of this leadership term, she taught English at Sacred Heart High School, Yonkers, New York (1973-1977). In 1977, she was again elected to the CSA general council serving another eight years in this role. Following this term of leadership, Sister Miriam Therese was appointed local coordinator for the sisters residing at Nazareth Heights, the CSA retirement center in Fond du Lac. She ministered in this role for six years, 1985-1991. In 1992, Sister was appointed novice directress for CSA in Nicaragua. She prepared for this ministry by studying Spanish for six months in Mexico before moving to Managua,

Nicaragua. Her experience serving in this role and living among the sisters and people of Nicaragua was life changing. She loved guiding the young members of the congregation and treasured the culture of the people. They in turn loved and treasured her. Returning to the United States in 2001, Sister Miriam Therese spent her remaining years in active ministry as a spiritual companion for the sisters residing at Nazareth Court & Center in Fond du Lac. It was during this time that she also translated for Spanish-speaking hospital patients.

Sister Miriam Therese became a resident at Nazareth Court & Center in September 2015, engaging in community life with the same gracious, creative, and reflective spirit that exemplified her life. Needing more care, she was admitted to St. Francis Home in 2024, where she continued to receive loving care until the time of her death.

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, her aunts Verona and Emma, her infant sister Susan, and her brother Eugene.

Sister Miriam Therese is survived by her nieces Catherine Putzer Levin and Cynthia Jones Barcnas and their families, by her cousins, and by the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

All services for Sister Miriam Therese will be on Friday, February 6, 2026.

Visitation will be held 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 will be held at 11:00 a.m. in Nazareth Center Chapel, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

The Liturgy of Christian Burial will be offered at 2:00 p.m. in St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Fr. 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 Putzer family are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and St. Francis Home for their devoted care of Sister Miriam Therese.

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