



Sister Grace Marie Kraft, OP

Born to earthly life: October 22, 1924

Religious profession: August 4, 1944

Entered eternal life: March 10, 2015

*Only so far as a person uses his/her education in society-building
– serving others regardless of race, color or creed –
is one truly educated.*

– Sister Grace Marie Kraft

SISTER GRACE MARIE TRULY WAS AN EDUCATED WOMAN.

Not only did her career encompass teaching children in grades one through 12 and tutoring adults; her philosophy of education made her a *people-builder*. “I see education as ‘people-building,’ since it contributes to basic human needs: achievement, acceptance and affection – the building blocks of self-realization,” she wrote in 1976 while teaching at Boyssville, a time she cherished among her 60 plus years in ministry.

Grace, born in Detroit, MI, on October 22, 1924, was the third of Frank and Elsie Kraft’s 10 children. Throughout her life, she remained close to “my wonderful family who have been a great support.”

Grace liked attending Nativity School in Detroit, enjoyed her teachers, and performed well academically. In fact, after completing fifth grade, she advanced directly to the seventh grade. She went on to graduate with high honors from Nativity High School, receiving a watch from a local jeweler for having the highest grades in her class. She was very proud of that watch.

At age 17, Grace entered the Racine Dominican Community, and at her reception the following year was given the name Sister Marie (after the Vatican II Council, she became S. Grace Marie). For almost 30 years she taught various levels in schools around Michigan and Wisconsin. In 1971, she became the media supervisor in the library at St. Thomas More School (Boysville) in Clinton, MI. For the next 14 years, “Grace Marie found ways to care for the vulnerable and broken,” S. Sharon Simon described her friend’s ministry at the boarding school for troubled boys. “She followed each boy carefully, desirous of his success.”

As compassionate and dedicated as S. Grace Marie was to the Racine Dominicans and her students, she was equally committed to her family, responding willingly whenever needed. Shortly before her death, two family members wrote tributes to S. Grace Marie in light of Catholic Sisters Week.

“I will never forget her faithful care of my mom for almost a year after her brain tumor was diagnosed,” wrote Christine Zech, S. Grace Marie’s niece. “Sister Marie came for a whole day every week...to help with my mom’s care and to give my dad a break – a little time away from the house and all his responsibilities there with my mom. ... Sister Marie taught by her actions, lessons of love and compassion and what it means to be family. ... “We love her dearly; she truly is ‘Amazing Grace’ to me.”

And S. Grace Marie’s sister-in-law, Anna, summed up the love so many had for her: “She now awaits her eternal reward but, as she said recently, ‘He hasn’t called me yet!’ She has ‘graced’ us with her presence in our lives, and that is the reason she is our ‘Amazing Grace.’ Her baby brother, Ken, and I are so lucky to have had her in our life.”