

Sister Bernadine Pohl, OP



Born to Earthly Life on March 12, 1928

First Profession on August 5, 1947

Entered Eternal Life on July 8, 2023

MARY BERNADINE was born March 12, 1928 to Louis and Catherine Pohl in Fowler, Michigan. She was the fifth of nine children and grew up on the family farm. It was there she learned a good work ethic and an appreciation for prayer, study and time with family playing games and cooking together. She was taught by many Racine Dominican Sisters and felt a call to religious life early. She joined her sister Dorothy at the convent in Racine, professing first vows in 1947 and her final vows in 1953. She was given the religious name S. Bernita and after Vatican II changed her name to S. Bernadine.

S. Bernadine received a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Dominican College in Racine and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

S. Bernadine spent many years in service to others in teaching, chaplaincy, parish ministry and as a nursing assistant. She began her ministry in teaching, where she taught for 25 years in schools throughout Wisconsin and Michigan, including Sacred Heart, St. Rita and St. Mary in Racine. Throughout those years she also became a certified chaplain and nurse's assistant and ministered in a variety of settings. She was a nursing assistant at Villa St. Ann in Oconomowoc and Our Lady of the Oaks in Pewaukee and a pastoral minister and chaplain at St. Mary's in Paw Paw, Michigan, St. Francis Medical Center in LaCrosse and St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay, WI, among others.

The common thread S. Bernie found through teaching, nursing, parish ministry and chaplaincy was the opportunity to connect with people. Being able to serve people of all ages at significant times in their lives left S. Bernadine with a deep sense of awe and appreciation of the work of God in our world. As she so wonderfully said, "When people share their stories, I often experience a deep appreciation of God's love and stand in awe of God's presence." Her caring heart and prayerful spirit made her a welcome presence, whether that was in the classroom, church or a hospital room.

After retiring from ministry, you could often find S. Bernadine continuing to serve. She taught English as a second language, was active in environmental justice work and was a prayer leader at Siena. And of course, you could always find S. Bernadine walking with Sisters and Associates through challenging times and offering a listening ear.

S. Bernadine had a gift of connecting with people, saying that "...their relationship with God gives them calm, openness and peace that is like touching the holy." She had a true servant's heart and we are grateful for the example she showed to each of us about seeing God in all things.

