



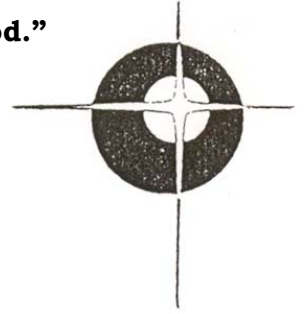
**“Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God.”  
--Micah 6:8**

**SISTER JANE (JEROME MARIE) FISCHER, SSND**

June 29, 1927

July 17, 1948

July 30, 2009



At 1:08 a.m., on Thursday, July 30, our beloved Sister Jane (Jerome Marie) Fischer, 82, died at Regions Hospital, St. Paul, Minnesota. She had sustained a severe brain injury in a fall on July 11, resulting in her death.

The funeral Mass for Sister Jane, with Father Tim Biren, as presider, will be on August 3 at 10:30 a.m., in our Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato, Minnesota, followed by burial in our cemetery. The vigil service is at 7:00 p.m. on August 2. Loving sympathy to her twin brother Jerome and his wife Marge, her niece and nephews and their families, as well as her former students and colleagues, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Raymond and Rosella (Roth) Fischer.

Jane and her twin brother Jerome were born ten minutes apart on a blistering hot day, June 29, 1927 at St. Joseph Hospital in St. Paul. Jane wrote of that day, “Because we came as a pair to St. Joseph Hospital, the staff insisted on helping choose our names of Jerome and Jane.” They were baptized two weeks later at St. Matthew Church in St. Paul.

She attended St. Andrew School through grade 2 and wrote, “Beginning school at St. Andrew’s, the examples of Sister M. Rosina (Schueller) and Sister Mary Maude (Agnes Marie Manning) deeply impressed on my immature mind the liking for the Religious State.” Jane moved to Cloquet, Minnesota, spending 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Sacred Heart School, and then came to Minneapolis for the rest of her grade and high school years, first at St. Thomas Elementary and then St. Margaret’s Academy. She graduated from St. Margaret’s in 1945.

Choosing SSND, Jane explained, “It was difficult deciding between the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of St. Joseph, who had taught me for eight years. The early training of SSND had remained. It was as though the spirit had crept into my being. So on August 28, 1945, I entered the Candidature.” At her Reception ceremony into the Novitiate, she was assisted by her 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Sister Rosina, “who had always been an example to me of what a good School Sister of Notre Dame is and should be.”

After Profession in 1948, she spent eleven years teaching grades 3 through 8 at Holy Childhood and St. Andrew in St. Paul, and at St. Leo, St. Leo, SS. Peter & Paul, Blue Earth, St. John, Jordan, and St. Anthony, Lismore. During this time, she earned her Bachelor’s degree through Mount Mary. Her years of elementary teaching concluded in 1959 when she was one of the teachers sent to open St. Gertrude High School in Raleigh, ND.

Her experience at Raleigh was just the beginning of a very successful 39-year ministry of high school teaching. Schools that benefitted from her expertise included St. Anne, Wabasso; St. Michael, St. Michael; and St. Agnes, Archbishop Brady, Cretin and Cretin-Derham Hall, all in St. Paul. She also spent one year as a social worker for Catholic Charities. During those years, she earned an M.A. in History from Creighton University,

Omaha, and did post-graduate study at Macalaster, the University of Georgia and DePauw University. In 1976, she was named Teacher of the Year at Brady High School.

Twenty of her secondary school teaching years were spent at Cretin, and then the combined Cretin-Derham Hall. Active in the Close Up program, which promotes student understanding of US history and government, she accompanied students each year to Washington, DC, where they visited historical sites and observed the government in action. In 1993, she was selected to receive the Close Up Foundation-Linda Myers Chosen Award for Teaching Excellence in Civic Education. The letter of recognition states, "This award is being presented to five extraordinary teachers across the country in recognition of their efforts and accomplishments in helping young people develop a better understanding and appreciation of their roles as citizens. ... Sister Jane's work with the Close Up Washington Program has been a model for educators nationwide. She demonstrates her special commitment to students every year, and her dedication to providing innovative learning opportunities has made a real difference during a time in which we are increasingly seeing young people feeling powerless and alienated from our political process." And Sister Jane, in turn, called Close Up "the most important education endeavor I ever engaged in with students." Over 200 students participated in the program under her guidance, where weekly assignments included critiquing three editorials and three political cartoons, along with readings on current issues.

She also wrote of two other high points of her Cretin-Derham teaching – the opportunity five times to take students to Ireland and a 1990 summer teaching experience in Israel. She described her time in Israel, "The Provincial of the Christian Brothers invited me to teach Freshman English at Bethlehem University. My 22 students, ages 19-23, were so interesting, and I sometimes think that they taught me more than I did them. The eight weeks there proved quite insightful, as I saw Israeli soldiers on nearly every corner, guns at hand ready for any disturbance. It was, to say the least, a challenging time."

Health issues had been a concern for a number of years. She survived a cancer diagnosis and surgery in 1967, and again in 2007. Congestive heart failure and subsequent open heart surgery caused her to retire from full time teaching in 1998. She wrote, "As I really enjoyed the students, this was, perhaps, the most difficult decision I've ever had to make." (Two footnotes to her teaching: in 1996 NFL quarterback Steve Walsh, a Cretin-Derham graduate, nominated her for the NFL Teacher of the Year award, and in 1999 a *Pioneer Press* journalist and Brady graduate, Theresa Monsour, gave public credit to Sister Jane, who encouraged her to apply for an Urban Journalism summer program that introduced her to the world of newspaper writing.)

In retirement, Sister Jane did some substitute teaching, and volunteered at St. Joseph Hospital in the Mended Hearts program, where she was able to bring comfort and hope to heart surgery patients. At St. Louis Church, she and a friend prepared the quarterly schedules for lectors and Eucharistic ministers. Residents of Mt. Carmel Manor, where she lived, considered her a real friend. And her extended family also was very important to her.

Her autobiography concludes, "I am most grateful to the SSND Community for all the educational and religious opportunities that have so enriched my life. It's been a GREAT time!" May Sister Jane, who so enriched the lives of others, and lived out the *You Are Sent* description of education as enabling others to reach their full potential, now be enjoying the GREAT time of eternal life!