



“Be still and know that I am God.”

– Psalm 46:10

SISTER MARY JULIANA WIESER, SSND

October 15, 1919

July 22, 1939

February 2, 2011



Our beloved Sister Mary Juliana Wieser, 91, died peacefully at 6:35 a.m. on Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at Good Counsel Provincial House, Mankato. Though she has been in frail health, her death was unexpected; the day before she died, Sister Mary Juliana had followed her normal routine which included a stop at the Notre Dame Hall bulletin board and reading the *Free Press*.

The funeral Mass for Sister Mary Juliana, with Father Andrew Olsem as presider, will be Tuesday, February 8, at 10:30 a.m., in Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in our cemetery. The vigil service will be at 7:00 p.m. on February 7. Loving sympathy to her sister Dorothy Klug, her brother Bernard and his wife Trudy, her nieces and nephews and their families, her former students and colleagues, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Aloysius (known as Louis) and Julia (Feldmeier) Wieser, and her sister, Sister Mary Aloysius, who died last October.

Sister Mary Juliana, the oldest of four children, was born on October 15, 1919, near Hokah, Minnesota. At her baptism at St. Peter Church four days later, she was given the name Barbara Marie. She wrote about her early years in a home with a very Catholic atmosphere, “I can truly say that my childhood was a happy one. Many a time under the shady elms in our front yard did my dear mother tell me about the Virgin Mary and her little boy. . . . In our kitchen we have a large, red oak reading desk with a level top. Mother helped us arrange little altars here. In May there would be one in honor of the Blessed Virgin, in June, in honor of the Sacred Heart. . .” The family prayed the Rosary together, and rarely missed daily Mass.

In 1925, Barbara enrolled in St. Peter School in Hokah, and was taught by Franciscan Sisters through the sixth grade. Beginning on her Solemn Communion Day, May 24, 1931, in sixth grade, she added an extra prayer to her night prayers, “Dear Jesus, make me be a Sister, but a good Sister.” The following fall, School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived in Hokah to take charge of St. Peter School. Sister Mary Juliana described how this affected her, “It was then that I saw Notre Dame Sisters for the first time. It was then that another girl and I resolved to become Notre Dames some day. However, she became a Franciscan.”

Barbara graduated from eighth grade in 1933, and her parents permitted her to continue her education at St. Peter High School. She realized this was very much a privilege, since in those days, after completing eighth grade, oldest daughters often stayed home to help. She finished four years of high school in three years, and graduated in 1936. She wanted to enter the candidature in Mankato, but hesitated to tell her parents. Her invalid grandmother had been staying with the Wiesers for seven years, and Barbara felt that she should stay home to help her mother with the family work. However, she finally did tell her parents, and “they cheerfully and willingly made the sacrifice in giving their consent.” She entered the candidature on August 27, 1936.

Barbara’s first year at Good Counsel was spent in teacher preparation. The following year, she taught fifty-five third and fourth graders at Sacred Heart School, St. Paul. At her reception into the novitiate in 1938, she was given the name Mary Juliana, after her mother. Her first mission after profession in 1939 was St. Philip, Minneapolis, where she taught third and fourth graders until February 1941. At that time, Mother Andrina asked her to become a full-time student at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee to earn her degree in home economics and dietetics, which she did in 1943.

Sister Mary Juliana's first secondary school assignment was St. Agnes, St. Paul (1943-54). She commented, "I introduced the unit method for teaching home economics and senior homemaking. I also taught general science." In 1950, she earned her MS in Dietetics-Food and Nutrition from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie. In 1954, she became the home economics and senior homemaking instructor at Good Counsel Academy. She also planned menus, purchased food, and supervised personnel for the school lunch program. During summers, she often taught classes to sisters.

In 1961 she returned to Mount Mary College, this time as an assistant professor in home economics and clinical dietetics. She also was the acting chair of the department and supervised student dieticians and student teachers during their internship experiences.

When Trinity High School in Dickinson, North Dakota, added junior and senior classes in 1964, Sister Mary Juliana resumed her high school teaching of home economics and senior homemaking, and stayed there until 1971. In 1966, Ramah Brown, one of her senior students, won a national essay contest sponsored by the Mobile Home Research Foundation of Chicago. Ramah and Sister Mary Juliana traveled to Bismarck for the formal presentation of the award by the governor, and both received an all-expense paid trip to the American Home Economics Convention in San Francisco. As her teacher, Sister Mary Juliana was awarded a \$1500 Advanced Study Grant. She used the grant for a seven-week study tour through fourteen European countries during the summer of 1967.

Sister Mary Juliana next taught at Don Bosco, Gilbertville, Iowa (1971-72) and St. Agnes (1972-73). While at St. Agnes, she taught part time and attended St. Catherine's College. In 1973, she was again missioned to Mount Mary College, where she taught dietetics and chaired the home economics department. She also coordinated the undergraduate dietetics program.

In 1984 Sister Mary Juliana came back to Mankato, and asked to study to become a registered nurse, in order to work in St. Joseph Health Care. She earned her Licensed Practical Nursing Degree at Mankato Technical College and completed licensure in 1985. She then entered the Registered Nurse program at Rochester Community College and gained clinical experience at Mayo Clinic, St. Mary's Hospital, and Methodist Hospital. She explained, "You may wonder why I pursued the R.N. program. My objective was to work on the nursing staff with our aged and infirm sisters in St. Joseph Health Care. I wanted the sisters to trust me, to have confidence in me as a nurse." She became an R.N. in 1986 at the age of 66, and later wrote, "I prayed I would remain healthy so as to be able to work on floor nursing duty at least ten years. I was granted 10 years of active nursing duty." An excellent teacher, she also trained nursing assistants, who all passed their certification examinations.

She retired from full-time floor duty in 1997 and lived for one year at Holy Childhood Convent in St. Paul. She assisted with pastoral care at Shalom Nursing Home and LyngBlomstem Nursing Home, and helped in Holy Childhood School during the library period for grades four through six.

In 1998, Sister Mary Juliana returned to Good Counsel, giving community service in health care for as long as she was able. She and her sister, Sister Mary Aloysius, knitted hundreds of stocking caps for the annual Craft Fair. A favorite pastime for the two of them was watching ice skating, either televised, or occasionally live. Visiting family in her loved Hokah area was also a much-anticipated and much-enjoyed time.

Sister Mary Juliana, lifelong educator and caregiver, was keenly aware of God in her life. And now, she no longer needs to be still to know God's presence. May she ever rejoice in that presence (and maybe enjoy eternal ice-skating performances, too)!

Sister Mary Kay Ash