



**“Those who have instructed many to justice
will shine as stars for all eternity.”**

– Daniel 12:3b

SISTER MARY RICHARD RADUENZ, SSND

December 18, 1925

July 21, 1946

January 28, 2011



Our beloved Sister Mary Richard Raduenz, 85, died peacefully at 2:30 a.m. on Friday, January 28, 2011, at Good Counsel Provincial House, Mankato. Sister Joanna Illg was with her when she died, and her niece Barb had been with her just before her death. In these last weeks as her condition declined, classical music had been playing in the background; when she died, the piece was a joyful movement in “Spring” from Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*. How fitting that this lifelong Catholic school educator should die on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the patron of Catholic schools.

The funeral Mass for Sister Mary Richard, with Fr. John Forliti as presider, will be on Tuesday, February 1, at 10:30 a.m., in Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato, followed by cremation. Burial in our cemetery will follow at a later date. The vigil service will be at 7:00 p.m. on January 31. Loving sympathy to 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, Clarence and Barbara (Kerst) Raduenz, her brother Richard and her sister Lois Mae Trost.

Sister Mary Richard, the middle child of three, was born December 18, 1925, in St. Paul, and baptized Elayne Katherine a few weeks later at St. Francis de Sales Church. Her mother also had been born in St. Paul and had attended St. Francis de Sales School. Her father, a Lutheran, had promised that their children would be educated in the Catholic faith. In her autobiography, Sister Mary Richard commented, “To me, this is very important for, had we been Lutheran, you can see what an impossibility my vocation would have been.”

Along with her older brother Richard, she attended St. Francis de Sales School, receiving her First Holy Communion in 1933 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in 1937. She found those days even more special because her father came along to church with the family. The summer before Elayne began eighth grade, a deep tragedy affected the family when Richard, a high school junior, was killed by a train in Wyoming.

Following eighth grade, Elayne continued her education at St. Francis de Sales for ninth and tenth grades. She attended Monroe High School for her junior and senior years. She wrote succinctly about her choice of vocation, “At the end of my senior year, I was compelled to decide whether or not I would enter St. Teresa’s College in the fall. Against my parents’ wishes I decided not to. I knew then that what I really wanted was to become a Notre Dame Sister.” She made plans to enter the candidature that fall and, on August 29, 1943, she became an SSND candidate. After one year of college work, she taught seventy-two first and second graders at Sacred Heart, St. Paul, and assisted in the music department.

On July 20, 1945, she became a novice, receiving the name Sister Mary Richard after her deceased older brother. Following profession of vows in 1946, she taught junior high grades at Immaculate Conception in Lonsdale for one year. She continued her education the next year at Diocesan Teachers College in St. Paul and then returned to junior high teaching at several schools: St. Mark, Shakopee (1948-50); St. Joseph, Red Wing (1950-53); St. Mary, Chewelah, Washington (1953-54); St. Dominic, Northfield (1954-56); Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa (1956-57); and St. Peter, Hokah (1957-59). During these years as a junior high teacher, she earned her BA in English and Education from the College of St. Catherine (1954), and her MA, also in English and Education, from St. Thomas College (1958).

In 1959 she began her ministry of high school teaching, usually in the areas of English, music and drama – a ministry in which she excelled, and thoroughly enjoyed. Her secondary

teaching experience encompassed many of the province high schools and one far beyond the province borders, and included St. Michael, St. Michael, Minnesota (1959-62); Trinity, Dickinson, North Dakota (1962-63); St. Felix, Wabasha (1963-66); Don Bosco, Gilbertville, Iowa (1966-71); St. Agnes, St. Paul (1971-73); Notre Dame School, Lingfield, England (1973-76); Good Counsel Academy, Mankato (1976-78); Brady, West St. Paul (1978-1990); and Cretin-Derham Hall, St. Paul (1990-2008). In many of these schools, she was responsible for the annual musical performance, and directed numerous productions.

In the 1970s, SSND leadership initiated the CIE (Committee for Interprovincial/International Exchange) Program. A participant in the program, Sister Mary Richard was invited to teach at Notre Dame School in Lingfield, England, in 1973. In return, a sister from the Canadian province came to the Mankato province. Sister Mary Richard spent three years at Notre Dame, immersing herself in English culture and history as she taught. She endeared herself to both students and staff, as shown by these remarks from a letter of Sister Hildegard Volk, a Notre Dame staff member: "Sister Mary Richard is doing splendid work here. Our singing in both Junior and Senior schools and chapel is outstanding owing to her hard work. Besides music she is also teaching other subjects and whatever she does, there is enthusiasm, eagerness to learn and love for the subject. I do not know what Lingfield would do without her. She has been a Godsend to our Order in England." However, as the exchange program ended, Sister Mary Richard was needed back in the province and she returned to Minnesota in 1976. Although she would have liked to have stayed in England, she wrote then, "It would never do to remain away from the classroom and American way of teaching for too long. That will always be my apostolate and I do not want to lose touch."

Sister Mary Richard's final eighteen years of teaching and mentoring were at Cretin-Derham Hall, where she taught English and journalism, and started the school publication, the *Chronicle*. She began as a full-time teacher in 1990; in 1998 she became the school's writing specialist, and continued as *Chronicle* moderator. She worked from a nook in the media center called "The Writing Corner." A school publication described the services of The Writing Corner: "One-on-one conferences about student writing went into the hundreds. Helping seniors with college entrance essays came next. Coordinating writing contest entries, private tutoring, discussions about writing styles and format – all have found their place in the gamut of writing. The Writing Corner became 'all things to all writing needs.' Interesting to note: Cretin-Derham Hall is the only high school to have a resource like this." When health concerns caused her to retire in 2008, the *Chronicle* paid her a special tribute, "A fiery yet amicable leader, Sister has been the backbone of the *Chronicle* throughout the entirety of the paper's existence. She has maintained her prowess through two decades of technology changes, hundreds of students and a very difficult budget. Sister has helped set up *Chronicle* alumni in prominent positions at collegiate newspapers throughout the nation."

Throughout her educational ministry, Sister Mary Richard expressed appreciation for a variety of opportunities that extended beyond the high school classroom. She studied music at DePaul in Chicago, and speech and drama at Indiana U. She also attended classes at Iowa, Wisconsin and Gonzaga Universities, as well as at the University of Galway in Ireland and Oxford in England. In the summer of 1993, she taught at the University of Bethlehem in the West Bank. She had the opportunity to travel in both the United States and abroad, and was often consulted by people planning a trip to England.

Sister Mary Richard enjoyed cooking and baking, and frequently shared baked goods with other residents of her apartment complex. Learning from the Food Channel was one of her favorite pastimes. She established lasting relationships with many former students, evidenced by the number of visits and written communications she received these past years.

Fully living her Funeral Liturgy theme, as well as the SSND charism of education – instructing many to justice – throughout her life, may Sister Mary Richard now shine as a star for all eternity.