

## Obituary of Sister Mary Magdalen Schaan

Sister Mary Magdalen (Elizabeth) Schaan

Monday, March 7, 2016, Sister Mary Magdalen (Elizabeth) Schaan, O.S.F., peacefully released her soul to God's eternal embrace at St. Gerard's Community of Care, Hankinson, ND. Funeral mass will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Chapel, St. Francis Convent, Hankinson, ND on Monday March 14 at 10:00 a.m. Visitation is from 2:30 to 4:30 on Sunday March 13 followed by a prayer service at 7:00 p.m. in the chapel.



Sister M. Magdalen was born at Rugby, Pierce County, ND on April 16, 1919, to Joseph and Catherine (Miller) Schaan. She grew up on a farm near Balta, ND with three brothers and four sisters. Sister's elementary education took place at a rural school in the Balta School District, and her high school years were at St. Francis Academy, Hankinson, ND.

Sister Magdalen entered her Franciscan community in 1938. She professed her first vows on July 17, 1939, and her perpetual vows on July 22, 1942.

Sister Magdalen completed the American Dietetic Correspondence Course and was a member of the Dietary Management Association. She worked in dietary departments throughout her active years, beginning with her first assignment in Chicago, IL in 1939. She was next sent to the hospital in Drayton in 1948, where she remained until 1958 when her Superiors asked her to move to Gettysburg, SD. In 1962 she was assigned to the Oakes Community Hospital, where she spent the next 30 years until, in 1992, failing health led to her retirement.

Sister is fondly remembered for her home style meals delicious breads. New parents were offered a choice of special meals in celebration of new life before this was a standard hospital practice. Patients who had no appetite and were not recovering well would earn a visit from Sister Magdalen so she could find out what they might really enjoy. Never one to be idle, she could be found in the gardens around the hospitals, or taking her few free hours to care of children. Sister didn't drive, but was a familiar sight scooting around town on her blue three-wheeled bicycle. She was quick-witted and generous, but with one limit in her generosity: she was a very competitive whist player who enjoyed winning!

One of the greatest joys of her long life was having her sister, Sister Mary Ann, in the convent with her. Her other siblings and many nieces and nephews were a great comfort to her after Sister Mary Ann's death in 2001. Sister Magdalen was especially grateful to her sister, Agnes, and her daughters, Maria and Elizabeth, who often welcomed Sister Magdalen to their homes over the years.

Sister Magdalen used her retirement years to pray for the needs of all people. She had a great love for people. Poor vision and arthritis could not stop this prayer warrior from crying out to the Lord for anyone she knew needed a prayer. She loved her life as a religious and immersed herself in inspiring and edifying reading for as long as she could. For her, Christianity included everyone and she knew that everyone was capable of bringing something of Christ to her. She had a great love of the Blessed Mother, and a deep trust in the providence of God. May God reward her for her faithful labors of love and her life of prayer throughout her 77 years as a Franciscan Sister of Dillingen.

When in August, 2013, Sister Magdalen was in need of more help, she moved to St. Gerard's Community of Care in Hankinson. There she gratefully received every effort to help her find comfort in her very advanced arthritic condition. To all the staff of St. Gerard's, the Sisters and family of Sister Magdalen offer their sincerest thanks and praise all the good that was done for her.

Sister Magdalen is survived by her Community of Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen and family members including her sister Agnes Lucy, Harvey, ND; sister-in-law, Mary (Albert) Schaan, Snohomish, WA; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents Joseph and Catherine (Miller) Schaan; eight brothers: Jacob, Joseph, William, Frank, Peter, Daniel, Paul and Albert Schaan; and three sisters: Sister Mary Ann Schaan, Theresa Schaan and Celestine Syverstad.