

Sister Mary David Debrecht, C.PP.S.

Born: February 22, 1922

Professed: August 10, 47

Entered into Life: August 29, 2024

Verse on her memorial card:

**"And now bless the God of all,
who in every way does great things;
who exalts our days from birth,
and deals with us according to his mercy."**

Sirach 50:22



Dear Sisters, Relatives, and Friends,

Shortly before 1:15 p.m. on August 29, 2024, our Sister Mary David experienced the fulfillment of her deepest longing and went peacefully home to God. Sister Julie Wolf and Frances McCullough were at her side, two of the many caregivers, friends, community and family members for whom Sister Mary David repeatedly expressed deep gratitude.

Gertrude Mary Debrecht was born in O'Fallon, Missouri, on February 20, 1922, the second of four children of Edwin and Magdalena (Halter) Debrecht. The family lived on Church Street, just a few blocks from our Motherhouse, until the death of her maternal grandfather, when the family moved to help her grandmother with the family farm.

After graduation from Assumption High School, Gertrude took college classes during the summer and began teaching in the fall at Oak Ridge, a one-room school near her family home. Though she put her heart and soul into teaching, she found it difficult. When the opportunity arose for a part-time job at the Agricultural Office in St. Charles, she readily accepted. Later she was offered a full-time bookkeeping position at International Shoe Company. She loved office work and described it as "play."

Despite her love for her job and her reluctance to leave her family, the call to religious life, which had been with her from an early age, did not subside. On August 20, 1944, when she "was 22½ on the dot," she left for the convent. She was received into our novitiate on July 25, 1945, and was given the name Sister Mary David. She professed first vows on August 10, 1947.

Sister Mary David earned a bachelor of science degree in business education at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, the first to earn that degree from Fontbonne. She completed a master's degree in business education at the Catholic University of American in Washington, DC.

Sister Mary David taught elementary grades at Sacred Heart in Columbia, MO and at St. Henry in Charleston, MO. She taught business education at Bishop DuBourg High School in St. Louis, MO. Sister Mary David spent much of her life in service to our community as Secretary General, Council Member, and Treasurer General. She also served in the finance offices of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Missionaries of LaSalette, both in St. Louis.

After twenty-five years of service to the community, Sister Mary David enjoyed a sabbatical year, spending time with our sisters in Finland and at St. Gertrude Priory in Cottonwood, Idaho. There her love for quiet and contemplation was nourished and deepened. She was deeply committed to her own spiritual growth, and she appreciated sharing her God-quest with like-minded seekers. She was a member of in-person and online prayer groups and relished learning from the mystics, wanting them read to her until just days before her death.

Sister Mary David requested that her memorial letter not “build me up too much.” “It’s all about God, not about me,” she said. It is all about God, and one way God became known was through her readiness to give. Teacher, accountant, baker, gardener, arborist, health and food naturalist, Sister Mary David readily shared the fruits of her labors. Whether a balanced checkbook or a fresh loaf of bread, each offering was an expression of God’s love through her. She credited her family with teaching her generosity by example rather than by words.

Sister Mary David was preceded in death by her parents and her siblings and their spouses, Wilfred Debrecht, Mary (Robert) Kelly, and Thomas (Lenore) Debrecht. She is survived by nieces, nephews, and many friends. She will be greatly missed by them, by all her Precious Blood Sisters, and by her caregivers who grew especially close to her in her final illness. Please hold them all in prayer.

Sister Mary David’s body will be returned to St. Joseph’s Chapel on Monday, September 9, 2024. The wake will begin at 9:30 a.m. There will be a sharing of memories at 10:30 a.m. followed by the Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m. Per her request, Sister Mary David will be buried at Assumption Cemetery with her brother, Wilfred.

For her memorial card, Sister Mary David chose the verse from Sirach 50:22 which speaks of God who exalts our days from birth. From birth and beyond her 102nd birthday, God exalted her with his love and mercy. May she now be enjoying the fullness of that love in the heavenly home for which she was longing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Janice Bader". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Sr. Janice Bader