

Death Notice

SISTER MARY JONATHAN

ND 4359

Rita May ZELEZNIK
(natural sister of deceased Sister Regina Marie, 2007)



Christ the King Province, Chardon, Ohio, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	May 8, 1928	Haddenville, Pennsylvania
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1948	Cleveland, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	October 9, 2017	Health Care Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Funeral:	October 18, 2017	Provincial Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	October 19, 2017	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon, Ohio

“Live in my love with all your heart.”

Of the six children born to George and Helen (Richnasky) Zeleznik, the oldest, Rita May, and the youngest, Marian (Sister Regina Marie), entered the Sisters of Notre Dame from St. Benedict Parish in Cleveland. A brother, Abbot Clement Zeleznik, OSB, is currently resident chaplain at Loyola Retreat House in Clinton, Ohio. Family bonds were strong as their parents nurtured and witnessed to their own faith life, love and concern for all. Growing up, Rita loved to read. Through her life commitment to study, reading and reflection, she acquired a rootedness in Jesus, in the Church and in her own vocation as a woman religious.

During her first year at Notre Dame Academy, Rita became acquainted with the aspirants. It was then that her vocation was realized and strengthened. The following year, Rita came to live with the aspirants and entered the community on February 2, 1946. Always drawn to the Gospel of John, she received the name Sister Mary Jonathan at investment.

Sister received both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in education from St. John College, Cleveland. Her life of ministry was one poured out and flowing over with activity. As an elementary school teacher and principal, Sister’s administrative abilities and strong sense of respect for students, teachers and parents endeared her to those with whom she ministered. She assumed community leadership roles as a provincial councilor and as a local and regional superior. Her keen insights, love, support and encouragement were gifts that consistently affirmed the uniqueness and talents of each sister.

Sister Mary Jonathan was elected to serve our international congregation as an Assistant General in 1974. As a member of the General Council for twelve years, Sister entered wholeheartedly into all undertakings and played a significant role in the revision of our *Constitutions*. While in Rome, Sister became more aware of the spirituality of the icon and the meaning of “personal vocation.” She was able to share these insights with all the sisters as she accompanied Sister Maria Raphaelita on visitation. Her experiences gave her a great sensitivity to a wide range of ages and cultures. Her infectious smile generated trust, easy communication and friendship.

When she returned to Chardon in 1986, Sister Mary Jonathan received certification as a pastoral minister and served in this role at two parishes as well as in our Health Care Center. She continued to share God’s goodness and loving care even in these last years in spite of the onset of dementia and physical diminishment. Her engaging smile, love for Our Lady and inner peace were both gift and blessing to all. We are grateful to Sister Mary Jonathan for her life and love which were truly gifts from God to us. May she live now in God’s love for all eternity.