

Baltimore's Sister Mary Madonna Gies, R.S.M., dies at 89

A funeral Mass was offered March 10 for Religious Sister of Mercy Mary Madonna Gies at the Villa in Timonium. A Baltimore native who spent most of her ministry teaching in area schools, she died March 7 at age 89 after 72 years as a Sister of Mercy.

Sister Madonna was taught by the Sisters of Mercy during elementary school at St. Cecilia in Baltimore, and by the Daughters of Charity at Seton High School in Baltimore. She knew that she was called to religious life, but had a hard time deciding between the two religious communities.

"I knew in my heart that I was called to Mercy," Sister Madonna is quoted in an obituary prepared by her order.

She entered the novitiate at age 17, and professed her final vows in 1951.

Sister Madonna went on to earn a bachelor's degree in education from Mount St. Agnes College and a master's degree in administration from what is now Loyola University Maryland.

The majority of her ministry was in education. She taught or was the principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Baynesville, Mount Washington Country School, Sacred Heart in Glyndon and Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Mount Washington.

Sister Madonna cited her time as principal at Immaculate Heart of Mary as her most complex assignment, where she oversaw more than 2,000 students.

In addition to her time in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, she served in Mercy schools and parishes in Alabama, Florida, Virginia and Washington, D.C. She spent nine years (1987-1996) in a poor region of Appalachia, teaching literacy, providing workshops for tutors, serving in prison ministry and supporting the local population.

From 1996 to 2004, Sister Madonna helped employees of Mercy Medical and Stella

Maris prepare for the GED. She also visited with patients and visitors at the medical center.