



# *Sisters of St. Casimir*

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**SISTER WANDA MARIE KAMZA, SSC**  
**(formerly Sister M. Stephen)**  
**August 11, 1935 – August 1, 2022**



Wanda Marie Kamza was born August 11, 1935, to John and Marie Petrauskas Kamza in Gary, IN. Wanda was the third of four children, all of whom belonged to St. Casimir's Parish and went to St. Casimir's School. These included her two older brothers, John and Ronald, and her younger sister, Dolores. The family was actively involved in the parish, especially Wanda, who helped the Sisters of St. Casimir with church work, even taking over for them when they were not there in the summer.

Wanda entered the community in August of 1952 as a postulant. Shortly after she entered, Janine Golubickis from Gary entered as an aspirant. That completed the group of "Gary girls" to enter and become Sisters of St. Casimir with a life-long bond to each other. The oldest of the group, Sister M. Deotilla, wrote a warm letter of welcome to Wanda when she entered the community. The others from Gary included Sisters Agnita Sabokas, Irene Rukas, Rosalinda Grigonis, Evelyn Vichoras, and Damien Margis.

Wanda, who became Sister M. Stephen, made first vows in 1955. Soon afterwards, she began her life of Ministry and Service within the church, which took her to four states: Illinois, Florida, Ohio, and Michigan. In 1960, having completed 5 years as a primary grade teacher at St. George's in Bridgeport, she made her perpetual vows. Later in her life she would have the joy of celebrating her Silver Jubilee in 1980, Golden Jubilee in 2005, and 60<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee in 2015.

She was well prepared for her ministries in education, having received her B.S. in Education from Marywood College in Scranton, PA. In all the schools where Sister Wanda Marie taught, she is remembered as an excellent teacher and a wonderful person who helped her students to learn well.

She was a very loved teacher in the places wherever she taught. In 1961 while she was at St. Peter and Paul in Rockford, Illinois, Sr. Wanda won an award titled, "The Teacher who Helped the Most."



Since her death we have received beautiful tributes attesting to how she contributed to the life of the school community as well as the parish community. St. Norbert School and Parish is such an example. Pictured with one of her classes at the left.

One colleague, Annemarie Rand wrote:

Sister Wanda was my grade level partner when I first started to teach at St. Norbert School in 1990. We both taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I don't know what I would have done without her help and guidance. She was truly a gift from God. In the following years, when I moved up to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom and teaching Jr. High Science (a job I still hold at St. Norbert School today), we used to good naturedly tease each other. I would sneak into her classroom and move her stapler a quarter of an inch on her desk to see if she would notice. She always did! We'd burst into laughter.

She and Sr. Mary Grace taught me how to direct the students in Living Stations of the Cross. When they both left the school, they passed everything on to me, and I continue to direct it for the school the way they taught me with one exception: Sr. Wanda used to bang two aluminum pans together to make the sound effect of a storm at the station when Jesus dies. Since then, the church organ has the capacity to make a good storm sound.

Oh, the memories are flooding back! Students used to try to run down the hallway, but once they got to Sr. Wanda's door, they would stop and walk past. Once clear, they would run the rest of the way. We called that the "Sister Wanda speed bump." Students also knew that they better have their shoelaces tied when she was around! Oh, she was delightful and such a fun person. I loved her very much.

I will never forget what Sr. Wanda taught me in my first years of teaching at St. Norbert.

Annemarie put the announcement of Sister Wanda's death on her Facebook page and the following are some of the comments which surfaced:

*Sister Wanda was a great person, friend, and was hysterical.*

*Sister Wanda was a great teacher for my kids.*

*It's so hard to lose someone who has made an indelible mark on one's life.*

*Sister Wanda was a wonderful teacher, mentor, and friend. And perfect penmanship—the best penmanship of anyone I ever met.*

*I remember crying when I found out she would be my 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher because she was "mean and scary." And I'll be honest, she was a little scary at times! But only because she expected a lot of her students. She knew our potential and wanted us to reach it. As the years went on, I got to know her sweet side. She did things like deliver a loaf of her homemade zucchini bread at lunch when I could not make it to the Christmas bazaar to buy some just because she knew it was my favorite. She was an amazing person who will be missed so much. And I know she was welcomed today with a hug by Sister Mary Grace.*

*Yes!! She was just the sweetest, but she did have high expectations and that is one of the things that made her so great. She and Sister Mary Grace taught me so much about what it means to teach in a Catholic School. Every year I draw from what they taught me. I love them both so much and hope they are having a wonderful reunion.*

*I remember Sister Wanda and think of Sister Mary Grace. In my mind they were a duo.*

*The dynamic duo. Watch out, God. You have them both. Put them to good use. They are back together.*

Anything taking place in the parish, Sister Wanda was there – the Christmas Bazaar, the Whale of a Sale (huge flea market) – she would bring homemade bread from the Motherhouse to sell, she would bring some of what was left to the Motherhouse to use for Summerfest. After the event was over, she would help pack up the clothes and kitchen items for new mothers, people in need. Sister Wanda and Sister Mary Grace were indeed a dynamic duo.

On the occasion of Sister Wanda's Diamond Jubilee in the community, Sister Regina Marie Dubickas shared the following:

In Sister Wanda's reflection at the time of her Golden Jubilee, as she thought about her ministry of teaching for 46 years, she said the most rewarding experience was to be able to prepare the children for the sacraments. For several years Sr. Wanda worked in our Food Pantry with our Sr. DeSales. Through Sr. Wanda's efforts, the people of St. Norbert's embraced our Food Pantry and our community through their generous donations. Just this past week, I received a check for \$500.00 as a gift to our community. For Summerfest's and Founders' Day celebrations Sr. Wanda, beginning with Sr. Mary Grace and continuing with Sr. Kathleen, gathered prizes and created a wonderful and well-visited booth.



*I never had the privilege of living with you, Wanda, but I know a few things that I have heard. Not only in the classroom but also in the convent itself, you have been a very caring and faithful companion and homemaker in the truest sense of the word, to a number of Sisters with whom you lived. In a very kind and unassuming way, you offered your assistance wherever it was needed, helping to make the place truly a home and welcoming those who came to visit.*

**SISTER WANDA (RIGHT) SELLING TREASURES AT THE AUXILIARY BINGO WITH SISTER RITA MARIE**

We are grateful to God for Sister Wanda and the many talents God gave her. May she now enjoy the fullness of life and peace in God's presence forever.



Sister Wanda Marie was preceded in death by her parents, John and Marie Petrauskas Kamza, her sister Dolores (Carmelo) Sapone, and her brothers, John Alex Kamza, and Ronald Kamza.

She is survived by her nieces, Tammy (Tim) Bifaro (Omaha, NE) and Carmella Sapone (Buffalo, NY), a nephew, Brian Sapone (Omaha, NE), grand nieces, Kaitlyn Marie Sapone (Bemidji, MN) and Claire Elizabeth Sapone (Portland, OR) and grand nephews, Merrick Paolo and Seth Walker Sapone (Omaha, NE) and the Sisters of St. Casimir

Deceased members of Sister Wanda Marie's Profession Class:

Sister M. Eva Revas  
Sister Margaret Anne Melavage

Living members of Sister Wanda Marie's Profession Class:

Sister M. Dolorine Lopez  
Sister Bernadette Marie Janus  
Sister Rita Marie Kerdock  
Sister Grace Ann Kalafut

**Visitation, Wake Service, Mass of the Resurrection**

Saturday, August 6, 2022  
Franciscan Village Chapel  
1270 Village Drive  
Lemont, IL 60439

**Visitation:** 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

**Wake Service:** 10:00 a.m.

**Mass of the Resurrection:** 10:30 a.m.

Celebrant: Rev. Bob Lucas, CM

Organist: Justin Sisul

Flutist: Anna Belle O'Shea

**Interment:** Saint Casimir Cemetery

**Funeral Director:** Lack and Sons

