



# *Sisters of St. Casimir*

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[www.sistersofstcasimir.org](http://www.sistersofstcasimir.org)



## **Sister Grace Carol Wastak, SSC**

(formerly Sister M. Charles)

April 12, 1928 — December 5, 2023

Sister Grace Carol Wastak was born April 12, 1928, to Andrew S. Wastak, Sr. and Josephine (Bajorinas) Wastak in Cicero, IL. Grace Carol was the second of three children. The family belonged to St. Anthony's Parish in Cicero. Grace Carol attended this parish school and then St. Casimir Academy for her high school years. The Sisters of St. Casimir were her teachers and had a positive influence on her.

Grace Carol entered the community as a postulant on February 2, 1947. In August of that year, she became a novice taking the name Sister M. Charles. She professed her first vows on August 15, 1949. Soon afterwards she began the ministry the Lord was asking her to do: in education, health care, and administration. Beginning with a class of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Immaculate Conception School in Brighton Park, she then went on to teach middle school students (grades 5-8) at Nativity BVM (Chicago, IL), St. Bartholomew (Waukegan, IL), Holy Cross School (Chicago, IL), St. Francis (Minersville, PA), St. Casimir (Philadelphia, PA), Sacred Heart (New Philadelphia, PA), St. John School (Roswell, NM), St. Norbert (Northbrook, IL), Sacred Heart (Clovis, NM), and St. Peter (Roswell, NM). Often, she taught music lessons too. In the early 1960s she began teaching high school science classes at Sacred Heart (Emerson, NE), Villa Joseph Marie High School (Holland, PA), and Maria High School (Chicago, IL). While in Emerson, Nebraska she had time to develop her writing skills. Grace Carol's poetry was published in several editions of National Poetry Press.

Sister Grace Carol completed her education at Marywood College in Scranton, PA earning a BS in Education and completed her master's studies at Villanova University in Villanova, PA which prepared her for ministry in teaching. After working for a year at Holy Family Villa in Lemont, IL (1951-52) something stirred within her that eventually led her to get a master's degree in administration from Notre Dame University, a degree in nursing at Daley College, and become a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator of IL.

Sister Grace Carol was well prepared for her ministry as a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator at Holy Family Villa beginning in 1977 and continuing until 1985 at which time, she became Aging Services Organizer for Catholic Charities. While at Holy Family Villa, she also played the organ for liturgies.

In 1986 she was missioned to Holy Cross Hospital (Chicago, IL) where she served as Director of the newly opened extended care unit of the hospital. In 1996 she took on the Department of Mission Effectiveness until her retirement from Holy Cross Hospital in March 2007, and her move to the Motherhouse.

A few colleagues at Holy Cross Hospital shared some of their memories of Sister Grace Carol:

*Nancy Shotas: I enjoyed working with Sister Grace Carol on the activities committee. She was such a good sport, always ready to cheer on accomplishments and connect them with a word that meant much to employees: SERVE – service, excellence, respect, value, enthusiasm. On the first Sunday of December each year, she would ride with Ron Iacano in a side car on his motorcycle in the Toys for Tots parade.*

*Joe Respanti: I have warm memories of Sister Grace Carol, loved her enthusiasm. I was touched when she gave me a Babe Ruth cap when I retired from Holy Cross Hospital.*

*Donna Parker: I enjoyed working with Sister Grace Carol, she was always taking care of her patients in the extended care unit.*

In 2014 Sister Grace Carol moved to Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL shortly after her good friend, Sister Teresita, moved to skilled care at Mother Theresa Home. Sister Grace Carol's room was close to Sister Teresita. This is where she would spend most of her days, a true friend in ministry of prayer and presence. After Sister Teresita's death, Sister Grace Carol moved to Assisted Living where she spent several years until she needed more care and was moved to Mother Theresa Home (skilled care).

During her 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 2009, Sister Grace Carol shared her wisdom: "I would pass on to others — cultivate, nurture, and retain a sense of humor." From her bed in Mother Theresa Home, she not only read countless mystery books by James Patterson, John Grisham, and others, she also enjoyed reading the weekly edition of the *Southwest News Herald* (local news from the southwest side of Chicago). Anyone who visited her often left with a smile on their face. "See you later alligator..."

Sister Grace Carol celebrated several milestones in her religious life: Silver Jubilee in 1974, Golden Jubilee in 1999, and 60<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee in 2009. On August 15, 2024, she would have celebrated her 75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee as a Sister of St. Casimir.

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



Sister Grace Carol was preceded in death by her father, Andrew S. Wastak, Sr., mother, Josephine (Bajorinas) Wastak, brother Andrew (Cecelia) Wastak, Jr., and sister Catherine (Chester) Klescewski. Sister Grace Carol is survived by her nieces and nephews, Andrew Wastak, III, Josephine Diedrich, Chester Klescewski, Jr., and many others, as well as dear cousins, friends.

Deceased members of Sister Grace Carol's Profession Class:

Sister M. Constance Balkus  
Sister M. Thereselle Close  
Sister M. Terence Kacergis  
Sister Therese Bernadette Zebrauskas

She is also survived by the Sisters of St. Casimir.

Visitation and Wake Service: Saturday, December 9, 2023, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
Franciscan Village Chapel  
1270 Village Drive  
Lemont, IL 60439

Mass of Christian Burial: Saturday, December 9, 10:30 a.m.  
Franciscan Village Chapel  
Celebrant: Father Bob Lucas, CM

Mass will be livestreamed:  
[www.asimplestreaming.com/srgwastak](http://www.asimplestreaming.com/srgwastak)

Interment: Saint Casimir Cemetery  
Funeral Director: Palos-Gaidas Funeral Home



2014



1967-1971 Sacred Heart High School  
Emerson, NE



Administrator at Holy Family Villa 1978-1984

### Matter For Speculation

Rocks and minerals; crystals and ores  
Magmas and lavas; oceans and shores  
Mountains and valleys; rivers and streams  
Challenge man's adventurous dreams.

Planets and comets; galaxies and stars  
Seasons and climates; sand and offshore bars  
Internal forces and pressures; faults and folds  
Reveal the majesty of Him who molds.

Tornadoes and hurricanes; storms and floods  
Winds and earthquakes; soils and muds  
Sunrise and temperatures; sunsets and breezes  
Continues to awe as knowledge increases.

### Parenthood

Take a little armful of love...  
Place it in a crib...  
And help it to know.

Take a little handful of strength...  
Walk beside it...  
And watch it grow.

Take a heart full of courage...  
Stand with it...  
And watch it strengthen.

Take a hand outstretched in giving...  
Clasp it within yours...  
And look for the reflection.

It began with you...  
It relied upon you...  
It learned with you...  
To become ... another you.

That love...  
Strength...  
Courage...  
Reflection.



Sister Immacula (left) greets 60 Year Diamond Jubilarians (from left) Sisters Therese Bernadette Zebrauskas, Grace Carol Wastak and Constance Balkus. 2009



## Holy Spirit



Sister Grace Carol leads a cheer last Thursday during a celebration at Holy Cross Hospital, 2701 W. 68th St. During the ceremony, the hospital received an award from Press, Ganey Associates in recognition of the hospital's turnaround in improving patient satisfaction. Press, Ganey is an independent satisfaction measurement firm based in South Bend, Ind. The hospital was rated in the 99th percentile in patient satisfaction scores. Just two years ago Holy Cross rated in the bottom fifth percentile.

(News-Herald Photo by Brandon Terrell)



1999 Golden Jubilee



