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**Catholic Extension offers nine grants in honor of nine Wisconsin sisters lost to COVID-19**

*Grants are part of the Sisters on the Frontlines initiative supporting families impacted by pandemic*

CHICAGO (March 8, 2021) – In the span of two weeks in December of 2020, nine Catholic sisters, all members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, died from COVID-19 in their Elm Grove, Wis., convent. Now, a special initiative will honor their lives and help fellow School Sisters of Notre Dame continue their mission of service in the world.

Supported by funding from Catholic Extension and [Sisters on the Frontlines](https://www.catholicextension.org/sisters-on-the-frontlines/), the School Sisters of Notre Dame will help aid those deeply impacted by the virus that claimed the lives of their sisters. Created in partnership with the Congregation of St. Joseph, [Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters](https://www.hiltonfundforsisters.org/), [FADICA](https://www.fadica.org/), [GHR Foundation](http://www.ghrfoundation.org/), [The Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities](https://www.rfca.org/), [Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland](https://socfcleveland.org/) and [Sisters of Mercy](https://www.sistersofmercy.org/) of the Americas, Sisters on the Frontlines aims to give 1,000 Catholic sisters $1,000 each to help an individual or family suffering the adverse effects of the pandemic. To date, 738 sisters have received grants, with 262 awaiting funding.

“So often the face of ministry among the poor is women religious, and their work is more important now than ever before,” said Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension. He added, “We are deeply honored to pay tribute to the nine School Sisters of Notre Dame who gave their lives to service in a way that will continue to help others, just as they would have wanted.”

The School Sisters of Notre Dame have already made a strong commitment as a religious congregation to help families in great distress during the pandemic, particularly immigrant families and those who have lost their jobs or had work hours drastically cut. The funds from the Sisters on the Frontlines Program are being used to respond to a variety of needs the School Sisters of Notre Dame have identified among suffering families in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, Mississippi, and Missouri. The basic needs include: repairing a car for work transportation; rent and utilities; insurance; food; medications; and medical bills.

“I am grateful for the assistance we are able to offer our undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters,” said Sister Carol Ann Prenger, School Sisters of Notre Dame. “Each family is in need because of a lack of work or hours cut because of the pandemic. They are deeply grateful for the assistance offered and given. As at least two of these people have stated, ‘Even $10.00 will be a help for the family, and is deeply appreciated!’”

Most of the School Sisters of Notre Dame who died of COVID-19 were in their 80s and 90s, but they were all very busy and active. They were known as mentors and wisdom figures for the congregation and community, and are remembered for the thousands of lives they impacted throughout their lives. Their mission continues through the loving service of today’s sisters among the marginalized.

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The deceased sisters being remembered include:

**Sister Cynthia Borman** was an educator and a handy-woman. She was the fixer-upper of the church. If you needed something fixed, she was the one to turn to.

**Sister Rose Feess** was a staunch advocate for young women. She focused her efforts at the Notre Dame School in Milwaukee, where she worked with Hispanic girls.

**Sister Joan Emily Kaul** served as a secretary for many parishes in the Milwaukee area in addition to teaching. She was known for her smile, which brought joy to many.

**Sister Lillia Langreck** was heavily involved in racial and social justice efforts during the Milwaukee marches for fair housing, integrated bussing and more.

**Sister Michael Marie Laux** traveled the world sharing her knowledge. From Guam to Alaska, her work was well known.

**Sister Ellen Lorenz** was known as an educator and administrator. She served as President of Mount Mary University for eight years followed by 25 years of working with prospective teachers.

**Sister Dorothy MacIntyre** liked arts and crafts, which she gifted to others.

**Sister Mary Alexius Portz** was a musician. Portz worked into her 80s, giving music lessons.

**Sister Mary Elva Weisner** had a special love for teaching children the sacraments. She would sing with them and bring a bright and cheery attitude.

To learn more, to donate or to become a frontline partner, visit <https://www.catholicextension.org/sisters-on-the-frontlines/>.

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**About Catholic Extension:**Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people in America’s poorest regions to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities. For more information visit [www.catholicextension.org](http://www.catholicextension.org/); follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicextension](http://www.facebook.com/catholicextension) or on twitter at [@CathExtension](http://www.twitter.com/cathextension).