

Mass of Christian Burial for Mary Downing, 81, of Taunton, was. on Wednesday



, June 9, 2010, at St. Edward Catholic Church in Minneota.

Burial was at Sts. Cyril & Methodius Catholic Cemetery in Taunton.

Mary died on Saturday, June 5, 2010, at the Prairie Home Hospice House in Marshall.

Mary Ellen (Baumann) Downing was born on March 8, 1929, in rural Bird Island, Minnesota, to Aloysius and Catherine (Pichotta) Baumann.

She grew up in Bird Island and graduated from St. Mary's Catholic School. On September 12, 1949, she was united in marriage to Vernon Downing in Bird Island.

The couple's first home was in Taunton. During their life together, they farmed and raised their family of eight children in rural Taunton. Mary had the gift of hospitality, and everyone felt welcome in her home.

She was very active and enjoyed flower and vegetable gardening, sewing, cooking, canning, homemade sausage making and baking. Chocolate chip cookies were her specialty.

She enjoyed working jigsaw puzzles, reading and was both an avid and skilled card player. Her game of choice was 500. She had compassion for people in all stages of life, recognizing their value and cherishing them.

For many years, she volunteered at Birth-right, a pro life organization. She stood up for what she believed as displayed by the numerous persuasive Letters to the Editor that she wrote, yet all would describe her as sweet, gracious and kind hearted.

She also served as Alta Vista Township Clerk for many years. While Mary had many interests, she was most passionate about her family.

She was a very loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She was wise with a strong and steadfast spirit.

Her family relied on her for counsel and guidance. She is greatly loved and will be forever missed.

She spent precious time with family on Memorial Day morning. In the evening, she experienced a brain aneurysm while doing one of the things she loved most, planting flowers — three packets of seed in hand.

Those left to cherish her memory include her daughter Joan (and Mike) Winter of Marshall, their son Tim; son Jim (and Kay) Downing of Florence, AL, their children Dr. Kristopher Downing, Andrew Downing, Tom Ahnemann, Dennis Ahnemann and Ken Parodi; son Jerry Downing of Austin; daughter Marlys (and Bill) Anderson of Tucson, AZ, stepsons Chris and Aaron; son Mike (and Alice) of Minneota, their children Carrie and Keith; daughter Marcia (and Ron) Foss of Maple Grove; daughter Lona Rae (and Rick) Konold of Minneota, their daughters Maggie, Addie and Katie; daughter LaVonne of Richfield; four great grandchildren; siblings Vince, Jerry (and Kay), Marge Aldrich, Willie (and Phyllis), Addie Baumann, Katy (and George) Henrich, Fr. Larry Baumann; nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Vernon, and sister Rosie Fischer.

For those considering memorial donations, suggested charities are Birthright of Marshall and Prairie Home Hospice of Marshall.