



In Loving Memory

Sister M. Aquin Svoboda, SSND

Sister M. Aquin Svoboda, 97, died Thursday, October 3, 2013, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. At the time of her death she was the oldest sister living on Good Counsel Hill.

Sister Aquin (Elizabeth Svoboda) was born November 8, 1915, on the family farm northwest of Silver Lake. She told a special story of her baptism in a 2010 Christmas letter: “My parents told me that the entire month was cold and stormy and the roads were impassible. Therefore my baptism was delayed until December 8. The pastor of St. Joseph Church had baptized my six sisters prior to baptizing me. After administering the sacrament of baptism to me he told my parents and godparents that he would place me on the Marian altar and dedicate me to God and His mother, Mary. He implied that I would become a religious sister some day. My mother never told me this story until much later when I had become a School Sister of Notre Dame.”

Sister Aquin attended public school because her parish did not have a Catholic school. When she was in seventh grade, her parents sent Elizabeth and her younger sister to St. Adalbert School in Silver Lake, conducted by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. With the exception of a few Saturday religion classes, this was her first contact with sisters. She wrote, “My first impression of the sisters was a most favorable one and I soon longed to be one myself.”

Elizabeth graduated from eighth grade in 1930 and entered the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, that fall. During the spring of her junior year she and six other aspirants asked to enter the SSND candidature the next fall. She and three others returned to Good Counsel that summer, finished their high school course work, and entered the candidature on August 27, 1933. She took college classes during her first year in the candidature and taught second grade at St. Matthew School, St. Paul, during her second year. She was received into the novitiate on July 16, 1935, and given the name Sister Mary Aquin. Following profession in 1936, she spent one year studying at the Dubuque Franciscan motherhouse and then began her teaching ministry.

Between 1936 and 1958, Sister Aquin taught grades ranging from intermediate through senior high school at the following schools: in South Dakota – St. Joseph, Grenville; in Minnesota – St. Anthony, Lismore; St. Dominic, Northfield; Good Counsel Academy, Mankato; St. Anne, Wabasso; SS. Cyril and Methodius, Minneapolis; and St. Michael, St. Michael; in North Dakota – St. Benedict, Strasburg and SS. Peter & Paul, New Hradec; and in Iowa – Notre Dame, Cresco. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Loras College, Dubuque, in 1941 and a Master of Arts in Sacred Doctrine from St. Mary’s University, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1966. In addition, she earned a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine certificate from Loras College in 1956 and a Certificate of Theology from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1960.

Birth
November 8, 1915

Baptism
December 8, 1915

Profession
July 17, 1936

Death
October 3, 2013

Burial
Our Lady of
Good Counsel Cemetery
Mankato, Minnesota

*Precious and blessed is
the death of the faithful
before God... for
they die in union with
their dear Jesus, in the
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister M. Aquin Svoboda



To make a memorial gift,
please visit our secure
online donation page [here](#)>

For more information,
contact info@ssndcp.org.

www.ssndcentralpacific.org



**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Sister Aquin described the next stage of her life: “As far back as I can remember in my religious life, my priority was to teach religion. In 1958 I was one of the first sisters in the Mankato Province to become involved full-time in religious education (CCD).” She was one of three to open Christ the King Catechetical Center in Medford, Minnesota, and remained there until 1960. Following a year of teaching at St. Joseph School, Red Wing, she served full-time at religious education centers and parishes in Minnesota, including those in Pipestone, Franklin, Fridley, Prior Lake, St. Michael, Minnesota Lake, Mapleton, New Richland, Windom, Mankato and North Mankato. In 1984 she became a pastoral minister and director of religious education at St. Joseph Parish, Jasper, where she stayed until 1996. She used a variety of creative techniques to enhance her religious instruction, and several of them were published in *Today’s Catholic Teacher*. She worked with all ages from pre-school through high school.

At the end of her tenure in Jasper in June 1996, she was awarded the Bishop’s Medal of the Diocese of Winona in recognition of her 12 years of service. In an article in the *Courier*, the pastor was quoted calling Sister Aquin “an anchor for the parish. For twelve years she took care of the needs of the parish by visiting the elderly and sick, organizing prayer groups, coordinating religious education programs and representing St. Joseph’s at ecumenical gatherings.” Bishop John Vlazny wrote, “You have been a good and faithful servant of the mission of Christ in our western deanery and I assure you that your life and ministry among us will never be forgotten.”

Sister Aquin’s final parish service was in East Chain (1996-2003). Her job description covered many aspects of parish life. Failing eyesight led to retirement at Good Counsel in 2003, but she didn’t really retire. She shared teaching ideas and art materials with sisters who were teaching in area schools. For as long as she was able (up until about a month before her death) she conducted a Saturday morning class in Notre Dame Hall for sisters called “Friendly Visits.” She prepared diligently for this class and often had handouts ready for the participants.

The funeral Mass for Sister Aquin, with Father James Barry as presider, was held Wednesday, October 9, in Good Counsel Chapel. A vigil service was held the previous evening. She is survived by nieces, including Sister Lucille Matousek, SSND, and nephews and their families, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Anna (Moravec) Svoboda, seven sisters, Josephine Bandas, Anna Cumming, Agnes Matousek, Magdalen Fischer, Margaret Svoboda, Sister Judith Svoboda, SSND, and Christine Maxwell, and one brother, William.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND