

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Lois Adrian, SSND



Birth
October 22, 1918

Baptism
November 3, 1918

Profession
July 22, 1940

Death
May 28, 2012

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

Our beloved Sister M. Lois Adrian, 93, died peacefully on May 28, 2012, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus, Mankato, Minnesota. In mid-April, she traveled to Arizona to celebrate the 100th birthday of her brother, Father Stephen, but because of her declining health, entered hospice shortly after her return to Mankato.

Sister Lois was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 22, 1918. The fifth child and third girl, she was given the name Agnes Frances at her baptism November 3 in St. Francis de Sales Church. Later two more boys were born, completing the Adrian family. The Catholic faith played a large role in the Adrian family, evidenced by nightly family prayer and regular attendance at daily Mass and parish devotions. In 1924, Agnes started first grade at the parish school, taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Agnes graduated from eighth grade in 1933, and returned to St. Francis for grades nine and ten. She then asked her parents' permission to attend the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato for her junior and senior years. They consented, and she completed high school at Good Counsel, graduating in 1937.

Sister Lois described her entrance into the Candidature: "My good parents found it hard to give up another of the family, for my sister Christine, now Sister M. Adrienne, had just entered a few years before, and my brother was at the time preparing for the priesthood. They did not wish to interfere with the Lord's plans and so I left my home and loved ones to enter the Candidature on August 27, 1937." As a second year candidate, Agnes did her practice teaching at St. Agnes, St. Paul, finishing in spring 1939. On June 3, 1939, she was able to attend her brother Stephen's ordination, and his first Mass the following day. She was received into the novitiate about six weeks later, and given the name Sister M. Lois. Following profession in 1940, Sister Lois began her lifelong ministry as a teacher of primary grade children.

St. Michael, Morgan, Minnesota, was her first mission. Prior to Sister Lois' arrival, St. Michael had been a grade 3-8 school because there was no room for the youngest grades. The new pastor, Fr. Alphonse Schladweiler, was insistent that all grades be taught, so space was found, and Sister Lois, the newly-professed, opened the first and second grade classroom. In 1944 Sister Lois received a new assignment: she and two other sisters opened the St. Leo Catechetical School in Pipestone.

Sister Lois returned to primary classroom teaching in 1948 at Holy Childhood in St. Paul, where she stayed until 1952. Over the next 20 years, she also taught at St. Mathias, Wanda (1952-53); SS. Peter & Paul, Springbrook, Iowa (1953-55); St. Matthew, St. Paul (1955-60 and 1968-69); St. John, Mankato (1960-63); St. Mark, Shakopee (1963-65); St. John, Jordan (1965-68) and her home parish, St. Francis de Sales (1969-73). During this time, she earned a B.A. in history from the College of

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Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

St. Catherine, St. Paul (1952) and an M.A. in reading from Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee (1966).

In 1973, Sister Lois once again became “the first” – when she opened the kindergarten classroom at St. Francis de Sales. She remained there until her retirement in 1991. In a Catholic Bulletin feature, the St. Francis principal commented, “Sister Lois has to be one of the world’s best kindergarten teachers. Folks here feel very sad to see her leave. However, we can appreciate her desire for a less-structured work situation after 52 years on the job.” Later in the article, it was stated that “Sister Lois will be remembered for many reasons, but most especially for her good common sense and her delightful sense of humor.” Sister Lois summed up her teaching ministry, “I’ve always loved kids. I enjoyed every year.” In her retirement from fulltime work, Sister Lois stayed at St. Francis Convent until 2000, and tutored at the combined St. Francis-St. James United School.

Sister Lois moved to Good Counsel in 2000. In 2010 she reflected, “My eyesight was getting poor and, after 60 years of teaching, I was ready to leave. I am legally blind and I can’t do many things now. I visit the sick sisters here, and I can see well enough to play cards. I keep my rosary in my hands all the time because I can’t read a thing. I can’t read Scripture and that bothers me a lot. But since I can’t have a book, I use the rosary. The rosary is always with me. It’s my lifeline.” Sister Lois took advantage of audio programs for the visually impaired, including listening to a daily recording of “Living Faith,” as well as subscribing to various audio book programs. During Notre Dame Health Care discussions, she often offered profound reflections on You Are Sent and other topics. An avid cribbage player, she also joined groups of sisters for other card games as well. Her family, too, was very important to her, and in her later years, she especially looked forward to visiting her brother in Arizona.

The funeral Mass for Sister Lois, with her nephew Father Stephen Adrian as presider, was held June 1, in Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in the cemetery. She is survived by her brother, Father Stephen and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Stephen and Elizabeth (Wolkerstorfer) Adrian, her sisters Ann Nagel and Sister M. Adrienne, SSND (Christine), and her brothers Matthias, Joseph and Raymond.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND