



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Norbert Marie Schares, SSND

Sister Norbert Marie Schares, 82, died Wednesday, October 23, 2013, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. A few months ago, she was diagnosed with cancer, and sisters and staff were frequent visitors in her last days.

The 11<sup>th</sup> of 15 children, Sister Norbert Marie was born March 14, 1931, on the family farm near Gilbertville, Iowa. Because she was not expected to live, she was baptized the next day by the pastor of Immaculate Conception Church and given the name Hilda Mary.

In 1936, at the age of five, Hilda started school at Immaculate Conception School, taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She received her first Communion in 1937 and was confirmed in 1941. She wrote, "It was at this time that I thought about becoming a sister but didn't think much more about it until I was about twenty. During those years between ages ten and twenty, I felt that I would do God's will when it came to make a decision about entering religious life." Following eighth grade graduation, she stayed home to work on the farm, doing both outside chores and household tasks. By watching her sisters, she learned how to bake bread and pies as a teenager. She also provided help for other farm families, sometimes staying with the family, and earned a wage of 50 cents an hour.

Sister Norbert Marie continued her vocation story: "When I was twenty, I felt the grace of my vocation when I had the opportunity to spend a few quiet days at Good Counsel in Mankato at reception and profession ceremonies. I was so happy that I felt like I was in a retreat. The quiet, peaceful place and the charity of the sisters inspired me. Everyone was so kind and happy." She entered the SSND candidature in August 1951. As a second-year candidate, she was missioned to Springbrook, Iowa, where she provided home service for the sisters and another candidate. On July 20, 1953, she was received into the novitiate and given the name Sister Norbert Marie. She professed first vows on July 21, 1954. Her first assignment was to help in the priests' and guests' department at Good Counsel. Eventually this work expanded so that she cooked in the health care unit in Fourier Hall (now called Marian Hall), and worked in the laundry. Her description of her work typifies what many home service sisters did: "We did all the cleaning, laundry, cooking and baking. We took care of the gardens, the apples and the chickens. I worked in the laundry when we had that first habit and starched wimple. Sometimes we'd have to make sixteen pounds of starch and wash 500 sheets. I didn't mind working because I'd had to work at home, too."\*

In 1959, Sister Norbert Marie was transferred to St. Agnes, St. Paul, where she stayed for two years. She had charge of the laundry, helped with cooking, and took care of feeding transients who came to the convent asking for a meal. In the succeeding years she provided community service at St. Stanislaus, St. Paul (1961-62); Good Counsel (1962-67); John Ireland, St. Peter (1967-71);

\*Quotation from Sister Norbert Marie's "Hands" Autobiography ©2010 by Kay Helms

*continued*

#### Birth

March 14, 1931

#### Baptism

March 15, 1931

#### First Profession

July 21, 1954

#### Death

October 23, 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

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Norbert Marie Schares*



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St. Agnes (1971-73); SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato (1973-75); St. Francis Xavier, Sartell (1975-77); and Adsum, St. Cloud (1977-83). In 1983, she moved to St. Joseph, Cresco, Iowa, where she visited and brought Communion to the sick, elderly and infirm of the parish. In addition, she helped in the school lunchroom and with cooking and cleaning in the rectory. She continued in this capacity until 1991. She spent the next two years in St. Paul, first as a visitor to the elderly at St. Francis de Sales, and then as a member of Sisters Care.

Sister Norbert Marie's final assignment was community service at Good Counsel, beginning in 1993. She helped with the sisters in St. Joseph Hall Health Care and was responsible for "Martha's Inn," the former academy home economics room transformed into a kitchen for sisters' use. She continued to use her baking skills and developed a wide reputation for her bread and pies. She especially enjoyed baking for sisters, staff members and people of the Mankato area who ordered pies and sweet treats from her. Knowing what each sister liked, she often made treats for sisters in health care and delivered them herself. Her pies were an important part of the SSND Craft Fair and she often recruited sisters' help in peeling bushels of apples in preparation. The black walnuts that Sister Norbert Marie carefully shelled and packed in jars were another Craft Fair specialty.

Sister Norbert Marie took an active part in community life at Good Counsel. Until a few weeks ago, she led prayer for the sisters in Notre Dame Health Care and spent time after prayer to visit with each sister. When she met a sister in the corridor, she always greeted her by name. She also enjoyed card games, especially Golf.

The funeral Mass for Sister Norbert Marie, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Monday, October 28, in Good Counsel Chapel, with a vigil service the night before. She is survived by her sisters Florence (Alban) Dittmer, Rosalea (Alfred) Schmelzer, and Agnes (Hank) Schnelle, her nieces, including Sister Roxanne Schares, SSND, and nephews and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Josephine (Arend) Schares, six sisters, Henrietta Simons, Theodora Breyfogle, Blanche Schmitz, Rita Michels, and two who died in infancy, and five brothers, Norbert, Louis, Jerome, Kenneth and Adam.

*By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND*