



Birth
December 17, 1926

Baptism
January 2, 1927

Profession
July 19, 1949

Death
December 13, 2014

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 M. Stephanie Fink, SSND

Sister Stephanie Fink, 87, died about 2:25 p.m. on December 13, 2014, in Notre Dame Health Care, Good Counsel Hill, Mankato, Minnesota. With a December birthday, she was to be a guest of honor at the Notre Dame Hall birthday celebration that afternoon. When a nursing assistant came to her room about 2:15 to ask if she was ready, Sister Stephanie's response was that she would not be going, "because my Father is coming to get me." When staff checked on her ten minutes later, she had died.

Sister Stephanie was born on December 17, 1926, in West St. Paul. She was baptized at St. Matthew Church on January 2, 1927, and named Rosemary. Her father was a butcher who owned his own small grocery store, and her mother was a caterer. Sister Stephanie described her childhood "as uneventful, with normal childhood 'stuff.' I loved to go fishing and help Mom and Dad plant the garden." She would rather build doll houses out of orange crates than play with the dolls.

Due to the great distance to the Catholic school, Rosemary spent her first two years of school at Emerson School. When she was in second grade, she transferred to St. Matthew School and was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. After graduating from St. Matthew in 1941, she attended Sibley Junior High for ninth grade, and then went to Humbolt High School. In January of her sophomore year, illness caused her to discontinue her schooling. Sister Stephanie wrote in her autobiography: "In May of that same year, 1943, I obtained a position at the South St. Paul Daily Reporter. At the same time evening classes at Rasmussen's Business College were also commenced. For about a year I worked in the bindery and pressroom, and then was given the position of Classified Advertising and Circulation Manager. Any free time was spent in helping Dad at the store, in the garden, or fishing."

It was about this time that Rosemary began to think seriously about becoming a sister. She commented, "As a child I always had great reverence and respect for the sisters. As a young girl, the thought of becoming a religious never for a moment entered my mind. I can truthfully say for positive that my vocation came through the Blessed Virgin Mary. A co-worker and I began a novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the Assumption Church immediately after work. From there I would go to St. Matthew's for another one at 7:30. Each Tuesday I would watch the sisters file in, in perfect order, and take their places. I wondered how they could stand those long black habits. . . . Then I understood. There was something, too, I was searching for; something that couldn't be found in the world. It was after Easter of 1946 that the desire to become a nun hit me like a ton of bricks." She talked it over with her mother, who was somewhat reluctant, but a July vacation convinced Rosemary to act. In August she visited the sisters at St. Matthew, and they made an appointment for her at Good Counsel for August 15. She wrote, "I fell in love with Good Counsel the moment I set my eyes on it. Measurements were taken and arrangements were made to enter on August 28."

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Stephanie Fink



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**School Sisters
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Many of Rosemary's Rasmussen Business College credits were applied to her high school requirements, and with a few classes at Good Counsel Academy during her first year in the candidature, she was able to finish high school and begin college classes. As a second-year candidate, she taught second grade at St. Mary, Shakopee, Minn. Rosemary was received into the novitiate in July 1948, and given the name Sister M. Stephanie, a form of her father's name.

Following profession in 1949, Sister Stephanie began a teaching ministry in Minnesota that continued until 1984. She taught primary grades at Sacred Heart, Heron Lake (1949-51) and St. Francis, Buffalo (1951-53); intermediate grades at St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul (1953-57) and St. Felix, Wabasha (1957-61); and upper grades at St. Andrew, St. Paul (1961-62), St. Paul, Comfrey (1962-67), St. Francis de Sales (1967-68 and 1970-76), St. Anthony, Lismore (1968-70), Guardian Angels, Colton, Washington (1976-78), St. Michael, Prior Lake (1978-82), and Epiphany, Coon Rapids (1982-84). She was also the principal at Comfrey and Colton. During these teaching years, she earned a bachelor's degree in education from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1962.

In 1984, during her final year at Epiphany, Sister Stephanie provided secretarial services for the parish. From 1985 through 1989 she continued this ministry at Holy Spirit Parish, St. Cloud. In 1990, she began working in the development office for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis as a secretary and bookkeeper. When she retired from that position in 1999, she wrote, "The eight years at the Archdiocesan Development Office have been just GREAT. The hardest thing I had to do in life was to admit this is the end. It's time to rest and give glory to God."

Sister Stephanie lived with her sister Joan in St. Paul, where she did volunteer work and enjoyed her retirement until 2004. She moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel campus in 2004 and helped out in a variety of ways. She used her bookkeeping experience as she kept accounts for the small communities of the campus. A warm, welcoming person, she was noted for her good sense of humor and quick wit. She enjoyed cooking and baking, using skills she developed when she helped out at home, and if there was a card game in the vicinity, Sister Stephanie was probably one of the participants. Cribbage was a favorite.

The funeral Mass for Sister Stephanie, with Father Bernard Steiner as president, was held December 22, in Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato. A vigil service was celebrated Sunday evening. She is survived by her sisters Joan Fink, SSND, and Leatta Zappa, nieces and nephews and their families, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Steven and Dorothy (Jarosch) Fink, a brother Steven, and sisters, Marie Byland and Dorothy Thompson.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND