

In Loving Memory

Sister Veronica [M. Bertilla] Wald, SSND



Birth
October 8, 1922

Baptism
October 9, 1922

Profession
July 20, 1942

Death
November 6, 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

Sister Veronica Wald, 90, died Tuesday, November 6, 2012, in Notre Dame Health Care Center, Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus, Mankato, Minnesota. She had been recently diagnosed with cancer, but was well enough to celebrate her 90th birthday with family, friends and community members less than a month before her death. Sister Veronica's sister, Sister Mary Alice Wald, SSND, was present with her at her death.

Sister Veronica was born October 8, 1922, in Wishek, North Dakota, and baptized Veronica Agnes the following day at St. Anthony's Church in Napoleon. She was the seventh child in a family that would eventually include 14 children – six boys and eight girls. When she was six, Veronica began attending a small country school near her home, but, as she recounted later, "We were taught our religion at home. We memorized our catechism and said all of our prayers in German. I made my first Holy Communion when I was eight years old."

Following her graduation from eighth grade at age 14, Veronica stayed home for a year. Her autobiography described her first experience with sisters: "In June 1937, two Ursuline Sisters came to our parish to prepare us for Confirmation. That was the first time I saw a sister. They knew that most of us had never seen a sister. One day they told us how and why they became sisters. While they were telling about their life, I thought that I would like to be one someday. I will always remember what they told us, 'If anyone of you feel you would like to become a priest or sister, just pray to our Dear Lord and He will take care of you.' I made up my mind on Confirmation Day, June 27, 1937, to be a sister."

The following year, Veronica's older sister Dorothy entered the SSND candidature. Veronica continued her vocation story, "After Dorothy entered, she prayed that I might enter, too. Four months later, I followed her. I entered on December 8, 1938. I had never seen a Notre Dame Sister until I entered. My parents were surprised when I asked to enter the convent, because I never said anything about entering before. They were very happy and said, 'Daughter, do as you please. If it is God's will, we hope and pray that you will persevere.'" (Dorothy later left SSND, but Veronica's younger sister Mary joined the community in 1942.)

Veronica spent nine months at Good Counsel as a candidate. In September 1939, she was sent to New Hradec, North Dakota, where she helped with cooking and housework for 71 boarders. A year later, she returned to the candidature. On her reception day, July 18, 1941, she was given the name Sister Mary Bertilla, but she later returned to her baptismal name.

Following her profession of vows in 1942, Sister Bertilla began 38 years of ministry as a home service sister. She served in convents in Minnesota: SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato, St. Felix, Wabasha, St. Agnes, St. Paul, and St. Matthew, St. Paul; in Iowa: SS. Peter & Paul, Springbrook; and Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville; in Washington: St. Joseph, Spokane,

continued

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and Immaculate Heart Retreat House, Spokane; and in North Dakota: St. Mary, New England; SS. Peter & Paul, Strasburg, and SS. Peter & Paul, New Hradec. In some of these locations, her responsibilities included cooking for boarders, which she thoroughly enjoyed. In 1947, her recipe for “Home Made Salad Dressing” was published in the Notre Dame Centenary Cookbook.

In 1981, Sister Veronica moved to St. Francis de Sales in St. Paul, where she was a parish visitor to the elderly, ill, and homebound until 1990, when she began participating in the Sisters Care program sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph. In 1996, she retired at Good Counsel where she gave community service as long as she was able.

In her years of service, Sister Veronica took advantage of various opportunities to expand her horizons. She participated in the Clara City, Minnesota, migrant program, worked with Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler in Chicago, worked with the Staff Builders Agency and family outreach, staffed a telephone hotline, helped with food service at Schmidt Brewery, volunteered at the Dorothy Day Center (20 years), substituted in school, and helped at parish soup suppers in St. Paul. Sister Veronica was a member of the province Life for All Seasons Committee, earned Sisters Care certification, participated in workshops for the care of elderly people, and was trained for the Vocational Hot Lunch program. In filling out a form that asked for her education, she responded, “My education was from the school of experience!” In 1980, she was given the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land, which, together with her jubilee trip to Rome, she counted as significant experiences in her life.

Sister Veronica was known for her creative sense of humor and displayed it in a variety of ways.

During this past year, Sister Veronica eagerly looked forward to celebrating her 90th birthday and her 70th jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame. She was grateful that so many family members were able to be a part of the celebrations.

Sister Veronica’s funeral was held Monday, November 12, in Good Counsel Chapel. She is survived by her sisters Sister Mary Alice Wald, SSND, Catherine Meyer and Monica Podolak, her brothers Anton (Mary) and Joseph, her 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, Adam and Magdalen (Gross) Wald, her sisters Christine Larson, Magdalen Remien, Dorothy Schlosser and Eva Wilkes, and her brothers Peter, Adam, Andrew and Valentine.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND