



Birth
Nov. 26, 1917

Baptism
Dec. 2, 1917

Profession
July 22, 1940

Death
Feb. 5, 2016

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. Carmen Madigan, SSND

Sister M. Carmen Madigan, 98, died Friday, Feb. 5, 2016, in Notre Dame Healthcare, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. In the past few days there had been a marked decline in her condition, and sisters had begun to pray with her.

Sister Carmen was born Nov. 26, 1917, in Madison Lake, Minnesota. Six days later, she was baptized at All Saints Church and named Florence Mary. She was the oldest in her family, and she later wrote, "During the first ten years of my life, every two years found me gazing rapturously into the deep blue eyes of another family member until we reached the number six with an even division of boys and girls." The Madigan parents provided their children with a strong faith experience: "Mother was never too busy to hear us say our night prayer. We really didn't think it counted unless we said it at her knee."

Florence attended country school for two years and then, as a third grader, she enrolled in All Saints School. Florence continued at All Saints through her junior year. She wrote, "It was a sad August day when I learned that All Saints High School was to close and I had to go somewhere else for my senior year." Since Madison Lake did not have another high school, she attended Mankato High School and graduated in 1936.

In the latter part of August of that same year, she heard the call to become a School Sister of Notre Dame, and was accepted for entrance on Aug. 27. She spent three years in the candidature, taking college classes the first year. "I was captivated by the life and knew it was just what I wanted." The next two years she taught at St. Francis de Sales School, St. Paul, and then returned to Good Counsel for reception. In a nod to her Irish heritage, she received the name Sister Mary Carmen. Following profession of vows in 1940, she began a 45-year teaching and administration ministry. Her first assignment was high school teaching at St. Agnes, St. Paul. She also attended summer classes at the College of St. Catherine. In 1942, it was decided that St. Agnes would become accredited, and therefore teachers needed to have their degrees, which Sister Carmen was still working toward. She spent the next year at several schools as a long-term substitute. In 1943, with three other sisters, she opened a mission at New Haven, Iowa, taking over from another congregation of sisters. She spent the 1944 school year at St. Francis de Sales and was able to complete the requirements for her bachelor's degree in English during that year.

Beginning in 1945, she taught English and sometimes served as associate administrator in several of the Mankato Province high schools: St. Agnes (1945-47 and 1961-64); Emmons Central, Strasburg, North Dakota (1947-48); St. Anthony, Lismore, Minnesota (1948-52); St. Francis de Sales (1952-53); St. Michael, St. Michael, Minnesota (1953-56); St. Anne, Wabasso, Minnesota (1956-60); St. Peter, Hokah, Minnesota (1960-61); Don Bosco, Gilbertville, Iowa (1964-66 and 1972-73); Trinity, Dickinson, North Dakota (1967-72); Loyola, Mankato (1973-79); and Totino-Grace, Fridley (1979-1985). During

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Carmen Madigan



the 1966-67 school year, she served as campus minister at the Thomas More Newman Center in Mankato, and also taught English to student sisters at Good Counsel. In 1953, she completed her master's degree in education at St. Thomas College. Known as an excellent English teacher, she combined her strong English background with her sense of humor to draw out the best in students. She also taught speech and debate and worked with school drama presentations. In 2007, Sister Carmen was inducted into the Loyola Catholic School Hall of Fame. The following notation appeared in the ceremony program: "Sister Carmen has affected the lives of hundreds of people as teacher and principal for over 45 years in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. Her skills as an English teacher and administrator have helped shape the character and values of many, many students."

Heeding the advice of her father, "Don't stay until the last dance," Sister Carmen stopped teaching in 1985. She became the coordinator of a program at the Good Counsel Education Center, the Residence for Women. Sensing that there was a need for housing for women college students who desired not to live in a dormitory situation, the School Sisters of Notre Dame a few years earlier had opened up the former high school residence halls to young women. A brochure described it this way, "Good Counsel invites women students attending Mankato Colleges to live in a quiet environment with an atmosphere of serious study, mutual respect and consideration, determining, for the most part, their own lifestyle and learning." As director, Sister Carmen was responsible for interviewing and admitting women, as well as meeting day-to-day needs that surfaced.

In 1991, Sister Carmen began a sabbatical year at Wellsprings in Glens Falls, New York. Following this experience, she returned to the Good Counsel Education Center community and served in several volunteer capacities, including working in the library in the motherhouse. She continued her love of reading by joining a book club that met monthly, and tutored in the Good Counsel Learning Center. In 1995, she moved to Marian Hall and in 2005 she joined the motherhouse community. She wrote, "My days are colorful, filled with reading, volunteer work and keeping in touch with family and friends. I know that I am blessed." A gracious, hospitable hostess, she was also an excellent cook. Very proud of her Irish ancestry, she took advantage of any opportunity to celebrate her heritage.

The funeral Mass for Sister Carmen, with Father Eugene Stenzel as president, was held Tuesday, Feb. 9, in Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato, with burial of her cremains at a later date. She is survived by nieces and nephews and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Henry and Nell (Brown) Madigan, her sisters, Ethel Garrahy and Mary Davis, and her brothers, George, Robert and Dan.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND

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of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

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