



Birth
August 29, 1923

Baptism
September 2, 1923

Profession
July 22, 1943

Death
October 15, 2015

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. Valine Saumweber, SSND

Shortly after the daily liturgy concluded in the Good Counsel chapel, Sister M. Valine Saumweber, 92, died on Thursday, October 15, 2015, in Notre Dame Healthcare, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minn. Her death was unexpected; before she died, healthcare staff noted a marked decline in her condition, and her two SSND sisters, Sister Miriam and Sister Vianney, were called. They and pastoral staff members were with her when she died.

Sister Valine was born August 29, 1923, in St. Paul, the sixth of eight children and the second daughter. Two of her brothers died at a young age in 1919, probable victims of the flu epidemic; two more girls joined the family after her. The Sunday following her birth, she was baptized Dolores Ann Adele.

Dolores attended Sacred Heart School where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. She completed eight grades in seven years because, at that time, third graders who could read very well were sometimes promoted to fourth grade mid-year. She wrote about her vocation, "As far back as I can remember, I always thought that one day I would become a Sister. One time, when the four of us girls were quite small, my mother took us to the convent across the street for Mass. After Mass the Superior said to my mother, 'Someday all of your girls will be School Sisters of Notre Dame.'" Dolores felt privileged to become a sacristy helper in sixth grade. Following eighth grade graduation, she attended the two-year high school at Sacred Heart. As a junior, she enrolled in the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato.

In 1940, Dolores graduated from Good Counsel Academy in June and entered the SSND candidature in August. Her older sister, Marie, (Sister M. Verna), had professed first vows in July of that year. As a second-year candidate, Dolores taught at St. Matthew School, St. Paul. Dolores was received into the novitiate in 1942 and given the name Sister M. Valine. Following first profession of vows in 1943, she returned to St. Matthew, where she remained until 1950 as a primary-grade teacher.

For the next 25 years, Sister Valine taught elementary grades and music in several Catholic Schools, all but one in Minnesota: Holy Childhood, St. Paul (1950-52); St. Joseph, Montevideo (1952-53); SS. Cyril & Methodius, Minneapolis (1953-55); St. Pius, St. Pius, N.D. (1955-58); St. Isidore, Litomysl (1958-61); St. Peter, Forest Lake (1961-65); St. Ann, Kimball (1965-67); St. Matthias, Hampton, where she was also principal (1967-74); and St. Michael, St. Michael (1974-75). During this time she earned a bachelor's in English from St. Catherine's College, St. Paul in 1951, and a master's in education with emphasis on education and music from Mankato State College in 1968.

After four years in a renewal program, she became the school secretary at St. Francis Xavier School, Sartell, in 1979. In her final year at Sartell, she began a ministry that would be her focal point for the next 23 years:

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister M. Valine Saumweber



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outreach to children, especially those with special needs, and to older adults. She commented, “My last year at Sartell (1985), I began my volunteer work as a Foster Grandparent. Moving from Sartell, I lived with Hazel Klein, an elderly woman, in St. Cloud, for two years. This was part of a program called ‘Share-A-Home’ with Catholic Charities.” During her years in St. Cloud, she was involved with several aspects of the Foster Grandparent program, sponsored by Catholic Charities, including in-home visiting; volunteering at a shelter for battered women and the Catholic Charities Day Treatment Center; and working at Talahi School.

Known as “Grandma Val,” Sister Valine became an integral part of the St. Cloud Foster Grandparent program. A 2003 article described her role: “As a Foster Grandparent at Talahi Elementary School, Grandma Val enjoys giving extra help in the ‘Book Buddy’ program, which is her favorite subject. Assigned children are able to spend 30 minutes with her each week working on reading. Grandma Val gets to know their personalities very well. She loves to be with kids.” The article continued, “When the children are on summer vacation Sister Valine volunteers at Anna Marie’s Women’s Shelter. Here she spends time in the daycare area caring for children of women who have been in an abusive relationship. Sister Valine comforts babies that need soothing, interacts with the children, has lunch with them, reads to and plays games with them.” Sister Valine herself commented, “I just really love being with the kids. It’s such a rewarding experience to grow close to a child.” When Sister Valine retired in 2007, she was honored with a special send-off at Talahi School that received coverage in the St. Cloud Times: “Students and staff lined up along two walls while Sister Valine was pushed past on a makeshift throne built on a maintenance cart covered with crepe paper. She wore a red crown, purple sash, and had a silver scepter.” One of the staff members was quoted, “She has been a wonderful volunteer. She loves our kids so much.”

Sister Valine’s favorite flower was the rose, and two of her favorite places in St. Cloud were the Clemens Rose Gardens and the Munsinger Gardens. She often walked to the gardens and took her visitors there whenever she could. She also loved animals, especially kittens and puppies. Music was also a special love, and she had a beautiful singing voice. She taught music, gave piano lessons, and was organist at some of the parishes where she served. An avid letter writer, she kept in contact with family and friends in this way.

The funeral Mass for Sister Valine, with Father Andrew Olsem as president, was held Tuesday, October 20, in Good Counsel Chapel, with burial of her cremains at a later date. She is survived by her sisters, Sisters Miriam and Vianney, her nephew James, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Sister Valine was preceded in death by her parents, Valentine and Marie (Griesgraber) Saumweber, her sister, Sister M. Verna, SSND (Marie), and her brothers, Clement, Gene, Gervais and Jerome.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND