



In Loving Memory

Sister Alice (Hilda Marie) Druffel

On Good Friday, April 2, 2021 our beloved Sister Alice Mary Druffel, 84, died peacefully in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota.

Sister Alice described her birth in this way, “Colton, a thriving Catholic, German community in the heart of the rich and fertile Palouse Hills of southeastern Washington, welcomed an addition to its farming population, Saturday, May 15, 1936, when Mr. and Mrs. George Druffel announced the birth of their third child, a daughter, Alice Mary.” She was baptized the following Thursday, Ascension Thursday, at St. Gall Church in Colton. She joined older siblings Donald and Janet, and later James and Polly completed the family. A love of the land and responsible stewardship for the land characterized the Druffel family. Their father was recognized as a pioneer in soil conservation; Donald and James continued this legacy. Alice and her sisters maintained a deep interest in the family farm throughout their lives.

In 1942, Alice became a first grader at St. Gall School, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). She received her First Holy Communion in 1944, and was confirmed on her birthday in 1949. Notre Dame Academy, a high school for girls, opened in 1948 in Colton. Janet Druffel and a cousin were the first to register at the new school. Alice graduated from St. Gall in 1950, and joined Janet at Notre Dame Academy that fall. However, the freshman retreat had a deep impact on Alice, and she enrolled at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, Minnesota, as a sophomore aspirant in 1951. She attributed her vocation to the example of her mother, who had wanted to be a sister, and to the sisters who taught her. When she returned for her junior year in 1952, Janet came along to enter the SSND candidature. Alice graduated from Good Counsel in 1954, and was the salutatorian of her class. Alice’s final comment about high school was: “Incidentally, I and my almost constant companion, my violin, traversed the 1,700 miles between home and school 13 times by train and once by plane.”

Alice entered the SSND candidature in 1954, the same year that Janet (Sister George Marie) professed first vows. In July 1955, Alice became Novice Hilda Marie, and she professed her first vows in 1956. She later returned to her baptismal name. After a year of college classes, she returned to Washington for her first teaching assignments: St. Joseph, Spokane (1957-58), and Christ the King, Omak (1958-63). She then taught seven years at SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato, Minnesota, followed by a year each at St. Mary’s, New England, North Dakota, and Guardian Angel-St. Boniface, Colton. During her years of teaching, she earned a bachelor’s degree from former Mount Mary College (now University) in 1968.

From 1973 through 1978, she served on the staff of Our Lady of the Valley Religious Education Center in Omak, Washington. When she left Omak, the parish published a tribute to her that read in part, “Teaching, visiting, consoling, recycling, encouraging, staffing a booth at the fair, providing music at Mass, making banners, pulling weeds, growing strawberries, working on

continued

Birth
May 15, 1936

Baptism
May 20, 1936

Profession
July 17, 1956

Death
April 2, 2021

Burial
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Cemetery

*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

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*Sister Alice (Hilda
Marie) Druffel*



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rummage sales, cleaning the church, hauling tables and chairs around for class, mowing her yard, and especially just being a very special person to everyone she meets, the list is endless. We are all the richer for her example and witness to the Gospel.” Sister Alice completed an MA in instructional technology from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, in 1974, and also attended summer seminars at the Human Life Center at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota. She left Omak to team with Father Paul Marx at the Human Life Center at St. John’s University as the center’s business facilitator.

Sister Alice returned to the West for a final time in 1979, serving first as librarian at St. Joseph School in Spokane, Washington, and then caring for her dad in Colton. In 1981, she began the first of many roles at Epiphany School and Parish in Coon Rapids, Minnesota. She taught in the grade school and served as a teaching assistant until 1984. At that time, she took a position that lined up well with her degree – Director of the Audio Visual Department of the Archdiocesan Central Purchasing Service – located in St. Paul, a position she held until 1991. She continued to live with the sisters at Epiphany in Coon Rapids while working for Central Purchasing.

In 1991, Sister Alice assumed the position of receptionist at Epiphany parish, Coon Rapids. “Church of Epiphany. How can I help you?” became her mantra full-time until 2011, and as a volunteer until 2016. She often went the extra mile to help those who called the parish. When people were unable to locate graves in the cemetery, she accompanied them, map in hand. With her proficiency in audiovisual equipment, she was able to repair machines in both the school and parish, something appreciated by both staffs.

In 2003, Sister Alice and Sister Corrine Dahlheimer, who also worked for the parish, moved from the convent to Epiphany Pines, a senior living facility, where they formed strong relationships with other residents. When Sister Alice participated in activities and gatherings, she was loved for who she was. In her later years, she moved around the parish facility using a donated motorized scooter, something that fascinated young students who attended the school liturgies where she was present. In May 2020, friends surprised her with a drive-by birthday parade that included a fire truck.

Sister Alice lived very simply, which she explained as her way of saving for her sister, Janet, who was serving in Guatemala. She held a strong interest in the family farm and was especially grateful for the times that she could be with her family.

The Funeral Liturgy for Sister Alice, with Father Gene Stenzel as presider, was held April 8, 2021, followed by burial in the Good Counsel Cemetery. A Prayer of Remembrance was held Wednesday afternoon, April 7. She is survived by her sisters, Janet, SSND, and Pauline (Polly) Druffel; nieces and nephews; and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Hilda (Greif) Druffel; and her brothers Donald and James.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND