



Birth
February 11, 1926

Baptism
March 14, 1926

Profession
August 1, 1955

Death
November 15, 2017

Burial
Chatawa 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

In Loving Memory

Sister Carla Marie Candella

Rosalie Candella was born in Alexandria, Louisiana in 1926. She was the first of Charles and Lena (Jerona) Candella's three daughters. She always claimed the Blessed Mother's special favor since her birth date was February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Of her early childhood, Sister Carla Marie recorded, "There was nothing unusual about this time. My family was a typical Italian one. Those were the depression years and at its peak, in 1932, my family moved to New Orleans. I attended elementary and secondary grades in the New Orleans public schools. In spite of my study being in the public schools, my parents never neglected their duty. They made certain that my two sisters and I received proper religious training."

The Candellas lived in Redemptorist St. Alphonsus, Parish and it was the School Sisters of Notre Dame who taught the girls religion and readied them to receive the sacraments. Sister Carla Marie wrote, "It was during the preparation for my Confirmation that I expressed the desire of being a religious sister. I loved the sisters who taught me and wanted to be like them.

"I was always fond of school and had hopes of becoming a teacher. When I completed high school, my parents thought I was too young to enter religious life. However I let time take its course."

The decision proved providential as her father died when she was 19 years old. She felt she could not leave her mother and two sisters, Josephine and Pauline.

After high school graduation, Rosalie had enrolled for commercial courses at Joseph A. Maybin Business College. The skills she acquired there were helpful her whole life, but proved especially useful at this time. Soon after finishing the courses, she was employed as office clerk by the Port of New Orleans. Her work provided much needed financial support to her family.

About nine years after graduation, Rosalie's pastor asked if she had ever thought of becoming a religious sister. Rosalie related, "We prayed over this, and I decided to give religious life a try. It was difficult to leave my family and home, but it was a decision I never regretted."

In 1953, Rosalie entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa in St. Louis. She continued her education at Notre Dame College, and at reception into the congregation she was given the name Carla Marie.

On professing her vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame in 1955, she completed work for her bachelor's degree, allowing her to pursue teaching.

Sister Carla Marie taught English, religion and Spanish in secondary schools in Missouri, Illinois, Texas and Louisiana. She said her most rewarding ministry was "anything that has to do with teaching. Young people do love and respect a good teacher. It is most rewarding when students return years later to thank you for teaching them, not only subject matter, but in helping them to develop their character."

Sister Carla Marie found ways to teach that benefitted her family, too. She wrote stories for her sister's children, including *Burrito, the Dancing*

continued

In Loving Memory



*Sister Carla Marie
Candella*

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Donkey. She was encouraged to have the story published. The book features illustrations by Mississippi school children.

Mrs. Candella suffered a severe stroke in 1986. The care required much of her sisters, and Sister Carla Marie felt obliged to take on some of the responsibility, helping care for her mother for two years.

Sister Carla Marie's last full-time teaching assignment was in Baton Rouge, at Bishop Sullivan, now St. Michael Archangel High School. She headed the religion department and taught English and Spanish beginning in 1990. She retired from full-time classroom teaching in 2005.

A seemingly impromptu invitation led to her next endeavor. Sister Carla Marie related, "The director of religious education at the cathedral parish asked if I would occasionally visit the Sunday religion classes. Several visits resulted in my becoming responsible for the catechetical classes in the parish, then to my becoming involved in the RCIA program." Sister Carla Marie spent more than 10 years with the parish, and was acknowledged with the Bishop's Day Award.

Weekdays of retirement were not idle. Sister Fides, Sister Carla Marie's 22-year community member, was teaching at St. Gerard Elementary School and asked if she'd be willing to volunteer as a reading tutor. The opening filled Sister Carla Marie's dream of helping children with reading problems. Her coaching put young readers on the right path to learning. Along with this individual help, she often substituted in the school's classrooms.

Sister Carla Marie, with Sister Fides, retired to St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, in 2012. In addition to participating in prayer and community activities, dish drying and receptionist duties, Sister Carla Marie developed projects that kept her busy. She created quilts for her friends and the gift shop, and gardened as long as she was able. Each year, she contributed to the Samaritan's Purse Shoebox program that brought Christmas cheer to the hearts of children in developing countries. Even on the day before Sister Carla Marie died, a bulletin was posted calling for volunteers to prepare this year's boxes.

No one could have been more surprised at Sister Carla Marie's death than the St. Mary of the Pines community. She seemed her normal, fragile self as she participated in all of the scheduled activities, prayer in the chapel and meals in the dining room on the day before. Even her sleep time must have been regular. It was upon rising Wednesday morning, November 15, that she was summoned to the rising for which we all hope.

Sister Carla Marie was preceded in death by her parents and her sister. She is survived by her sister, Josephine Candella of Orange Park, Florida and by two nieces, Susan Stores and Alyson Pierce-Renzo. Morning prayer for Sister Carla Marie and visitation was on Monday, November 20, 2017, at St. Teresa Church in Chatawa. The Eucharistic Celebration followed. Rev. Brian Kaski, pastor of St. Alphonsus Church, McComb, Mississippi, was the celebrant. Burial was in the Chatawa Cemetery.

May our Sister, Carla Marie, rest in peace.

This remembrance was prepared by Sister Carol Nishke, SSND