

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Evelyn Dangel



Birth
August 26, 1932

Baptism
September 18, 1932

Profession
July 19, 1953

Death
April 21, 2024

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

Sister Evelyn Dangel, 91, died peacefully at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, on April 21, 2024. Both she and Sister Petrann Sieben, her classmate, Good Counsel Hill community member, friend and partner in Ceramic Haven, had been in declining health and died within two days of each other.

Early in the morning of August 26, 1932, a daughter, named Ethel Evalyn, was born to John and Regina Dangel in Tulare, South Dakota. She was the seventh and last child for family. Three weeks later, she was baptized at St. Bernard's Church in Redfield, South Dakota. At the age of six she entered first grade at the same country school where her brothers and sisters had attended and was taught by the same teacher. In her autobiography, Sister Evelyn recalled that at the time of her confirmation, she took the name, Mary, and prayed that Mary would take care of her in the future.

Ethel's father was a depot agent and the family moved frequently due to his work. In the summer of 1946, shortly after she completed eighth grade, the family would relocate to Montevideo, Minnesota. Since Ethel wanted to become acquainted with other girls in the area, she attended a religious education summer school that was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). There she met Sister Hilaria Leuther, one of the teachers, and later described what happened: "After the last class, we all gathered around Sister Hilaria's desk and talked about our vocations. Without giving it too much thought, I said I wanted to be a School Sister of Notre Dame. She did not seem surprised, but thought the same, and proceeded to tell me about Good Counsel and the aspiranture." Ethel told her parents about this possibility for her high school education, and that fall she became a freshman aspirant at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, Minnesota. She loved her four years at Good Counsel and graduated in 1950.

Ethel entered the SSND candidature August 1950. As a second-year candidate, Ethel taught second graders at St. Stanislaus School in Winona, Minnesota. She found teaching difficult at first and wanted to be a home service sister, but soon learned that teachers were needed. At her reception into the novitiate on July 18, 1952, she was given the name Sister Mary Evelyn. This made her father extremely happy because he had wanted to name her Evelyn Ethel at birth, but her mother wanted Ethel Evelyn. Sister Evelyn knew at this time that her early prayer to Mary had been answered: "Mary not only took care of me, but she drew me to her special order, the School Sisters of Notre Dame."

Following profession of first vows in 1953, Sister Evelyn began her ministry of teaching primary grades at schools in Minnesota, Iowa and the state of Washinton. She taught at Sacred Heart and St. Francis de Sales in St. Paul; St. Mary in Bellechester; St. Casimir in Wells; Crucifixion in La Crescent; SS. Peter & Paul in Mankato; and St. Peter in Canby – all in Minnesota; St. Joseph in Spokane and Guardian Angel-St. Boniface in Colton, both in Washington; and Blessed Sacrament in Waterloo, Iowa. In 1961, she graduated with a bachelor's degree from the College of St. Catherine.

continued

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In 1979, Sister Evelyn became a certified nursing assistant and worked in St. Joseph Hall Health Care at Good Counsel for the next five years. She then served in home health care, first with Dove Health Care in Superior, Wisconsin, and then with Optional Care Systems in St. Paul. She commented later: “I treasured my time working with the elderly, first with our own sisters in health care and later with other persons in their own homes. I realized how much they appreciated a listening ear, a loving conversation and a good laugh.”

A six-month sabbatical at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi, was then sandwiched between two years of community service at St. Peter & Paul Convent in Mankato. In 1990, Sister Evelyn began a ten-year ministry of hospitality, cooking and gardening at the Center for Spiritual Development in Bird Island, Minnesota. Staff members recall that her sense of humor, help with food preparation and laundry needs, and engagement with visitors were wonderful gifts that she brought to her service there.

Beginning in 2000, Sister Evelyn resumed her service with the elderly, working part time for Sisters Care based in St. Paul. She arrived to Our Lady of Good Counsel in 2007, where her primary responsibilities were sacristan and ceramist at the craft and ceramic studio, Ceramic Haven. After her classmate, Sister Petrann Sieben, assumed leadership of Ceramic Haven in 2011, Sister Evelyn became her assistant. In addition to working in the studio, she accompanied Sister Petrann on trips to repair and restore statues outside of Ceramic Haven. One pastor wrote, “I was delighted by the work the Notre Dame Sisters in Mankato did with our statues. They had to sand them down, fill in the cracks and match colors. Sisters Petrann and Evelyn were the artists. I was surprised when they sent us a letter thanking us for the privilege of restoring our statues. I saw a great generosity in these sisters. They charged us a small price for the restoration and wondered if it was too high of a price.” As sisters were preparing to move to Shakopee in the fall of 2022, Sisters Petrann and Evelyn, along with Sister Marguerite Churilla, brought closure to their loved ministry.

In a Jubilee reflection, Sister Evelyn wrote, “As I grow older, with each passing year I become more aware of God’s love and presence in my life. I see unfolding the countless blessings God has given me in my life.”

The funeral Mass for Sister Evelyn was held April 30, in the Windermere chapel, Shakopee, with Father John Kunz as presider. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the Liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato will be held later.

Sister Evelyn is survived by 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, John and Mary Regina (Freund) Dangel, her sisters, Betty Miedwig, Jenny McKeown and Rosemary Kundert, and her brothers, John, Fredrick and William.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND