



Birth
Nov. 17, 1932

Baptism
Nov. 27, 1932

Profession
July 19, 1953

Death
July 8, 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 Irene [Mary Casper] Komor, SSND

Sister Irene (Mary Casper) Komor, 83, died at 9:45 p.m., Friday, July 8, 2016, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. She entered hospice in late June as her physical condition continued to decline. Her profession class had been keeping vigil with her these last days.

Sister Irene was born in St. Paul on Nov. 17, 1932, and baptized Irene Hedwig 10 days later at St. Francis de Sales Church. Both of her parents were German immigrants and devout Catholics. According to a 1993 newspaper article, Irene “learned all of her prayers in German and was devastated the first day of school when she couldn’t say her prayers in English with the other children. ‘My mother went right out and got a catechism and she helped me learn them all in English,’ she said.”

During Irene’s eight years at St. Francis de Sales School, she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. She wrote, “The sisters there were so influential in my life. We were always visiting them and doing church work together and got to know them very well. They were our friends. We loved the sisters.” In second grade, she told a neighbor that she wanted to be a sister. The neighbor replied that God had to call you to a vocation, and 7-year-old Irene responded, “I hear him calling me.” She continued her story, “In the seventh and eighth grades, I wasn’t all that certain about leaving my home. I prayed each night, not sure at all what I should do. When spring came and I was about to graduate, Sister Raphaeline, our principal, spoke with me. She asked if I was still thinking about being a sister. To me that was like an answer to prayer. God was letting me know he was inviting me to follow Him as an SSND. My mom and dad supported my decision.” Following eighth grade graduation in 1946, Irene and three of her classmates, Barbara Gruber (Sister Paulanne), Irene Latessa (Sister Yolanda) and Joan Hau (Sister Colleen), entered the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato.

Irene fulfilled her dream of being a sister and a teacher by becoming an SSND candidate in 1950. She attended college classes during her first year and taught grades three and four at St. Joseph School, Cresco, Iowa, as a second-year candidate. She was received into the novitiate in 1952 and given the name Sister Mary Casper, her father’s name. She later returned to her baptismal name.

Following her first profession of vows in 1953, she began her 54-year ministry in elementary education. During her teaching years she gained experience at all grade levels – primary, intermediate and junior high. As a teacher, she served at St. Michael School, St. Michael (1953-56); St. Casimir, Wells (1956-57); Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa (1957-61); John Ireland, St. Peter (1961-63); St. Mary, Shakopee (1963-64); SS. Cyril & Methodius, Minneapolis (1964-65); and St. John, Vermillion (1965-67). With the exception of the 1974-75 school year at St. Joseph, Cresco, Iowa, she then served in elementary administration from 1967 until 2007,

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Irene Komor



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at St. Mary, Madelia (1967-74); John Ireland, St. Peter (1975-82); St. Mary, Winona (1982-86); and St. Michael, Prior Lake (1986-2007), at times also a part time teacher. She earned a bachelor's in English from the College of St. Catherine in 1963 and a master's in educational administration from DePaul University in 1973.

As a teacher and principal, Sister Irene worked to get a very important message to her students: "Jesus was an ordinary person, and he loved us, and there are no strings attached. He just cares about everybody, and you want the children to understand it as best as they can." In Prior Lake, especially, where Sister Irene spent 22 years, it was evident that she succeeded in imparting her message. The invitation to her farewell celebration read, "Come honor the career of Sister Irene Komor, SSND. For 22 years she planted the seeds of love, virtue, faith and knowledge in the children of St. Michael's School. As parents, students, colleagues, friends and family we pay tribute and give our thanks to her for her service."

At the time of her retirement, Sister Irene commented that her vows and spirit of service are something from which she would never retire. "I can't imagine sitting around the house and not wanting to do something. I'm never going to retire from being a sister." Sister Irene moved to St. Paul in 2007 for a sabbatical year and continued to live there until she came to Good Counsel in 2010.

Sister Irene also involved herself in province committees and ministries including Theresa Living Center, a shelter for women in transition, located in St. Paul, where she spent several nights a month as a volunteer house mother. For a number of years, she also joined some of her classmates as the "Apple Pie Sisters" of the Craft Fair. She was also known for her interest in the fine arts and had an eye for beauty and a sensitivity to creative ways.

Sister Irene concluded a vocation talk in this way: "I have never regretted my decision to be a sister. I loved teaching. I've lived with so many great and beautiful women who've shown and guided me by their example to follow Jesus. There have been hard times when my road was bumpy and there have been ever so many wonderful times that brought me joy and great happiness. I have a loving family and many sisters who are my friends. And most of all, I am grateful to God who is always faithful and never stops loving me or you."

The funeral Mass for Sister Irene, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Friday, July 15, in Good Counsel Chapel. She is survived by her brother-in-law, Carlo Abrahamsen; nephews, Mitchell and Jack and their families; her cousins, friends, former students and colleagues; and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Casper and Louise (Kern) Komor, and her sister, Mary Lou Abrahamsen.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND