



In Loving Memory

Sister Loretta Marie (Mary Walterine) Strobel

Sister Loretta Marie (Mary Walterine) Strobel, 80, died peacefully on December 7, 2022, at Benedictine Living Community – St. Gertrude’s in Shakopee, Minnesota. Members of the nursing staff were praying the rosary with her when she died.

Birth
July 11, 1942

Baptism
July 26, 1942

Profession
July 17, 1962

Death
December 7, 2022

Burial
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Cemetery

Sister Loretta was born in Glencoe, Minnesota, on July 11, 1942, to Frances and Walter Strobel. She was baptized Loretta Mary two weeks later, at St. Mary Church, Arlington, Minnesota. In her very creative autobiography Sister Loretta described her birth: “Four little angels tolled the bells of heaven on July 11, 1942, when I caught the first glimpse of daylight. The four little angels were my four little brothers, who had preceded me to both my earthly and heavenly abode.” She continued, “Picking apples, climbing trees, and wading in the brook are ways in which I passed my childhood days on a farm near Henderson.” Loretta attended a rural school near Henderson, Minnesota, for her elementary education. At the time of her First Holy Communion, she thought about being a sister, but “my dream of becoming a bride of Christ was packed away with my First Holy Communion veil.”

Loretta attended Arlington-Green Isle School, Arlington, Minnesota, for seventh through eleventh grade. In the summer after her junior year, the idea of being a sister resurfaced and she applied for admission to the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, Minnesota. Her year in the aspiranture confirmed her desire. The summer before entering the candidature, she was given the surprise gift of a European tour by her father, the result of his saving for years. Loretta prayed especially at Grotto of Massabielle (Grotto of the Apparitions), Lourdes, France, for her Lutheran father, (who later became a Catholic). Loretta entered the SSND candidature in 1960, and was received into the novitiate in July 1961, and given the name Sister Mary Walterine. She professed her first vows on July 17, 1962.

In 1964, Sister Loretta earned her bachelor of arts in history, at the Mankato Campus of Mount Mary College (now University), and began her educational ministry. She taught primary grade students from 1964 through 1996, in various Minnesota Catholic schools: St. Anne, Wabasso; St. Mathias, Wanda; St. Mary, Madelia; St. Andrew, St. Francis de Sales, Project Discovery and Sacred Heart in St. Paul; Sacred Heart, Waseca; St. Michael, St. Michael; and then in Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa; and St. Mary, New England, North Dakota. In 1970, she volunteered to participate in a School Sisters of Notre Dame interprovincial exchange program. She spent that school year teaching at St. Helena of the Cross School on the south side of Chicago, then a part of the SSND DeKalb (Illinois) Province. This experience made a strong impression on Sister Loretta: “Chicago was a challenging and growing experience which broadened my outlook and changed my life. Working in a black school and living in a black parish enriched my understanding of cultural differences. This experience also helped me realize how much we are all alike.” Even though she spent just one school year at St. Helena, Chicago, she returned there over 30 times, continuing her ministry in summer programs. She forged friendships that remained for the rest of her life. In addition, she earned a master’s degree

continued

*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 Loretta Marie
(Mary Walterine)
Strobel*



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in education from Mankato State University, Mankato, in 1975.

Following a brief sabbatical in 1996, Sister Loretta tutored for a short time at the Good Counsel Learning Center, Mankato, and then began a program that led to a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) certificate. She served as a chaplain at Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, and Maplewood Care Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, as part of the training. Beginning in 1999, and continuing until 2011, she served as corporate chaplain for the Volunteers of America in three different Minnesota metro locations: Maplewood Care Center, Maplewood; Edina Care Center, Edina; and Crystal Care Center, Crystal. She provided a variety of services at the three locations and again formed lasting relationships with colleagues and residents. During this time, she also fulfilled other chaplain responsibilities. One that was memorable for her was serving as chaplain for the Faith United Methodist Church Choir of Minneapolis on its concert tour of England and Scotland in 2003. Sister Loretta retired from the Volunteers of America program in 2011 and reflected on her experience: "Being touched by the hearts and souls of the elderly helped me to grow in compassion and love." Sister Loretta was also trained in spiritual direction.

Sister Loretta returned to her educational roots in 2012, as she became a tutor for the East Side Learning Center in St. Paul and after she moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, in 2015, at the Good Counsel Learning Center. Celebrations were important in her life, especially jubilee, retirement and farewell events. She kept numerous photos, showing those who celebrated with her. An only child, she found family in her SSND community and with her colleagues.

As a resident of Notre Dame Health Care, she often offered to pray with sisters and staff, an outgrowth of her belief that "God's ways make it possible to grow and reach out to others in compassion and love."

The theme of her funeral liturgy, "Be compassionate as your Heavenly Father is compassionate," guided Sister Loretta's life. May she now experience God's eternal love and compassion.

The funeral Mass for Sister Loretta Marie was held Monday, December 12, in the Windermere chapel, Shakopee, with Father Joe Fogal, as presider. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato, followed. She is survived by cousins and colleagues and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Walter and Frances (Schnickels) Strobel and four stillborn brothers.

By Mary Kay Ash, SSND