

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Bernelle Taube



Birth

June 2, 1931

Baptism

June 21, 1921

Profession

July 19, 1953

Death

April 29, 2022

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 M. Bernelle Taube died unexpectedly at 5:20 a.m. on Friday, April 29, 2022, in Mayo Clinic Health Care System Hospital, Mankato, Minnesota. Two sisters were able to be with her through the night in the hospital.

Sister Bernelle was born in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, on June 2, 1931. She was the second child in the family of Henry and Gertrude Taube, but because an older brother had died at birth, she was considered the oldest child. On June 21, she was baptized Cecilia Gertrude at St. Mary's Church, New Trier. Two sisters and a brother would later complete the family. As the children grew older, they helped with the operation of the family farm and caring for the animals. A large garden provided food for the family and work for the children. Table and nightly prayers were also a part of the family life.

In 1937, Cecilia started first grade at a country school near their farm. She also attended this school as a fourth grader. The remaining elementary school years were spent at St. Mary's School, New Trier, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. As a seventh grader, she admired her teacher, Sister Felicitas Blaeser, and hoped to be like her. However, as an eighth grader this desire faded to the point where, as she later recalled, when given a vocation prayer card by her teacher, "I thought if I prayed the prayer, I would surely have a vocation, so I took it home and threw it in the stove." Another turn in her vocation story happened while Cecilia was a freshman at Hastings High School. A teacher gave an assignment for the next day, as students were to tell the class what occupation they planned for their lives. Sister Bernelle later wrote, "That was a turning point in my life. After a restless night, I felt the struggle, 'Should I be a sister?' When my turn came, I thought the class might laugh at my choice, so I said, 'I don't know.' The teacher said quite sternly, 'Well, you better find out pretty soon.' That stirred my soul." Cecilia visited the sisters in New Trier for advice, and they helped her enroll the next school year as an aspirant at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato. She completed her final three years at Good Counsel, graduating in 1950.

Cecilia's father developed leukemia in the spring of her senior year, causing her to think seriously about not returning as a candidate. However, his health improved and she entered the candidature in the fall of 1950. When her father died in March 1951, she considered leaving the candidature, but chose to stay. As a second year candidate, she taught grades one and two at St. Peter School, Hokah. At her reception into the novitiate in 1952, she was given the name Mary Bernelle, a companion name to her brother, John Henry, who became Brother Bernard in the Sacred Heart Congregation.

Sister Bernelle professed first vows on July 19, 1953, and began a life-long teaching ministry focusing on primary grade children. She returned to St. Peter, Hokah, staying there until 1959. Throughout her teaching years, Sister Bernelle prioritized sacramental preparation of young children. Other Minnesota schools and parishes that benefitted from her expertise included St. Michael, Prior Lake (1959-65); St. John the Baptist, Mankato (1965-66); St. Dominic, Northfield (1966-72 and 2005-17); Crucifixion, La Crescent (1972-77); St. John the Baptist, Vermillion (1979-93); Our Lady of the Prairie, Belle Plaine

continued

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(1993-97); and St. Joseph, Red Wing (1997-2005). In 1964, she completed her bachelor's degree from Mount Mary College (now University), Milwaukee.

At each school and parish where she served, Sister Bernelle invested herself fully in school and parish life, developing a strong network of friends, colleagues and devoted former students. When she left La Crescent, Minnesota, in 1977, she received a farewell scroll that alluded to one of her 'on-the-side' ministries of religious education for the very young. The scroll read in part, "All preschoolers learned to know and love her well and sparkle when they talk of Sunday School and Sister Bernelle." The scroll also summed up Sister Bernelle's service, not only in La Crescecent, but in all of her parishes and schools, "By her generous ways she's showed us all how to give, and by her total person has showed us how to live."

Sister Bernelle began her years in Vermillion teaching first graders. In 1984, she became principal as well as a first-grade teacher. Reading mastery for each student was important to her and she stressed this with the faculty. As principal of a small school, she took the lead in many school and non-school activities. She was able to obtain donations of school supplies from individuals, organizations and businesses. She took 'collecting' to the highest degree, using labels, boxtops and UPCs to acquire school materials. She kept the school updated by researching current educational trends. Outside of school, she was very active in SOAR (Stop Our Airport Relocation), a group formed when the Metropolitan Airport Commission was considering building a new airport in the Vermillion area.

Sister Bernelle continued her investment in school and parish life at Red Wing. In 2013, a former student was featured in a "Salute to Seniors" section in *The Catholic Spirit*. In answer to a question about who was a spiritual role model, the senior responded, "My second-grade teacher, Sister Bernelle Taube, prepared me for my First Communion and has always kept in touch with me even when she moved away. She sends me notes of encouragement and reminds me that she is praying for me." Sister Bernelle concluded her school and parish ministry in Northfield, where she was a substitute teacher and parish visitor. She commented about her days in Northfield, "I went to school at 8:00 and came home at 3:00. I did every job that needed to be done."

In 2017, Sister Bernelle retired and moved to Good Counsel. She continued her ministry of outreach through letters, visits and calls. Knowing that sisters prayed for special intentions, many contacts reached out to her with requests for prayer. She shared her interest in family history with her nieces and nephews and enjoyed visits from her family.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Bernelle was held May 4, in the Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, with Father Joe Fogal as presider. She is survived by a brother, Brother Bernard Taube, SCJ, 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, Henry and Gertrude (Tutewohl) Taube, two sisters, Mary Beissel and Agnes Knipe, and an infant brother who died at birth.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND