



Birth  
December 8, 1928

Baptism  
December 8, 1928

Profession  
July 29, 1948

Death  
December 16, 2017

Donated her body to  
St. Louis University  
School of Medicine

*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 M. Carmelita Erdman

Sister M. Carmelita Erdman, 89, passed away on December 16, 2017. She was a teacher, principal, director and pastoral minister.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1928, the third child of Katherine (Schneider) and Alois Erdman was born in Hereford, Texas. She was baptized the same day at St. Mary, Umbarger, Texas, and named Dorothy Marie. She had an older sister, Margaret Ann, and a brother, John, who died before Dorothy was born. The following year, her brother Joseph was born, and her father sold their farm and moved to Fort Sumner, New Mexico. Her siblings, Annamay and Charles, were born there.

In 1934, her father was stricken with pneumonia and died after three days. Her mother, left with five children ranging in ages from 11 months to seven years, was persuaded by her parents to return to Aurora, Nebraska, where most of her family lived. After the long train ride, the family spent six weeks at their grandparents' home. Not wishing to impose on them, Mrs. Erdman placed the children in St. Thomas Orphanage in Lincoln, Nebraska, under the care of the Franciscan Sisters. After two years, she had earned enough money to rent a home from an elderly woman in Aurora, and the family was together again. They grew their own vegetables and raised chickens, but were on welfare and received food from the local commodity store.

During her years in the orphanage, Dorothy received the sacraments and began her education. Her mother schooled the children in prayer and was a living example of faith and trust in God. Because her mother had to work, most of the care of the younger children and household chores fell to Dorothy and her older sister. During the summer, School Sisters of Notre Dame from Lawrence, Nebraska, came to conduct summer school. When Dorothy was in the fourth grade, her aunt, Sister John Baptist Schneider, was one of the teachers. She told her mother that she wanted to be a sister like her aunt.

In her sophomore year, Sister John Baptist and her sister, Sister Beata Schneider, came for a home visit. Sister Beata asked Dorothy if she wanted to go back to St. Louis with her to complete high school in the aspiranture. Dorothy readily agreed and went with her aunt. Having finished her high school courses, Dorothy entered the candidature on January 27, 1946. She was received into the novitiate on July 29, 1947 and given the name M. Carmelita. She professed first vows on July 29, 1948, and final vows on July 29, 1954.

In 1958, she received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the former Notre Dame College in St. Louis. She was granted a master's degree in elementary education from St. Mary College in Leavenworth,

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister M. Carmelita  
Erdman*



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of Notre Dame**  
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through education

Kansas, in 1963.

Sister Carmelita taught elementary children for 19 years at St. Clare, St. Clair, Missouri; St. Martin, Jefferson City, Missouri; St. Joseph, Freeburg, Illinois; Sacred Heart, Lawrence, Nebraska; Sacred Heart, Eureka, Missouri; and St. Joseph, Farmington, Missouri. She was principal at Sacred Heart, Lawrence, Nebraska for six years. She taught religious education 13 years at St. Mary and Cardinal Stritch, Keokuk, Iowa; Sacred Heart, Dexter, Missouri; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Herrin, Illinois; St. Michael, Staunton, Illinois; Immaculate Conception, Cuba, New Mexico; and St. Francis, Lumberton, New Mexico. She aided in community service at the SSND retirement center, Villa Gesu, St. Louis, for more than four years. She also served in pastoral ministry for 10 years at St. John, Leopold, Missouri; St. Michael, Staunton, Illinois; St. Francis, Lumberton, New Mexico. In New Mexico, she ministered with the Native Americans.

During the 14 years of community service at the former St. Louis motherhouse, she also ministered as a teacher in RCIA programs in neighboring parishes. After several knee and hip surgeries, she retired to Veronica House in 2012. She was transferred to Anna House in June 2017 following a fall and the break of her femur. She was placed on hospice in mid-December 2017. She died peacefully around 11:50 p.m. on December 16, 2017. Sister Carmelita donated her body to St. Louis University School of Medicine.

A prayer service was held at the Sarah Community on December 28, 2017. The memorial Mass was celebrated on December 29, 2017 with Rev. Paul Rothschild presiding. Family members were unable to attend; however, sisters and friends were present for the services. She is survived by a brother, Charles (Toni) Erdman of Rio Rancho, New Mexico. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers: John and Joseph and her sisters, Margaret McConville and Annamay Weaver.

Sister Carmelita was the first woman religious to serve as pastoral coordinator to the Hispanic and Jicarilla Apache community in New Mexico. In her various ministries, she was an excellent educator, worked to empower the laity, visited the sick and elderly, and encouraged parents to participate in the religious education of their children. She was an avid gardener and cultivated plants and flowerbeds. She inspired hope and trust in those she met and lived life to the fullest. During her last months of suffering, she never complained of the pain she was experiencing. Now, free from suffering, may she rejoice as she celebrates Christmas with family members and her God!

*This remembrance was prepared by Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND.*