



In Loving Memory

Sister M. Lucia Aschenbrener

Sister M. Lucia Aschenbrener, SSND, 90, died on Friday, December 28, 2018, at Notre Dame Health Care, Mankato, Minnesota. The middle child of seven, Sister Lucia was born November 23, 1928, in Spokane, Washington. Her parents were Wisconsin natives who fell in love with the West. The first three Aschenbrener children were born in Wisconsin before the family moved west and settled in Spokane. Sister Lucia was baptized Lenore Jean at the Church of the Holy Ghost and St. Anthony in Spokane on January 13, 1929. Her family moved several times while she was young, settling eventually in Elmore, Idaho.

Lenore started first grade in Elmore in a one-room school. She wrote about an early call to religious life: "I received my formal religious education through correspondence courses from the 'Jesus and I' catechism every week. During one summer we took the train to Sandpoint, Idaho, for a two-week religious vacation school, staying with families. This was my first experience with sisters, the Immaculate Heart of Mary order from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Through their example, I received my desire to become a sister."

When Lenore was a junior in high school, the family moved to Spokane, Washington, where she enrolled in Marycliff High School, staffed by the La Crosse Franciscans. "It was my first experience in a Catholic School, which I loved. We lived near St. Joseph Parish where the School Sisters of Notre Dame taught in the grade school. I started taking piano lessons from Sister Corrine Lawrie. During one of my lessons she said, 'Your mother told me you were thinking of becoming a sister.' I said that I hadn't given it a thought in years. She gave me some literature about SSND, which I took home and hid under my pillow and later read it. All the memories of becoming a sister as a child came rushing back; thinking about the possibility soon became a reality. After graduation [in 1947] I found myself on a train from Spokane to Mankato with three others who also had the desire to become a sister."

Lenore spent two years in the SSND candidature and was given the name Sister Mary Lucia at her reception into the novitiate in July 1949. She professed first vows on July 21, 1950, and began her teaching ministry in August. She taught primary or intermediate grades at Catholic schools in three states: St. Mary, Bellechester, Minnesota (1950-1954); Holy Family, Clarkston, Washington (1954-62); St. Mary, Chewelah, Washington (1962-65); SS. Peter & Paul, Springbrook, Iowa (1965-70); St. Martin, Rogers, Minnesota (1970-71); and SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato, Minnesota (1971-76). She earned a BA degree in Education from Holy Names College, Spokane, Washington, in 1960. As part of her coursework, she was able to take several art classes, which helped her develop her natural talent.

Following some time for personal renewal, Sister Lucia resumed her teaching ministry at St. Mary's Cathedral School in St. Cloud, Minnesota, where she taught primary grades from 1978 through 1990. In 1990, she shifted her classroom emphasis and described it this way: "My dream has always been to work with children who had difficulty decoding skills in reading and math. I put

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Birth
November 23, 1928

Baptism
January 13, 1929

Profession
July 21, 1950

Death
December 28, 2018

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

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my dream in the hands of God and prayed that something would open up. I was especially interested in the Title I program. When Title I came back into the parochial schools, I knew my dream was becoming a reality.” She was hired by the St. Cloud Public School District as a paraprofessional in Holy Spirit School and later at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School. She wrote, “I love working with small groups of children and watching the progress they make in reading and math.” From 1991 through 2010, she worked part-time as a tutor and in several other capacities in St. Cloud, including visiting the elderly, doing clerical work, and being part of the foster grandparent program. For over five years during her time in St. Cloud, she took care of an elderly woman, making supper for her and staying overnight.

Among her artistic abilities, Sister Lucia had a special gift of being able to turn photographs into very realistic pencil sketches. Many family members and friends received sketches, and Sister Lucia also took requests from customers at craft fairs and other art shows. In 2003, she created a large image of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton with two children, which now hangs in the school hallway in St. Cloud. She created several paintings in watercolors or oil, which were sold at art shows. Sister Lucia also designed the logo for the Diocese of St. Cloud in 1998.

Sister Lucia fully retired in 2010 and moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. She continued her ministry of pencil sketches and other artistic work. A Sister Lucia-drawn sketch was an item in several silent and live auctions for fund-raising events at Our Lady of Good Counsel. Many of her sketches and water color paintings were also turned into greeting cards, which she sold at the annual craft fair. As she worked, she enjoyed listening to audiobooks.

As a Diamond Jubilarian in 2010, she wrote, “I have feelings of joy, peace and gratitude for the call I heard to do God’s work as an SSND and that I didn’t hesitate to say ‘YES!’ It has been an amazing journey.”

The funeral liturgy, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Friday, January 4, at Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, with a prayer service preceding the Liturgy. Burial followed in the Good Counsel cemetery. She is survived by nieces and nephews and their families, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents Casper and Leona (Werner) Aschenbrener; sisters Ann Hill, Elaine Salvesen, Maree Smith, and Sylvia Elkin; and her brothers LeRoy and Casper.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND