



In Loving Memory

Sister M. Luella Zollar

Sister Luella Zollar, 96, died Monday, January 10, 2022, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. Over the previous few weeks she had experienced a gradual decline in health. Sisters from Notre Dame Hall were praying with her in the days preceding her death.

Sister Luella, the oldest of eight children, was born June 21, 1925, in Wilton, North Dakota, and baptized Louise Eleanore the next day at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Wilton. Her father, Louis, was from northern Minnesota and was a Soo Line depot agent. Her mother came with her family from Ukraine and settled in Wilton. The Zollar family moved to several North Dakota towns, where Louis pursued depot agent positions. When Louise was in seventh grade, the position opened in Grenville, South Dakota. Louis bid for the job because Grenville's St. Joseph parish had a Catholic grade and high school taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). The Zollar parents wanted their children to have a Catholic education. Sister Luella described her family faith life as, "My parents influenced me by their good example. When we children were small, my mother would have us kneel by her and she would have us repeat short prayers after her. We prayed the rosary every evening after supper." Music was an important aspect of family life as well. The older children took music lessons and their parents would accompany them on violin and accordion.

Louise completed grade school and high school at St. Joseph School. When the sisters left for Mankato, Minnesota, for a few weeks during the summer, she played the organ for the parish. St. Joseph was a Polish parish, and Sister Luella later commented, "Of course all the hymns were in Polish. We learned to read it, but didn't understand most of the words." While in high school, Louise prayed for direction in choosing a vocation. As a senior, she thought about religious life, having been influenced by the example of her teachers. After graduation, she talked to her parents about it. Her mother thought she should wait a year, but her father suggested that she try it, and if she didn't like it, she could come home. Plans were made and in August 1943, she left by train for Mankato. She wrote, "I had never visited Good Counsel or seen a candidate before I came."

Louise's first year in the candidature was spent taking college classes to prepare for teaching. As a second-year candidate, she taught at St. John Cantius School in Wilno, Minnesota. She was received into the novitiate in 1945 and given the name Sister M. Luella. After she professed first vows in 1946, she returned to Wilno for another year. In 1947, she and three other sisters traveled by truck from Wilno to Eden, South Dakota, to reopen Sacred Heart School, which had been closed for 15 years. The sisters rode in the back of the truck with the furniture and had a tarp over their heads. Sister Luella remembered, "Sitting, we enjoyed our hours-long ride. When we were near our destination, we began brushing each other off as we were so covered with dust we could print our initials on our veils." Sister Luella remained in Eden until 1951, when she moved to St. Adalbert Parish and School in Silver Lake, Minnesota, where her Grenville Polish experience repeated itself. She wrote, "I played organ for Polish High Masses every day and sang with the children, even though I could hardly understand a word I was singing." After six years in Silver Lake, Sister Luella

continued

Birth
June 21, 1925

Baptism
June 22, 1925

Profession
July 21, 1946

Death
January 10, 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

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returned to Grenville for two years, and then completed her Catholic School ministry with one year at St. Wenceslaus, Dickinson, North Dakota. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Mount Mary College (now University), Milwaukee, in 1959, and later earned master's certificates in Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Apostolate (CCD) from St. Scholastica College, Duluth, Minnesota, and Marquette University, Milwaukee.

In the 1960s, a continuing trend in religious education was to establish area catechetical schools, staffed by full-time teachers who either traveled to where students were located or taught students in the school building. In 1960, Sister Luella and Sister Esther Boor began working first at Christ the King Catechetical School in Medford, Minnesota, where they stayed until 1966, and then at St. Theresa Catechetical School in Mapleton. In 1969, Immaculate Conception Catholic School in Forsyth, Montana, closed and became a catechetical center. Sisters Luella and Esther responded to the invitation to staff the center, sight unseen. In addition to conducting classes at Forsyth, they traveled to five other Montana communities, Rosebud, Sumatra, Hysham, Custer and Colstrip, and met with students after the regular school day.

In 1973, the two sisters moved to Baker, Montana, where they continued their religious education ministry. The religious education center served the communities of Wibaux, Ekalaka and Plevnar, in addition to Baker. Lay teachers assisted the sisters with the instruction. The sisters also were active in parish ministry during this time. Sister Luella summed up her experiences, "I taught for 51 years and also had First Communion classes in most places. As a teacher, I challenged hundreds of students to become responsible citizens and leaders in society. Through my parish ministry, I touched the lives of countless people by visiting the sick and elderly, distributing Holy Communion, playing the organ, giving piano lessons, and preparing children for First Confession and First Holy Communion." Sister Esther retired in 1992; Sister Roseanne Eggert and later Sister Carol Illa joined Sister Luella in her final years in Baker.

Sister Luella left Baker in 1996 and moved to Eden Valley, Minnesota, where she helped care for her mother until 2002. At that time, Sister Luella returned to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota, where she gave community service in a variety of ways including the operation of the Hill Gift Shop. She and her sister, Sister Roselle, enlivened community celebrations with their accordion renditions. Family members made frequent trips to visit their sisters at Our Lady of Good Counsel, something very much appreciated.

Funeral services including a Prayer of Remembrance, and Funeral Liturgy with Father Joe Fogal as presider, were held January 25, in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel. Burial followed in the Good Counsel Cemetery. She is survived by her sisters, Helen Schmitt and Joyce Bischof; her brother, Jerry; 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, Louis and Annie (Eshanko) Zollar, her sisters, Sister Roselle, SSND, and Florence Johnson; and her brothers, Lawrence and Dan.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND