



In Loving Memory

Sister Maris Stella Waselak

Sister Maris Stella Waselak, 97, died peacefully at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 30, 2022, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota.

On October 8, 1924, the Joseph and Mary Waselak family of Minneapolis welcomed their second daughter, Dorothy, who was baptized two weeks later at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church in Northeast Minneapolis. Two years later, another daughter was born into the family. When Dorothy was five, her father died, and her mother became the sole supporter of the family.

Dorothy attended public school throughout her elementary and high school years. There was no Catholic school in the parish until Dorothy was in seventh grade. Attending religious education classes on Saturdays that were taught by Franciscan sisters from a neighboring parish. SS. Cyril and Methodius School opened in 1937 with School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) as teachers. One day, the school principal, Sister Mary Wenceslaus Suda, asked to see Dorothy. Sister Maris Stella shared, "I felt sure she was going to ask why I was not attending Saint Cyril's but, to my relief, she merely wanted me to join a junior choir the sisters were organizing. That choir was the starting point of my vocation. Of course, I was not drawn to the sisters all at once, but gradually I became more and more interested in them. Every now and then I visited the convent with a friend who was their shopper. When she graduated from high school, I took her place, which meant closer contact with the sisters."

During her high school years, Dorothy started to think about becoming a sister. Attending choir practices, singing for two Masses on Sundays and many during the week and attending various parish devotions gave her a glimpse of the life of a sister. No one had mentioned anything to her about becoming a sister, but one day Sister Wenceslaus asked Dorothy if she had ever considered becoming a sister. It was at that point that she decided to become a SSND. She graduated from high school in 1943, but was needed at home to help support the family. She worked in an office for one year and then entered the SSND candidature in August, 1944.

A severe bout of homesickness almost caused her to leave the candidature early on, but she recovered and decided to stay. As a second-year candidate, she taught fourth grade at St. Matthew School, St. Paul. On July 14, 1946, Dorothy was received into the novitiate and given the name Sister Mary Maris Stella, Latin for one of the titles of Mary, Star of the Sea. She professed first vows in 1947, and began a teaching ministry that would encompass students from the primary grades through high school. She taught elementary grades at St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul; John Ireland, St. Peter; SS. Peter & Paul, Loretto; St. Matthew, St. Paul; St. Stanislaus, Winona; and St. Anthony, Lismore. From 1963 through 1965, she taught at Trinity High School in Dickinson, North Dakota. Following a year at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, Minnesota, where she taught business courses and helped with secretarial work, she returned to North Dakota, teaching at St. Mary, New England, until 1972. She earned a bachelor's degree in secretarial science from Mount Mary College (now University), Milwaukee, in 1958. In a 2017 Jubilee reflection, Sister Maris Stella wrote, "I

Birth
October 8, 1924

Baptism
October 26, 1924

Profession
July 15, 1947

Death
April 30, 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

continued

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*Sister Maris Stella
Waselak*



enjoyed all the students that I taught, but I especially liked teaching commercial subjects such as shorthand and typing. One of my favorite places to minister was in the wide-open country of North Dakota, where I taught at Trinity High School in Dickinson and St. Mary's School in New England. Here, we had boarders and I really enjoyed them. We had some wonderful times with them."

Sister Maris Stella returned to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota, in 1972 and worked for one year as a member of the province secretarial staff. She spent the next three years on the academy clerical staff, doing secretarial and accounting work. Beginning in 1976, she filled a variety of roles at Our Lady of Good Counsel, the main one being receptionist and switchboard operator. In 1987, she transitioned to general community service, which included helping with mail distribution. During these years, she worked with Sisters Mary Joyce Pietsch and Mary Matthew Michel and shared with them a tremendous interest in and loyalty to the Minnesota Twins.

Sister Maris Stella retired fully in 2007, and appreciated having time for some of her favorite activities, including crossword puzzles, word finds, other types of word puzzles and scrabble. She was known to make copies of word puzzles from the daily newspapers for distribution to other puzzle enthusiasts. As a resident of Notre Dame Hall in her later years, she was often seen wrapped in her Twins blanket enjoying a televised Twins game.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Maris Stella was held, Friday, May 6, 2022, in the Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, Mankato, with Father John Kunz as president. A prayer of remembrance preceded the funeral. Burial followed in the Good Counsel cemetery. She is survived by nieces and a nephew, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Mary (Rymarchick) Waselak, two sisters, Mary Peterson and Florence Affeldt, and her brothers, John and Joseph, and a brother who died in infancy.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND

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