

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Arthur Kunze



Birth
March 2, 1929

Baptism
March 10, 1929

Profession
July 21, 1950

Death
September 18, 2020

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 Mary Arthur Kunze, 91, died September 18, 2020, in Notre Dame Health Care at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. She celebrated her 70th Jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) this past summer.

Sister Mary Arthur and her twin brother were born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on March 2, 1929. A week later they were baptized at the Church of St. Bernard and named Doris Maxine and Germain Edward, after their sponsors. In her autobiography, Sister Mary Arthur described her childhood as “Together with our two sisters Constance and Phyllis, and a brother, Arthur, we shared each big and small event. I was very lively and often had everyone excited as to what I was going to do next in the way of mischief.” The family attended Sunday vesper services in honor of the Blessed Mother and Sister Mary Arthur attributed her call to religious life partially to this practice. The Kunze family moved several times and as a result, Doris attended four Catholic Schools in St. Paul: St. Columba (K-1); St. Bernard (2-5); St. Agnes (6-8); and St. Matthew (9-10). It was at St. Agnes that Doris first met SSND During her sophomore year, Doris and Jerry were separated for the first time, as he attended public school that year.

Since the high school at St. Matthew had only ninth and tenth grades, Doris attended Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, for her junior year “to pursue my childhood’s cherished desire, to become a Bride of Christ.” Doris graduated from the Academy in 1947, and entered the SSND candidature that August. As a second-year candidate, she taught first graders at St. Michael School, St. Michael, Minnesota. She was received into the novitiate in July 1949, and later wrote, “I still recall the tears in my father’s eyes when he heard that it was his name I had wanted and received – Sister Mary Arthur.”

Following profession of vows in 1950, Sister Mary Arthur taught first grade and assisted with music at St. John the Baptist, Jordan. The next year, she was sent to All Saints, Madison Lake, where she taught grades one and two for only eight weeks, and then was asked to replace a lay teacher at Sacred Heart School, St. Paul. After finishing the year at Sacred Heart, Sister Mary Arthur continued her ministry in Catholic schools until 1979, teaching all grades from first through twelfth. In Minnesota, she taught at St. Michael, St. Michael; St. Nicholas, New Market; John Ireland, St. Peter; Holy Rosary, North Mankato; Crucifixion, La Crescent; St. Agnes, St. Paul; St. Matthias, Wanda; Good Counsel Academy, Mankato; and New Ulm Catholic School, New Ulm. She also taught at Trinity High School, Dickinson, North Dakota, and St. Gerard Majella in San Antonio, Texas. She earned a B.A. in English from the College of St. Catherine University, St. Paul, and also earned credits in elementary administration from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, and media and communications from St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota. While studying at St. Cloud State University in 1976, she authored a series of six extensive articles on the New Rite of Penance for the St. Cloud diocesan paper.

continued

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In 1980, Sister Mary Arthur changed the focus of her ministry to parish pastoral service, first at St. Ambrose Cathedral in Des Moines, Iowa, and then at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Granger, northwest of Des Moines, Iowa. At the Cathedral parish, she immersed herself in work and carried out a variety of responsibilities including overseeing parish education; designing, writing and printing the parish bulletin; coordinating RCIA; and being the Parish Council liaison for Education, Family Life and Parish Relations committees. At that time, Des Moines was home to the largest Southeast Asian Catholic community in the country, and Sister Mary Arthur worked actively with this group. During her stay in Des Moines, she took a Clinical Pastoral Experience (CPE) course and found it very valuable to her ministry. In Granger, a parish that encompassed five towns, Sister Mary Arthur also filled many roles in her parish ministry.

From 1983 through 1987, Sister Mary Arthur provided Community Service at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, with one year of service to St. Mary's Parish in Bechyn, Minnesota, sandwiched in between. It was in 1987 that Sister Mary Arthur began a ministry that engaged her creative talents – that of floral design and arrangement. She worked in several floral shops in the Twin Cities area. Listed as one of her favorite memories was in the designing of floral bouquets for the hotel rooms of Luciano Pavarotti and Mitzi Gaynor.

Beginning in 1996, clerical work became Sister Mary Arthur's main ministry and she worked in a variety of settings until 2005, when she moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel. For many years at Our Lady of Good Counsel, she shared her floral design talents as she created corsages for sisters celebrating Jubilee or their 90th birthday. She remained in close contact with family members and especially enjoyed visits with them.

During her years of service, Sister Mary Arthur was involved in several committees and activities. One that she was especially proud of was her membership on the SSND Committee for International/Interprovincial Exchange (CIE) in the 1970s, which promoted SSND service across province lines. She wrote, "It was a very great privilege to serve on the CIE. Because of it, I have been enriched by the committee members, as well as the many SSND I've met and the unique spirit of each province that I have experienced."

The Memorial Mass for Sister Mary Arthur was held Tuesday, October 6. Because Sister Mary Arthur donated her body to Mayo Clinic, her burial will follow at a later date. A Prayer of Remembrance was held Monday afternoon, October 5. She is survived by 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, Arthur and Helen (Wolkerstorfer) Kunze; her twin brother, Germain (Jerry); another brother, Arthur; and her sisters, Phyllis Kustelski and Constance Doyan.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND