



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Mary Carine Dirkers

Sister Mary Carine Dirkers, 94, passed away in the morning of November 19, 2019, at Anna House, The Sarah Community, Bridgeton, Missouri. The ninth child of Catherine (Forst) and Frank Dirkers was born on July 25, 1925 in St. Louis, Missouri. She was baptized on August 2, 1925 at St. Francis de Sales Church and named Rose Marie Dorothea. However, her birth certificate has her name as Rosemary Dorothy. She jokingly states in her autobiography, “No wonder there was confusion in her life from the start.” She had five brothers and three sisters, one of whom was our deceased School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND) Sister M. Fanchette.

**Birth**  
July 25, 1925

**Baptism**  
August 2, 1925

**Profession**  
July 31, 1946

**Death**  
November 19, 2019

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria in Ripa  
Cemetery, St. Louis, MO

Rose Marie began kindergarten at St. Francis de Sales School and continued her education there until the completion of her sophomore year in the two-year parish high school. She enrolled at Notre Dame High School for the remaining two years. Her entire education was under the direction of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Already in the third grade, Rose Marie desired to become a sister and would often ask the principal if she was big enough to become a candidate.

Rose Marie entered the candidature at Sancta Maria in Ripa on August 25, 1943. As a second year candidate, she was sent to teach fifth grade at St. Andrew School in Lemay, Missouri. She was received into the novitiate on July 30, 1945, and given the name Mary Carine. During her novitiate year, her father died very suddenly. She pronounced first vows on July 31, 1946, and final vows on July 31, 1952.

She received a bachelor’s degree in English from Incarnate Word College, San Antonio, Texas, in 1956, and a master’s degree in English from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana in 1964.

Sister Carine spent 53 years in Catholic education. She taught elementary children at Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Louis, Missouri; St. Gerard Majella, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; St. Peter Cathedral, Belleville, Illinois; St. Gerard Majella, San Antonio, Texas; Sacred Heart, DuQuoin, Illinois; St. Mary, Alton, Illinois; St. Peter, Jefferson City, Missouri.

She was principal at Sacred Heart, DuQuoin; St. Mary, Alton; St. William, St. Louis; St. Francis Borgia, Washington, Missouri; and St. Gabriel, St. Louis, Missouri. Her last 14 years in the classroom were spent at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis, Missouri.

From 1968 to 1971, she was assistant directress of Junior Sisters. Sister Carine was a staff member in the finance office at the former St. Louis motherhouse for six years and did community service for 11 years prior to her transfer to The Sarah Community’s Veronica House in Bridgeton, Missouri, in 2011. She was missioned to Anna House in August 2018. She passed away peacefully at Anna House on the morning of November 19, 2019.

*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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A wake service was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on November 25, 2019. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Robert Ruhnke, CSsR, a former student from San Antonio, presiding. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. A nephew, nieces and their children and other relatives joined former students, former Junior Sisters, friends, colleagues and SSND in celebrating her life.

Sister Carine was preceded in death by her parents, her sisters: Sister M. Fanchette, SSND; Catherine Maddock, and a baby sister; her brothers: Francis, Gregory, Raymond, Harold and Norbert.

Sister Carine began her autobiography with the following quotation from a friend that she felt summarized who she is, "I began to watch the spirited, arrogant, idealistic young religious, whose life seemed to be a mass of tangents, all jangled and exposed like my electrical circuit box looked before it was connected to the Master Source, and through the years I perceived the sorting out process and I marveled at the beauty as each circuit was fitted painfully into place and proceeded to operate. When a life has been deliberately and painfully designed in this fashion, cognizant of the plugging in process to the Master Source, it becomes one of life's joys to perceive."

Sister Carine was dedicated to her students and encouraged them to succeed. She was a light-hearted person with a keen sense of humor and a strong love for those to whom she was sent to serve. She loved children, especially those who were struggling, encouraged and supported them in many ways. She described the various jobs she performed in community service as "freelancing."

A fun-loving, happy person who saw loveliness in life, Sister Carine was a mentor to many younger sisters and others. She was a woman of passion and compassion who reached out to those in need. With her listening heart, she was remembered as a light to those who were experiencing some form of darkness. She was deeply devoted to her family and loved by them. In her retirement years, her poetic nature was fostered by beautiful sunsets and all the beauties of nature.

During her lifetime, Sister Carine sought a balance between an intimate friendship with God, her propensity for making mistakes, and her innate gravitation to a lighthearted, zany sense of humor that few understood. She admired those who combined a deep love for God with a unique sense of humor and a strong dedication to SSND. She realized that it takes great humility to laugh at oneself and a simplicity of life to acknowledge one's mistakes.

Sister Carine had a very deep, intimate union with Jesus. She was eager, even excited, but calm regarding her death and finally seeing her God face to face when she could give God a big hug. As she enters eternal life, may she now rejoice with her God and all her family who have gone before her!

*By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND*