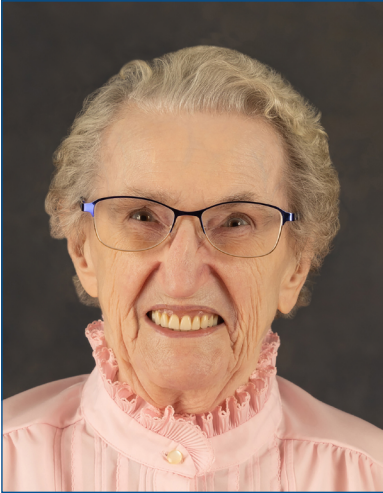


# *In Loving Memory*

## Sister Mary Owen Stevermer



**Birth**  
November 24, 1930

**Baptism**  
November 30, 1930

**Profession**  
July 15, 1951

**Death**  
April 3, 2024

**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

On Wednesday, April 3, 2024, little more than two weeks after the feast of St. Patrick, Sister Mary Owen Stevermer, 93, died peacefully at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota. Intensely proud of her Irish heritage, she had celebrated St. Patrick throughout the month of March.

Lucille and William Stevermer welcomed their second child and first daughter, born on the family farm near Easton, Minnesota, on November 24, 1930. A week later she was baptized Ruth Ann at the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Easton. Two more daughters and four sons eventually joined the family, although her brother Paul died in infancy. (Sister Mary Owen was his godmother.)

Her father was active in farm and church organizations and her Irish mother passed on a strong Irish heritage to her family. Sister Mary Owen remembered enjoyable times with her family playing cards and board games.

In 1936, Ruth entered first grade in a country school in Faribault County. It was customary for Catholic students to attend the local Catholic school during the years they received the sacraments, and because there was no available bus service, families were responsible for transportation. Sister Mary Owen commented that, when a family member needed to attend, as many children as could fit into the car would go to Catholic school. With this arrangement in place, she attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel for grades two and four and the local country school for grades one, three and five. When she was in sixth grade, bus service became available, and she attended Our Lady of Mount Carmel for grades six through eight.

Following her graduation from eighth grade in 1944, Ruth enrolled as a boarding student at Our Lady of Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, Minnesota. During her high school years, she heard the call to become a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND). Her parents gave their consent, and she entered the SSND candidature in August 1948. She prepared to become a home service sister and worked in the motherhouse bakery during the second semester. As a second-year candidate, she was missioned to Immaculate Conception Convent in Lonsdale, Minnesota, where she took care of the household for the small community of three sisters and two candidates.

Ruth was received into the novitiate on July 14, 1950. She requested the name "Owen," one of the "top Irish names." Her aunt had hoped that there would be an Owen O'Rourke in the family and now there would be a Sister Mary Owen. Her patron saint was Saint Ouen, a French saint who is the patron of cooks and housekeepers. After professing first vows in 1951, Sister Mary Owen began a long ministry of caring for the needs of others through cooking and homemaking. She served at St. Peter, Hokah, Minnesota; St. Mathias, Wanda, Minnesota; and St. Pius, Scheffeld, North Dakota, where care of the boarders was her responsibility.

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Mary Owen  
Stevermer*



To make a memorial gift,  
please visit our secure  
online donation page

[www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate](http://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate)



**School Sisters  
of Notre Dame**  
*Central Pacific Province*

Transforming the world  
through education

This was followed by serving at St. Francis de Sales and Sacred Heart, St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Mary, Marystown; St. Mark, Shakopee; St. Michael, Morgan; and Holy Rosary, North Mankato. She worked in food and laundry services at Our Lady of Good Counsel, where she also assisted with preparing specialized meals for sisters in health care. She took classes in food preparation and diet therapy and had a special interest and expertise in nutrition. Sister Mary Owen was especially concerned about the individual needs of sisters. She furthered her skills by also enrolling in basic sewing and clothing alteration classes.

Sister Mary Owen expanded her service beyond SSND convents in 1985, when she was employed as a cook at the Gus Johnson Plaza in downtown Mankato. From there, she ministered to the elderly in the Cedar Haven apartments in Mankato. Her final service to the residents of Mankato was in food service at what is now known as MRCI, an organization that provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In response to a question about special events in her life, she responded: “The time when I was part of MRCI and I worked as a counter person in the kitchen. This was very encouraging work and a rewarding ministry.”

Beginning in 1999, Sister Mary Owen turned her attention to the sisters on Our Lady of Good Counsel Hill when she provided community service in a variety of ways. For many years, she distributed the newspapers to locations within the building. She partially retired in 2007, which gave her more time to enjoy her hobby of “fishkeeping” – raising goldfish and other varieties in her aquariums. Possessing a green thumb, she nurtured many plants in her room and elsewhere. She enjoyed her birthday celebrations, recalling that since her birthday fell near or on Thanksgiving, she had pumpkin pie rather than a birthday cake and therefore requested pumpkin bars for her 90th birthday celebration. She remained in close contact with her family and looked forward to visits with them.

For Sister Mary Owen, March was the most important month. She wore green throughout the month and decorated her room in a profusion of green and Irish memorabilia. She used Irish blessing cards for special occasions throughout the year. Her favorite treat? McDonald’s Shamrock Shake.

Sister Mary Owen felt God’s presence in her life and was grateful for God’s blessings. An Irish blessing proclaims: “Wishing you a rainbow for sunlight after showers and miles and miles of Irish smiles.” May Sister Mary Owen now experience those “miles and miles of Irish smiles” forever in God’s presence.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Mary Owen was held Monday, April 8, in the Windermere chapel with Father John Kunz as presider. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the Liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato followed. She is survived by her sisters, Irene Mikkalson and Alice (Lawrence) Killion, and her brother, Emmett, 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, William and Lucille (O’Rourke) Stevermer, and her brothers, Ray, William, Thomas and Paul.

*By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND*