

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Roman Adam



Birth
February 25, 1924

Baptism
March 9, 1924

Profession
July 25, 1951

Death
September 8, 2017

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 Roman Adam, 93, died September 8, 2017 in Notre Dame Health Care, Mankato, Minnesota. Her sister, Therese Schwinghammer, her cousin, Sister Helen Marie Plourde, SSND, and other sisters and pastoral care staff were with her when she died.

The first of four children, Sister Mary Roman was born February 25, 1924, in St. Paul. She was baptized Lorraine Margaret on March 9 at St. Agnes Church. Lorraine attended St. Agnes Grade School, taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame, with Lorraine starting first grade in 1930. She traced her vocation to her First Communion Day, but did not tell anyone at the time. Lorraine graduated from eighth grade in 1938 and, because St. Agnes did not yet have a four-year high school, enrolled in St. Joseph Academy where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Following high school graduation in 1942, Lorraine was employed in the accounting office of a St. Paul department store. Her employer's letter of recommendation stated, "Her progress during this period has been exceptional. During a period of six years, she has advanced from a routine clerical position to the highest accounting position we have for women in the office." Sister Mary Roman wrote in her autobiography, "During these years I knew that I was being called to religious life. After much inner struggle, I went on a pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beaupre's Shrine in Quebec in July 1948. Upon my return at the end of July, I resigned my position and requested to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame. I was 24 years old at the time. I was accepted and entered the congregation on August 28, 1948." Her letter of application contained a precursor of the work that would occupy much of her SSND life: "I enjoy figure work very much."

As a second-year candidate, Lorraine was sent to St. Andrew School in St. Paul, where she taught 41 fourth graders. At her reception into the novitiate in 1950, she was given the name of both her father and brother, Sister Mary Roman. Following profession in 1951, she taught intermediate grades at St. Joseph, Cresco, Iowa, for three years. She then taught junior high at St. Stanislaus, St. Paul (1954-57) and Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa (1957-60). In 1960, she was missioned as principal and teacher of grades six through eight at St. Mary, New Trier. Also in 1960, she completed her bachelor's degree from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee.

Meanwhile, events in the international SSND congregation became instrumental in shaping the remaining years of Sister Mary Roman's life and ministry. In 1956, the decision was made to move the generalate from Munich to Rome. A villa about 15 miles from the Vatican was purchased, and the general leadership moved to Rome in 1957. In spring 1961, Sister Mary Roman was called to Mankato, where she met the SSND international leader, Mother M. Ambrosia Roecklein, who told Sister Mary Roman that the generalate needed office help and a driver. She asked Sister Mary Roman to come to Rome in August.

continued

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**School Sisters
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In August, Sister Mary Roman, accompanied by Sister Mary Julia Hale, traveled by train to New York and by ocean liner to Naples, Italy. At the generalate, she settled into a ministry of clerical work for the general council, typing letters and documents and assisting with accounting. She also helped with driving. She soon found out another reason why her help was needed: the decision had been made to build a new, larger generalate closer to the Vatican. Sister Mary Roman visited the site almost daily to supervise the construction. The “ground stone” was placed on November 21, 1961, but it wasn’t until January 1964 that the move was made to the new building. The building was still not finished, and there was a need to improvise in several areas.

SSND held a General Chapter in 1968 in Rome. The position of general treasurer was created then, and Sister Mary Roman wrote, “It was at this time that I became the first general treasurer, even though I had done the same work previously.” That work involved dealing with bankers, providing currency exchanges, working with province reports in both German and English, and watching over and working with investments, to name a few responsibilities, and at the same time using her foresight and creativity to make the best use of SSND resources.

After 14 years in Rome, Sister Mary Roman returned to Mankato in 1975 and became the business administrator of the motherhouse. Four years later she was elected to the provincial council as coordinator of temporalities (treasurer) and continued her administration of the buildings and their maintenance. When her second term on the provincial council ended eight years later, she was asked to be province treasurer, since that office was no longer a part of the council. She continued in this role until 1997. A 1993 recommendation described her as “energized through planning, analysis and challenge. She sees creative options easily and is willing to pursue them to conclusion.” During her years as treasurer, she also worked cooperatively with the treasurers of all the North American SSND provinces in developing interprovincial property and liability insurance, a cooperative investment plan, and other finance-related projects.

Sister Mary Roman retired in 1997 and, following a sabbatical year, continued her financial service as investment fund administrator for several provinces until 2002. She spent the 2001-03 years as a community member in the interprovincial novitiate in St. Louis and then returned to Mankato, where she gave community service in a variety of areas. She also read the Wall Street Journal daily (even during retreat; it was her “spiritual reading.”)

The Funeral Liturgy, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held September 13 in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel. A prayer service of remembrance was held prior to the Funeral Liturgy. Sister Mary Roman requested that her body be donated to science and it was accepted. A burial date will be determined later. She is survived by her sister, Therese (Robert) Schwinghammer, sister-in law, Rita Adam, 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, Roman and Marguerite (Robertson) Adam, her brother Roman and her sister Marian McMullen.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND