

In Loving Memory

Sister Mary Noel Ewald



Birth
December 24, 1923

Baptism
January 7, 1924

Profession
July 21, 1946

Death
October 21, 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

Early in the morning of Friday, October 21, 2022, our beloved Sister M. Noel Ewald, 98, died peacefully in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota.

Sister Noel described her day of birth: “On December 24, 1923, the Christ Child sent a small three-pound girl to the home of Mr. and Mrs. August Ewald of Adams, Minnesota.” Named Dolores Bernadine, she was the youngest of the eleven Ewald children, six girls and five boys. She was baptized two weeks later at Sacred Heart Church in Adams, Minnesota. Her parents, especially her mother, were instrumental in instilling a deep faith into their children.

Dolores followed her siblings to Sacred Heart School, Adams, beginning first grade in 1930. The Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, Minnesota, were her teachers. After completing eighth grade in 1938, she enrolled in the local public high school. She missed her contact with the sisters and the daily connection with God that had been part of her elementary school years.

Graduating from high school in 1942, Dolores was not sure what she wanted to do with her life. In September, she moved to Owatonna, Minnesota, to work, following the footsteps of her older sister, Loretta (Sister Mary Damian, SSND), who had also worked for a time in Owatonna. Sister Noel succinctly described her vocation in an early autobiography: “I am still following Loretta’s footsteps in becoming a School Sister of Notre Dame, for it is from her example that I received my vocation.” She entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a candidate in September 1943 and began preparations to become a home service sister. Dolores spent the 1944-45 school year assisting at St. Matthew’s Convent in St. Paul and entered the novitiate in July 1945. She received the name Sister Mary Noel, very fitting for her Christmas Eve birth date.

After profession of vows in 1946, Sister Noel spent one year at St. Leo Catechetical School in Pipestone. She commented, “At Pipestone, I cooked for only three people. I found it rather hard at first because I was used to helping in the motherhouse as a novice, cooking for 300 people.” She also helped teach once a week. Returning to Mankato in 1947, she spent the next six years assisting in the Our Lady of Good Counsel kitchen. In 1947, the School Sisters of Notre Dame published a Centenary Cookbook featuring recipes submitted by home service sisters from all over North America. As a young home service sister, Sister Noel had four recipes published in the book: “Salad Dressing,” “Cake Frosting,” “Orange Slice Squares,” and “Graham Cracker Pie Crust.” Sister Noel also served as a home service sister at SS. Peter & Paul in Matador, North Dakota, and St. Bernard in Cologne, Minnesota.

In the mid-1950s, the province faced a shortage of teachers, receiving more requests than could be filled. Some home service sisters were recruited to become teachers. Sister Noel was one of them. She taught primary or intermediate grades at St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul; St. Michael, Morgan; Blessed Sacrament, Waterloo, Iowa; SS. Peter & Paul, Loretto; St. Casimir and

continued

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St. Stanislaus, Winona; St. Felix, Wabasha; St. Michael, St. Michael; St. Anne, Bismarck, North Dakota; and Crucifixion, La Crescent. She was the school librarian at St. Mark, Shakopee, Minnesota. In summers, she worked toward earning her bachelor's degree, which she achieved in 1973 from Mount Mary College (now University). In a Jubilee reflection, she wrote: "I went out on mission as a home service sister and sometime later was sent out to be a teacher of God's little ones in primary grades. They were so eager to learn and wanted to be so helpful. It wasn't long and they won a place in my heart. I learned many lessons from them and from my sisters who taught me how to teach them."

Sister Noel returned to the Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, in 1981 and provided community service in a variety of ways. In 1988, she moved to St. Matthew's Convent in St. Paul and engaged in an eight-year ministry to the elderly as part of the Sisters Care program. Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Sisters Care served elderly people who wanted to stay in their own homes but could not afford private help. At one point, sisters from nine different congregations ministered in the program. The program was beneficial not only to those who received the services but also to those who provided the service.

In 1996, Sister Noel again came to Our Lady of Good Counsel, this time to retire and offer service as needed. As she aged, and lost her hearing, sisters and staff were accustomed to communicating with her via a small white board. She could often be found in a chair near the nurses' station in Notre Dame Hall reading the paper and visiting with those who passed by.

The Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Noel was held Friday, October 28, 2022, in the Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, with Father Gene Stenzel as presider. Burial of her cremains in the Good Counsel cemetery will follow the liturgy. She is survived by nieces and nephews and their families and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, August and Helena (Krapp) Ewald; her sisters, Sister Mary Damian, SSND (Loretta), Sister M. Cecile, OSF (Esther), Sister M. Cosmas, CSJ (Bernadine), Pauline Morgan and Eleanor Coffey; and her brothers Wilton, Victor, Marcus, George and Augustine.

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By Mary Kay Ash, SSND



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

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