



Birth
July 26, 1922

Baptism
Aug. 6, 1922

Profession
July 30, 1943

Death
Aug. 15, 2016

Burial
Chatawa Cemetery
Chatawa, Mississippi

*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

In Loving Memory

Sister Paul Marie Duck, SSND

*H*elen Ann Duck was born July 26, 1922 in South Bend, Indiana. She was the sixth of seven children born to Louis B. Duck and Genevieve (Turnock) Duck. They were a typical family of the early 20th century. And even in her 90s, Sister Paul Marie gathered and made a treasure of her family memories. She thanked God as she recalled, “I feel so blest in the happy memories of my early childhood.” These memories allowed later – seemingly disruptive experiences – to steady and enrich her.

How soon memories were met with tragedy. For Helen Ann was 6 years old when pneumonia took the life of her mother. She remembered, “After my Mother’s death my older sister, Mary, a high school junior, helped to keep my dad and all of us together.” This new family situation maintained for just two years when Louis Duck was also taken in death.

Never again would Helen Ann, her brother Richard, and her five sisters live together. Yet they and their extended families maintained an unusually close relationship. “My godmother, Aunt Helen, took me to live with her family in Tulsa, Oklahoma. There I attended school for the next three years.” Then “Another crises necessitated another move and I returned to South Bend to live with my aunt and uncle there.”

Before Helen Ann finished elementary school there was another transition. Her older sister, Marcia was completing high school at Notre Dame Academy, Belleville, Illinois. Helen Ann joined her there as a seventh grade boarder. They came to admire their teachers and caregivers – the School Sister of Notre Dame. When Marcia graduated and entered the SSND candidature in St. Louis, Helen Ann returned to South Bend to complete the eighth grade.

One senses the emotions during the times of welcoming and parting from when Helen Ann was an 8-year-old until she seemed to be settled at 18. Just recounting the places she lived makes her seem like a nomad.

Sister Paul Marie explained, “The tragedy of losing my parents was somewhat mellowed by the sensitive care of the sisters and by the close relationships built during my time as a boarder at Notre Dame Academy. I was so impressed by the way the sisters lived, as well as the lessons they taught, that I was drawn to follow my own sister – now, Sister Viva.”

Helen Ann enrolled in the SSND aspiranture for high school, located at the former motherhouse in Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. It seemed to feel like home to this teenager for she explained, “I liked the life and was able to attend for two years, – but my aunt felt I should come ‘home’ for at least one year.” On completing her junior year in South Bend, she related, “Much to my joy, I was permitted to return to the Ripa aspiranture for my senior year which ended with my graduation in 1936.” “I was particularly drawn by one of my teachers and often thought that I would want to have some of her good qualities thus to become more pleasing to the Lord. The one quality that seemed outstanding was her spirit of self-sacrifice.”

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Paul Marie Duck



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

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Helen Ann entered the SSND candidature in 1940. In 1942, she received the habit and the religious name, Paul Marie. On finishing the novitiate year, she pronounced her vows in 1943. During her first six years of religious life, she was a teacher in the elementary schools of the St. Louis area.

In 1950 Sister Paul Marie received a bachelor's degree in home economics from Webster College, St. Louis. She earned a master's degree in the same area from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. She then taught at secondary schools in Missouri, Illinois, and San Antonio, Houston and New Orleans. Interestingly, she returned three times to the Redemptorist High School in New Orleans.

Becoming a guidance counselor seemed a natural extension of her profession and her desire to help others. She returned to her birthplace, South Bend, to study guidance counseling at the University of Notre Dame, where she completed her certification.

During her 50 years in education, her students expressed their admiration for Sister Paul Marie. Beyond the text and the practice, she is especially remembered for her random acts of kindness. From helping to finish a dress in time for a student's special event, to her deep understanding as she helped another student whose mother had died.

It's not only the girls who remember her help. At the Redemptorist high school, the home economics cottage was just steps away from the athletic field house. The boys remember Sister Paul Marie mending and washing uniforms so that they'd be presentable for their games.

In 1995 there was a call for a personnel director at an Archdiocese of New Orleans retirement home, Sister Paul Marie accepted the position, bringing her many talents to a new role.

Sister Paul Marie's experiences in being welcomed, modeled for her the warm welcome she always extended to others – as a community member, a local leader and a provincial chapter member. Sister Paul Marie always looked for ways to be of service. She worked on the SSND habit design and implementation committee for North America. Her contributions helped SSND to be one of the best dressed communities when they changed habits.

The daughter of a very close LSU friend related, "Sister Paul Marie had a great influence on my faith. She taught me to pray to the Blessed Virgin and encouraged me to put my trust in the Holy Spirit."

Sister Paul Marie retired in 2002 to give more time to prayer and community service at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa, Mississippi. Always seeking and finding ways in which she could do something for others, she was active in the community until just a few months before she died peacefully at St. Mary of the Pines, early in the morning of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Aug. 15, 2016.

Sister Paul Marie was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Richard and her five sisters: Lucille, Mary Genevieve, Marcia (Sister Mary Viva Duck, SSND), Bernice and Gertrude. She is survived by many nieces and nephews.

By Sister MarieClare Powell, SSND