

In Loving Memory

Sister Paulanne Gruber



Birth
July 7, 1932

Baptism
July 24, 1932

Profession
July 19, 1953

Death
February 29, 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

Sister Paulanne Gruber, 91, died peacefully at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, Thursday, February 29, 2024. Sisters had been praying with her in the days leading up to her death.

The oldest child and only daughter of Leopold and Lorraine (Altmeyer) Gruber, she was born on July 7, 1932, in St. Luke's Hospital, St. Paul, Minnesota. She was baptized at St. Francis de Sales church, St. Paul and named Barbara Lucille. Known in the family as "Bobby," she later welcomed two brothers to complete the family.

Bobby entered first grade at St. Francis de Sales School in the fall of 1938. In a Jubilee reflection, she responded to the question of what drew her to the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) by saying that she grew up knowing the sisters. "When my younger brothers were born, we took them to the convent so mother could show them to the sisters, who were her former teachers. It was love at first sight! I spent time after school and on Saturdays helping the sisters wherever needed. My dad even asked me if I wanted to move my bed down to the convent! After grade school, I went to the aspiranture at Our Lady of Good Counsel and the rest is history!" Bobby and three classmates, Irene Komor (Sister Irene), Joan Hau (Sister Colleen) and Irene Latessa (Sister Yolanda), began their high school education at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato in 1946, and graduated in 1950. Seventeen graduates, including Bobby, entered the SSND candidature in fall 1950.

As a second-year candidate, Bobby taught grades two and three at St. John's in Mankato. She was received into the novitiate on July 18, 1952, and given the name Sister M. Paulanne. She professed first vows in 1953 and began her primary-grade teaching ministry at Holy Childhood School, St. Paul (1953-57). She taught first grade at Holy Rosary in North Mankato (1957-60) and concluded her formal education years at St. Philip in Minneapolis, Minnesota (1960-63). She earned a bachelor's degree from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul in 1961.

Sister Paulanne was interested in ministry to the elderly. In 1963-64, she worked as a nursing assistant at Our Lady of Good Counsel. From 1964 until 1967, she attended St. Mary's School of Nursing in Rochester, Minnesota, and earned her RN degree in 1967. For the next 10 years, she worked at Our Lady of Good Counsel as coordinator and director of the nursing staff and was responsible for the primary care of retired SSNDs living at Our Lady of Good Counsel. In 1976, she completed a nurse practitioner program from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, with a specialization in geriatric care. When her term as administrator in healthcare was completed the next year, she inquired about possible positions in Spokane, Washington. She spent two years there as a nurse practitioner and enrolled in courses at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington to further her education.

Returning to Minnesota in 1979, Sister Paulanne was employed by Lutheran Haven Nursing Home in Montevideo, Minnesota, until 1981. She then moved to Rochester, where she worked with the Olmsted Medical Group, a small 35-physician clinic serving local residents. As the clinic's geriatric nurse

continued

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practitioner, she cared for nursing home patients for 12 years.

In 1993, Sister Paulanne became the first nurse practitioner to work with the Mankato Clinic, Mankato. She represented doctors whose patients were residents at nursing facilities in the Mankato area, including Our Lady of Good Counsel. An introductory article stated: "The most obvious benefit is that Sister Paulanne will be in each nursing facility each week fielding the needs of various patients." The article continued: "Spirituality is another dimension that Sister Paulanne brings to her practice. She is able to offer consolation and prayer."

Sister Paulanne described her vision as providing "personal quality care for nursing home patients that enhances the ability of the doctors to maintain a presence in the nursing facility." Further noting, "Being a sister is not a job description. Being a sister is an added dimension to the person I am."

Healthcare at Our Lady of Good Counsel was in transition at the same time, and Sister Paulanne was asked to be an outside consultant. In a memo to healthcare staff, Provincial Leader Mary Gen Olin, wrote, "As an SSND herself, Sister Paulanne brings her medical knowledge, her membership in the religious community and her experience as a previous administrator in our healthcare to help and support us through this transition."

Sister Paulanne retired from the Mankato Clinic and the medical field in 2002. She spent one year with the SSND Folk Art Program in Oakdale and then served in hospitality at Notre Dame Center in St. Paul until 2005. She moved on to volunteer in several additional capacities, first at the convent in Waseca for five years and then at Our Lady of Good Counsel, beginning in 2010. She was a talented seamstress and helped in the sewing room, using her sewing abilities to make alterations for sisters' clothing and to create many unique items for the annual Craft Fair. She was an avid quilter and counted painting and calligraphy as additional artistic interests.

Sister Paulanne's small family was very important to her. She especially enjoyed trips to California where her mother and brother, Paul, had relocated. As her mother became more fragile, Sister Paulanne moved her to a nursing home in Mankato where she could help care for her.

Sister Paulanne marked a paragraph in *You Are Sent*, the SSND Constitution, that reads in part, "We go forth daily in the spirit of Mother Theresa, remembering her words . . . 'Let us continue to serve the Triune God all our lives with joy, to obey him, to love him above all.'" May Sister Paulanne's service to God now be rewarded with eternal life in God's presence.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Paulanne was held Thursday, March 7, 2024, in the Windermere Chapel, Shakopee, with Father Joe Fogal as presider. Visitation and Sharing of Memories preceded the Liturgy. Burial in the Our Lady of Good Counsel cemetery took place March 11, 2024. Sister Paulanne is survived by brother, Richard (Sheila), three 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, Leopold (also known as Paul) and Lorraine (Altmeyer) Gruber, and her brother, Paul.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND