

In Loving Memory

Sister M. Rochelle Trembley

Sister M. Rochelle Trembley, 95, died suddenly and unexpectedly while at supper at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, on Saturday, April 13, 2024.

On March 29, 1929, a cold and snowy day, a daughter was born into the Ira and Marie Trembley family of Delavan, Minnesota. Named Theresa Arless, she received the sacrament of baptism on April 5 at Mater Dolorosa Church in Delavan. Sadly, her mother died one day later, and baby Theresa was taken in by her paternal grandparents to live with them in Mankato, Minnesota.

In her autobiography, Sister Rochelle wrote, “Even after my grandmother’s death when I was five, my grandfather kept me with him, giving me the opportunity of a Catholic education, which otherwise would have been impossible. Here I spent my formative years and attended grade school at SS. Peter and Paul’s School.”

She listed her first communion in May 1937 and her confirmation in May 1940 as significant events in her life. Following graduation from eighth grade in 1943, she enrolled in Good Counsel Academy. She recalled that her years at the academy were “the four happiest years of my school life.” It was during her high school years that she felt the call to become a School Sister of Notre Dame (SSND).

Theresa graduated from Good Counsel Academy in 1947, and entered the SSND candidature that fall as a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Mankato. Following a year of college classes, she taught for two years as a candidate, first at St. Bernard in Cologne, Minnesota, and then at Sacred Heart in St. Paul, Minnesota. In both instances, she taught intermediate grades and was responsible for the choir and school music. Theresa was received into the novitiate on July 14, 1950, and given the name Sister Mary Rochelle. Her patron was St. Roch, a French nobleman who devoted his life to taking care of the poor and sick. She professed first vows on July 15, 1951.

Sister Rochelle then began her extensive education ministry, encompassing both classroom teaching, principally for middle grades, as well as church and school music. She taught one year at St. Mary’s, Shakopee (1951-52), followed by Crucifixion, La Crescent, Minnesota (1952-54) and then St. John the Baptist, Dayton, Minnesota (1954-58). She then moved “out west” to the state of Washington, where she taught at Guardian Angel, Colton (1958-60) and Holy Family, Clarkston (1960-64). In 1962 she earned a bachelor's degree in education and music from Mount Mary College (now University) in Milwaukee.

Following one year as a music teacher at Trinity High School in Dickinson, North Dakota, she spent the remainder of her teaching ministry throughout Minnesota in St. Paul: St. Agnes (1965-67), St. Matthew (1967-69), St. Francis de Sales (1969-74) and again at St. Agnes (1974-85). School music and instructing piano lessons were her day’s work. In her role as music teacher, she moved from



Birth
March 29, 1929

Baptism
April 5, 1929

Profession
July 15, 1951

Death
April 13, 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

continued

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classroom to classroom and, in some schools, she gave piano lessons during the noon hour, which left her little time for lunch. Beginning in 1985, she assisted the sisters with whom she lived at St. Agnes convent for the next three years.

In 1988, Sister Rochelle began a long tenure of providing services to the community at Our Lady of Good Counsel. She enjoyed driving sisters to appointments and other destinations, as well as shopping for those unable to do this for themselves, especially if they were in health care. When her eyesight diminished and she was no longer able to drive, other sisters did the driving and she continued to be very conscientious about shopping, even when she had to look carefully to make sure she had the right items.

Sister Rochelle's Silver Jubilee trip to Rome in 1976 made a strong impression on her. In 2021 she wrote: "Celebrating my 70th Jubilee brings back memories of the 25th Jubilee's spiritual renewal summer spent in Rome and the days spent in Munich visiting all the places of our SSND roots and connecting with sisters from our other provinces."

Reading was a pastime for Sister Rochelle until her eyesight began to fail, and she also enjoyed watching movies. Sisters commented on her sense of humor and recalled how she would share jokes at mealtime. Visits from her family were special and she looked forward to them. In the fall of 2022, she moved with other SSND to Windermere in Shakopee.

At the time of the Transfiguration, the apostles remarked, "It is good for us to be here." Sister Rochelle chose this as the theme for her funeral liturgy, for she knew that it was good for her to be here on earth, serving as a SSND. May she now be a part of the heavenly choir, grateful to have reached her final destination.

The Funeral Mass for Sister Rochelle was held Monday, April 22, 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 in Mankato followed.

Sister Rochelle 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, Ira and Marie (Willette) Trembley, her sisters, Amreta Joel, Janet Trembley, Ethel Erickson, Marceline Henke, Doris Kennedy-Paul, Frances Dunn and Rosemarie Cox, and her brothers, Paul, Joe and Roland.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND