



In Loving Memory

Sister Rose (Mary Conrad) Schwab

Shortly after breakfast on May 12, 2021, Sister Rose Schwab, 94, died unexpectedly in Notre Dame Health Care at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. A day earlier she had enjoyed a golf-cart tour of the Good Counsel campus.

Sister Rose, one of 11 children of Ludwig and Regina Schwab, was born on the family farm near Strasburg, North Dakota, on March 13, 1927. Three days later she was baptized at SS. Peter & Paul Church, Strasburg, and named Rose Emelia. Her parents rented farmland, and the family lived at three different farm homes as the children grew up. In some unfinished memoirs of her family, Sister Rose described these farmsteads in detail. She recalled that the family attended Sunday Mass and, during Lent, Stations of the Cross. The family also prayed the rosary together during Lent. Rose's school experience was varied as, "I mostly liked school and liked my wonderful teachers. I had a young man in first grade, Ursuline Sisters from Grades 2 to 9, the Benedictine Sisters from Bismarck for grades 10 and 11, and the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 12th grade." Her educational records show that she attended Strasburg Public School. However, at that time in North Dakota, Catholic Schools operated as public schools. When offering to become a missionary, Sister Rose referenced her family life as a qualification in that, "as a member of a large family I learned early the 'give and take' one needs to get along with other people. I know what poverty means and is. (I was raised in years of dire poverty.) Also, as a member of my family, I learned early to share and work hard – I can drive a car, tractor, and am very much at home on or behind a horse. I milked cows and did almost every type of North Dakota farm work. I must mention, however, that I did very little cooking, but am sure I can do enough not to let myself or anyone else starve."

Rose graduated from high school in 1945, and then attended some classes at Dickinson State College (now Dickinson State University), Dickinson, North Dakota. During this time, she also taught in a country school. She entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) candidature in 1947. She gives no indication of what led her to SSND other than saying that she, "liked her wonderful teachers." Because she had experience teaching, she was sent out to teach after Christmas in her first year as a candidate. Unlike the rest of her entrance class, who spent a second year in the candidature practice teaching, she was received into the novitiate in 1948. At that time, she was given the name Sister Mary Conrad, but later returned to her baptismal name. She professed first vows in 1949.

Throughout her 40 years in education as a junior and senior high school teacher, as well as an administrator in some locations, Sister Rose shared her expertise with students in the following Upper Midwest schools: In Minnesota - St. Michael, Madison; St. Stanislaus, Winona; St. Clara, Clara City; and Sacred Heart, Holy Childhood, St. Matthew and Guadalupe Area Project, St. Paul; in North Dakota - St. Anne, Bismarck; Trinity, Dickinson; and St. Gertrude, Raleigh; and Sacred Heart, Eden, South Dakota. She completed her BA in 1958 from Mount Mary College (now University), Milwaukee, and in 1982

continued

Birth
March 13, 1927

Baptism
March 16, 1927

Profession
July 19, 1949

Death
May 12, 2021

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

In Loving Memory



*Sister Rose (Mary
Conrad) Schwab*



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

Transforming the world
through education

earned an MA in secondary administration from St. Thomas College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

In 1961, Sister Rose volunteered to serve in the foreign missions: “When I consider my family background, my ability to do physical work, my health, ease of physical and mental adjustment to changes of diet, lodging and people, I feel my conscience dictates that I hereby volunteer to be accepted or at least considered as a possible member of a missionary group.” The former Mankato Province leadership (now Central Pacific Province) accepted her offer and, on August 26, 1963, she and Sister Sylvester (Mary Jo) Trombley left Mankato to serve at Patzun, Chimaltenango, Guatemala, about 70 miles from Guatemala City. Before moving permanently to Patzun, the sisters studied Spanish and Guatemalan culture in Antigua for four months. Shortly after they arrived in Antigua, they went to Patzun for a formal welcome that included greetings from the mayor and other officials, as well as a ticker-tape-like parade of rose petals from the throngs of people lining the main street. In January 1964, they began working in the school, which had opened the previous January. Nine lay teachers joined the sisters on the faculty of this very poor school with an enrollment of about 155 students. In a January letter to the sisters of the province, Sisters Conrad and Sylvester wrote, “Pray for us and our work, but pray especially for our poor, poor people.” Sister Rose later commented, “The people were wonderful. . . . They were a religious people, faith-filled.”

Sister Rose served in Guatemala until 1967. She then resumed her teaching and administration ministries in the Upper Midwest. In 1989, she moved to her home area, Strasburg, North Dakota, as the director of religious education and as a pastoral minister. She remained in that position until 1998, when she came to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota, to work in the printing department. After five years in the printery, she remained at Our Lady of Good Counsel, providing community service in various ways, including teaching in the Good Counsel Learning Center and serving as a driver for sisters’ shopping trips.

One of her main interests was writing letters. She commented, “I write to about 60 people. Of course, many of these are complete strangers. I never met them but received their names and addresses from others. They are mostly elders and just plain lonely.” Watching sports on TV was another strong interest. She was very appreciative of the opportunities she received as a School Sister of Notre Dame.

In a reflection for the celebration of her 70-year Jubilee, she wrote, “Why God chose me to give the blessing of a vocation is a mystery. I don’t have words strong enough to say THANK YOU.”

Sister Rose donated her body to the Mayo Clinic. Her Memorial Mass is scheduled for July 22, with burial to follow at a later date. She is survived by her sisters, Jean Schumacher and Helen Schwab, her brothers Joe and Louis, 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, Ludwig (Louis) and Regina (Keller) Schwab; her sisters, Mary, Cecilia, Alice and Priscilla; and her brothers, Larry and Leo.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND