



Birth
Jan. 10, 1924

Baptism
Jan. 13, 1924

Profession
July 28, 1944

Death
Oct. 25, 2016

Burial
Sancta Maria
in Ripa Cemetery
St. Louis, Missouri

*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 Ruth [Antoinette] Saddler, SSND

Ruth Clare, the third of five girls, was born on Jan. 10, 1924 to Catherine (Temborius) and Ross Saddler in Fort Madison, Iowa. She was baptized on Jan. 13, 1924 at Sacred Heart Church in Fort Madison. Her father worked nights at the Santa Fe Railroad storehouse and slept most of the day. Consequently, weekends were important family times with picnics or sight-seeing trips. Her father's parents died before she was born and her mother's father died when she was 7 years old. She and her sisters took turns staying with her grandmother and helping with gardening and other tasks. Ruth would go with her to sell produce and flowers to the Mexicans who lived along the railroad tracks. Ruth witnessed her grandmother praying with an elderly or sick woman or giving congratulations on the birth of a new baby. This was the beginning of Ruth's desire to help the poor.

She attended Sacred Heart Grade School and Catholic Central High School where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. From early childhood, she wanted to be a sister and her grandmother and mother kept this vocation alive within her. She had just finished eighth grade when her grandmother died. Shortly before her death, she told Ruth "Be that Sister that you always wanted to be." In her senior year of high school, her best friend told the principal that Ruth wanted to be a sister. Ruth was chosen to tutor a young polio victim in reading and math. She attended daily mass with the sisters in the convent and was taken to Ripa to witness the reception and profession ceremonies. These experiences confirmed her desire to become a religious. She entered the candidature on Aug. 27, 1941. She was received into the novitiate on July 27, 1943 and given the name, Mary Antoinette. Profession of first vows was on July 28, 1944 and final vows on July 28, 1950.

Following her profession, she taught elementary students for 41 years; 21 of these years were in inner-city schools. After one year at St. Francis Borgia, Washington, Missouri, she became one of the pioneers to teach the African-American children at St. Peter Claver, Robertson, Missouri. She taught at St. Alphonsus (Rock) Grade School and St. Barbara in St. Louis. In Illinois, she taught at St. Francis of Assisi in Teutopolis; St. Henry, Belleville; St. Charles, Dubois. In Iowa, she taught at St. John the Baptist, Burlington; St. Mary and Aquinas East in Fort Madison. She was also principal at St. Barbara in St. Louis and St. Charles in Dubois.

She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Webster College, St. Louis, Missouri in 1952 and a master's degree in elementary education from DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois in 1960.

In the mid-1940s, she volunteered to go to Africa. However, our sisters did not go to Sierra Leone until 1973. In 1984, she was attending an "Over 60" workshop at Ripa and heard of the need for sisters to go to Sierra Leone. She spoke to her provincial council contact of her desire to serve in Africa. From 1985-1989, she taught at Port Loko Catholic Secondary School in Sierra Leone, once again fulfilling her childhood desire to minister to the

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Ruth Saddler



poor. After a sabbatical, she taught in Notre Dame Tutorial Center for a year and then served as a health care aide in the Ripa infirmary. In 1992, she became a full time driver for sisters who lived at Ripa.

After 17 years of community service at Ripa, she was missioned to Veronica House in February 2007. She passed away unexpectedly at Veronica House on Oct. 25, 2016 around 11 a.m. Though she suffered from congestive heart failure, Sister Ruth requested not to be sent to the hospital. She was found in her recliner in her room where she met her God and peacefully went home.

The wake/vigil was held at The Sarah Community and Theresa Center on Nov. 3, 2016. The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Paul Rothschild presiding. Nieces, nephews, their children and grandchildren came from Iowa, Texas, Kansas, Illinois and Missouri to join her SSND community in celebrating Sister Ruth's life. She was preceded in death by her parents and her four sisters: Mildred Saddler, Gladys Harry, Beatrice Hottenstein and Rosemary Saddler.

Sister Ruth described her years in Africa as "I felt God was very near in Sierra Leone. The people have to fight to stay alive, yet they are happy and trusting in God. I learned from them to accept and to be happy with whatever comes in life... In the midst of it all, God is so present among these people."

At the sharing of memories, Sister Ruth was described as a gracious, happy person who loved parties and delighted in chocolate ice cream or candy. She was accepting of everyone and her favorite name for anyone was "Honey." She was a forward-looking principal, trying the newest methods of teaching and a great mentor to younger teachers. She was small in stature, yet her warm smile endeared her to all. She was very close to her family and cherished the times she was able to spend with them.

Throughout her life, she loved the poor and ministered to their physical and spiritual needs. May she now rejoice in the welcome she received from Jesus who cast his lot with the poor and the marginalized!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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