



In Loving Memory

Sister Miriam (M. Verone) Saumweber

Sister Miriam (M. Verone) Saumweber, 95, died on September 13, 2020, in Notre Dame Health Care, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. Sister Miriam had celebrated her 75th Jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame this past summer. The second last of eight children, Sister Miriam was born in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota. Miriam was the third of four daughters and all were named in honor of Mary. Miriam wrote, "I still rejoice over the name that my mother chose for me – Miriam Loretta Rose – at my baptism." As she grew up, she formed a tight bond with her older sisters Marie and Dolores, and her younger sister, Marilyn. Two of four her brothers, Gene and Clem, were about 10 years older than the girls. Gervaise and Jerome had died as very young children before the girls were born.

Birth
November 4, 1924

Baptism
November 9, 1924

Profession
July 22, 1945

Death
September 13, 2020

Burial
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Cemetery

In 1930, Miriam joined her older siblings as students at Sacred Heart School, St. Paul, Minnesota. She wrote, "These were years of enlightenment, discovery and searching." In those years, Sacred Heart had a two-year high school commercial program and Miriam attended ninth grade in this program. When her class returned for tenth grade, they learned that the commercial program was closing because the space was needed for an influx of kindergarten students. While many in her class scrambled to find another school, Miriam knew what she would do – attend Good Counsel Academy in Mankato.

Miriam's two older sisters had attended the Academy and then entered the SSND candidature. Dolores (Sister Valine) was received into the novitiate in 1942, the summer of Miriam's graduation. Witnessing her sister's great joy on this occasion convinced Miriam that she, too, should become an SSND. She entered the candidature that August. On July 21, 1944, she was received into the novitiate and given the name Sister Mary Verone. She later returned to her baptismal name.

Following profession in 1945, she was sent to Ss. Peter & Paul, Loretto, Minnesota, to teach grades 1, 2 and 3. She then taught at St. Matthew School in St. Paul. Following a year of studies at the Diocesan Teachers College, she taught for one and one-half years at Holy Childhood, St. Paul, and then began some years of substitute teaching at Twin Cities schools. In 1954, she began her high school ministry, teaching primarily biology, at Good Counsel Academy and Loyola Catholic School, Mankato; St. Anthony, Lismore; and Trinity in Dickinson, North Dakota. During her years of teaching she earned a B.A. in English, education and biology from St. Catherine's University, St. Paul, and M.A. degrees in education and biology from St. Thomas University, St. Paul, and St. Mary University of Minnesota, Winona, respectively.

It was while she was teaching at Loyola Catholic School that she had a life-changing car accident, followed by a long recovery. She finished the year on a part-time basis. From 1970 through 1976, she tried a variety of ministries, including a return to teaching at St. Isidore, Litomysl, Minnesota; and Notre Dame High School, Cresco, Iowa.

*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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Saumweber*



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In 1976, Sister Miriam felt called to a new ministry. She studied art at the College of St. Benedict and art therapy at the College of St. Teresa. She had been interested in art since childhood and found that this field suited her abilities. Two years later, she began teaching art therapy to all ages, especially those with special needs. She truly believed in the philosophy of art therapy – that art, as therapy, is a healing experience, which mends where developmental processes have broken down. Sister Miriam shared her expertise in art therapy with students at Laura Baker School, Northfield, Minnesota; St. Mary's Special School, St. Louis; Trevilla of Robbinsdale in Minnesota; St. Vincent's Residential School, Freeport, Illinois; Read Mental Health Center, Chicago; St. Vincent Orphanage, Philadelphia; and St. Matthew School, St. Paul, Minnesota.

In 1993, with her art therapy background, Sister Miriam worked to fulfill a 15-year-old dream, "to set up an arts program for children in schools, especially where the arts have been neglected." In 1994, she set up a pilot program in St. Paul, organizing a group of artists who had the same goal of reaching children through the arts. The program, "Expressive Arts for Children," was initially funded by the State of Minnesota and eventually became incorporated. It employed 40 artists and offered music, dance, creative movement, visual arts, theater arts, poetry, storytelling and puppetry. She continued with the program until 2000.

Throughout her active ministry, Sister Miriam possessed a wide interest in life. She attended many workshops. She painted and sketched, created with clay, applied for a patent for a crayon printmaker in 1992, ushered at the Ordway Theater in St. Paul, earned county awards for conservation projects, received commendations for her volunteer work, and shared her love of art with children, and with sisters, once she moved to Our Lady of Good Counsel in 2002. Sister Miriam was also the family genealogist, collecting information for a family history. She maintained close ties with her nephew and his family. She looked on all that happened in her life as God's will.

The Funeral Liturgy for Sister Miriam was held September 22, 2020, followed by the burial of her cremains in the Good Counsel Cemetery. A Prayer of Remembrance was held the previous afternoon. She is survived by a sister, Sister Vianney Saumweber, SSND; a nephew, Jim, and his family; and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Valentine and Marie (Griesgraber) Saumweber; two SSND sisters, Verna and Valine; and four brothers, Gervaise, Jerome, Gene and Clem.

By Sister Mary Kay Ash, SSND