

In Loving Memory

Sister Veronica (Anthony Marie) Horvat



Birth
April 30, 1934

Baptism
May 13, 1934

Profession
July 21, 1954

Death
September 1, 2023

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 Veronica (Anthony Marie) Horvat, 89, died unexpectedly in her apartment at Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, Minnesota, on Friday, Sept. 1, 2023. Very fittingly, the Gospel for that day's liturgy closed with, "You know neither the day nor the hour."

The youngest child of 11, Sister Veronica was born April 30, 1934, on the family farm outside of Mankato, Minnesota and named Veronica Elizabeth. Her parents were immigrants from Austria-Hungary and the former Yugoslavia who met and married in Omaha, Nebraska. They labored as migrant workers in Minnesota during the summer and initially rented, then bought a farm about two and one-half miles from Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. The Horvat parents did not have the opportunity for formal education but were self-taught and learned many skills through experience. Croatian and broken English were the languages spoken at home.

When Veronica was born, neither she nor her mother were expected to live. Veronica later wrote, "Due to the loving care of my father and siblings, especially Katherine, who quit high school in her sophomore year to care for us, we both survived. My mother, however, remained ill the rest of her life. Because of this illness, I learned responsibility at a very young age." The Horvat family belonged to SS. Peter & Paul Parish in Mankato where Veronica was baptized and attended elementary school. While there she met the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). A desire to be a sister was kindled during her grade school years. She continued her education at Loyola High School, graduating as the valedictorian of her class in 1952. Throughout most of her school years, she belonged to 4-H and won many blue ribbons for gardening, food preparation and demonstrations. In her senior year, she was a state champion and one of six national champions in food preparation. The scholarship that went with this award paid her fees when she entered the SSND candidature. Veronica's parents were reluctant to have her enter the convent because of "unpleasant concepts of religious life from Yugoslavia." They gave their permission, however, and she became an SSND candidate in August 1952.

Veronica was received into the novitiate in 1953 and given the name Sister Anthony Marie, sometimes shortened to "Sister Toni." She returned to her baptismal name in 1990. She professed first vows July 21, 1954, and spent the following year under the direction of Sister Maureen O'Keefe at Diocesan Teachers College in St. Paul. She wrote, "This was greatly appreciated and helped to build a strong foundation for my religious life."

In 1955, Sister Veronica began her Catholic School teaching ministry at Sacred Heart School in St. Paul. Initially a teacher of primary grades, she eventually taught all eight elementary grades and high school math. She was also the principal in some of the schools. In Minnesota, she also served at St. Francis de Sales and Corpus Christi in St. Paul; John Ireland, St. Peter; St. Peter, Canby; Epiphany, Coon Rapids; St. Michael, Madison; St. John the Baptist, Savage; and Sacred Heart, Sauk Rapids. She also taught at St. Mary, New England and

continued

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*Sister Veronica (Anthony
Marie) Horvat*



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St. Benedict, Strasburg, in North Dakota, and Guardian Angel-St. Boniface in Colton, Washington. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Mount Mary College (now University) in 1963 and a master's degree in guidance and counseling and theology from Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa, in 1973. An educational highlight was a National Science Foundation grant to study at the University of Alaska in the summer of 1965.

Sister Veronica began working in Duluth, Minnesota, with the Parish Neighborhood Renewal program in 1983. The organization trained lay people as missionaries to go from parish to parish to help form "Base Church Communities, whose goals included evangelizing and spreading the Good News which guides people in their faith formation." Sister Veronica traveled to several states, "for periods of time ranging from one to six weeks, establishing neighborhood groups to gather for faith sharing and meeting the needs of their neighborhood." She later served as a director of religious education for three years each at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Sartell, Minnesota, and St. Joseph Parish, Wautoma, Wisconsin.

In 1997, Sister Veronica transitioned into the home health care ministry in St. Paul, Minnesota, working first with Sisters Care (1997-2007) and then with the West Seventh Street Community Center (2007-2015). She wrote, "This gave me a direct way of working for the elderly, poor and handicapped. Although the work was physically hard at times, it was a joy to be able to be present to and help these precious people. It was a great community experience with the other caregivers and the administration. This was not a job, but rather a ministry."

Sister Veronica's work with the West Seventh Street organization was part-time, and this allowed her to pursue her interest in art. She took classes on the "one stroke painting technique," and "painted hundreds of cards for the SSND Craft Fair, as well as candles, gift bags and craft pumpkins." She was also well-known for her intricate Ukrainian egg designs.

Sister Veronica would have celebrated her 70th year as a School Sister of Notre Dame in 2024. When she celebrated 60 years in 2014, she wrote, "A blessing that I want to share is a deep gratitude for God's call to become a School Sister of Notre Dame. My heart is filled with gratitude for my many gifts and talents and the opportunity to share them with God's people."

The Funeral Mass for Sister Veronica was held Friday, Sept. 8, in the Windermere chapel, Benedictine Living Community, Shakopee, with Father John Kunz as presider. Visitation and sharing of memories preceded the Liturgy. Burial in the Good Counsel cemetery in Mankato followed.

She is survived by 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, Stephen and Magdalene (Mozanich) Horvat; her sisters, Mary Ritter, Katie Pufahl and Anne Anderson; and her brothers, Joseph, George, John, Stephen, Martin and two, who were named Stephen and died in infancy.

By Mary Kay Ash, SSND