



**“As the Father loves me, so I also love you.  
Abide in my love.”  
--John 15:9**



**SISTER M. DOMINICA BACIGALUPO, SSND**

November 5, 1925

July 15, 1947

April 20, 2008

Our beloved Sister M. Dominica Bacigalupo, 82, died suddenly and unexpectedly at Good Counsel Provincial House, Mankato, Minnesota, Sunday, April 20, 2008. Her death was announced just prior to the Good Counsel Academy Alumnae Homecoming Liturgy. Sister Dominica, the second of her 2007 Diamond Jubilee class to die this month, had played cards just the evening before with some of her Antonina Community members.

The funeral Mass for Sister Dominica, with Father John Wilmot as presider, will be on April 24 with community vespers the evening before. Following cremation, burial will take place in our cemetery at a later date. Loving sympathy to her sisters Marie Bacigalupo and Ida (Glen) Bye, her nephew Gary (Barb) Berosik, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, as well as her friends, former colleagues, students and parishioners. She was preceded in death by her parents John and Rose (Bacigalupo) Bacigalupo.

In her file, there is a paper that she entitled “When the Lord Calls Me...” Just above her signature, she wrote, “God has been so good to me all my life, it is heaven to praise and thank my God!” Her early autobiography frequently mentions the awareness of God in her life.

Sister Dominica, the youngest of three girls, was born November 5, 1925, in St. Paul, and baptized Nelda Marie on November 18 at Ancker Hospital. She wrote about her name, “It was providential that my mother placed me under the care of our dear Blessed Mother, for she was to guide me along my childhood path after the early death of my mother and later lead me to her congregation, the School Sisters of Notre Dame.” Both of her parents were Italian immigrants, and Marie, her oldest sister, was also born in Italy. The Bacigalupo family sailed for the United States when Marie was three weeks old.

Much of Nelda’s childhood was defined by her mother’s illness. Rose Bacigalupo contracted tuberculosis before Nelda was born. Sister Dominica remembered, “Because of my mother’s illness, my early childhood was quite unsettled. Not until after I was four years old could our whole family live together.” Religious instruction was somewhat limited in the home because of their mother’s illness, but all three girls attended St. Francis de Sales School after second grade.

Rose died in April of Nelda’s fifth grade year. Writing about her feelings at that time, Sister Dominica said, “Just a child of eleven at the time, I was more relieved than sad when my mother died.... Already at this time, I had been thinking about being a Sister and I was under the impression that only girls that had no mother could be one, so her death removed that obstacle of my childish imagination.”

Nelda completed two years of high school at St. Francis, and finished at St. Agnes. She wrote, "Following graduation, I answered the summons that Christ had given me while yet a child." She entered the candidature on August 27, 1944. As a candidate, she taught fourth grade at St. Andrew's in St. Paul, her first of many years of teaching, a ministry that she loved dearly.

Schools that benefited from Sister Dominica's teaching and administrative skills included St. Albert, Albertville; St. Matthew, St. Agnes and Sacred Heart, St. Paul; St. John, Winona; Holy Rosary, North Mankato; St. Michael, Prior Lake; SS. Peter & Paul, Loretto; St. Francis Xavier, Sartell; St. John the Baptist, Savage; and Assumption in Walla Walla, Washington. At Walla Walla, her final year was spent in Educare, where she worked with kindergarten-aged children. She was Dean of Residence and a faculty member at Good Counsel Academy during its final year. Known for her love of teaching math and art, she also continued to teach in schools where she was principal. She earned a Bachelor's degree in history from St. Catherine's, and a Master's in elementary administration from Loras College in Dubuque.

Sister Dominica also said "yes" to non-teaching opportunities in her years of apostolic service. She served as hospitality coordinator at the Education Center for three years, and worked in community service at the Provincial House for three years. With Sister Marguerite Thiry, she shared a pastoral ministry position for several years at St. Francis de Sales, where she served as parish visitor for the home-bound and hospitalized, distributed Communion, and sang in the choir. And she spent several summers as a gracious hostess at Bodawan Lodge near Park Rapids.

Returning to Good Counsel in 1998, she again gave community service and taught in the Learning Center. She especially enjoyed teaching math to older students, and in her last year on the staff became an office assistant, making sure that teachers had the materials they needed for their students. She joined the chapel choir and also helped with sacristy work.

During her active years, Sister Dominica was often a member of the Provincial Assembly, and was a delegate to the 1982 General Chapter. In 1970, she and Sister Viola Kane participated in the Institute of Post-Conciliar Spirituality in Rome. This two-month experience invited participants to become "living expressions of the vision" of Vatican II.

In her "When the Lord Calls Me..." paper, Sister Dominica listed some "Thoughts Very Frequently with Me." One of those thoughts is from *You Are Sent*, "Presume the good will of another," an attitude that she carried with her throughout her life. Sisters who have lived with Sister Dominica recall her as a delightful community member, one who loved community gatherings, games and cards. A Twins fan, she often tuned into games and kept track of the team's ups and downs.

Simplicity of life is another of her values, along with joyful gratitude. For her wake, she has asked that there not be a sharing of memories, instead, "just remember me in prayer. I have been treated kindly and affirmed all along, and I thank you."

May Sister Dominica now be experiencing the fullness of God's love, abiding in this love forever, after serving the God of her life for 82 years, over 60 of them as a School Sister of Notre Dame.