



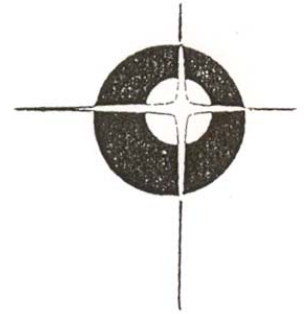
**“Like clay in the hand of the potter,
so are you in my hand.” – Jeremiah 18:6**

SISTER M. ROBERTA ROTHER, SSND

June 1, 1916

July 22, 1938

November 4, 2009



Our beloved Sister M. Roberta Rother, 93, died at 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at Good Counsel Provincial House, Mankato, Minnesota. Sister Lucille Matousek was with her and had just finished singing the “Salve Regina” when Sister Roberta took her last breath. A few hours after closing her very successful Craft Fair booth on October 10th, Sister Roberta fell and broke her hip, and had been unable to recover from that injury and subsequent surgery.

The funeral Mass for Sister M. Roberta, with Father Ted Hottinger, SJ, as presider, will be on November 9th at 10:30 a.m., in our Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in our cemetery. The vigil service is at 7:00 p.m. on November 8th. Loving sympathy to her sister, Rita Stubbs, brothers Gregory, Raymond and Clarence and their spouses, nieces and nephews and their families, as well as her former students and colleagues, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Catherine (Kuhn) Rother, sisters Catherine Kimmes, Elizabeth Kimmes and Sister M. Kathleen, SSND (Martha), and her brother Edward.

Sister Roberta (Florence Rother) was born June 1, 1916 in Hampton, Minnesota. She wrote that at the time of her birth, her grandmother had gathered the four Rother children for morning prayers and then told them that they had a baby sister. The whole family rejoiced at the arrival of a new baby. A few weeks later, she was baptized at St. Mathias Church. Florence’s godmother Rose asked to have the baby named after her, but since a cousin already had that name, she was called Florence. She wrote, “My rosy cheeks often recalled this incident to my godmother... and she prayed that one day I would become a spiritual rose in the service of God.”

Sister Roberta described her parents as good Catholics “who instilled that spirit within us from the beginning of our childhood. ... Their true kindness and genuine love for us made us want to please them.” At the age of six, Florence was needed at home to help take care of the younger children, so she only started school at age seven. The Rother children stayed in town with their grandmother during the week because they lived some distance from school. Florence enjoyed that aspect, but found “much to my chagrin I disliked school. That attitude continued during my eight years of elementary grades.” She made her First Holy Communion with Martha in 1926. After completing elementary school in 1929, she stayed home a year because there was no Catholic high school in close proximity. The next year, a ninth grade opened at St. Mathias and Florence was one of the 14 students enrolled.

Meanwhile Martha (named after her aunt, Sister Martha Kuhn, SSND) attended Good Counsel as a freshman aspirant, but did not return after that year and stayed home to help family members for two years. That meant that Martha and Florence had the same amount of education, which Florence duly noted. In August 1933, Martha decided that she wanted to return to Good Counsel as a candidate, and she was accompanied by Florence and her mother. Surprising to everyone, Florence also decided that day that she would like to join Martha, and on August 27, 1933, both of them entered the candidature. Because they needed to finish their high school education first, they spent four years in the candidature. During one of those years,

Florence did her practice teaching at St. Francis de Sales, St. Paul, guiding 48 first and second graders through the school year.

In July 1937, both Florence and Martha entered the novitiate, with Florence receiving the name Sister M. Roberta after their father, and Martha receiving the name Sister M. Kathleen, after their mother. Following profession in 1938, Sister Roberta served as a primary teacher in several schools including Sacred Heart, Holy Childhood and St. Agnes in St. Paul; Holy Rosary, North Mankato; SS. Peter & Paul, Loretto; St. Stanislaus, Winona; St. John, Mankato; St. Bernard, Cologne; John Ireland, St. Peter; St. Anne, Wabasso; St. Felix, Wabasha; and St. Mary, Shakopee. She also spent three years in the host department at Good Counsel and a year at Christ the King Catechetical School in Medford. During this time she earned her BA degree from St. Catherine's College in St. Paul. Later, she completed her Master's work in Library from Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois.

In 1960, Sister Roberta began a new phase of educational service – that of librarian, first in the college at Good Counsel and then at SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato, and Sacred Heart, St. Paul. She returned to Mankato, where she was again college librarian and then moved to Good Counsel Academy until it closed in 1980. After two years in St. Cloud, she assisted in the Institute for Reading Development on the Hill from 1982-87.

It was during her years of community service at Good Counsel that Sister Roberta developed and perfected the art of pressed flower cards. Always artistic, she applied this talent in a very precise manner. From start to finish, she produced exquisite greeting cards. In a 2001 *Mankato Free Press* Senior Scene article entitled “Beautiful Greetings Begin under Pressure,” Sister Roberta, then 85, and her cards were featured. Quoting the article, “With tender care and a creative eye for her art, Sister Roberta grows and gently tends flowers with a two-dimensional purpose in mind. When they reach the peak of their glory, she plucks them off their stems, carefully closes them in the pages of worn books, presses them in an antique book press until they are dry, then glues them to textured paper. The result? Some of the most unique and beautiful greeting cards a person can send.” In that article, Sister Roberta said, “I see God's face in every flower. If a petal is bent over, I mend it. I put them in the books very carefully, then check them and as they dry, I keep tightening the press so they keep getting flat.” She then used an inked stamp to place a greeting on the card. Initially she added original calligraphy to each card, but the stamping process was much quicker and allowed her more time to spend with the flowers. Her cards were sold at the Craft Fair, in Ceramic Haven and in the SSND Gift Shop. The article concluded with her words that sum up her love of this craft, “It's a lot of work, it is precise work, and it takes a very steady hand. But it's joyful. I can't wait to get there every day and start working.”

The image of God as the potter was a favorite of hers. In her funeral plans, she listed this quotation from St. Irenaeus, “It is not you who shape God; it is God who shapes you. If then you are the work of God, await the hand of the Artist who does all things in due season. Offer the Potter your heart, soft and tractable, and keep the form in which the artist has fashioned you. Let your clay be moist, lest you grow hard and lose the imprint of the Potter's fingers.”

May Sister Roberta, so very creative until the time of her fall, and who placed her trust in the hand of the Artist who does all things in due season, now be enjoying the eternal presence of the Potter in her life.

Sister Mary Kay Ash