



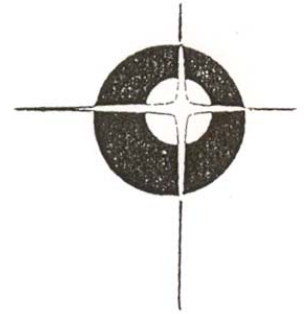
**"I will celebrate your love forever."
--Psalm 89:1**

SISTER M. ROSALIE SIEBENALER, SSND

September 27, 1912

August 1, 1932

August 23, 2009



At 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 23, 2009, our beloved Sister M. Rosalie Siebenaler, 96, died peacefully at Good Counsel Provincial House, Mankato, Minnesota. Several sisters were present with her, singing one of her favorite hymns, *Jesus, Jesus Come to Me*. And in the chapel the provincial house community and guests were just beginning the Sunday Liturgy, singing these words from *For You Are My God*: "You show me the path for my life; in your presence the fullness of joy. To be at your right hand forever, for me would be happiness always."

The funeral Mass for Sister Rosalie, with her cousins, Fathers Martin, Leonard and John Siebenaler, as presiders, will be on August 26 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 August 25. Loving sympathy to her sisters Rose Rother, Theresa Lucking and Nell Whipple, and her sisters-in-law, June and Evelyn Siebenaler, 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, Mathias and Rosa (Girgen) Siebenaler, brothers Ferdinand, Joseph, William, Bernard, Mathias and Leo, and sisters Clara Rother, Marie Kasel and Susan Wagner.

Sister M. Rosalie (Margaret Siebenaler) was born September 27, 1912, on the family farm about three miles outside of Vermillion, Minnesota, and the fourth of thirteen children. She received the sacrament of baptism at St. Mathias Church, Hampton, a few days later.

Margaret's school days began when she was six years old. She remembered, "How glad I was when permitted to accompany my older brother and sisters to a little country school, and happier still when I was given my first reader." She attended this school for three years until it closed because of the small enrollment. The pupils of the entire district were taken to New Trier for school, where the Siebenaler family attended St. Mary's School. Here she first met School Sisters of Notre Dame "and their cheerful, friendly demeanor made me at once wish to become one of them. The fire of my vocation was kindled." The next school year, she became a pupil at St. Boniface in Hastings, and finished her grade school education there, with Sisters of St. Benedict as teachers. Hastings was some distance from home, so she boarded with her grandmother. Frequent visits by her parents eased her lonesomeness, and her grandmother's stories about her native Germany helped pass the time in the evenings.

One advantage of attending St. Boniface was the opportunity to attend daily Mass, which Margaret considered a great privilege. By the time she finished grade school, she was determined to become a sister. She wrote, "Four years with the Benedictine Sisters had left a store of precious memories that could not easily be blotted out. One year with the Notre Dame Sisters seemed to confirm the old adage, 'First impressions are lasting.' Besides, two of my cousins were Notre Dame Sisters." Her parents were supportive of her decision to become a sister and understood her dilemma of "Where?"

That summer she met a girl from the parish who was going to Good Counsel – and that solved her difficulty. In September 1926 she became an Aspirant at Good Counsel, and in October received the Sacrament of Confirmation at SS. Peter & Paul Church. She became an SSND candidate after three years of high school, and graduated from Good Counsel in 1930 as a candidate.

After a challenging year teaching grades 1-3 in Bellechester, MN, as a 2nd-year candidate, she returned to Good Counsel and was received into the Novitiate and given the name Sister M. Rosalie. Following profession of vows in 1932, Sister Rosalie's first teaching assignment was 1st grade at SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato. She wrote, "Several years previous when I entered the candidature, I had left three older and eight younger brothers and sisters at home so now I was quite in my own element teaching primary grades." (Her youngest sister hadn't been born when she entered the candidature.)

Four years later Sister Rosalie was asked to begin kindergarten work and was given the opportunity to prepare at the Kindergarten Education College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. She missed SSND company that year and looked forward to Saturdays when SSNDs came to class at the college. She earned her kindergarten certificate in June 1937. Sister Rosalie completed her Bachelor of Education degree from Mount Mary College, Milwaukee, in 1943.

In August 1937, Sister Rosalie returned to SS. Peter & Paul, this time as kindergarten teacher. She followed a very successful kindergarten teacher and at first felt very inadequate, but by the end of that first year, she wrote, "I believe that anyone would learn to love [kindergarten teaching] for I don't think that anywhere more than in the Kindergarten can one see Christ in the eyes of the children as one can see Him in the innocent eyes of those youngest in our care." This was to become her philosophy throughout her long ministry as a kindergarten teacher in four Catholic Schools: SS. Peter & Paul (1937-44); and three St. Paul schools, Sacred Heart (1944-50); St. Matthew (1950-54); and St. Agnes (1954-82). As a kindergarten teacher, she was considered ahead of her time. Among her former students' memories are how she made Bible stories come alive, that she taught many songs — and that she also had a parakeet in her classroom. Students also remember a kindergarten band, the classroom store, and kindergartners being part of high school Christmas productions. In at least some of her years, the large kindergarten classes attended school all day.

She had the opportunity of two trips to Europe, an educational experience in 1975 and the Rome Renewal program with her class in 1978.

After 50 years of teaching, in 1982 Sister Rosalie retired, but remained at St. Agnes providing community service. From 1989-1991, she lived at the convent in Hastings, also giving community service. She came to Good Counsel in 1991. In her retirement years she continued a special ministry that she had begun many years before – rosary making. In the 1960's she was asked to make rosaries for doctors who donated their services to the sisters. When she doubted that she could do this, she received this response, "If you can fix them, you can make them." So she began making them. In retirement, this became a primary ministry for her.

May Sister Rosalie, who for so many years celebrated God's love with the youngest of God's family, now be celebrating forever the fullness of joy in God's presence. And may she now be singing the verse from *Jesus, Jesus Come to Me*: "Jesus, I live for Thee, Jesus I die for Thee, I belong to Thee Fore'er in life and death."

Sister Mary Kay Ash