

Sister Verona Schafer C.PP.S.

Born: January 20, 1916

Professed: August 10, 1936

Entered into Life: February 15, 2011

Verse on her memorial card: *“I know the plan I have for you...a future full of hope.”* Jeremiah 29:11



February 15, 2011

Sister Verona Schafer, the daughter of Charles and Elizabeth, was born Renilda Mary on January 20, 1916, and baptized at St. Joseph Parish, Martinsburg, Missouri. Sr. Verona was the sixth in a family of nine children which included her brothers Joe, Ed, John, Leo and Paul, and her sisters Mathilda Mary, Agnes and Sr. Mary Martha, also a Precious Blood Sister. She passed into new life on February 15, 2011, the last member of her immediate family leaving nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews to carry on the legacy of the Schafer family.

Sr. Verona was interested in learning about all aspects of life, from the contemplation of a beautiful red rose to a high school football player, to a sister in community and to a parent with a problem. The whole of life was her delight and passion. She lived life as if she was at a banquet and all the delicacies were hers to enjoy and share.

Sister Verona began a lifetime of learning at St. Joseph School in the small rural town of Martinsburg, Missouri. She continued her education at Quincy College where she received a bachelor's degree in math and onto St. Louis University for a master's degree in education.

Beginning the ministry of teaching, Sr. Verona taught in several elementary schools in Missouri: St. John the Baptist and Holy Family in St. Louis; Assumption School, O'Fallon; St. Anthony of Padua, High Ridge; St. Anthony of Padua in Westphalia; and St. John the Baptist in Gildehaus, Villa Ridge. Sr. Verona also taught at St. Peter's School, Quincy, Illinois. She was a teaching elementary principal at the following schools in Missouri: St. Anthony of Padua, Westphalia; St. Joseph, Josephville; St. Brendan, Mexico; and St. Anthony of Padua, High Ridge.

In secondary education Sr. Verona taught at Bishop DuBourg High School for four years before becoming the principal for eleven years, 1957-1968. From 1975-77 she was the Administrator of St. Elizabeth Academy. As a principal and teacher Sr. Verona valued each student and faculty member as individual persons with a uniqueness to be revered and respected.

At Bishop DuBourg Sr. Verona had a student body of over 2000 and 125 faculty members and she led with dignity, respect for individuals, and concern for every student, parent, and faculty member. One faculty member from DuBourg spoke about Sr. Verona and I believe she lived these words her entire life: *“She keeps her finger on the pulse of change, studies it, and maintains a balanced vision. She knows the trends of education a year or two before they are being discussed generally. And she is always investigating the new.”* (O'Fallon in Focus, 1965) *“She keeps her finger on the pulse of change, studies it, and maintains a balanced vision.”* As Superior General of the community 1968-1974 these words came true in many ways. She helped the sisters cope with the challenges of Vatican II and the implications for the way we lived community life and continued our ministries. In 1970 we

celebrated 100 years in the United States and Sr. Verona wrote these words:

“As we face the second century of service in America, we are again challenged with decisions to be made in a society suffering profound confusion... a society torn by war, conflict, revolution, change. In the next one hundred years, we hope that the struggles of society “push” us where the need is so we can be both a sign of what God is doing and an instrument for its accomplishment, an instrument in breaking down walls of human alienation, barriers of inequality and injustice, of war, poverty, fear and hate.” (O’Fallon in Focus, 1970)

When Sr. Verona traveled to the significant places of our history, Steinerberg, Switzerland, Gurtweil, Germany, Finland, she was aware that *“our work is not just in this school or that, in this town or state, but world-wide. A small group of young women in 1845 influenced the world far beyond the walls of the stone church where they prayed.”* This awareness of the world being wide and far beyond our walls moved her over the years to search for ways to become more inclusive, more global in her thinking, her conversations, and in her prayer.

After serving in congregational leadership, Sr. Verona, with two Sisters of St. Joseph, co-founded Inter-Community Consultants, for the purpose of offering facilitation and consultation skills to religious communities of women and men. Her wisdom and listening skills were invaluable when meeting with groups coping with change, renewal and integrating the challenges of Vatican II into their communities.

Sr. Verona was always “investigating the new” as she attended conferences and workshops, was a member of the St. Louis Women’s Interfaith Conference, facilitated the Bridges Program in a parish and made herself available for retreats and spiritual direction.

Sr. Verona’s insights were ever expanding; no thought, no idea, no stretch of imagination was too wild to be considered. She nurtured every person she met from the children in elementary school, to the high school students and faculty, to the board rooms and conference tables or organizations needing her wisdom and facilitation.

Most of all, Sr. Verona was a woman of hope. This was so evident as she aged and her body slowed down and no longer supported her desire to be involved in meetings, conferences, gatherings. She radiated hope, encouragement, support, and peace. In the last months of her life as she coped with physical limits, it seems her spirit became so loving that anyone in her presence felt accepted and appreciated. As her hearing diminished, her listening and speaking were through her eyes and her broad smile and her open arms inviting us into her loving embrace.

And now, Sr. Verona, you are in the loving embrace of the One you have longed for, the One who has been with you for 95 years and telling you: “Come, my beloved daughter, I am so pleased with you. Come to the banquet I have prepared for you.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Fran". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Sister Fran