

Sister Rose Marie Mersinger, C.PP.S.

Born: April 3, 1932

Professed: August 10, 1952

Entered into Life: November 17, 2019

Verse on her memorial card:

“I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

November 18, 2019



Dear Sisters,

Shortly before 8 a.m. on Sunday, November 17, 2019, our Sister Rose Marie Mersinger passed from this life to the next. Around 2 a.m. the Meadowlands’ staff notified Linda Cento, our Health and Wellness Coordinator, that Sister Rose Marie was getting weaker. Linda was with her in the very early hours of the morning, but it was after Linda left that Sister Rose Marie made her final journey to the fullness of life.

Rose Marie was born in St. Louis, MO, on April 3, 1932, to Otto and Rose (Drees) Mersinger. The ninth of ten children, five boys and five girls, Sister Rose Marie gained experience with “life in community” from an early age. She brought with her to O’Fallon a keen sense of humor and the ability to tease and be teased, a likely consequence of being among the youngest of so many brothers and sisters.

After graduating from St. Elizabeth Academy, Rose Marie (Sr. Dorothy Rose) entered our novitiate on July 25, 1950, and she professed first vows on August 10, 1952. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Education at Quincy College.

For the first ten years of her religious life, Sister Rose Marie was an elementary school teacher. In Missouri she taught at St. Joseph in Martinsburg, St. Vincent in Dutzow, and St. Stephen Protomartyr in St. Louis. She also taught at St. Rose of Lima in Murfreesboro, TN and St. Peter’s in Quincy, IL. She evidently had a very positive impact on the Martinsburg students during her first year of teaching. Sister Marie Fennewald, a second grader that year, recalls that three students chose their confirmation name in honor of Sister Dorothy Rose – one choosing Dorothy and two choosing Rose.

Following her years as a teacher in the States, Sister Rose Marie ministered for twenty years in education, pastoral care and formation in Bolivia and Peru. Everywhere she served, but perhaps most notably in South America, she brought a can-do, will-do attitude. It was her idea to expand our Peruvian mission beyond Lima to the rural areas. She and Sister Josepha began serving in the Santa Valley in 1970. The Winter 1972 issue of *O’Fallon in Focus* described their “normal days” of catechetical instructions in seven villages, work with Mothers’ Clubs and youth groups and many other tasks. Their “abnormal days” were dawn-to-dusk efforts to distribute food, water, and medical supplies to those left homeless by a major flood in March 1972. What “kept us going

despite the muscle-wrenching, nerve-wracking work of those interminable weeks. . . was that we were able to do our bit to bring comfort and aid. . . I guess that's the reason why we go to Peru or Bolivia or Finland, to Las Cruces, Omaha, St. Louis, or any of our missions. We go to lead our brothers and sisters to dry land, there to break for them the bread of God's word and to show them the way to their real home."

Upon returning to the U.S., Sister Rose Marie ministered to disabled adults in the Personal Enrichment Program (PEP) in O'Fallon and with the Spanish-speaking communities of Alpine and Marfa, TX. She also served as Motherhouse administrator and as coordinator and maintenance worker at St. Elizabeth Convent. In 2006 she began volunteering in various capacities at the Motherhouse and since 2018 has ministered through Prayer and Presence at Meadowlands.

Rose Marie loved to play cards and pool and the occasional practical joke. As her memory began to fade, she often cracked a joke to divert attention from herself and to put others at ease. Concern for others was always primary.

Always close to her family, Sister Rose Marie experienced many sorrowful farewells. She was preceded in death by her parents; her brothers, Father Arthur, Richard, Victor, George, and Father Norbert; by her sisters, Sr. Barbara Rose, MM; Margaret and Teresa. She is survived by her sister and brother-in-law, Agnes and Thomas Kelly; and sisters-in-law Margaret and Laurie Mersinger; and by nieces, nephews and many friends. Let us hold them close in prayer as they mourn the loss of her earthly presence.

Sister Rose Marie's body will be returned to St. Joseph Chapel at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, and her wake will be from 3:30 – 8 p.m. with a Prayer Service of Thanksgiving at 7 p.m. Her wake will continue Wednesday, November 20, from 9 – 10:45 a.m. with her Funeral Mass at 11 a.m., all in St. Joseph Chapel.

As a missionary to both Peru and Bolivia, Sister Rose Marie experienced the joy of many homecomings. She now enjoys the ultimate Homecoming. The words of Sunday's first reading have become a reality for her -- "For you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays." We take comfort in knowing she experiences this wonderful healing!

Sincerely,

Sr. Janice Bader

Sister Janice Bader