

SISTER M. EMERIA JIRIK, SSND



Sister M. Emeria Jirik, 94, died Friday, February 3, 2012, in Notre Dame Health Care Center, Good Counsel Campus, Mankato, Minnesota. In her SSND ministry she served as a primary teacher, reading specialist, Title I coordinator, Reading Center tutor and director, sacristan, seamstress and driver.

Sister Emeria, the second of ten children, was born in 1917 on the family farm near Webster, Minnesota, and baptized Mary Lillian one day later at Immaculate Conception Church, Lonsdale. She attended Immaculate Conception grade school, boarding with the sisters for four of those years. It was here that she came to know and love the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Following 8th grade graduation, she continued at Immaculate Conception for its 2-year high school program. After 10th grade she worked for a year, and then finished high school at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, completing her senior year (1936-37) as an SSND candidate. She spent two more years in the candidature, one as a student teacher on mission and the other as a college student. Reception into the novitiate, where she was given the name Sister M. Emeria, followed in 1939, and she professed first vows in 1940.

For almost 30 years, Sister Emeria taught primary grades, and she was known as an excellent teacher and an excellent cook. Her teaching ministry included St. Mathias, Hampton (1940-44); St. Mary, Shakopee (1944-45); St. Peter, New Haven, Iowa (1945-48); St. Stanislaus, Winona (1948-50); John Ireland, St. Peter (1951-52); St. Anne, Wabasso (1952-57); St. Stanislaus, St. Paul (1957-60); St. Casimir, Wells (1960-67); and SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato (1967-69). In some of those places, she also served as the parish organist and gave music lessons. During this time she earned her B.A. from the College of St. Teresa in Winona (1952) and her M.A. as a reading specialist from Mankato State College (1968). Beginning in 1969, her educational ministry was focused on reading. She worked as a reading specialist for the Mankato Catholic schools until 1973, and as a tutor and later director of the Good Counsel Reading Center (1973-79). Her work as director of the Title I program for the Mankato parochial schools (1975-81) coincided with her Reading Center position.

In 1979, Sister Emeria also began a part-time community service ministry at Good Counsel, which expanded to full-time in 1981. She assisted in the priests' department, endearing herself to the several resident chaplains who served Good Counsel during that time. Her deep love was the ministry of sacristan. When she was on mission, she served as sacristan in several parishes and supervised the servers. At Good Counsel, she delighted in working with flowers, arranging – and rearranging – them into attractive bouquets to enhance the altar and other worship spaces, and took great care in preparing for the Mass and other services. Sister Emeria was also a driver, often taking sisters to visit relatives and friends. An excellent seamstress, Sister Emeria took great pride in her embroidered dishtowels, once earning over \$1000 at a Craft Fair. Her 1985 Jubilee trip to Rome and a 1990 Heritage Workshop in Baltimore were high points in her life.

She is survived by two SSND sisters, Sisters Paulissa and Rita Jirik, and a brother John (Eleanor). She was preceded in death by her parents Joseph and Anna (Marek) Jirik, her sisters Helen Smisek and Rose Skluzacek, and her brothers Frank, George, Joe and Ray Jirik.