



### **SISTER MARY MATTHEW MICHEL, SSND**

Our beloved Sister Mary Matthew Michel, 85, died peacefully at 7:35 a.m., Friday, November 25, 2011, in Isidore Hall, Good Counsel Campus, Mankato, Minnesota. In her ministry, Sister Mary Matthew served as a primary teacher and finance office staff member.



Sister Mary Matthew, the fourth of twelve children, was born February 9, 1926, near Springbrook, Iowa, and baptized Dula Mae. She attended SS. Peter & Paul School, Springbrook, where she was taught by School Sisters of Notre Dame. Both of her parents had also attended SS. Peter & Paul. After 8<sup>th</sup> grade, knowing that she wanted to be a sister, she became an aspirant at Good Counsel Academy, Mankato, over 300 miles from her home.

She entered the candidature in 1943, following her high school graduation. She was received into the novitiate in 1945 and given her father's name, Mary Matthew.

As a second year candidate, she taught 1<sup>st</sup> grade at St. Stanislaus School, Winona, where she taught first grade. Following profession in 1946, she continued her primary teaching ministry at St. Albert, Albertville, Minnesota (1946-48); St. Matthew, St. Paul (1948-53); and Immaculate Conception, Gilbertville, Iowa, (1953-64). In December 1963, she injured her back, which required an extended hospital stay. Because of the back injury and foot problems, she could not to continue teaching in Gilbertville, so in May 1964, she moved to Good Counsel. She underwent two foot surgeries and skin grafting that summer, and was assigned to teach second grade at Holy Rosary, North Mankato. Because of continuing health problems, her orthopedic surgeon suggested that she leave the teaching profession, which she did in January 1968.

At the same time, the province accountant had become disabled, and Sister Mary Matthew was asked if she would help with the province bookkeeping. She consented and worked in this role until 1987. In 1987, Sister Mary Matthew became the Province Medical Claims Secretary, a position that she held until 1999. At Sister Mary Matthew's retirement gathering, Sister Katherine DuVal, Provincial Leader, summarized her ministry: "Your sisters who have dealt personally with you can attest to your detective know-how, persevering service and organizational skills as you deciphered and tracked every lost, confusing or incorrect bill. . . And, over the years, you have had to adjust to five different leadership groups – no small accomplishment! . . . You have been an invaluable resource to the council, the finance office and the province."

A high point of Sister Mary Matthew's life was joining her family in 1995 to celebrate the International Kilburg Fest in Luxembourg. Over 85 members of the Kilburg clan were guests at a famous castle which once belonged to the family in Vianden. The group visited vineyards that have been in the family for over 500 years and also toured areas of Germany with Kilburg connections.

Sister Mary Matthew did not really retire. She continued to give community service in a variety of ways until just a few months before her death. Whether she was shredding documents, clipping labels, assembling folder contents, or a variety of other tasks, she willingly gave of her time (and, in season, shared her opinions of the Minnesota Twins' success and failure).

May Sister Mary Matthew now enjoy the heavenly rest promised by Jesus to those who labor for His cause, the heavenly rest of those spending their eternity in God's presence.

She is survived by seven sisters and two brothers, an SSND niece, Sister Janet Heiar, and other nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Mathew and Julia (Kilburg) Michel, one sister and one brother.