



**Sister Mary Albert Bartsch**  
**October 10, 1919 – April 13, 2017**

Sister Mary Albert died at Notre Dame Convent on April 13, 2017 at the age of 97 and in her 78<sup>th</sup> year as a School Sister of Notre Dame.

Mary was born in Salvador, Saskatchewan on October 10, 1919, the third of eight children. Her father, Albert, was born in Russia and later moved to North Dakota where he married her mother, Armella Bichler.

From a young age, Mary took care of her younger brothers, since her mother was sickly and in the hospital. While visiting her mother in the hospital, a nun put her arm around Mary and said, "This little girl will one day be a Sister." That was the beginning of her desire to enter the convent.

Although Mary attended public school, catechetical instructions were given during the summer. At age 15 she went to Leipzig Convent, Saskatchewan as a junior candidate. A few months later she joined the candidates in Waterdown. Within a year Mary received a telegram from her mother asking her to come home. Her mother wanted Mary to join the Ursulines, so that she could be near her home. However, Mary's love for SSND influenced her to take the long journey back to Waterdown. On July 27, 1938 she was received as Novice Mary Albert and the following year she professed her vows.

From 1939-1946 Sister Mary Albert worked in the Motherhouse kitchen. In the summer of that year she volunteered to go to England. To her surprise she was asked to go to Faversham. Although there were only four sisters in the community, she prepared a hot meal at noon for 60 school children. The following year she was missioned to Lingfield, England. The sisters and boarders lived together in Battnor's Hall. At that time, the kitchen facilities were quite inadequate, yet, Sister Mary Albert prepared tasty meals for the community and the students.

In 1952 she returned to Faversham until 1954. Her next mission was in Ladner, British Columbia. From 1955- 1959 she served as homemaker in convents in Ontario. In 1959 she ministered in Leipzig, Saskatchewan, a day and boarding school until 1965.

In 1966 Sister Mary Albert went back to Lingfield. A new wing had been built. The large kitchen had adequate equipment with big ovens and boilers to prepare noon meals for day students, numbering more than 350, plus 70 boarders. Although there were four sisters in the kitchen, there was no processed or frozen produce. Vegetables were grown in the convent garden. Each day she fed the chickens and collected the eggs. In spite of long hours in the kitchen, Sister Mary Albert found additional time to work in the vegetable garden. She also typed essays for the sisters who were studying. Sister Mary Albert was always cheerful and never complained about the heavy workload.

When the sisters withdrew from Lingfield in 1986, Sister Mary Albert went to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. There, she visited the elderly in nursing homes. Also, she was asked to prepare meals for the Bishop which she did for several months. Always eager to learn, she attended lectures, workshops and retreats given at Queen's House Retreat Centre. Sister Mary Albert readily assisted community members living in Saskatoon who needed extra help.

In 2008 she moved to Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown. In her retirement Sister Mary Albert enjoyed piano lessons. In the summer months she would sit outdoors praying and reading. In the autumn, she could be seen in the orchard, gathering apples to make apple sauce. With her computer she kept in touch with family and friends in Saskatchewan. As her health declined, she found it difficult that she could no longer move as freely as formerly. However, during her last days, she was, consciously, at peace.

Sister Mary Albert died on Holy Thursday. The Gospel Acclamation for the liturgy was, "I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you."

Throughout her life, Sister Mary Albert considered her ministry as a service of love.

Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Albert was celebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, chaplain, on April 18. She is survived by nieces and nephews living in western Canada.

S. Joan Helm