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of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2017

**Sister Paul Therese Saiko
Teacher, Spiritual Director**

Mankato, Minn.—Sister Paul Therese Saiko, 83, died Monday, April 17, 2017, in Notre Dame Health Care, Mankato, Minnesota. In her SSND ministry she taught elementary grade students, served as Novice Director, was a member of the Mankato Provincial Council and was on the faculty of the Saint Paul Major Seminary.



Sister Paul Therese, the youngest of seven children, was welcomed into the Saiko family on December 1, 1933, in St. Paul. She was baptized Phyllis Therese on December 10 at the Church of St. Agnes. In 1938, Phyllis enrolled in kindergarten at St. Agnes School. She wrote of her school days, “It was there that I came to admire the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who were not only excellent teachers, but great friends.”

As a high school student, Phyllis began to think seriously of religious life. Her brother was already a member of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and her sister Dorothy had become a School Sister of Notre Dame. As a sophomore, she discussed this with her parents and made the difficult decision to leave St. Agnes, which she loved, to become a junior aspirant at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato. She graduated from Good Counsel in June, 1951, and entered the SSND candidature in August. As a second year candidate she did her practice-teaching at St. Peter, Hokah. At her reception into the novitiate, she was given the name Sister Mary Paul Therese (which was often shortened to “PT” by friends and colleagues). She professed first vows in 1954.

In her first years of SSND ministry, Sister Paul Therese taught at John Ireland, St. Peter (1954-56); Sacred Heart, St. Paul (1956-59); St. Joseph the Worker, Mankato (1959-61); Holy Childhood, St. Paul (1961-65); and St. Anne, Bismarck, North Dakota (1965-67), where she was also principal. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Mount Mary College in 1963.

In 1967 Sister Margareta Bertrand, the Provincial Leader, invited her to prepare for a new service within the community. Sister Alberta Janda, the novice director, was nearing retirement. Sister Paul Therese was asked to prepare to be the next novice director. She spent the 1967-68 year studying theology and scripture at the University of San Francisco, where she later completed a master’s degree in theology. In 1968 she met her first of several classes of novices, and continued in this ministry until 1975.

Sister Paul Therese was elected to the SSND Mankato Provincial Council in 1975. Following the completion of her second term in 1983, Sister Paul Therese spent the next year on sabbatical.

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In 1984, Sister Paul Therese was invited to join the formation staff as a spiritual director at St. John Vianney Minor Seminary and the Saint Paul Major Seminary. These two part-time positions eventually became a full-time position at the Saint Paul Seminary. In her 30 years at the seminary, she worked for five rectors and with eight spiritual directors with the following titles: Academic Advisor; Teacher; Full-Time Formation Faculty Member; Admission Committee Member; Coordinator of Evaluations; Coordinator of the Wednesday Morning Spirituality Program; and Coordinator of the Retreats and Days of Recollection. As a member of the seminary staff, Sister Paul Therese had many opportunities for education and enrichment. She found traveling to Jerusalem a number of times to be the most enriching, and wrote about these experiences, "Here it is where Scripture came alive in a whole new way. . . . The land where Jesus walked not only has enriched my teaching; it has entered into my very being as daily study of it was part of my life." She retired from the seminary in 2014.

Sister Paul Therese shared her love of Scripture with many others as she conducted days of recollection, taught classes to sisters, or gave talks at parishes. In her retirement years, it was her plan to continue this ministry. Her final presentation was a reflection on Scripture and the Psalms to the Mankato Serra Club in March.

The Funeral Liturgy, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Monday, April 24, in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in the Good Counsel Cemetery. She is survived by her nieces and nephew, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Paulina (Hopfauf) Saiko, her sisters, Sister M. Cecile, SSND (Dorothy) and Rosemary Opitz, and her brothers, Father Bill, SVD, George (who died in infancy), Bob and Jim. Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Retirement Fund, c/o Resource Development, 170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN, 56001-3138, or online at www.ssndcentralpacific.org/Partner/Donation.

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