



**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 8, 2017

Sister Dorothy (M. Annella) Merth, SSND
Music teacher, kinesiologist

Mankato, Minnesota—Sister Dorothy (M. Annella) Merth, 100, died Saturday, October 28, 2017 in Notre Dame Health Care, Good Counsel Hill, Mankato, Minnesota. She celebrated her 100th birthday in September, but after that, her condition steadily declined and she recently entered Hospice.



Sister Dorothy was born on September 12, 1917, in St. Paul and eleven days later, baptized Dorothy Mary at St. Agnes Church. In 1922, Dorothy registered as a member of the St. Agnes kindergarten class, the first of thirteen years of Catholic education under the direction of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. In October 1923, when Dorothy was in first grade, her mother died giving birth to a younger brother. Dorothy's paternal grandparents moved from Sleepy Eye to St. Paul to take care of the family.

Dorothy graduated from eighth grade in June 1931 and, later that month, her father remarried. Dorothy also had to make a decision that summer about where she would continue her education. She had received a scholarship to Good Counsel Academy, and decided to enroll there as an aspirant. She graduated from the Academy in 1935 and entered the candidature that fall.

In the candidature, she studied music and participated in a National Music Clubs Association contest held in Duluth, an experience she found valuable. As a second-year candidate, she assisted with music classes at Sacred Heart School, St. Paul. In July 1937, she was received into the novitiate and given the name Sister Mary Annella. (She later returned to her baptismal name.) In October she received the news of the birth of a little sister, Catherine (the future Sister Therese Marie).

For the next forty years, Sister Dorothy served as a music educator at the following Minnesota schools: John Ireland, St. Peter; St. Felix, Wabasha; St. Philip and SS. Cyril & Methodius, both in Minneapolis; St. Francis de Sales, St. Agnes and St. Matthew, all in St. Paul; SS. Peter & Paul, Mankato; Holy Rosary, North Mankato; and St. Mark, Shakopee; as well as St. Mary, New England, North Dakota. She earned a BA in Music Education from Mount Mary in 1949 and a Master of Music Education from MacPhail College of Music in Minneapolis in 1966.

In 1979, she became the Director of Teacher Placement for Archdiocesan Education Office and was certified in the Teacher-Perceiver and Administrator-Perceiver programs. In 1983 she was invited to be an auditor/advocate for the Archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal, helping individuals move through the annulment process. She served in this capacity until 1993.

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While working in the tribunal, Sister Dorothy faced serious health issues and became acquainted with the Touch for Health Kinesiology Association. Beginning in 1987, Sister Dorothy accrued many hours of training and became a Touch for Health practitioner, who incorporated prayer for healing into the process when appropriate. She continued in this ministry until 2010, when she retired to Good Counsel. And on the Hill, she also provided Touch for Health to sisters and others as her own health permitted.

Music and the arts were always important to Sister Dorothy. She had an electric piano in her apartment that she played for enjoyment and, during her years in St. Paul, she served as a weekend parish organist. She was blessed with an excellent singing voice and was a member of the Cathedral Choir in St. Paul. After coming to Good Counsel, she was a member of the Chapel Choir for several years.

The funeral liturgy, with Father John Kunz as presider, was held Friday, November 3, in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, followed by burial in Good Counsel Cemetery. A prayer service of remembrance preceded the funeral liturgy. She is survived by her sister, Sister Therese Marie Merth, SSND, her brother George, nieces and nephews, including Sister Ann Marie Merth, SSND, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND Associates. She was preceded in death by her parents, Rudolph and Anna (Hafner) Merth, and her brothers, Father Robert and William. 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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