

February 18, 2019

Sister Rita Marie Schneider, SSND
Teacher, marriage tribunal advocate

Mankato, Minnesota – Sister Rita Marie Schneider, SSND, 86, died Monday, February 18, 2019, at Notre Dame Health Care, in Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato, Minnesota. In her SSND ministry she served as a primary grade teacher and as a member of a diocesan marriage tribunal.

The oldest of eight, Sister Rita Marie was born in Minneapolis on August 24, 1932, to Ralph and Rita (Connor) Schneider. At her baptism, she was given the name Mary Ann. In 1946, she entered the aspiranture at Good Counsel Academy. Mary Ann graduated from Good Counsel Academy in June 1950, and she entered the SSND candidature in August. As a second-year candidate, she taught at SS. Peter & Paul School, Springbrook, Iowa. She was received into the novitiate in 1952 and given the name Sister Rita Marie. She professed first vows in 1953. She earned a BA in history and elementary education from the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, and an MA in reading from Cardinal Stritch College in Milwaukee in 1973



For one year, she taught primary grades at St. Matthew School, St. Paul, Minnesota. Over the next 25 years, she taught at St. John the Baptist, Mankato; St. Joseph, Grenville, South Dakota; St. Adalbert, Silver Lake; St. Casimir, Wells; St. Mary, Worthington; Sacred Heart, St. Paul; and John Ireland, St. Peter. After earning her degree in reading, she became the reading specialist in several of the schools where she taught. In most of the parishes, she was also the sacristan, a religious education teacher and a leader of Bible sharing groups. She was a lector, song leader, choir member and led word and communion services when needed.

In St. Peter, Sister Rita Marie became involved in Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) weekends. She also served on Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter teams. Sister Rita Marie's interest in helping families led to a ministry change in 1981. As procurator, she represented the person petitioning for annulment. As the advocate, she guided the person through the annulment process. During her years in Superior, Wisconsin, Sister Rita Marie was also instrumental in revitalizing the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

Sister Rita Marie retired in 2005 and spent one year in Owatonna, Minnesota, where she was active on the Food Shelf Board. In 2006, she taught in the Learning Center. She also offered her services to the Winona Diocesan Tribunal, in Winona, Minnesota, first as an auditor and later as an advocate. She continued in this service until 2011. At Our Lady of Good Counsel, she was a choir member, served as sacristan and was a leader of word and communion.

She is survived by her sisters Helen Gunderson, Catherine Dickhausen, Dorothy Hughes and Corinne Anderson; and her brothers James, Richard and Raymond and their spouses; nieces and nephews; and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame and SSND associates. She was preceded in death by her parents Ralph and Rita (Connor) Schneider.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Resource Development, 170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN 56001 or online at <https://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/give>.