

Sister Leona Steinbeisser, CSJ
May, 8, 1918 ~ August 4, 2016

Sister Leona was born on May 8, 1918 in Morton, Minnesota. How her family settled in Morton is a long story. Her parents Grace Ruhland, and Joseph Steinbeisser met and married in Germany. It is not clear when they came to the United States, but they were encouraged and sponsored by an uncle of her mother. This must have made entering the United States less painful and the trip all the way to Minnesota less stressful. They settled on a farm and began their family.

Sister Leona was baptized Mary Ann and had three brothers and three sisters: Andrew, Joseph, John, Barbara, Catherine and Agnes. Barbara, the eldest, loved and nurtured all her siblings.

For most of her elementary and high school years, Mary Ann attended the Morton public schools. For two years she stayed with her sister Barbara in Watertown, SD and attended Immaculate Conception School, where she first met the Sisters of St. Joseph. When she returned to Morton, her pastor, Fr. O'Hara, encouraged and fostered her vocation to become a Sisters of St. Joseph.

She joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in St. Paul, September 7, 1937, entered the novitiate in 1938, and professed her first vows in 1940. Her first ministry assignment was to teach second grade at St. John's school in St. Paul while living at St. Agatha's Conservatory. On March 20, 1941, she was missioned to Trinity Hospital, Jamestown ND. It was in Jamestown that her career in dietetics began.

After making final vows in 1943, she attended the College of St. Catherine. Sister James Agnes Fogarty, CSJ, instructed and mentored Sister Leona as well as Sister Helen Austin Gillespie, CSJ and Sister Anne Noel Willette, CSJ. Sister Leona began her career as a dietitian in 1947.

Upon completion of a B.S. degree in nutrition, she returned to Trinity Hospital in Jamestown. After a year at Trinity Hospital, she was accepted for an internship at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, where she observed and learned the practical aspects of the work of a dietitian. In 1949, Leona was missioned to St. John's Hospital, in Fargo, N.D. until she was assigned to Bethany in 1961.

Sister Leona served as Food Service Director at Bethany from 1963 to 1987.

Retirement from kitchen and dietetic duties did not include abandonment from doughnut making. After the bakery that supplied doughnuts for the community celebration and wakes closed, Sister Leona took on the role of baking donuts using second hand machines. She quickly became known as the "best doughnut maker".

At Bethany, Sister Leona enjoyed working in ceramics with Lillian Waldera, CSJ, where Leona did all the firing. She could also sit down at any time and help finish the most complicated jigsaw puzzle!

Sister Leona was preceded in death by her parents, Grace Ruhland and Joseph; her three brothers: Andrew, Joseph and John; her three sisters: Barbara, Catherine and Agnes. She is survived by twenty-four nieces and nephews and many grandnieces and grandnephews; the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Consociates and her caregivers at Carondelet Village.

She died at Carondelet Village on August 4, 2016. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on August 8, 2016 in Our Lady of the Presentation Chapel. Interment was at Resurrection Cemetery in Mendota Heights, MN.

May Leona rest in the peace and love of God!