

Sister Rosilda Thiel, CSA

Sister Rosilda (Alvera) Thiel, CSA, (83) died Friday morning, June 17, 2011, in St. Francis Home where she resided.

On May 9, 1928, in St. John's (Hilbert), Wisconsin, Peter and Rose Meier Thiel welcomed their fifth daughter and sixth child, naming her Alvera Cyrilla. A second son, born in 1931, completed the family of seven siblings. Growing up on a farm close to the soil and nature left its mark on Alvera and her siblings as they grew into adulthood. So did the faith of their staunch Catholic parents. The children were educated at St. John's Catholic School by the Sisters of St. Agnes.

Alvera is remembered as a "tomboy" by her sisters. She was as at home on a tractor as she was in the kitchen.

Alvera's love of life and children made her decision to enter the convent a real struggle. Nevertheless, she made the short journey to Fond du Lac in 1947 at the age of 19. Much later she wrote, "I know I chose the best road for me." Alvera attended St. Agnes High School and professed first vows in 1952, receiving the name Sister Rosilda.

Sister Rosilda began ministry in the dietary departments of Marian College and St. Agnes Hospital. After completing a bachelor's degree in Foods and Nutrition from the College of St. Teresa in Winona, Minnesota in 1956, she served a one-year dietetic internship at Good Samaritan Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. For the next thirty-two years Sister was the Dietary/Food Service Director in hospitals and institutions in Kansas and Wisconsin. These were years of self-giving, long hours and hard work, yet the labor of creating healthy, tasty meals for people allowed Sister Rosilda to express her motherly instincts.

Still Sister Rosilda longed for more direct service and interaction directly with people and families. After a sabbatical and training in Parish Service in the late eighties, she began eighteen years of loving parish service at St. Albert the Great Parish in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Her simple desire was to "try to help whenever I'm needed." To the people of St. Albert's, she was their "Sister Rosie." Whether she was visiting the sick, babysitting for a family, giving blood to the Red Cross, or bartending at the parish festival, Sister Rosie was always looking out for others. Her smile and hugs were readily given to all who came, especially to children. She never put on airs, saying "I'm a plain Jane."



It was a sad day in April 2008 when Sister Rosie announced her need to retire to Nazareth Court/Center. Failing health made it impossible to continue without nursing care. "I have served God and God's people all my life," she wrote to parishioners, "and I will continue to do so, perhaps in a different way than I did with you, but always with a loving heart and willing spirit." Her Sisters welcomed her presence and the people of St. Albert continued to stay in contact with her. For the last several months, Sister Rosilda's suffering increased and led to her residence in St. Francis Home. A merciful God called her to the banquet table in heaven, where she is no doubt happily at home.

Preceding Sister Rosilda in death were her parents: Peter and Rose (Meier) Thiel; two brothers: Ermin and Ronald; and three sisters: Esther Martin, Lillian Berchem and Armella Swabenlander. She is survived by her sister, Eleanore Thiel of Chilton, Wisconsin; loving nieces and nephews, and the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed and ministered.

Visitation: Visitation for Sister Rosilda will be held Tuesday, June 21, from 2:00 till 6:15 p.m., at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett St., Fond du Lac. A prayer service will be held Tuesday at 3:00 p.m.

Services: A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Tuesday, June 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac. Father Ken Smits, OFM Cap will preside. Burial will take place at a later date in St. John's (Hilbert).

Memorials may be directed to the Sisters of St. Agnes Development Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of St. Francis Home and Nazareth Court and Center for their care of Sister Rosilda in her retirement years and to the staff of Hospice Hope for their support in these last months.

Zacherl Funeral Home is serving the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Agnes.