



Golden Jubilee, 1998

Sister M. Dolores (Gervase) Chartrand, OP
Born to earthly life: October 2, 1928
Religious profession: August 15, 1948
Entered eternal life: May 24, 2016

*Serve one another
as good stewards of God's varied grace.*

1 Peter 4, 10

“‘God’s word is trustworthy and true.’ Sister Dolores knew that and she based her life on it,” said her niece Tarri Blick, with obvious affection. And, added Sister Carol Wester, “When you were with Dolores, you had her full attention; I think she was that way with everyone she met.”



First Communion

The sentiment was shared consistently by family and community members at Dolores’ remembering service.

Dolores Helen, born October 2, 1928, in Richmond, Michigan, was the second of Alfred F. and Anna

Schweiger Chartrand’s eventual five children. She was baptized at Saint Clement’s Parish in Center Line. Raised on a large poultry farm near Capac, she passed her elementary grades in a one-room school house. She longed, however, to attend a Catholic school, and her wish was fulfilled in tenth grade when her family moved to Center Line and she enrolled in Saint Clement’s High School, staffed by the Racine Dominicans.

Dolores was just shy of seventeen when on August 28, 1945, she traveled to Racine to become a Dominican aspirant and continue her high school education to graduation. In February



Little Dolores

of 1946 she entered the postulate, and on August 4 was received into the novitiate with a new name, Sister Gervase of the Fortitude of Jesus. (In 1968 she would resume her baptismal name.)



Dolores as an aspirant, with her parents

service workshop at Dominican College in 1963 and a cake decorating class at Milwaukee Vocational School in 1965 — she became an accomplished homemaker, cook, and baker. She took pride in preparing well-balanced, attractive meals for the community she served and for her family. “I always liked to give whatever food I prepared a special touch of seasonings and a final touch of parsley or other edible decoration that meets the eye and makes it attractive,” she said. Attentive to stewardship, she invented tasty ways to prepare leftovers and use all food before it could spoil. Sister Rita Lui, a recipient of Dolores’ creativity while living with her in Detroit, likened her culinary endeavors to art, commenting, “She prepared food with such class. Her meals really were works of art.”

Learning first with mentors in the motherhouse kitchen and later enhancing her skills through classes and workshops — a food



About 1945



As a postulant, with her father

Wherever she served as cook, the refrigerators in her kitchens were always full, and there was always a plate of cookies ready for the sisters to help themselves. While she couldn't bear to throw anything away, she never let anything spoil. And food wasn't the only thing she couldn't bear to throw away, as anyone who ever helped her move could testify!



About 1945, in the motherhouse yard



An eager novice on visiting Sunday

After her first profession on August 4, 1948, Sister Dolores continued to serve for another year in the motherhouse kitchen. Then, in the fall of 1949, she began two years of service at the residence of the archbishop of Santa Fe.

Terms of ministry followed at Saint Francis Xavier in Merrill, Wisconsin (1951 to 1955); Saint Luke's in Plain, Wisconsin (1955 to 1957); Saint Pius in Chicago (1957 to 1962); Saint Benedict the Moor in Milwaukee (1962 to 1965); Nativity in Detroit (1965 to 1971); Assumption Grotto in Detroit (1971 to 1977); Saint Patrick Senior Citizen Center in Detroit (1977 to September of 1982); independently providing home care for Detroit's elderly (1982 to 1984) and then through Renaissance Health Care (1984 to 1988) and Royal Home Care (1988 to 1997). From 1997 until

2001 she ministered as senior companion to Detroit's elderly in their homes.

Dolores was seventy-three when, in 2001, she moved to Siena Center and began to volunteer as a visitor in the Senior Companion Program, faithful to those she visited until declining health began to limit that activity and finally made it impossible. Her supportive presence was also felt in the Siena Retreat Center. In spare hours she began to frequent Siena Center's art room. "She loved painting and grew in confidence the more she did it," observed Sister Barbara Kukla, director of the program. "She was proud of her paintings and always expressed gratitude for suggestions anyone offered."

Aside from Dolores' creative abilities, she was cherished for simply being who she was. "She made everyone feel welcome and was a friend to so many people," Siena staff member Marian Faye reflected. "She was one of the kindest people I ever knew," said Pat Shutts, expressing gratitude for Dolores' strong support of Siena Retreat Center through prayer and active interest in its programs. Pat and many others marveled at her positive attitude no matter what was transpiring around her. She was never heard to make a negative comment about anyone.



With her mother, about 1950



Painting a still life with S. Mary Vosters

She managed to spend time outdoors most days, even when confined to a wheel chair, shielding her face from the sun with a fancy straw hat.

She was an avid fan of Detroit's football team, the Tigers. She so treasured her Tiger mascot Buddy that she eventually asked to have the stuffed figure buried with her.

On the morning of May 19, 2016, Dolores was experiencing shortness of breath and chest pain, and was taken to



The lady in the straw hat

the emergency room at All Saints Hospital. There her cardiologist determined that her congestive heart failure was such that her heart's pumping ability was severely compromised with a backup of fluid in her lungs, shortness of breath, and episodes of chest pain and fatigue. No further treatment would improve it, and it was uncertain whether she would have the ability to regain her strength with therapy. Just after midnight on May 24, she experienced an episode of shortness of breath and was given medication to make her comfortable. She subsequently dozed off, and crossed into eternity peacefully while sleeping, just as she had prayed she might. She was eighty-seven years old.

She was survived by two classmates, Sisters Irene McCarthy and Virgine Lawinger.

Her funeral liturgy was celebrated at Siena Center on the morning of May 27, with Sister Sharon Simon preaching. Her body was interred in the community plot in Holy Cross Cemetery in Caledonia.

Dolores' devotion to her family was clearly reciprocal, as reflections were read at her remembering service from those unable to attend: "Sister was always

interested in what other people were doing.... She was the perfect example of love," wrote her niece Shari. "Having S. Dolores as my sweet aunt was like having two moms.... When I was little, I was in awe of her. I thought she was an angel sent by God," wrote her niece Sue.

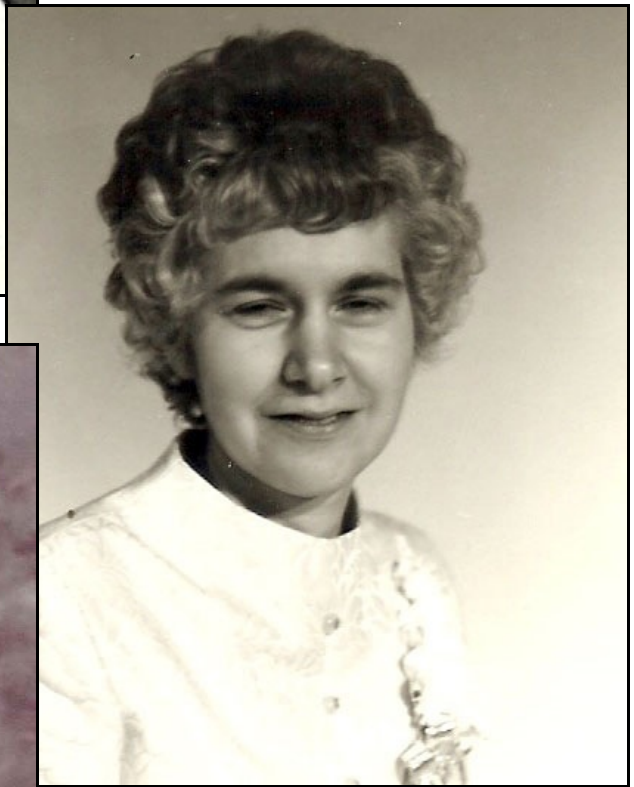
As Racine Dominican president Sister Maryann McMahon said in welcoming guests to Dolores' funeral, "Sister Dolores was joyful, congenial and prayerful. She was always interested in others and was happiest when she could love and care for others."



At a Brewers' game, with Sisters Thomasina Zajac and Catherine Wildenberg



1945



Silver Jubilee, 1973



1960



Dolores in her kitchen



Meet Buddy!



Final Vow Summer



Silver Jubilee



Golden Jubilee