

Sister Carolyn Leffler, OP



Born to Earthly Life on August 15, 1929

First Profession on August 15, 1950

Entered Eternal Life on April 7, 2021

DOROTHY MAE Leffler was born in Detroit, Michigan on August 15, 1929, on the feast of the Assumption. She was one of three daughters born to Edward and Ida Leffler. Her family belonged to Assumption Grotto Parish in Detroit.

Dorothy Mae was profoundly influenced by Racine Dominicans who taught her in third through eighth grade. She left home at age 17 to go to Racine, Wisconsin and join the Racine Dominican Community. In a letter of reference, S. Carolyn's pastor said "from her previous record here, she should, in every way, prove a worthy candidate for this chosen calling." She professed vows on the feast of the Assumption (her birthday) in 1950 and was given the name Sister Carolyn. Because of this, the feast of the Assumption was always a special day for her.

S. Carolyn received a bachelor's degree from Dominican College, Racine and would find her ministry and passion in the classroom. Sr. Carolyn described teaching as the love of her life. Friends and family shared that she was an excellent and very dedicated primary grade teacher during her career which spanned more than 65 years. A fellow educator said "She's a marvelous teacher – one of those quiet people who never draws attention to herself, but who gives so much to others." She taught for several years in Wisconsin before moving to Michigan, where she spent most of her teaching career.

S. Carolyn loved teaching God's little ones "because of their desire to learn and their great enthusiasm." She built lifelong relationships with her students and their families as well the staff, parishioners and even local businesses. She had the gift of gab and used it often, especially when she was convincing folks to buy raffle tickets. She sold many tickets, so many that she was the queen of sales at her parish for many years. After Sr. Carolyn retired from teaching, she wasn't quite ready to stop working so she served in pastoral ministry in Michigan for several years.

S. Carolyn loved life and loved reaching out to others. She called people on their birthdays and sent numerous cards and notes to her family, friends, community and neighbors over the years. She was always concerned about how others were doing and did her best to help people smile and laugh by sharing one of her many jokes. Many in the community recalled, "you couldn't have a conversation with S. Carolyn without hearing a joke or two." She truly believed that laughter was the best medicine.

She moved back to Racine in 2020 and was a welcoming presence around Siena as well. S. Carolyn was always very appreciative of all those who helped her in any way.

She was a woman of strong faith. She had a very well-worn booklet of prayers that she said whenever she was standing in line for meals and she faithfully attended Mass and Word Services throughout her life. S. Carolyn had a deep relationship with God and clearly knew that God was in charge.

We are grateful for S. Carolyn's faithful commitment to being Dominican, for her love, care, humor, compassion, kindness, prayers and for all the ways she was a reflection of God's love.

