



Sister Esther Schwehr, OSB

Sister Esther (Marcella) Schwehr of Mother of God Monastery, SD died Friday, September 26, 2014 at the Estelline Nursing and Care Center. She was 98 years of age and a professed member of the Monastery for 75 years. A Liturgical Wake will be held on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 1, 2014 in the monastery chapel with burial in the monastery cemetery.

Marcella Mary Schwehr was born October 6, 1915 on a farm 7.5 miles southeast of Belfield, ND. She was the third of sixteen children born to Edward Pius and Elizabeth (Winkels) Schwehr. Marcella's father promised his children that he would send them to a Catholic high school, if they desired, even if he had to mortgage the farm. He did mortgage the farm and when the hard years of dust storms, drought, grasshoppers, and army worms came, he actually lost the farm. Her family then moved to Billings, Montana.

Marcella graduated from high school and had one year of college at Good Counsel Academy in Mankato, MN when she began teaching. She taught school for two years and then returned home for one year before entering Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton in August, 1937. In 1942, Sister Esther made perpetual vows.

Sister Esther earned a B.A. degree in Education from Northern State in Aberdeen and a Master's Degree in Education from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion. Throughout her teaching career, she ministered in various schools and parishes in North and South Dakota and in York, NE. Gradually music was included with her teaching, both giving private lessons and playing the organ.

Sister Esther was a founding member of Mother of God Monastery. In 1995, when the new monastery was being constructed, she and a group of Sisters were missioned in Gettysburg, SD. She returned to the monastery in the year 2000. She was a resident in the Estelline Nursing and Care facility since November, 2012, where she was dearly loved by the staff and residents.

Sister Esther loved drama, poetry and short stories and often delighted the Sisters with scenes from Shakespeare or other poetic stories. She was known for her joy and hospitality.

Sister Esther is survived by three brothers, John (Loretta) Schwehr of Billings, MT, Richard (Sybil) Schwehr of Sarasota, FL, Robert (Judy) Schwehr of Boise, ID; two sisters, Elizabeth (Art) Dephner of Spokane, WA, Mary Ann Schwehr of Billings, MT; two sisters-in-law, Eva (Philip) Schwehr and Shirley (Leo) Schwehr of Billings, MT; many nieces and nephews; and her sisters of Mother of God Monastery.

She was preceded in death by her parents and 10 siblings.