



SISTER BERTHA ZEISER 1911 – 2016

Sister Bertha Zeiser was born February 25, 1911, in Browns, Iowa, the eldest of four children of Frank and Loretta (Fier) Zeiser. She was baptized Bertha Marie on March 5, 1911, at St. Joseph Church in Browns, Iowa. Bertha attended St. Joseph Elementary School in Browns, and graduated from Mount St. Clare Academy in 1928.

She entered the congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, Iowa, on July 7, 1929, and received the name Mary Rupert at her reception on April 22, 1930, later resuming her baptismal name. She made her first profession of vows on June 20, 1932, and her final profession on June 19, 1935. Her novitiate classmates were Sisters Catherine Coupé, Laurita Morehead, Mark Hayne, Aloysius Leonard, Helene McConohy, Monica Rice, Imogene Thoma, Mary Lacy, André Gehant, Thomasella Walsh, Aidan Ryan, and Leonard Temple.

Sister Bertha earned an AA degree from Mount St. Clare College in 1931; a Bachelor of Philosophy in mathematics from DePaul University, Chicago Illinois; and an MA in mathematics from Catholic University, Washington, D.C. She held Secondary Professional Teaching and Administration Certificates for Iowa and Nebraska, and was a member of the National Association for Secondary School Principals, and the American Mathematical Society.

Sister Bertha was a high school math and religion teacher, serving also as principal for 14 years. She taught at Mount St. Clare Academy for a total of 33 years. Earlier, Sister Bertha taught grade school at St. Francis de Paula, Chicago, Illinois, and high school at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Fonda, Iowa; St. John, Victor, Iowa; and St. Ann, Lexington, Nebraska. She also served from 1962-1965 as director of the congregation's temporary professed sisters.

After retiring from full-time classroom teaching in 1980, she assisted for five years with the Clinton Community College English as a Second Language Program, working with adult Southeast Asian refugees. Her last mission was in Reedley, California, where she served as receptionist at St. Anthony Parish, 1985-1995.

Sister Bertha retired in 1995 and tutored an Arch core member until the fall of 2010. She moved to The Alverno in March, 2012, where she resided until her death on June 14, 2016.

She is survived by several cousins, three generations of nieces and nephews, and by her Clinton Franciscan sisters with whom she shared life for 87 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Frank and Loretta (Fier) Zeiser, her siblings and their spouses, brothers Edward (Jean) and Francis (Bea), and a sister, Genevieve (Don) Leonard.