

Name: Sister Cabrini Schmidt
Date of Birth: April 4, 1922
Place of Birth: Bartlett, North Dakota
Parents: Edward Peter and Mae (Hinks) Schmidt
Religious Profession: August 15, 1942
Date of Death: March 30, 2024
Age: 101
Years Professed: 81



Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Eileen Elizabeth Rita Schmidt was born in Bartlett, North Dakota on April 4, 1922 to Edward Peter and Mae (Hinks) Schmidt. She was baptized at St. Mary's Church in Lakota, North Dakota on April 21, 1922. Most Reverend Paul P. Rhode confirmed her at St. Mary's Church in Appleton, WI on April 19, 1936.

Eileen was the oldest of seven children. She had four brothers and two sisters. They were a close knit, strong Catholic family. Her parents made sure that there were wholesome reading materials for all to read in their home. Among the reading materials were the *Sunday Visitor* and a publication by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, *Tabernacle and Purgatory*. Eileen was drawn to the life of the Sisters and decided at the age of ten that she wanted to be a Sister.

Living on a family farm, everyone had their jobs to do to help care for the turkeys, cattle and sheep. The summer after Eileen finished seventh grade a hail storm destroyed the crops and the turkeys that were in the field. The cattle and sheep found shelter. This great loss forced the family to give up farming and move to Appleton, Wisconsin where her parents used to live before moving to Lakota, North Dakota.

Eileen's family became members of the St. Therese Parish when they moved to Appleton. She attended St. Therese Grade School, which was staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Eileen only knew about the Benedictine Sisters. She was fond of the Sisters who taught her and reasoned that God probably wanted her to be this "new kind of Sister." After completing eighth grade Eileen attended the public high school for two years. In July, after her Sophomore year, with the blessing of her parents, their Pastor, Father Hauch, took three girls, who were interested in being Sisters, to see the Convent in Manitowoc. Mother Generose wanted Eileen to stay right then. Eileen returned home and on August 3, 1939 Eileen wrote the following letter to Mother Generose:

Dear Mother Superior,

Please send me an application blank for entering your Order. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eileen Schmidt

Eileen was formally accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 24, 1939. Eileen completed her High school education at Holy Family Academy in May 1941. She continued her education at Holy Family College earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1959 with a Major in Education and a Minor in History.

On her Reception Day, June 13, 1940, Eileen received the name, Sister Cabrini. Eileen did not know much about St. Francis Cabrini. After Reception she read more about her life to find out that Mother Cabrini specialized in hospitals and orphanages. In the first years of her Religious Life, Sister Cabrini often felt that the name really didn't fit her. Obviously, Mother Generose, listening to God's inspiration, did think it was an appropriate name. Sister Cabrini's very first Mission Assignment was Guardian Angels Boarding School in Oneida, Wisconsin. She had the title "Prefect" and received her practice teaching as a substitute teacher in grades one through four. The students were orphans and children who were referred by the court system and other social cases.

Sister Cabrini spent 44 years teaching, as a full-time teacher in grades one through four or as a catechist in summer Religion Programs. One of her greatest joys was preparing young children to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. Sister Cabrini served her Sisters as a Homemaker, Laundress and General Helper for 25 years before moving to St. Rita Health Center in 2013.

When Sister Cabrini was asked about her special talents, skills, hobbies and interests she named: teaching reading skills/primary skills, housekeeping, cleaning, listening to good music, reading current and historical events. She was an avid reader throughout her life. She especially liked all kinds of history and world happenings, in particular, history about Russia and Czechoslovakia. This can be verified in the newspaper clippings that she saved. Having a love for teaching reading, Sister Cabrini was fascinated with words. She had a small booklet of 263 Words Derived from Latin, the Language of the Roman Empire. Sister Cabrini enjoyed visiting and learning.

In her reflection for the Diocesan Newspaper, *The Compass*, from August 11, 2017, she addressed her insight into God's love, Sister Cabrini wrote, "*God's love is with us as life begins, accompanies us through our entire life, guiding, protecting and never leaving us. Finally, His love receives us into eternal life with Him forever.*"

On Holy Saturday morning, God's love received Sister Cabrini into eternal life with Him forever. We thank the family of Sister Cabrini for sharing 81 of her almost 102 years of life with her Religious Community. We thank Sister Cabrini for listening to God's call to be "a new kind of Sister," a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity.

Eternal life grant to Sister Cabrini, O, Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace, Amen!