

SISTER MARY BENEDICT ZIMMERER, CDP

1926 – 2020



Sister Mary Benedict entered eternal life on August 11, 2020 at the age of 94. She was born in La Feria, Texas on May 28, 1926 to Ludwig and Katherine Sieger Zimmerer. She was the third child of six and was named Rosemary. She entered Our Lady of the Lake Convent on September 6, 1941 at the age of fifteen. After finishing high school and two years of college she made First Profession of Vows as a Sister of Divine Providence on June 22, 1946. She was a caregiver, nurturer and teacher who wholeheartedly furthered the mission of Jesus by serving children and the poor.

Sister Benedict earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master in Education from Our Lady of the Lake College. She spent thirty-eight years teaching first and second grades and sometimes kindergarten in Catholic and public schools in Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. As was her nature, she volunteered many hours after school or over the weekend to help her community. When the time came to close this academic chapter of her life, she answered the call to minister to the poor in Mexico.

Sister Benedict served through a group called *Los Niños*. This group worked with the poor in Tijuana and Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico. She brought food, water, and education to the poor people living in the *colonias*, dump yard, and those in the city jail. After two years with *Los Niños*, Sister continued ministering in Nueva Rosita, Morelos, and Allende, Coahuila, Mexico for nine more years. She worked with the elderly in some places and with children in a children's home.

Five months after returning to San Antonio, she was approached by Sister Barbara Hyzak, CDP about working with babies and children with AIDS. During the 1980s the Congregation of Divine Providence addressed the signs of the times and filled the need to care for babies and children with AIDS. It established Providence Home for this purpose. As soon as Sister Benedict heard "children" she answered "YES!" She became a founding mother with others, the on-site construction supervisor and director of volunteers for Providence Home which opened on the west side of San Antonio, Texas. For five years she also naturally and freely dispensed the most important and necessary prescription for the children of Providence Home: love. As a child Sister Benedict always had a desire to work in an orphanage and be with children. Providence Home and St. Rita Children's Home in Morales were the closest to an orphanage.

Her final assignment was serving St. Michael's Church in Big Wells, Texas alongside her sibling, CDP Sister Madeleine. She was there for six years. She returned to Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center in 2008 and continued to contribute in her own special way until her last day.

Sister is survived by her sister, Sister Madeleine Zimmerer, CDP, sister-in-law Maria Teresa (Tere) Zimmerer, numerous cousins and friends, and her Sisters of Divine Providence. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ludwig and Katherine (Katie) Zimmerer and brothers and sister-in-law, Joseph, Martin (Claudine), Frederick (Fritz), and sister Therese Marie Zimmerer, and twin nephews Ray and Roy Zimmerer who died at birth.

A rosary and prayer service will be held on Tuesday. A Mass of Resurrection and burial will take place on Wednesday. All services will be private. In lieu of flowers, you may wish to make a memorial contribution to the Sisters of Divine Providence, 515 S.W. 24th Street, San Antonio, Texas 78207-4619.