

Sister Carmela Torres, SDS

October 20, 1925 – July 29, 2011



Sister Carmela Torres (birth name: Irene) was born on October 20, 1925 in East Chicago, Indiana, diocese of Fort Wayne. She was the third child born to Juan & Pamfilia (Reymosa) Torres. Her parents came to the United States from Mexico. Her mother died when she was one month old. She and her two brothers were cared for by their aunt and later at an orphanage.

Sister Carmela received her elementary education at Holy Trinity School in East Chicago. The sisters who taught at the school inspired her and awakened a desire in her to become a teacher and a sister. While reading the magazine, The Savior's Call she learned about the Sisters of the Divine Savior and on August 30, 1940 at the age of 14, she entered the Congregation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was received into the novitiate on August 12, 1942, pronounced her first vows on August 13, 1943 and final vows on August 13, 1949, Milwaukee, WI.

Sister Carmela received her secondary education at Divine Savior Convent High School. She studied at St. Teresa College in Winona, MN, graduating with a BA in Spanish, minors in French and Education. She then attended Marquette University where she received her MA in Modern Languages & Literature. To enrich her professional life, Sister Carmela held membership in the Wisconsin Bilingual Association. She studied at the Mexican American Cultural Center and attended various workshops, among them Hispanic Vocations and Catechetics for Hispanics.



Sister Carmela began her teaching career in various elementary schools in Wisconsin. At the request of the Salvatorian Fathers, the North American Province opened a mission in Colombia in 1950. Sister Carmela was asked to join the staff there teaching the little ones at our school in Bogotá for four and one-half years. After she returned to the United States, she continued teaching in our elementary schools and also taught for nine years at Divine Savior High School.

In 1973, she began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to the migrants at the Spanish Center in Milwaukee and also volunteered at St. Francis Parish. In the following years she joined the staff at the Office of Hispanic Ministry of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. She taught Spanish to both lay and clergy who ministered to the Hispanic Community in parishes. There were also students in her classes who planned to go to South or Central America. Sister Carmela stated that she felt more fulfillment in this ministry than in any other ministry. She experienced great satisfaction when she saw some of her students leave for the missions and even more so when they would write to tell her of their success with the Spanish language. After completing her time in the Office of Hispanic Ministry, she continued to use her gifts tutoring individuals in Spanish and served as a translator in both Spanish and French. She also ministered to Hispanics in hospice at St. Mary's Hospital.

In 1998, Sr. Carmela retired to Salvatorian Heights and in 2001 moved to the new Salvatorian Sisters Residence on St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus. In October of 2008, when it became apparent that Sister Carmela needed more assistance, she moved to the skilled care unit on St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus. She accepted this graciously. She will be especially missed by Mr. Bob Bartelt who was a close friend and visited her faithfully every weekend.



Sister Carmela was a free spirited person, delighted in life and was always ready for a good time. She also had a compassionate heart, giving special attention to the elderly and sick sisters.

On July 23rd, Sister Carmela suffered a stroke leaving her paralyzed on her left side. Following the stroke, her health declined quickly. Volunteers began vigil keeping on Wednesday, July 27th. Sister Carmela died peacefully on Friday, July 29th at the age of 85 and professed for 68 years. May her joy be full as she beholds the presence of God.

She was preceded in death by her parents Juan and Pamfilia (Reymosa) Torres, her brothers, Carlos & John and her sister-in-law, Celia.

She is survived by her sister-in-law, Hopie Torres, nieces and nephews and friends as well as her brothers and sisters in the Salvatorian Family.

Funeral Plans are as follows:

St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus Chapel
Thursday, August 4, 2001

Welcome of Body:	1:00 pm with Prayer Service
Visitation:	1:30 – 2:00
Mass of Christian Burial:	2:00 pm