

Mother Louise Walz

Prioress from 1919–1937



Mother Louise (Theresa) Walz was born in Baden, Germany, on December 19, 1864, the daughter of Ferdinand Walz and Ursula Haller Walz. At the age of 8, she came to the United States with her parents. She entered Saint Benedict's Convent on October 18, 1884, became a novice on July 11, 1886, and professed her first vows on July 11, 1887, and her perpetual vows on July 11, 1890. She became the novice mistress immediately after her first profession and served in that role until 1892.

Prior to her election as prioress in 1919, Mother Louise served the community as a teacher and as subprioress from 1902–1919. During her three terms as the seventh prioress of Saint Benedict's

Convent (1919-1937), she continued the brick-and-mortar expansion policy of her predecessor, Mother Cecilia Kapsner. St. Walburg Hall was built as a sisters' residence and art needlework department. The new Scholasticate building was needed to accommodate the large number of candidates seeking entrance into the community. Also, the St. Cloud Hospital was completed in 1928, just before the beginning of the Great Depression. Due to the ensuing hospital debt of \$2,500,000, Mother Louise had to use all of her resourcefulness to keep the community afloat financially.

Among Mother Louise's many other duties was service as the president of the College of Saint Benedict. Although she herself had only an eighth-grade education, the college received accreditation during her term. It was also during her term that the community was called upon to open a mission in China. In 1930, six sisters left Minnesota to open a women's college at the Catholic University of Peking, China.

It was said that Mother Louise had a motherly heart and prayerful disposition. Under her leadership, the community experienced spiritual renewal, the strengthening of a bond of unity and reform in liturgical worship. During her time as prioress, 457 new members entered the community—the largest number of entrants during the tenure of any prioress in the history of the community. She died on January 22, 1944.