

Mother Rosamond Pratschner

Prioress from 1937–1949



Mother Rosamond (Maria) Pratschner was born near Fingal, N.D., on September 22, 1885, the daughter of Michael and Elizabeth Leitner Pratschner. She entered Saint Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., on August 31, 1904, became a novice in July 1905, and professed her first vows on July 11, 1906, and her perpetual vows on July 11, 1909.

Following her first profession, Mother Rosamond taught in elementary and high schools in Minnesota, North Dakota and Tacoma, Washington. During the summers, she studied at the Minnesota School of Business and Rasmussen in Minneapolis. In 1919, she received a Bachelor of Law degree from Hamilton College of Law in Chicago. She served as subprioress from 1919–1921 and as private secretary to the prioress from 1921–1937.

In 1937, Mother Rosamond was elected prioress and held this position until 1949. Always a woman of vision and deep faith, Mother Rosamond led her community during a period of trial and growth. With unusual business acumen, as well as courage and stamina, she stabilized the community's financial status during the burdensome post-Depression years, seeking the help of competent lay advisors. She was a dedicated educator, encouraging her sisters to maintain high standards in their professional work and to earn academic degrees in preparation for their work as teachers and nurses.

In her worldwide concern for the church, she responded to the request for health care in Ogden, Utah, and was instrumental in establishing missions in Taiwan and Puerto Rico. In the 1940s, she forwarded the cause of the community to replace episcopal jurisdiction with pontifical status by forming independent priories in Bismarck, N.D., St. Paul, Minn., and Eau Claire, Wis. These foundations were a prerequisite to forming the Congregation (termed Federation since 1975) of Saint Benedict, along with Saint Benedict's in St. Joseph, Minn. Mother Rosamond became the first president of the Congregation and served in this capacity for six years (1948-1954).

Mother Rosamond valued propriety, formality and decorum, along with a deep interest in the welfare of the community and its members. She died in the infirmary at St. Benedict's on April 12, 1969.