

SISTER RUTH (PAULUS) BEARER

Sister Ruth (Paulus) Bearer, CSJ, 89, died Monday, January 15, 2024, in the 72nd year of her religious life. The daughter of Clair and Regina Buck Bearer, Sister Ruth entered the Congregation from Holy Name in Ebensburg. She shared a Valentine's Day birthday with her twin brother, Paul.

Following a 10-year ministry as an elementary and high school teacher, Sister Ruth earned a master's degree in social work at the National Catholic School of Social Service at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and became the first sister from the Baden Congregation to become a social worker. From 1967 to 1973, she served as the associate director of the social work department at Georgetown University Hospital.

Sister Ruth subsequently returned to Pittsburgh to serve as supervisor of Social Services in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where she helped to establish the Parish Ministry Program. In 1981, she became associate director of Focus on Renewal (F.O.R.) in McKees Rocks, and seven years later, she was elected to the Baden Congregation's Leadership Team.

Following her leadership term in 1993, Sister Ruth returned to Sto-Rox Family Health Center and F.O.R., where she served for an additional 18 years, first as program supervisor and then as associate director. When she retired in 2011 from F.O.R, Sister Ruth sorted through many "stacks of memories," which inspired her to write a book on the history of the center. In 2018, she published "Fifty Years of Footprints" and dedicated it to her dear friend, Father Regis Ryan, a long-time director of F.O.R. A year later, the Sto-Rox Hilltop Community Health Center dedicated its Education Room in Sister Ruth's name.

While at the Motherhouse, Sister Ruth volunteered in the Communications and Development offices.

Quiet and introspective, Sister Ruth creatively chronicled her life experiences over four decades in a compilation of poems called "Ruth's Ramblings," which often served as a source of reflection for her. She enjoyed doing puzzles, walking the grounds, listening to the wind chimes, and praying at the statue of St. Joseph.

Each new ministry and each daily call represent a "gradual growing into an ever-deepening awareness of the faithfulness of a God who loves," Sister Ruth said at her Golden Jubilee. "God usually works very slowly and gently in my life, nudging me along step by step, gifting me occasionally with the realization that I am in a place I have not been before."

Predeceased by three brothers and one sister, Sister Ruth is survived by nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews, Associates, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden. The Sisters are grateful to the Supportive Living staff at the Motherhouse for their care of Sister Ruth.

Friends will be received Sunday, January 21, from 1 p.m. to the close of the Prayer Vigil, which begins at 6 p.m., and Monday, January 22, from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Medaille Hall at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Mass of Christian Burial will be offered on Monday, January 22, at 3 p.m. in the Motherhouse Chapel.

Donations in the name of Sister Ruth may be sent to the Sisters of St. Joseph Memorial Fund, Development Office, 1020 State St., Baden, PA 15005 or made online at www.stjoseph-baden.org.

Send condolences post-gazette.com/gb