

The Great Service Cross, First Class, of the Order of Merit

Awarded to Mother Almeda Schricker, SSND, May 10, 1953

“One unusual bright spot did appear during this year (1953) the conferring upon her by the Federal Republic of Germany of one of its highest distinctions, the Great Service Cross, First Class, of the Order of Merit. A letter from the office of Hans Ehard, The Minister-President of Bavaria, informed her that the ‘President of the Federal Republic (Dr. Theodor Hues at this time) had heeded his suggestion and wish to confer the honor’ on her. Dr. Ehard would be ‘delighted to confer this recognition in person, if she could appear at the Bavarian State Office in Munich.’ In writing to the Sisters before the event—there seems to be no letter describing the actual ceremony—she says, ‘I thus have to endure this honor—totally undeserved personally – on May 10. I am fully aware that this honor really belongs to our dear Sisters for their faithful, devoted work in kindergartens, schools, and homes of retirement, and the dear homemakers who make the apostolate of teaching and educating possible. This honor may also well be an act of reparation for the injustices we suffered during the years 1933-45. Mindful of our Order, I am grateful to God and his holy Mother for this recognition of our work by the highest government authority.’ And so for the sake of the Order she is willing to ‘endure’ the ceremony, so little to her personal taste as it was. Her letter continues: ‘I am convinced that you, dear Sisters, are also happy over this token of merit and are ready to congratulate me. However, I beg you to refrain from doing so. Instead let us all pray the Magnificat several times and Te Deum once.’ Although it was not possible for the entire Motherhouse community to accompany Mother to the State offices, the kitchen staff made sure that all participated in a memorable way: at each person’s place in the refectory that evening there appeared a large cookie in the distinctive shape of the Cross of Merit, decorated with red icing instead of red enamel, and adorned with yellow, black and red stripes of icing exactly like the much smaller gold and enamel cross Mother wore pinned to her bosom!” pp. 219-220

Material taken from *“The Chain of Love: The Life and Work of Mother Almeda Schricker, SSND”* by Anne Winkelmann, SSND, 1992