

Bishop Raymond Lucker

A Heart Formed in Community

Sandra Spencer

Bishop Raymond Lucker was the second Bishop of the New Ulm, MN diocese from 1976 to 2000. During this time he formed a residential community with some of his priests and with Sisters from the various communities that served in the diocese; SSND's, CSJ's, OFM's and OP's. During these years some School Sisters of Notre Dame were privileged to be part of this faith community: Sisters Elaine Guerber, Mary Gen Olin, Paulette Pass, and Kathleen Spencer

Bishop Lucker was convinced that the strength of the diocese derived from the fact that it was filled with so many small faith-filled communities, beginning with his own pastoral staff.

While he devoted a lifetime to renewal movements in the church he was a leader in the development of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and was one of the founders of the Catechetical Forum. Bishop Lucker was also vocal and wrote on many issues of the day including war and peace, civil disobedience, the ordination of married men, moral values, women, inclusive language and capital punishment

A commitment to the poor and to the third world was evidenced in his frequent visits to the diocesan Mission of San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala. The mission was staffed by priests from the New Ulm diocese and by School Sisters of Notre Dame. The majority of SSNDs were from the Mankato Province with sisters from the Chicago and Milwaukee Provinces joining them. The Bishop supported the work of the mission by encouraging immersion groups, financial backing, and during civil upheaval by courageous speaking and writing to church and government officials.

The national movement to have non-ordained pastoral administrators to serve as leaders of parish communities started in the diocese of New Ulm in 1981.

In the midst of commitment to the New Ulm Diocese, the bishop took his turn cooking, canning, leading prayer, and working in the garden just like the other members of the household. He was honest in sharing his own ideas, approachable, and enjoyed a good laugh and meals with friends.

Information from: *Prairie Views: Twenty Five Years of Pastoral Letters*; Bishop Raymond A. Lucker.