



Eulalia May "LeMay" Bechtold

June 10, 1927 - September 2, 2025

Eulalia May (LeMay) Wagner Bechtold, 98, died on September 2, 2025, at her farm home in Rockville, Minnesota. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, October 24, 2025 at Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Rockville, Minnesota. Visitation will be in the Rockville church from 4:00-8:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 23, and from 9:30-10:45 a.m. on Friday, October 24.

LeMay was born June 10, 1927, in Wolf Point, Montana, to Thomas A. Wagner and Margarett Jackins Wagner. She grew up on a wheat and cattle ranch in Nashua, Montana, where she worked cattle on the prairie on horseback and did field work with horses. LeMay started elementary school at French School in Nashua, a prairie school near the Wagner ranch, and finished at the Lab School in St. Joseph, Minnesota, where the family traveled when her oldest sister was ready to start high school. LeMay said the family "lived as transients" during those years, traveling back to their Montana ranch for the summer and returning to St. Joseph, Minnesota, for the school year. LeMay graduated from St. Benedict High School in 1945 and continued her education at the College of St. Benedict.

She married Jerry Bechtold on August 18, 1948, in Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Nashua, Montana. After LeMay earned her BS in Biology from the College of St. Benedict in 1949, she and Jerry settled on a farm near Rockville

where they established Kipland Vale Dairy Farm and worked the farm side-by-side. Together, they created a warm and welcoming home and raised their family of 11 children, teaching them the value of hard work, parish and community involvement, and education.

LeMay was active in church and parish work her whole life and, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council teachings, she advocated for lay participation in the Mass and parish. She was a lector and eucharistic minister, served on the Parish Council for many years, and ran the prayer line until she was 98 years old. As the director of religious education in her parish for over 65 years, she taught classes on scripture and the sacraments for all adults, recruited and trained religious education teachers and aides, and involved parents in the CCD classes. She taught Confirmation and First Communion classes for generations—using Penance and Communion textbooks she wrote and published.

LeMay was active in the Christian Mothers, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, and the National Council of Catholic Women, serving in various roles, including president and keynote speaker at national conventions. She was the St. Cloud Diocesan Pastoral Council executive secretary for several years. For years, she and her husband Jerry were active in the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and co-chaired the St. Cloud Diocesan Rural Life Committee, which hosted the National Rural Life Convention in 1968.

In 1969, LeMay was named to the Advisory Board of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Committee on Women in Church and Society. In this role, she advised American bishops for many years, advocating for lay participation in church and parish life and for justice for women, children, and families. In 1995, she completed the Certificate of Pastoral Associate, became the Pastoral Associate for Rockville parish, and served in the role until 2016, leading daily Communion Services for the parish.

LeMay worked at St. John's Abbey Liturgical Press over 30 years, serving as editor of Celebrating the Eucharist, The Loose-Leaf Lectionary, and The Guide for Prayers of the Faithful and Selected Hymns. In 1973, she earned her MA in Theology from the Graduate School of Theology at St. John's University. She spoke locally and nationally on scripture, lay involvement in the liturgy and parish, and women in the church. Knowledgeable and well-read, LeMay was a fine scripture scholar herself.

Over the years, she was recognized in the parish, the diocese, and nationally for her work in the church. In 1973, she received the College of St. Benedict Outstanding Alumna Award. As LeMay reflected on her life in her last weeks, she said, "I hope and trust that I used all the talents God gave me through the power of the Holy Spirit."

LeMay loved the family farm and did farm and field work for many years; she kept the farm books into her 97th year. She had a huge vegetable garden for years and taught her children to can and preserve food. Using her trusty weed-whacker, she kept her rock and flower gardens going well into her 90s. She loved to read and often read a book a day.

LeMay warmly welcomed everyone into her home. She loved visiting and playing games with her children and grandchildren. She will be remembered for her bread-baking days and her apple pies with the best crust ever. Whatever LeMay did, she did energetically and whole-heartedly, and she was the heart of the Bechtold family.

LeMay is survived by her children, Karen (Bernie Koltjes) and their children: Patrick, Brian (children: Noah, Madison, McKenna), James (Sally) (children: Abigail, Michaela (Luke Mullen) (children: Simon, Henry), Shawn (Toni) (child:

Lexi), Heidi (Mario Lopez), and Holly (Kyle Poepping); Brigid; Barbara (John Tomaro) and their children: Londi (Aaron Holmes) (children: Wilder, Moxie), Samuel (Julie) (children: Rylee, Noah), Alicia (children: Hank, Corb); Stephen and his children: Teresa (James Hietala) (child: Aubrey), Thomas (Lauren), Paul (Lucia), Joseph; Mary Ruth; Mark; Joyce and her children: Shane (Erin Hecner), Cole, Sage; Timothy (Karen Knudsen) and their children: Stellan, Bente. She is survived by sisters-in-law Laura Wagner, Dixie Wagner, Marie Bechtold, and Monica Bechtold as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Jerome, in 2013; her sons, Michael in 1973, Gregory in 2020, and Roger in 2020; her grandson, Mark Tomaro in 2022 and great-grandson, Waylon Beard in 2008; her nine siblings: Mary Margarete (Les) Hanson, Therese Ann, J.F. (Arlys), Damaris (Phil) Boerschinger; Hugh (Lois), Phillip (Mary Ann), Richard (Pearl), Roger, and David; her in-laws, Dolores (Leander) Meyer, Rosemary (Bob) Warnert, Phil Bechtold, Cletus Bechtold, and Alphonse (Betty) Bechtold.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **23**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Mary of Immaculate Conception Church
113 Broadway St
Rockville, MN 56369

Visitation

OCT **24**. 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM (CT)

Mary of Immaculate Conception Church
113 Broadway St
Rockville, MN 56369

Mass

OCT **24**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mary of Immaculate Conception Church
113 Broadway St
Rockville, MN 56369

Tribute Wall

SS

“ *Lemay was truly a gift from God. A hard worker, a giver. Always a warm smile. May she enjoy her rewards in heaven. Rest in peace Lemay, you will be missed. Blessings to the Bechtold family, Shelly (Sauer) Laudenbach* ”

Shelly Sauer-Laudenbach - October 24, 2025 at 10:33 AM



“ *Blue & White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Eulalia May "LeMay" Bechtold.* ”



October 22, 2025 at 03:27 PM



“ *LeMay was a very special, kind, intelligent, giving lady. I think everyone looked up to her for guidance. I know I did and my kids when they were servers. She will be truly missed. RIP LeMay. 🙏🙏* ”

Mary Schneider Feldhege - September 14, 2025 at 12:26 PM

TB

“ *Tiara Bechtold purchased the Bountiful European Dish Garden for the family of Eulalia May "LeMay" Bechtold.* ”



Tiara Bechtold - September 14, 2025 at 02:14 AM

PE

“ *LeMay was a grand, wonderful, welcoming lady! Always ready with a welcoming smile, a bit of wisdom, and a giant bowl of ice cream, she opened her heart and home to all who entered. Thank you for sharing your God-given gifts with all of us. Rest in Peace— say “hi” to all our shared loved ones who now get to welcome you home.*



Pat Ebacher - September 13, 2025 at 11:45 PM

KK

“ *REST IN PEACE*

KAREN BERNIE KOLTES - September 13, 2025 at 12:25 PM

SB

“ *My thoughts and prayers for your loss. Kemal was good women I remember her from religion class and church she helped me catch up and always had smile .*

sara 'smith/hennen' Boline - September 12, 2025 at 11:42 PM