



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036
WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG
FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



February 4, 2020

Dear Sisters and Associates, Co-workers, Family and Friends,

In the stillness of this winter morning, before the first hints of the dawning day, our beloved Sister Francis Assisi Kennedy peacefully breathed her final act of love and surrender and passed into God's eternal arms at 5:30 a.m. Though her departure was unexpected, no one doubted that she was led into the radiance of her Beloved. For those who knew her well, S. Francis Assisi embodied the Beatitude, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God!"

S. FRANCIS ASSISI KENNEDY, OSF

In her autobiography, Anna Marie Kennedy explained, "I was born in the middle of a beautiful snowy January night, around 3:00 on the morning of January 13, 1938. The world I entered was my maternal grandparents' home in Indianapolis, but that was merely for the occasion of my birth. Dad, I am sure, was there to welcome his first born. He has never ceased doing so. Some years later, when I was in my teens, a gentle old neighbor lady smiled to me the "news" that I was obviously the fruit of my parents' love. I don't believe that I had ever or have ever doubted that."

The daughter of Paul Michael Kennedy, a city detective and business manager, and Helen Marie Walsh, a homemaker, Anna Marie was baptized only a week after her birth. "I had little choice," she wrote. "Mother's parents had come from Ireland, and so had Dad's grandparents. They were poor, proud, humble with that peculiar Irish mixture of pride and humility, which is really only gratitude both puffed up and tempered by a deep faith. There flowed in my veins the love of beauty, especially in creation and words, the love of truth in reality, and the love of good in God and in people."

Anna Marie enjoyed a happy childhood, though in her early years she had no siblings. Her brother, Paul Michael, was born eight years later, and his diagnosis of Down syndrome served to bond the family in a tight-knit community of care. Anna Marie's faithful devotion to Paul Michael was a lifetime commitment.

Taught by Oldenburg Franciscans at both Little Flower School, Indianapolis and Holy Name School, Beech Grove, Anna Marie's religious vocation awakened early. She recalled, "Sometime between the ages of eight and ten I was taken to Oldenburg for the first time. I do not recall that visit, but I am sure I decided then that I would someday stay, for before I was out of grade school, my mother was declaring that 'the only thing you like better than going to Oldenburg once is going to Oldenburg twice.' I have never lost that love." After winning a scholarship to the Academy of the Immaculate Conception (now, Oldenburg Academy), Anna Marie "flourished splendidly in the boarding school atmosphere". She stated, "Sister Muriel Ernst especially nurtured my vocation and my devotion to my heavenly Mother. She was, I suppose, a kind of spiritual mother, but she paid me the supreme compliment of treating me as a friend, school girl that I was."

In her junior year, Anna Marie sought the permission of her parents to become an aspirant for her senior year—a decision that would enable her to enter the Community as a postulant in February. "Dad's reply," she noted, "was 'I say, when you know what you really want to do, that's the time to do it.'" Becoming S. Francis Assisi, she embraced her novitiate time as a source of happiness and spiritual growth. "God was very close," she remembered.

For Francis Assisi, teaching was "in my blood; I succeeded in it from the first." In her early career, she enjoyed working with grade school children, but her real love was educating older students. Her degrees from Marian College (now, Marian University) and John Carroll University equipped her to "star" as a teacher of literature, journalism, Latin, and religion in both Indiana and Ohio high schools, and as Assistant Professor of English at Marian College. Amid her assignment in college instruction, Francis Assisi was entrusted with directing Sister-students living on the campus. She rose to the challenge and spent five years in this important ministry. Meanwhile, her excellent writing skills enabled her to be a successful contributor to religious and educational journals.

A new dimension of service emerged as Francis Assisi became the Community Archivist. In this role, her natural inclinations for research were utilized in assisting Sisters and other inquirers exploring Community history. She used this opportunity to trace Mother Theresa Hackelmeier's roots to her native Austrian community—a feat requiring steadfast determination after so many years. In addition, Francis Assisi served as both researcher and author for the jubilee history of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, a book published in 2009 and celebrating the Church's presence in central and southern Indiana for 175 years.

For a time, family care required that Francis Assisi live at her aging parents' home. Always the devoted daughter and sister, she lovingly sacrificed the community life she treasured to provide the needed support for the community of family.

In her final years, Francis Assisi remained a model of faithful love and simplicity as she lived her days in St. Clare Hall. Her quiet, childlike presence and her purity of heart reminded us all of the grace of "being". She seemed to reflect her own words written at an earlier time: "The years in religious life have been good. There have been crosses to carry and crises to struggle through, but there have been great and deep joys, too—intellectual challenges, warm friendships, professional successes, spiritual graces, and divine inspirations. God has been loving, my students rewarding, my friends loyal and my Sisters kind . . . and most of all I cherish the companionship of a loving Father, a faithful Spouse, a gentle Guide. It is indeed 'good to be here'".

To her devoted classmates, Sister-companions, and family members, we express our sincere sympathy at so great a loss. To her excellent nurses, caregivers, and Pastoral Care Team in St. Clare Hall, we extend our deepest gratitude for your loving service. May Francis Assisi, now living in pure light, behold the face of God and reflect God's beauty upon us!

In loving remembrance,



S. Delouise Menges
for the General Council

SISTER FRANCIS ASSISI (ANNA MARIE) KENNEDY

Birth: January 13, 1938

Entrance into Religious Life: February 2, 1956

Entrance into Eternal Life: February 4, 2020

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. FRANCIS ASSISI SERVED:

- 1957-1958 St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, IN
St. Mary, Bedford, IN
St. Anthony, Morris IN
- 1958-1959 ICA (now Oldenburg Academy), Oldenburg IN
- 1959-Jan 1960 Scecina, Indianapolis, IN
- Jan-June 1960 St. Lawrence, Indianapolis, IN
- 1960-1964 Rex Mundi, Evansville, IN
- 1964-1970 Ritter High School, Indianapolis, IN
- 1970-1975 Marian (College) University, Indianapolis, IN
- 1975-1982 Our Lady of the Angels, Cincinnati, OH
- 1982-1990 ICA (now Oldenburg Academy), Oldenburg, IN
- 1990-1995 Martin Center College, Indianapolis, IN
- 1995-2000 ICA (now Oldenburg Academy), Oldenburg, IN
- 1996-2010 Sisters of St. Francis Archivist, Oldenburg, IN
- 2010-2020 Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Weigel Funeral Home – visit their website to view Sister's online memorial, and if desired, an online condolence may be left on the site to share with her family and the Franciscan Sisters – www.Weigelfh.com

Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at www.OldenburgFranciscans.org