

May 1, 2023

Associate Mary Bollinger was called home to God on Friday, April 28, 2023. Mary was born on August 15, 1941, in Canton, Ohio to the late Rufus Bollinger and Helen Horner Bollinger. She is survived by one sister, Betty Lehberger, of Massillon, Ohio.



Mary's spirituality embraced different religions. She started life as a Methodist in Ohio, went to a Baptist college in Tennessee, spent most of her working career at Bethany Christian Mission Center, pursued the Oldenburg Franciscan Associate Relationship, and went through the RCIA process becoming Catholic in 2004. Through her life of prayer, Mary felt called to follow the spirit of St. Francis and became an Associate on April 6, 2003, with Sr. Amy Kistner and Sr. Noreen McLaughlin serving as her contact persons. In 2009 Mary was featured in Catholic Press by Correspondent Beth Dotson Brown. During the interview Mary stated, "I suppose if I had known about Catholics before, I might have become a Catholic Sister myself." Sr. Amy shares, "Mary was always ready to help when there was work to do."

Mary loved her connection to the Oldenburg Franciscans. She once reflected, "The Oldenburg Sisters that minister in Campton (KY) have touched my heart with their openness, acceptance, and love for me." She felt her relationship with them helped her to be more connected to those who live Franciscan values and focus on doing what Jesus did and would do. Mary had a special connection to Sr. Amy, writing in one of her reflections, "I respect her and love her. I would do anything for her." Visits to Oldenburg were especially life giving to Mary. She enjoyed attending retreats, spending time down at San Damiano, and walking the grounds of Michaela Farm.

Sr. Amy went on to share, "Mary was searching for God in many ways," which led her to reaching out in the community. Mary worked at the Bethany School in Canton, OH serving as house Mother for 25 years. When she moved to Campton, she owned her own printshop and worked other jobs in the community as well. Hearing of Mary's passing, a friend of Mary's wrote on her face book page, "Mary was more than my friend, she was my spiritual mentor, one of few attendees at my wedding, my RCIA sponsor, and companion for attending classes and retreats." In addition to the previously mentioned ministries, Mary was a Sunday School teacher, transportation provider, computer assistant with the bulletin, and visitor to the sick.

Mary served on several Boards in Wolfe County. She also helped at Good Shepherd Church in Campton. Betsy Savare had the privilege of working with Mary at the Good Shepherd Christmas Store reflecting, "She was such a delight." Mary was committed to helping Relay for Life, Music in the Park, Wolfe Co. Animal Shelter, Catholic Food Pantry, and many other organizations and programs throughout the Campton area. Sr. Susan Marie Pleiss who served as

Pastoral Life Director at Good Shepherd Church in Campton shares the following about Mary, “Mary took her commitment to serving God and God’s people very seriously. Her earlier years of ministry at Bethany Christian Mission endeared her to many adults in Campton who had spent part of their childhood at the Mission and were deeply grateful for the loving care they received from Miss Mary and others at the Mission. Some of my best memories with Mary were driving out to small country churches for 5th Sunday Hymn sings and the two of us singing gospel hymns and praying with residents at the local nursing home. In her later years, she truly embodied the spirit of St. Francis by dedicating many hours caring for the dogs at the Wolfe County Animal Shelter.”

Services for Mary were held at Porter and Son’s Funeral Directors in Campton, KY on Monday, May 1, 2023.

Mary, may you now rest in the loving arms of the God you searched for and served so faithfully!

Jane Schaefer