

MEMORIAL LETTER for S. MYRA PEINE, OSF

“Autumn is the season that invites us to let go, to yield....”
- Joyce Rupp

As summer slipped into autumn, S. Myra Peine gently let go into the arms of God at 6:06 PM on Friday September 24, 2021.

Martha Jane Peine was born at home on August 13, 1930, the fourth child born to Albert J. and Anna M. Peine in Brookville, Indiana. Two older brothers, Tom and Pat, had been followed by their sister, Susan. Eight years later, Martha was born. Her big brothers doted on her. When, as a child, she was sick with pneumonia and not wanting to eat, Tom devised a plan. He snuck a little rabbit into her room and told her he would bring it back for her to pet if she would eat a little ice cream.



Martha's father, Albert, was a lawyer. She would later write, “My interest in Justice and Peace issues began as a child when I observed my parents' concern for underprivileged persons.” It is no surprise that Sister Myra spent her teaching years in schools in poorer areas, where she would devote her considerable energies to offering the best possible education available.

Her formal education was with the Oldenburg Franciscans. She attended St. Michael's School in Brookville, Immaculate Conception Academy (now Oldenburg Academy) and Marian College (now Marian University). At Marian, she was known for her musical abilities, playing the clarinet and singing in both the Bel Canto and A Capella choirs. While getting her degree in education, she also seems to have made room for fun. S. Rachel West remembers her as “something of a prankster,” recalling such things as an “after-lights garden party” in Myra's dorm room to which attendees crept down the darkened halls, each bearing snacks and potted plants to help create the indoor garden.

Following graduation from Marian in 1952, Martha entered the Oldenburg Franciscans. She originally wanted to join the Blessed Sacrament Sisters, because she knew they ministered with Native Americans and in black communities. Mother Cephas had other ideas! She told Martha that she could do those things as an Oldenburg Franciscan. The fact that she had two aunts in the community (Sisters Mary Jane and Mary Albert Peine) was, no doubt, also a factor.

Taking the religious name, Sister Myra, she began her teaching career at St. Rita's School in Indianapolis. After receiving her Master's degree at Cardinal Stritch in Milwaukee and becoming a reading specialist, she was missioned to St. Joseph's School in Kansas City, MO. Although we may have imagined Myra as always self-confident, she wrote of this transition, “You can imagine how I felt! I was the youngest Sister on the mission, had never taught above third grade, and here I was principal, superior, and eighth grade teacher.”

When reflecting on the early years at St. Joseph's, Myra attributed the success of the school to the hard work of all the Sisters there. S. Marya Grathwohl recalls that “Education was Myra's passion, and she believed that a good education was a necessary component for African American students to reach their full potential. No exceptions. She insisted that the school atmosphere and every aspect of the building had to be clean and inviting. We did a lot of scrubbing, spackling and painting.”

S. Ruth Eggering remembers Myra's goal of helping the students succeed in getting into the best high school in the city. She set high standards and believed in bringing out the best in each

student.

After twenty-one years at St. Joseph's, Myra returned to Oldenburg and became the Activities Director, a position which allowed her creativity, her music, and her passion for justice and peace to find new avenues of expression. S. Barb Riemensperger and S. Bernice Roell recalled the many meetings the three had together that would begin with Myra saying, "I have an idea!" She invited other retired Sisters to share their areas of expertise in Spanish classes, art classes and plant care. She initiated chime choirs, stamp collecting, and creating ornaments for Christmas trees at the Motherhouse. Myra's love of flowers found an outlet in the flower bed outside Theresa Hall and also in the herb garden at Michaela Farm.

She worked closely with S. Rachel West on Justice and Peace efforts at Oldenburg. She would have all the materials together for people who wanted to write letters to political leaders about justice-related issues after Rachel's updates. She also arranged pre-election visits of candidates. Representative Lee Hamilton decided he had to meet these Sisters after receiving a bag of letters from Oldenburg.

When memory issues made it difficult to continue in this ministry, Myra retired. But her desire to help others never left her. She would still be seen weeding a flower bed or taking someone out for a wheelchair ride. Myra's life was one of service. She embodied the line from our Constitution:

"We serve and work in love."

We offer our sympathy to Myra's family, and extend our condolences to her dear friend, S. Barb Riemensperger, and to her classmates, friends and former students. Our gratitude and sympathy includes our nursing and pastoral care staff who cared for Myra and will miss her.

In gratitude for her generous spirit,

S. Barbara Leonhard, OSF

S. MYRA (Martha) PEINE, OSF

Born: August 13, 1930

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1952

Entrance into Eternal Life: September 24, 2021

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MYRA SERVED:

1954-1962 St. Rita, Indianapolis IN

1962-1983 St. Joseph, Kansas City MO

1983-2008 Occupational Therapy, Motherhouse Oldenburg IN

2008-2015 Motherhouse Community Service, Oldenburg IN

2015-2021 St. Clare Hall, Oldenburg IN

S. Myra is preceded in death by her parents, Albert & Anna (Nee: Meyer) Peine, siblings, Thomas Peine, Patrick Peine and Susan Tise. Survivors include numerous nieces and nephews.

VISITATION: Thursday, September 30 from 1 – 3 p.m. at the convent Chapel. Funeral services follow at 3 p.m. with Rev. Al Hirt, OFM officiating. Burial will be in the convent cemetery.

PLEASE NOTE: Guests who have been vaccinated are welcome to attend but masks are mandatory.

For those unable to attend, services will be live-streamed at <https://youtu.be/ANrI26GL2RM>

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