



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG

FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



May 9, 2019

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

S. SANDRA SCHWEITZER, OSF

*"I dream my painting and I paint my dream."*

This philosophy of 19<sup>th</sup> century post-impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh might easily represent our Sister Sandra's vision as well.

The canvas of Sandy's life began with her birth on May 19, 1942 to Vincent and Doris Schweitzer, residents of Cincinnati's Northside German parish of St. Boniface. World War II claimed the life of her father shortly after he returned from combat in the naval forces of the Pacific. Thus, the family's three children—Sandy, her younger brother Mike, and her older sister Mary—were labeled in government files as "war orphans."

Sandy shared in her autobiography that "the story of my vocation is one of real faith and love of God. I realize *now* that not everyone was given the strong determination which was so much a part of my original 'calling.'" This awareness led Sandy in September of 1960 to Oldenburg, where she became known as Sister Mary de Paul.

Early days in the Community found S. Mary de Paul teaching art at St. Mary Academy and later at Marian College. "Teaching was always okay with me," she commented, "but the moving ambition in me was to serve the Lord through my abilities as an artist. Final affirmation of this came to me through the recollection of the story of Francis of Assisi who heard the call to "rebuild my church" and then took to rebuilding churches, stone by stone. I do that now, as he did, only in the technical age which puts much of the rebuilding in the hands of architects and artists. Through blueprints and graph paper, committees and documents, I help to put the stones in place which form the environment in which the people of God meet Him and one another in prayer." Sandy was speaking here of her new ministry as Director of Liturgical Art for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Rebuild the church Sandy did—quite literally. She acted as consultant and designer in over 60 Catholic churches as well as hospital and college chapels in Indiana, Ohio, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, and New York. She served in this same capacity for at least eleven motherhouse chapels, including our own 100-year-old chapel in the early 1990's. While liturgical design consultants were in short supply, one architect with whom Sandy worked noted that "trying to do a project like this without a liturgical design consultant is like trying to design a car without one who knows something about engines." Another colleague commented that "Sister Sandra works very hard to surface from within the community what they can and should do. Consensus building among parishioners allows them to take ownership in the process." As Sandy herself acknowledged, "Designing a church has as much to do with building lines of communication as drawing lines on a blueprint. A church is more than the materials used to build it. It's really the masterpiece of the people who will use the building; it is their gift to God."

As artist, one of Sandy's proudest moments was the 1997 unveiling of *The Healing Triptych* which continues to adorn St. Francis Hospital South. This 14-month project, an expansive piece of artwork, depicts three aspects of healing: surgery, electronics, and medicine.

Still, "there is nothing more truly artistic than to love people," van Gogh observed. This too was Sandy's belief, as shown by her great love for family, friends, classmates, and former students. She drew renewed energy for mission through her sharing with the "Constitution Group," who gathered monthly for over 25 years to keep our *Vision and Journey* in focus. To all of them, especially to Sandy's sister Mary, her brother Mike, and her long-time companion and faithful friend S. Catherine Schneider we extend our sincere sympathy.

Catherine wrote at one time, "I'm always inspired by Sandy's stories of her creative journey. Yet, what strikes me most often is her simple, yet confident faith that God continues to direct her and always provides opportunities for her to be whom and what she was created to be— an artist."

As sociologist Charles Horton Cooley noted, "An artist cannot fail. It is a success just to be one." Sandy, may you find peace in the arms of the Divine Artist who acknowledges that, for you, this is so.

In loving memory,



Sister Christa Franzer  
*For the General Council*

SISTER SANDRA (formerly S. Mary de Paul) SCHWEITZER

Birth: May 19, 1942

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1960

Entrance into Eternal Life: May 8, 2019

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. SANDRA SERVED:

Jan-June 1965 St. Louis School, Batesville, IN  
1965-1973 St. Mary Academy, Indianapolis, IN  
1973-1974 Temple University, Philadelphia, PA (student)  
1974-1986 Marian College, Indianapolis, IN  
1986-2005 Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Artist, Liturgy Consultant  
2005-2019 Freelance Artist, Indianapolis, 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](http://www.Weigelfh.com)*

*Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at [www.OldenburgerFranciscans.org](http://www.OldenburgerFranciscans.org)*