



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

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



February 9, 2020

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

S. ALICE RETZNER, OSF

On Thursday, February 6, as quietly as the snow that had just begun to fall, Alice passed from this life into the loving embrace of God. In the midst of our grief, we celebrate that now there is for her no more fear, no more pain, no more struggle.

Alice was born at home in Sunman, Indiana to Frances and Louis Retzner on March 3, 1942. She wrote that hers was an early birth, her mother assisted by two neighbor ladies and her grandmother. "I always loved listening to my mother telling about my birth." Alice was the first girl in the family, with two older brothers and three younger sisters.

Reflecting upon her childhood, she recalled, "I received the beginnings of my spiritual growth from Mom and Dad. We were brought up with the traditional family prayers: the rosary, morning prayer, meal prayers, and night prayer. My dad taught us to pray with the beauty of nature around us. Every Sunday he would take us on a walk. Dad instilled in me a great love and respect for the creation God has given us."

Having attended St. Nicholas grade school and Immaculate Conception Academy (now Oldenburg Academy), Alice told her family that she wanted to enter the Oldenburg Community. She recalled that not everyone imagined her remaining with the Sisters. "My brothers and their friends made a chart and laid down bets on how long I would stay."

In the Franciscan way of life, Alice found a close connection to the earthy spirituality she had experienced at home. Entering the Community just as Vatican Council II was starting, she embraced the changes in the Church and in community life. Later, as she made the transition from elementary school teaching to parish ministry, she was grateful for the opportunity to study pastoral ministry at Seattle University. She was excited by what she described as a time that broadened her views on social justice, liberation theology and society.

Openness and gratitude were part of Alice's nature, as is evident in the way she wrote about her ministry: "Some of the most valuable years of my life were the years I spent in other cultures. I have been taught and mentored by the Black community of Holy Trinity in Indianapolis for ten years. They have given me the joy of a singing heart in the midst of poverty. The strong family bond that is so evident in their lives reinforced my close relationship with my own family. The gift of the Native Americans to me has been to walk with reverence upon Mother Earth. They also made me aware of the extended family – that we have a responsibility for one another. I have been taught to pray within the circle of creation: the wind, the stars, the sun and the moon."

Her last years of active ministry were in Appalachia at Queen of All Saints in Beattyville, KY and at Good Shepherd in nearby Campton. In these parishes she found herself engaged in everything from RCIA to food pantries to being with families at the time of death, a part of ministry she particularly treasured. "Being in the Appalachian area where there are so many needs has encouraged us to offer a large outreach

program. God has blessed me with many volunteers from the local community who make all of our programs possible. I never know what will happen when I open the doors to the church each day. I do know it is not going to be uneventful or boring.” Alice seemed to love everybody. Her delight in connecting with people and drawing out their gifts endeared her to others everywhere she served.

In 2017, Alice returned to Oldenburg, where she looked forward to being closer to her family and friends and to participating in various Community projects. Her storytelling and laughter enlivened any group in which she was present. The diagnosis of ALS came as a blow to her and to everyone who loved her. It soon became apparent that, through all the inevitable waves of conflicting emotions, Alice was intent upon staying connected. Family gatherings and card playing remained important; she had a supportive circle of Sisters with whom she prayed; she had companionship on scooter rides outdoors when weather permitted; and she was present for Liturgy and community celebrations as long as she possibly could be. Friends continued to visit and write. Alice’s courage and honesty, her deep spirituality, and her appreciation of everyone around her was a ministry in itself to each person in her presence.

We extend our sympathy to Alice’s siblings, Louis, John and Jo Ann, as well as nieces, nephews and extended family. We also offer condolences to her close Community friends and classmates.

Our wholehearted thanks to her caregivers in St. Clare Hall and to the Sisters in Pastoral Care, especially S. Michelle, who had the privilege of walking so closely with Alice on the difficult and sacred journey through these last months into life eternal.

In gratitude for this spirited woman of faith,


Sister Barbara Leonhard
for the General Council

SISTER ALICE RETZNER (formerly S. Francile)

Born: March 20, 1942

Entered Religious Life: February 2, 1961

Entered Eternal Life: February 4, 2020

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. ALICE SERVED:

1963-1965	St. Mary, Greensburg, IN	1980-1990	St. Christopher, Indianapolis, IN
1965-1968	Immaculate Conception, Old Monroe, MO	1990-1991	Sabbatical
1968-1972	St. Bonaventure, Cincinnati OH	1991-1994	Christ the King Parish, Shiprock, NM
1972-1973	St. Agnes, Evansville, IN	1994-1995	Job Search
1973-1974	St. Pius, Cincinnati, OH	1995-2015	Queen of All Saints Parish, Beattyville, KY
1974-1977	St. Xavier Mission, St. Xavier, MT	2015-2017	Good Shepherd Parish, Campton, KY
1977-1978	St. Charles Mission, Pryor, MT	2017-2020	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN
1978-1980	St. Bartholomew, Cincinnati, OH		

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