



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

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FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



S. GERALDINE POWER, OSF

February 20, 2018

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

On Friday afternoon, February 16, as Sisters at her bedside sang *The Blessing of St. Clare*, Sister Geraldine Power quietly welcomed Sister Death. After a full life of ninety-nine years on this earth, she is finally united with her God, her Peaceful Light.

Geraldine was born on July 3, 1918 in Suttons Bay, Michigan. She was the second daughter born to Harold and Ruth (Steimel) Power. After her father died at the age of 28, her mother married Harry Dearing and the family moved to Indianapolis. Shortly thereafter, Victoria, Geraldine's older sister died. Geraldine was only six years old. She was devastated by this second death in her immediate family. Eventually, seven step-brothers and one step-sister were added to the Dearing family.

Since Geraldine's mother was a teacher, education was very important to the family. Geraldine attended Holy Cross Grade School and St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis. During her time at St. Mary with the Sisters of St. Francis, she began to feel a call to religious life. Her step-father insisted that she date and "see a bit of the world" before she made a final decision. She did so, but, in Geraldine's words, "the desire to give myself to Jesus became stronger." She entered the community on September 8, 1935 and was invested in the habit and given the name Sister Francis Leonette on July 2, 1936.

For thirty-two years, S. Francis Leonette served as teacher and principal in Indiana, Ohio, Illinois and Missouri. In 1967, experiencing physical and mental exhaustion, she left the community to return to Michigan. She continued teaching until she was involved in a near-fatal car accident. As soon as she could, Geraldine returned to serving those in need as a volunteer probation officer, in jail ministry, working with migrants, as a tutor in a high school, visiting nursing homes and teaching religious education in her parish. Geraldine believed that the many tragedies and losses of her life gave her "a greater understanding of the handicapped, of stress and trauma." She added, "Whoever you are, wherever you are, someone out there needs you." Geraldine was able to find those people and to reach out to them in love.

Over the years, Geraldine made several requests to return to the Sisters of St. Francis, her "first love". She believed in her heart that she never should have left. She often prayed the words from Psalm 23 which she had chosen for her silver jubilee theme: "Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Finally, in 1993, she was allowed to return to the community. She professed her final vows again in 1998.

There had been many changes in the congregation between the time Geraldine left and when she returned, so the adjustment was not always easy. However, she trusted in "God's loving guidance" for her and for the community. Geraldine was especially thrilled when S. Myra Peine asked her to serve as bibliotherapist for the Sisters in St. Clare Hall. She took around a book mobile cart, helped

the Sisters choose books, talked with them about what they had read and read to those who were unable to do so.

When Geraldine's own health required that she move to St. Clare Hall, she continued to visit the Sisters and was especially devoted to S. Rose Mary Lee. As other Sisters died and Geraldine lived on, even after several serious health crises, she would wonder why she was "still here". Most would assure her that God must have something more in store for her. When S. Geraldine became the oldest Sister in the community, she felt she had a special obligation to be a good example for the rest of us. Geraldine, your compassion and concern for the "underdog" were surely an example to us. May we always remember that there is someone out there who needs us.

We express our sympathy to the nieces and nephews of S. Geraldine, the nursing and pastoral care staff of St. Clare Hall who tended to Geraldine's every need and to all of her friends and loved ones who will miss her physical presence with us. We rejoice with her that she will live in the house of the Lord forever, experiencing God's Peaceful Light.

In loving memory,



S. Maureen Irvin
for the Council

SISTER GERALDINE (FORMERLY S. FRANCIS LEONETTE) POWER

Birth: July 3, 1918
Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1935
Left Community: December 24, 1967
Re-entrance to Community: June 17, 1993
Entrance into Eternal Life: February 16, 2018

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. GERALDINE SERVED:

1938-1941	Our Lady of Mercy, Dayton, Ohio
1941-1943	Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, Indiana
1943-1946	St. Anthony, Streator, Illinois
1946-1954	St. Bernard, Cincinnati, Ohio
1954-1956	Our Lady of Sorrows, Kansas City, Missouri
1956-1957	Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis, Indiana
1957-1960	St. James, Cincinnati, Ohio
1960-1961	St. Michael, Indianapolis, Indiana
1961-1965	St. Clare, Cincinnati, Ohio
1965-1966	St. Peter, Chillicothe, Ohio
1966-1967	Scecina Memorial High School, Indianapolis, Indiana
1967	Received dispensation from vows
1993	Re-entered Community
1993-2018	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, Indiana

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