



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

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FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



February 15, 2017

S. MARY CATHERINE ESCHENBACH, OSF

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

S. Mary Catherine Eschenbach made her final journey home to God very peacefully Sunday morning, February 12th, three days before her 94th birthday.

**Jesus said to Peter, “Do you love me?”
Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, I love you.”
Jesus responded, “Feed my sheep.”**
(John 21:15-17)

This conversation, spoken between Jesus and Peter, was chosen by S. Mary Catherine for her funeral liturgy. It indeed speaks of her life, one of total love for God and service to others.

Mary Catherine was born February 15, 1923, the oldest of seven girls in the Eschenbach family. She attended St. Catherine School and St. Mary Academy in Indianapolis. Mary Catherine claimed that God called her to religious life through sports because she would go to the 6:00 AM daily Mass and pray for Notre Dame to win. As time went on, she felt drawn to a closer relationship with God. At age sixteen, she answered God's call to religious life and entered the community of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg.

Education was kin to S. Mary Catherine. Always inquisitive, she shared her passion for learning with each of her students. She was an exemplary educator who ministered as a teacher in Catholic elementary schools for twenty years and an administrator for an additional twenty years. During these years, she mentored countless others in the profession of education.

Often the thought of being a missionary in Papua New Guinea loomed in her heart. Because her mother was elderly, Mary Catherine was hesitant to leave her. When approaching her mother about this possibility, the response was, “Go, I’ll visit you in PNG.” And that she did...at age eighty-six!

Mary Catherine loved New Guinea where she continued “tending the sheep” in her care as an itinerant teacher. She instructed catechists, taught at the Teachers’ College and at two seminaries with the Capuchin Brothers, as well as in the Bush. Wherever she served she loved the people and her ministry.

S. Mary Catherine had a true Franciscan spirit, living life to the fullest. God was first and the center of her being. She balanced life with prayer, ministry and Franciscan joy. She loved sports, the outdoors, traveling, bike riding, being adventurous, and seeing the beauty in all of creation. Being a photographer, she often captured the special beauty of God’s outdoor natural cathedral. In community, she was compassionate, humble, honest, prayerful, joyful, and always had a good sense of humor.

We offer our sympathy and love to her sisters, Angela and Lee, her nieces and nephews, faithful friends, and all who knew and loved her, especially her classmates Sisters Virginia Ann, Millie, Veronica and Wilhelmina.

We thank the nursing staff and pastoral care for taking such good care of Mary Catherine during these recent years. We thank Mary Catherine for the gift of her life, for being a wonderful instrument of God's love to all those whom she touched, especially through education. By example she taught us all how to live, love, enjoy life, and embody God.

Thank you, Mary Catherine, for the beautiful Franciscan life you lived throughout your pilgrim journey on earth. We celebrate you and your new birthday with all the angels and saints in heaven as we commend you back to God, the One you loved so much. Please continue to intercede for us.

Gratefully,

Sister Joanita Koors, osf

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for the Council

SISTER MARY CATHERINE ESCHENBACH (FORMERLY S. CLARENCE CECILE)

Birth: February 15, 1923

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1939

Entrance into Eternal Life: February 12, 2017

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MARY CATHERINE SERVED:

1941-1947	St. Louis, Batesville, IN
1947-1950	St. Francis de Sales, Indianapolis, IN
1950-1954	St. Ann, Hamilton, OH
1954-1960	Immaculate Conception, Old Monroe, MO
1960-1961	St. Anthony, Streator, IL
1961-1967	St. Lawrence, Lawrenceburg, IN
1967-1981	St. Michael, Indianapolis, IN
1981-1982	St. Vincent de Paul, Bedford, IN
1983-1984	Franciscan Sisters of Mary, Kagua, PNG
1984-1988	Holy Trinity Teachers' College, Mt. Hagen, PNG
1989-1992	St. Fidelis Seminary, Madang, PNG
1993-1994	Good Shepherd Seminary, Banz, PNG
1995-1998	St. Joseph, Tari, PNG
1998-2017	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, 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

Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at www.OldenburgFranciscans.org