



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036  
WWW.OLDENBURGFRANCISCANS.ORG



March 7, 2022

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

S. JUDITH WERNER, OSF

Just a few days into the Lenten season, Sister Judith Werner responded to the invitation of resurrection. Late Saturday evening, March 5, she quietly released her spirit into the gracious Oneness of God.

Judith Ann Werner was born in Batesville, IN on July 1, 1943, the second child, but first daughter, of Francis and Ethel Werner. She was born while her father was an infantry soldier in World War II. Later, Jim and Judith were followed by three more siblings: Suzette, Dale and Brian. When the family moved to Oldenburg after the war, they lived next door to her grandfather, and Judith remembered that every morning she would go to his back door and have a bowl of oatmeal with him. Years later, the family bought a farm. Judith told the story: "I was blessed to be able to attend the Academy because my mother raised chickens and used the money on the sale of the eggs to pay my tuition for four years."

Judith loved learning, and her formal education was with the Oldenburg Franciscans at St. Louis School in Batesville, Holy Family School in Oldenburg, and the Academy of the Immaculate Conception (now Oldenburg Academy). She entered the Community of the Sisters of St. Francis in 1961, continuing her education at Marian College in Indianapolis (now Marian University) and later at Creighton University in Omaha, where she earned a Master of Science in Science Education.

In reflecting upon her experiences in the Community, Judith remarked, "My years as a Sister of St. Francis have been blessed with opportunities that I would never have experienced otherwise. I have been challenged, supported, and gifted through the wisdom of many holy women. My ministries and education have deepened my spirituality. Throughout my journey I have felt the presence of the Divine. I have continually met the next 'teacher,' and heard the right messages that prepared me for the next step of my journey."

As someone who liked to be stretched in her ways of thinking and learning, it is not surprising that Judith had a variety of ministries. She was a gifted, creative teacher in grade schools in both Indiana and Ohio for many years. Eventually she "took her show on the road", traveling in a special van from school to school in the Cincinnati Archdiocese doing in-service programs in science. In an article about Judith in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, she said, "I've never gotten tired of teaching science. I think science brings out the creativity and magic in a child." She wanted teachers and students alike to be fascinated with science, and her enthusiasm was infectious.

Judith also served the Community as Co-director of Communications and later as project manager in Development. Still later, she taught GED in Batesville, celebrating each time someone received a GED diploma from the state of Indiana. Judith wrote, "My reward in this ministry is knowing that I may have changed someone's life for the positive. My hope is that they will make choices that make a better world for themselves and others. Education is priceless."

In addition to a variety of ministries, Judith had an expansive array of interests and things in which she took delight. Relationships were of great importance to her. We witnessed her deep and faithful friendship with S. Mary Laurel Hautman. She also enjoyed her classmates in Community and

occasions when they gathered. Just recently S. Joan Miller was reminiscing about a laughter-filled post-Jubilee trip that several of them took to New Mexico. Judith also treasured groups and individuals with whom she shared life and spirituality. Her family continued to be such a vital part of her life. She wrote of some of the blessings in her retirement years: "I'm also enjoying a monthly get-together with my brothers and their wives, and the "Christmas in July" party at the family farm. A true blessing as I enjoy retirement is the time with all of my nieces, nephews and their children."

Many people enjoyed Judith's creativity, which was certainly not confined to the classroom. It was also evidenced in the way she decorated a room and in the beautiful cards she made. She loved creation and any opportunity to be outdoors, breathing in the beauty. It was a place where she readily connected to the spirit of God, moving and life-giving. In the last two years, as confusion began to limit Judith's ability to find the words she wanted and to understand what was happening within her, we could still see in her a depth of spirit and places of connection. Recently, when she received a basket of tulips, I was privileged to watch how gently she touched each bud and ran her fingers over every petal, appreciating the beauty.

Sisters in St. Clare Hall have been especially blessed by Judith. When she was able to walk the hallways, she liked to visit each person and ask how they were. In the midst of her vulnerability, she still had a desire to connect to others. S. Elna Stemann enjoyed her walks with Judith and contemplative times of silence when Judith would come and just sit quietly in her room, praying. S. Mary Beth Hefti enjoyed getting to know her while they chatted over popcorn. She found her to be a good listener, someone genuinely interested in others.

Recently Judith told S. Laurina Schneider that she was going to dance in heaven. We rejoice with her and picture her in the freedom of dance and the joy of oneness with the Sacred Presence of the Divine.

In gratitude for her expansive and contemplative spirit,

  
S. Barbara Leonhard, OSF

SISTER JUDITH (formerly Sister Bonaventure) WERNER, OSF

Birth: July 1, 1943

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1961

Entrance into Eternal Life: March 5, 2022

#### MISSIONS WHERE S. JUDITH SERVED:

1965-1970	Our Lady of Victory, Cincinnati OH	2003-2005	IKRON, Cincinnati OH
1970-1971	Our Lady of Angels, St. Bernard OH	2005-2006	Life Skills Cntr, Cincinnati OH
1971-1981	St. James, White Oak, Cincinnati OH	2006-2007	OCA, Development, Oldenburg IN
1981-1986	St. Catherine, Cincinnati OH	2007-2012	PR Director, Oldenburg IN
1986-1991	Our Lady of Lourdes, Cincinnati OH	2013-2013	Sabbatical
1991-1994	Archdiocese of Cincinnati, OH	2013-2014	GED Teacher, Batesville IN
1994-1995	Professional Sabbatical	2014-2015	Twice Blessed, Batesville IN
1995-1996	West End Comm. Empowerment Program, Cincinnati OH	2015-2017	Gift Shop, Motherhouse
1996-2002	Communications Co-director, Oldenburg IN	2017-2022	Motherhouse, Oldenburg IN
2002-2003	Sabbatical		

*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.OldenburgFranciscans.org](http://www.OldenburgFranciscans.org)