



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO Box 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036
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S. MARILYNN HOFER, OSF

March 27, 2022

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

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

These were the last words our Sister Marilynn Hofer proclaimed in our convent chapel during a shared Gospel reading on Friday, the feast of the Annunciation. Like her patron, little did Marilynn understand what “yes” she would be called upon to utter the very next day! Those words of acceptance, however, were words that characterized Marilynn throughout the nearly 89 years of her life.

Marilynn Genevieve Hofer was born in Chicago, the second of seven children of Louise Belda and John Hofer. When she was six years old, the family moved to Indianapolis where Marilynn was educated by Oldenburg Franciscans from grade one through college. Extracurriculars during grade school years at Our Lady of Lourdes included piano lessons, baton lessons, and a little kickball. Marilynn notes in her autobiography that feast days and liturgical celebrations—Forty Hours, May crowning, Lourdes novena, Way of the Cross, Benediction, and early morning singing of the Requiem—were very important parts of her life at that time. High school years were spent at St. Mary Academy. There it was her participation in various choral groups that provided special enjoyment for Marilynn.

Sharing her vocation story, Marilynn wrote: “Having been blessed with caring and demanding Franciscan Sisters of Oldenburg as my teachers for eleven years, I admired and wondered about being a sister/teacher. I was quite sure I wanted to be a sister, but what order was an open question because I wanted to come home for visits. Oldenburg Franciscans were not allowed to do that, so I looked around for an order that allowed visits. I often prayed the St. Francis Peace Prayer and one day near the end of my senior year while praying it, I realized I was holding something back looking for another congregation besides the Franciscans so I could go home sometimes. I decided to ‘give all’ and enter the Oldenburg Congregation.”

Marilynn’s (then Sister Maryl’s) early years of teaching were spent at St. Michael’s in Brookville, Our Lady of Victory in Cincinnati, Holy Name in Beech Grove, and at Rex Mundi High School in Evansville. When she completed her doctorate at the University of Notre Dame, she began her lengthy ministry at Marian College (now University). As a faculty member, Marilynn became Director of Secondary Education, a position which she held for over 30 years. This role involved traveling around to supervise student teachers. On one observation visit Marilynn forgot to turn off the headlights on her car. When an announcement was made over the PA system, Marilynn had to admit to the student teacher that this was her car. Even worse, she had to confess that she didn’t know the way to the parking lot!

When Marilynn “retired” from teaching, she accepted a position as Gifts and Systems Processor in Marian’s Advancement Office. When more and more computer work became an expectation, she moved to the newly-created role of Assistant Director of Alumni. This gave Marilynn a chance to meet former students and “experience a thrill when I see what alums have done/are doing with their lives.”

Toward the end of Marilynn’s 43-year ministry at Marian, she was selected to receive the prestigious Franciscan Values Award. Several staff members referred to Marilynn as one of the “unsung heroes” on Marian’s campus, and they felt she preferred to keep it that way. Still, nominators applauded Marilynn’s patience and calm guidance, her kindness and tolerance, her gentle and humble leadership. She was recognized as using her sense of humor to diffuse conflict and pave the way for understanding and reconciliation.

In 2011 Marilyn said another “yes”—this time to becoming the part-time Coordinator of Health Insurance at Oldenburg. About this transition she wrote, “Living and working at the Motherhouse has been a joy for me. The opportunities for prayer, sharing, attending programs, etc., in a pleasant atmosphere is most satisfying. My responsibility regarding medical insurance has proved manageable and leaves me time to read, study, visit the Sisters and take walks. I still maintain my connection with Marian University by serving on the Board of Trustees. Do I not have the best of both worlds?”

Now once again, I bet Marilyn would exclaim about having the best of both worlds! On the very day of her death she was still seen visiting Sisters in St. Clare Hall late in the afternoon and joining in laughter at supper time. That evening on the vigil of Laetare Sunday, she was experiencing the joy of that feast at the heavenly table. Yes, the best of both worlds.

In this world, however, Marilyn will be greatly missed, for in our conversations since her death, it seems that she was everybody’s “best friend”! We offer our sympathy then to Marilyn’s sister Andrea, sister-in-law Mary Ann, and to her nieces, nephews, and cousins. We wish peace to her classmates, former housemates, colleagues and friends.

Our Sister Marilyn has taught us so many lessons, both in her life and by her death. She delighted in all aspects of life—her nature walks, in reading a good book, in visiting with family and friends. She carried out all those gracious acts that some of us only think about doing—visiting the sick, sending cards to those at a distance. One could count on Marilyn’s generous “yes” to fill most any need—replacing individuals in liturgical ministries, helping out during a shortage of food service co-workers, composing “portraits” of jubilarians for our magazine *Celebrate*. Somehow she befriended each person she met, making each feel special and deeply loved. Marilyn lived life to the full, even up to her last hours. She died quietly, as she lived—no fuss, no fanfare. Most of all, she taught each of us how to truly be the handmaid of the Lord, offering our “yes” to each invitation. With Marilyn, may each of us respond to our God, “May it be done to me according to your word.”

In gratitude for a life well lived,



Sister Christa Franzer
For the General Council

SISTER MARILYNN (S. Maryl) HOFER, OSF

Birth: June 12, 1933

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1951

Entrance into Eternal Life: March 26, 2022

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MARILYNN SERVED:

1953-1958	St. Michael, Brookville IN
1958-1959	Our Lady of Victory, Cincinnati OH
1959-1961	Holy Name, Beech Grove IN
1961-1964	Rex Mundi High School, Evansville IN
1964-1967	Notre Dame University, Notre Dame IN
1967-2011	Marian University, Indianapolis IN
2011-2022	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