



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

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S. MARTA AIKEN, OSF

March 31, 2021

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

Ever so peacefully, as S. Joanita Koors kept prayerful watch at her bedside, S. Marta Aiken quietly slipped away into the loving arms of our God. How welcomed she must have felt by her beloved parents, Sister-companions, and friends who awaited her arrival in her forever home!

The only child of Norma Quitter and Victor Aiken, Doris Anne was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on May 6, 1925. Her upbringing chiefly among adults created a multi-faceted environment for her development. "I loved nature and music, gifts of my Grandpa Aiken and liked baking with my Grandma Quitter." The richness of her family interactions and her genealogical heritage were sources of pride for Doris. Among her noteworthy ancestors, members of "pioneer families", were John James Audubon, the Bakewell family, the Crosley Family, Charles Aiken, who founded the public school music system in Cincinnati, and Walter Aiken, music supervisor in Cincinnati schools for 50 years and namesake of Aiken High School.

Doris recalled the "wonderful gifted teachers who encouraged me to read and to strive" in her elementary years, as well as her mother who encouraged her in dramatics and provided for her enrichment despite the limitations of Depression days. As she prepared to enter seventh grade, her family moved to Richmond, Indiana, where Doris blossomed in school and in friendships. Her high school years during wartime strengthened her even further: "The work ethic was strong in my life, so while in high school I worked at Woolworth's selling dishes and live goldfish!" After serving as a nanny for three children in Michigan one summer, Doris increased her funds by making machine gun bullet casings as a factory worker.

Life as a student at Marian College, Indianapolis (now Marian University) opened up more vistas for Doris, providing a rich educational experience and the benefits of small college life. "We were probably 100 students in total," she wrote. "Education for me was not a hardship. I might well have been a professional student if I had not been attracted to the Sisters and the Convent." There at Marian, Doris felt the support of S. Eileen Hoffman who listened and walked with her in her discernment. She cited the "down-to-earth attitude" that the Sisters shared with her and the other students both in class and in the dormitory setting. "I knew in my heart that I, too, wished to share my life and gifts with this group of women. I have never regretted a moment of it," she stated.

Despite her parents' strong objections at "losing" their only child and the future they had dreamed for her, Doris entered the Sisters of St. Francis upon graduation from Marian College and became S. Marta. For some years the struggle with her parents remained a suffering to Marta. Yet empowered by Community support, especially the guidance of S. Lavonne Long and her own sure convictions, Marta embraced the teaching ministry, finding her work and her community living both enjoyable and fulfilling. Her skills in Spanish enabled her to instruct at both the high school and college levels, assisting students and befriending them, as well. After 30 years in the classroom, Marta took a sabbatical which led her to embark on a new ministry. Following training at St. Louis University, Marta became a full-time chaplain, spending the next thirteen years in hospital chaplaincy in Louisiana and Florida. While working in Florida, Marta was able to be of assistance to her elderly mother living in Tampa, until her parent's death.

In 1996, Marta accepted the position of director of pastoral care for St. Clare Hall at Oldenburg. Her skills for ministry to the sick continued to be shared when, four years later, she began her service as chaplain for Sisters who required hospital services. Many recall her presence at Margaret Mary Hospital, Batesville, and other medical sites where Marta stayed with Sisters undergoing surgeries. S. Mary Flieman, who ministered at the Motherhouse with Marta, recalls that Marta brought comfort to people whom she accompanied for medical treatment. Her compassionate presence and gentleness have not been forgotten.

Since her retirement from active ministry in 2016, Marta spent her days visiting other Sisters and being a calm companion to other residents. Her interest in many things, especially NASCAR racing and her ongoing contact with friends and former students added continued meaning and enjoyment to her life. S. Claire Whalen and S. Rachel West both fondly describe Marta as “the lady” for her quiet dignity, graciousness, and gentle personality.

Perhaps Marta’s own words best sum up the gift she has been to this Community and to the world: “Throughout my life I have cherished friendship with its unconditional acceptance, affirmation, and sharing. Hopefully my life has been that of Francis and founded in prayer and service. As I age, silence and time alone are precious gifts. May I ever be a gentle listener, a loving presence and a woman of quiet dignity, integrity, and ever open to the Spirit.”

We extend our deepest sympathy to S. Marta’s classmates, her Sisters and Associates in Community, to the nursing staff in St. Clare Hall who so gently cared for her, and to her many friends and beloved former students. Now, in the presence of endless Light, may she guide us to be gentle and peaceful companions to one another!

In loving remembrance,

Sister Delouise Menges, OSF

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For the General Council

SISTER MARTA (Doris Anne) AIKEN

Birth: May 6, 1925
Entrance into Religious Life: September 7, 1947
Entrance into Eternal Life: March 29, 2021

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MARTA SERVED:

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| 1949-1951 | St. Leo, Cincinnati OH | 1982-1983 | St. Louis University, St. Louis MO |
| 1951-1952 | St. Ann, Hamilton OH | 1983-1984 | Baptist Med Center, Jacksonville FL |
| 1952-1954 | Holy Cross, St. Louis MO | 1984-1986 | St. Francis Med Center, Monroe LA |
| 1954-1963 | Our Lady of Angels, Cincinnati OH | 1986-1996 | St. Joseph Hospital, Tampa FL |
| 1963-1967 | St. Mary Academy, Indianapolis, IN | 1996-2016 | Pastoral Care/Hospital Ministry, Oldenburg IN |
| 1967-1979 | Marian College, Indianapolis, IN | 2016-2021 | Motherhouse, Oldenburg IN |
| 1979-1980 | ICA, Oldenburg IN | | |
| 1980-1982 | Shalom, Indianapolis 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