



## SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036  
WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG



August 19, 2022

S. MARY CLAIRE HAUSFELD, OSF

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

Too soon, in human terms, yet perfectly within God's time, our beloved S. Mary Claire Hausfeld slipped peacefully into God's loving arms this evening at 7 PM, just as Sisters and Associates were gathered in Chapel, singing "Lift Up Your Hearts". How marvelous that Mary Claire was lifted to her Creator at this precise moment!

Mary Claire was born on July 22, 1949 in Cincinnati to parents Celeste "Sally" (Holthaus) and Paul Hausfeld. Being the second of eight children and the oldest girl, Mary Claire was in a position to welcome and encourage the younger ones, and she treasured her strong family connections all her life. She knew the joys and challenges of daily interaction with a large family, all of which served to prepare her for living in a religious community. Her education at St. Clement School and Our Lady of Angels High School, St. Bernard, Ohio, exposed her to the Oldenburg Franciscans and helped shape the early days of her vocation.

Commenting on those early years, Mary Claire reflected, "It seems like only yesterday when Mom, Dad, my brothers Jim, Richard, Bill and John, and my sisters Judy, Jane, and Carol and I all piled into our Jeep at the time to come to Oldenburg the day I entered the Community in 1967. I think Carol ran all the way home from kindergarten that day because she thought we forgot her."

As she celebrated her Golden Jubilee in the Community, Mary Claire spoke to her family about her life as a Sister and the ministry choices she had made. She noted, "I entered this Franciscan community because of the joyful and giving spirit I saw in my teachers and in the Franciscans in our family. I was concerned for a while, though, that I was entering a teaching community and I did not want to teach. So I spent some time thinking of what I could do in this community and I would always tell God, 'If you want me to know something, you are just going to have to put it right in front of my nose so I can see it.' Sometime after, the answer came very simply, 'All those teachers still have to eat.' So that was the beginning of my 42-year cooking career . . ."

Mary Claire's suitability for this ministry was formed already in her family home. She explained, "My mom and Granny, as we called my grandmother, taught me a lot about cooking, before I ever went to the convent. At home with a big family, Mom would say, 'Do you want to do some sewing or the cooking for supper?' I always chose the cooking for sure because by the time I got the sewing machine to work, I could have a whole meal made. Granny taught me a lot about cooking for large groups. When she cooked for the Teens Encounter Christ retreats, I sometimes helped her, and she taught me little tricks of the trade. Cooking for me became an art. I gave it my all."

This "art" form to which Mary Claire devoted her service gave her creative expression. "I loved dreaming up new food ideas, so much so that one of our Sisters said, 'Do you think we could have this one more time this year?' I always liked keeping everyone wondering!" Mary Claire related.

From Diet Kitchen service, to Diet Kitchen Manager, to Coordinator of Central Food Service, Mary Claire spent 42 years preparing meals for Sisters and students at the Motherhouse—an illustrious career! In the midst of her work, Mary Claire forged lasting friendships with Sister-cooks and Co-Workers with whom she spent many years. Her 17 years of ministry with S. Irene Hoff in the Diet Kitchen, her decades of interaction with Casey Quick and Cindy Lampert in Central Foodservice created loyalties and precious friendships that would never end. Yet cooking was not the only enterprise to which Mary Claire devoted her life. When her health concerns brought her kitchen time to an end, she found other beneficial ways to be of service to others. One notable long-term outreach was the care-giving and companionship which Mary Claire provided for

Peggy Schuckman, sister of our S. Pat Bietsch. The close relationship of Mary Claire to the Schuckman and Bietsch families during that time of Peggy's illness has endured, even with the passing of both Peggy and S. Pat.

Mary Claire involved herself in other Community projects. One of them brought her to Beattyville, Kentucky, where she joined with nine other Oldenburg Franciscans in a Habitat for Humanity "build". This seven-day project included Mary Claire's mother, Sally; and the mother-daughter "team", along with S. Irene Hoff, became the vital cooking staff for the Habitat building crew. The efforts of these experienced cooks made possible the work of creating a sturdy home for a needy family.

In addition to serving as receptionist at the St. Clare Hall desk, participating in the Community vocal choir, and involvement in Community activities, Mary Claire remained a faithful friend to classmates, housemates, and those whose paths had crossed her own in life. She enjoyed visiting and joking with Sisters and Co-workers alike, finding grace and life in the present moment. The following poem, written by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre was used by Mary Claire in a prayer setting while participating in a Sabbatical program. It expresses the depth of her own grace-filled life, serving wherever the opportunity arises:

***"How to Recognize Grace"***

It takes you by surprise  
It comes in odd packages  
It sometimes looks like loss  
Or mistakes  
It acts like rain  
Or like a seed  
It's both reliable and unpredictable  
It's not what you were aiming at  
Or what you thought you deserved  
It supplies what you need  
Not necessarily what you want  
It reminds you you're not in control  
And that not being in control is a form of freedom

As we celebrate this grace-filled woman, we offer our deep sympathy to Mary Claire's sisters and brothers, her extended family, to S. Irene Hoff, her Convent classmates, and her many friends. Our condolences are given, too, to our nursing and pastoral care staff who have supported and lovingly cared for Mary Claire through her time of illness. May she now, in the Divine Presence, lift us up to the honor and glory of God!

In gratitude and love,

  
S. Delouise Menges  
for the General Council

SISTER MARY CLAIRE HAUSFELD, OSF

Birth: July 22, 1949

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1967

Entrance into Eternal Life: August 19, 2022

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MARY CLAIRE SERVED:

1971-1986	Motherhouse Diet Kitchen, Oldenburg IN
1986-1987	Sabbatical
1987-2014	Coordinator of Food Service, Oldenburg IN
2014-2016	In-home caregiver, Cincinnati OH
2016-2022	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](http://www.Weigelfh.com).*

**Memorial Donations** in Sister's memory may be given online at [www.OldenburgFranciscans.org](http://www.OldenburgFranciscans.org)