



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG

FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



July 9, 2019

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

S. SHARON MARIE BLANK, OSF

While celebrating the 4th of July with family, there was a sudden change in Sister Sharon Marie's health. A trip to the local hospital was followed by a move to St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis. The next day, surrounded by family and classmates, S. Sharon Marie passed on to eternal life with her Creator.

S. Sharon Marie was born Sandra Anne Blank, the second child of Harold and Viola Blank. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, she grew up in Middletown where she attended St. John grade school. There she was taught by our Sisters. She attended Fenwick High School into her junior year. The family moved to Akron where she graduated from St. Mary High School. Another religious order taught at that high school, but Sandra chose to enter the convent where her sister Sharon had entered four years earlier, the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana. Sandra chose as her religious name, Sister Sharon Marie.

Sharon Marie loved the outdoors and enjoyed sharing those outdoor experiences with friends and family. She found peace both in viewing the mountains and hiking in them. She also found peace near the water, whether it be by the ocean or sitting beside a lake or a running stream. God's creation spoke peace to her. Still she was always ready for a new adventure.

As a member of the Wholistic Celebrations Committee, Sharon Marie took part in hosting various receptions for our community. They also planned fun events like Family Fun Day. She added an extra touch by grilling hot dogs, brats and corn on the cob. With the help of others, the "carry out" griller took the feast to Sisters in St. Clare Hall. Her love of life and sense of humor always made her fun to be around.

Sharon Marie began her teaching career in Old Monroe, Missouri, where she also served as an organist. Following a year as a student at Marian College (now Marian University) she began teaching at St. Wendel's in Wadesville, Indiana. After six years as a teacher there, she became the principal. Spending six more year there, she guided teachers and students in their learning experience. All of that time, she was also serving as the parish organist.

Her skills as a principal had been recognized and she was sent to be principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in New Albany, Indiana. There she was nominated for the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Distinguished Principal Award. In recommending her for the award, Daniel J. Elsener, then executive director of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis said, "She conveys a true Christian love and gentleness in her interaction with co-workers and with her students." Sharon Marie was also known for her gift of listening, her support of her staff and her spiritual leadership.

From a tribute to her posted on Facebook, we learned that she was a champion for inclusive education. In the early 1990s when the family of a child with Down Syndrome desired that he receive a Catholic education, she said “yes” and made it happen. This was a life-changing experience for the family. A member of that family became a teacher and expressed herself this way, “I pray that the faith she has passed onto me will allow me to be as brave as she was and that I may answer the call to serve those in need with just as much open-mindedness, friendliness, and boundless enthusiasm.”

Next she moved across the Ohio River to become principal at Our Mother of Sorrows in Louisville, Kentucky. While there, she was part of a program for parents and coaches on “The Catholic Athletic Experience.” She told those attending, “While we play to compete, we also play to win at teaching our kids the Christian values of courage and poise in the midst of adversity, honor and respect of self and others and sacrificing and serving one another.”

Sharon Marie had returned to teaching and was a language arts teacher of sixth graders at St. Gabriel in Louisville, Kentucky. She will be greatly missed.

We thank you, Sharon Marie, for the gifts that you have shared with so many children as well as their parents and parishioners. We thank you for sharing your life with us.

We extend our sympathy to Sister Sharon Marie’s sisters, Sister Sharon and Sharlene and Sharlene’s family as well as members of her convent class and other Sisters and friends.

In Christ’s peace,



S. Annette Grisley
For the General Council

SISTER SHARON MARIE BLANK

Birth: 08-01-1946

Entrance into Religious Life: 09-08-1964

Entrance into Eternal Life: 07-05-2019

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. SHARON MARIE SERVED:

1966-1967	Immaculate Conception	Old Monroe, MO
1967-1968	Marian College (University) - Student	Indianapolis, IN
1968-1985	St. Wendel	Wadesville, IN
1985-2000	Our Lady of Perpetual Help	New Albany, IN
2000-2005	Mother of Sorrows	Louisville, KY
2005-2006	Sabbatical	
2006-2019	St. Gabriel the Archangel	Louisville, KY

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.OldenburgerFranciscans.org