

Remembering Our Sisters

When our community gathers to celebrate the life and ministry of a dear sister who has died, we know that, in Heaven, she cherishes our love, prayers and--when possible--presence at her visitation, Vigil, and Funeral Mass.

Six sisters have died since the last public celebration of a Mass of Christian Burial in St. Joseph Chapel in early March, before the Archdiocese of Milwaukee issued its directive on celebrating the Eucharist during the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to being able to celebrate their lives soon. In the meantime, as we abide by social distancing guidelines, we will share our deceased sisters' obituaries through occasional emails.

May we continue to draw strength from their holy lives as we ask for their prayers of intercession and protection.



Sister Annelda Holtkamp, who lived her religious vocation as a homemaker, died on April 19, 2020, at Our Lady of the Angels Convent, in Greenfield, Wisconsin. Sister was 102 years old.

Sister Annelda was born on October 27, 1917, in St. Paul, Iowa. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1943; made her first profession of vows in 1945; and made final (perpetual) vows in 1951.

Sister Annelda is survived by her sister Renelda Pieper of Houghton, Iowa; and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community, with whom she shared her life for 77 years.

Sister Annelda ministered in Wisconsin, Illinois and Nebraska for more than seven decades. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sister served as homemaker at St. Bernardine Convent in Forest Park (1950-1951), and at St. Peter Convent in Skokie (1954-1957). In the Diocese of Green Bay, Sister served as homemaker at St. Mary Convent in Chilton (1992-2005).

In the Diocese of Madison, Sister served as homemaker at Immaculate Conception Convent in Kieler (1947-1949). In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, sister served as homemaker at St. Joseph Convent Motherhouse, Milwaukee (1945-1947) and (1951-1952), at St. Anthony of Padua Convent, Milwaukee (1949-1950), at Immaculate Conception Convent, Saukville (1958-1959), and at St. Joseph High School Convent, Kenosha (1959-1992). In the Archdiocese of Omaha, Sister served as homemaker at St. Mary Convent in Osmond (1952-1954).

In her retirement, Sister served in the ministry of prayer and presence at St. Joseph Convent, Campbellsport (2005-2011), and at Our Lady of the Angels Convent, Greenfield, from 2011 until the time of her death.

A Funeral Liturgy was held on April 24, 2020, at St. Joseph Chapel, Milwaukee. Interment was at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Sister Clare Maureen Connolly, who lived her religious vocation in education and parish ministry for 60 years, died on April 15, 2020, in Omaha, Nebraska. Sister was 82.



Sister Clare Maureen was born in Ireland on September 16, 1937. She joined the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus in 1955, with whom she taught elementary and high school students. In 1975 she transferred to the School Sisters of St. Francis and made her final (perpetual) vows with our community in 1976.

Sister Clare Marie is survived by two brothers: John (Karen) Connolly of Fairfield, Connecticut, and Jim of Pacifica, California; sister Maureen (Terry) of Venice, Florida; many nieces and nephews, and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community with whom she shared her life for 45 years.

Beginning in 1975, Sister Clare Maureen ministered in Nebraska for more than four decades. In the Archdiocese of Omaha, sister served as a parish minister at St. Ludger Parish in Creighton (1975-1976), as a parish minister and director of religious education at St. Frances Parish in Randolph (1977-1980), taught at Ryan High School in Omaha (1980-1983). She worked in Omaha as an education consultant (1984-1994), and as area manager for Childcraft of World Book (1992-1993). She served as education consultant (1994-1996) and program coordinator (1996-2020) for New Covenant Center in Omaha, and served as coordinator of the Alternative to Violence Project in Omaha (2009-2020).

Sister donated her body to the Anatomical Board of Nebraska. A memorial service will be held at a later date.



Sister Marie June Skender (Maristeva), who lived her religious vocation as an educator, musician and parish minister for 65 years, died on April 7, 2020, at Our Lady of the Angels Convent in Greenfield, Wisconsin. Sister was 83 years old.

Sister Marie June was born on November 16, 1936, in Milwaukee. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1953, made her first profession of vows in 1955, and final (perpetual) vows in 1961.

Sister Marie June is survived by a brother, Steven Skender of Port Charlotte, Florida; a sister, Shirley Williams of West Allis;

nieces, nephews and cousins; and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community, with whom she shared her life for 67 years.

Sister Marie June ministered in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin for more than six decades. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sister served as a musician at St. Peter School in Skokie (1955-1958), where she also served as teacher/organist (1958-1960) and teacher (1960-1961). In the Diocese of Green Bay, sister served as teacher/organist at St. Charles School in Charlesburg, (1963-1965), where she also served as a principal and teacher/organist (1965-1969). She taught at St. Mary School in Chilton, Wisconsin (1969-1971); served as music coordinator at Consolidated Parish Elementary School for Johnsbury and Chilton (1971-1972); and served in religious education and pastoral ministry at St. Anthony Parish in Niagara (1972-1982). She also served in pastoral ministry and director of religious education at St. John the Baptist parish in Seymour (1982-1987), and was director of pastoral care at Maryhill Manor, Niagara (1987-1990).

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Sister served as director of pastoral care at St. Joseph Convent, Campbellsport (1990-1996); served as secretary at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in West Allis Wisconsin (1998-1999) where she also served in pastoral care (2005-2012); served as pastoral minister at Clement Manor in Greenfield (1999-2001), was choral director at West Allis Center In West Allis (2001-2002), and assisted with Christian formation at St. Augustine Parish in West Allis (2002-2005). In the Diocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, sister served as a teacher/organist at St. Walburga School in Fletcher (1961-1963).

In her retirement, Sister served in the ministry of prayer and presence at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee (2015-2016), and at Our Lady of the Angels Convent in Greenfield from 2016 until the time of her death.

A Funeral Liturgy was held on April 16, 2020, at St. Joseph Convent Chapel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Interment was at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Milwaukee.

Sister Marylyn Welter (Leona Marie), who lived her religious vocation as an educator and pastoral Associate for 67 years, died on April 4, 2020, at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee. Sister was 85.

Sister Marylyn was born on September 12, 1934, in Chicago. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1951, made her first profession of vows in 1953, and final (perpetual) vows in 1959.

Sister Marylyn is survived by nieces and nephews, and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community, with whom she shared her life for 69 years.



Beginning in 1953, Sister Marylyn ministered in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sister served in Chicago as director of catechumens at Holy Angels Parish (1987-1988), was secretary for the Passionist Community (1988-1991), and served as pastoral associate at Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish (1991-1997). She also was pastoral associate at St. Mary of Celle Parish in Berwyn (1997-1999) and at St. Thomas Becket Parish in Mt. Prospect (1999-2007), and served as RCIA Volunteer at St. Celestine Parish in Elmwood Park (2007-2016).

In the Archdiocese of Denver, she taught at St. Anthony School in Denver (1970-1971). In the Archdiocese of Detroit, Sister was a pastoral minister and director of religious education at St. Joseph Parish in Monroe (1982-1984). In the Diocese of Joliet, Sister taught at St. Walter School in Roselle (1971-1982). In the Diocese of Gary, Indiana, Sister served as a substitute teacher at Holy Name School in Cedar Lake, Indiana in 1953. In the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota, sister taught at Japanese Martyrs School in Leavenworth (1953-1956).

In the Diocese of Rockford, Sister taught in Aurora at Our Lady of Good Counsel School (1965-1969) and at St. Joseph School (1969-1970). In the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, Sister taught at St. James School in Decatur (1956-1964) and at St. Margaret Mary School in Granite City (1964-1965).

In her retirement, Sister served in the ministry of prayer and presence at Sacred Heart in Milwaukee from 2016 until the time of her death. Sister chose to have a green burial, which was held on April 7, 2020, at the Sisters Cemetery in Campbellsport. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at a later date.



Sister Ellinda Leichtfeld, who lived her religious vocation in education and health care for 73 years, died on March 28, 2020, at Maria Linden Apartments in Milwaukee. Sister was 95.

Sister Ellinda was born on June 18, 1924, in Chicago. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1945, made her first profession of vows in 1947; and final (perpetual) vows in 1953.

Sister Ellinda is survived by her great niece, Karen Carbone, several cousins, and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community with whom she shared her life for 75 years.

Beginning in 1947, Sister Ellinda ministered in Illinois and Wisconsin for more than seven decades. In the Archdiocese of Chicago, Sister taught at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Glenview (1947-1948), at St. James School in Arlington Heights (1953-1958), and served as Administrative Resident at Holy Cross Hospital in Chicago (1962-1964).

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Sister served in Milwaukee as principal at Our Lady of Sorrows School (1958-1962), and as Administrator at St. Mary Hill Hospital (1964-1976), where she also served as Administrative Executive Director (1976-1984), and as President/CEO (1984-1989). In the Diocese of Rockford, Sister taught at St. Joseph School in Aurora (1948-1953).

Upon her retirement, Sister volunteered her services at Alfons Gallery in Milwaukee (1992-2001), served as a volunteer for students with special needs at Alverno College (2001-2012), and served in the ministry of prayer and presence at Maria Linden Apartments in Milwaukee from 2014 until the time of her death.

A Funeral Liturgy was held on April 2, 2020, at St. Joseph Chapel, Milwaukee. Internment was at Mount Olivet Cemetery, Milwaukee.

Sister Marion Verhaalen (Vernon), who lived her religious vocation as a musician, piano instructor, and composer, died on March 16, 2020, at Sacred Heart, Milwaukee. Sister was 89.

Sister Marion was born in Milwaukee on December 9, 1930. She was received into the School Sisters of St. Francis on June 13, 1950; made her first profession of vows in 1952; and final (perpetual) vows in 1958.

Sister Marion is survived by a sister-in-law, Patricia Rader of Orange City, Florida; nieces, nephews and friends; and the School Sisters of St. Francis Community with whom she shared her life for 70 years.



Beginning in 1950, Sister Marion ministered in Wisconsin for seven decades. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Sister served as musician at Alverno College in Milwaukee (1952-1955) where she also served as associate professor of music (1958-1967) and professor of music (1970-1978). She served as a musician at UW-Milwaukee (1978-1979) and at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music in Milwaukee (1979-1981), where she also served as an instructor from 1982-1983 and 1990-1998. Sister taught creative arts in the Milwaukee Public Schools (1980-1982) where she also served as coordinator of the piano curriculum (1983-1990). She served as a piano instructor at Cardinal Stritch University (1998-2014), where she also served as a musician (2006-2012), and she served as a musician and composer in Milwaukee (2012-2017).

In her retirement, Sister served in the ministry of prayer and presence at Sacred Heart, Milwaukee (2017-2019) and at Our Lady of the Angels Convent in Greenfield from 2019 until the time of her death.

A Funeral Liturgy was held on March 20, 2020, at St. Joseph Chapel in Milwaukee, followed by burial at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.