

Sister Mary Ann Averbeck, C.PP.S.

Born: August 22, 1932

Professed: August 10, 1955

Entered into Life: November 25, 2017

Verse on her memorial card:

“In the presence of the angels I will sing your praise.”

(Psalm 138:1)



November 28, 2017

Dear Sisters,

As Sister Viola Marie sang the Bridegroom Song, Sister Mary Ann Averbeck joined the heavenly choir at 1:02 p.m. on Saturday, November 25, 2017. The words she chose for her memorial card, “In the presence of the angels I will sing your praise,” (*Psalm 138:1*) came to fulfillment.

Music was integral to Sister Mary Ann’s life. In her 2006 autobiography, Sister Mary Ann wrote of taking piano lessons as an elementary school student. She credited Sister Adelindis (Florence) with sowing the early seeds of her vocation through conversations during those lessons. Participation in the schola during her high school years and being part of operettas at Quincy College were among her treasured memories.

The only child of Margaret (Arning) and Leo Averbeck, Sister Mary Ann was born in Quincy, Illinois, on August 22, 1932. She attended Quincy College for two years before entering our community in September 1952. When she became a novice in 1953, she was given the name Sister Margaret Leo in honor of her parents. Sr. Mary Ann went on to major in music at Fontbonne College with a concentration in voice.

Teaching was Sister Mary Ann’s first ministry. In Missouri, she taught at St. Clement and St. John the Baptist in St. Louis; Sacred Heart, Columbia; St. Mary, Glasgow; St. John the Baptist, Villa Ridge; and St. Anthony, High Ridge. In both Columbia and Villa Ridge she served as a teaching principal. She also taught at St. Louis in Louisville, Colorado; St. Richard in Omaha, Nebraska; and St. Mary’s in Quincy, Illinois.

In 1977, Sister Mary Ann began ministering in our treasurer’s office where she served for thirteen years. Her initial assignment was bookkeeping for St. Elizabeth Academy (SEA), and she also helped with a music class at SEA. She soon was given the added responsibility of Health Insurance Coordinator for our Sisters and lay employees. She appreciated that this ministry allowed her to be less in the public eye; when it came to music, however, she shared her rich voice without hesitation. Her bell-like soprano tone raised many minds and hearts to God in prayer.

In 1990-91, Sister Mary Ann enjoyed a sabbatical, part of which was spent at St. Gertrude Priory in Cottonwood, Idaho. There her love of music, especially chant, was further nurtured. Following her sabbatical, Sister Mary Ann served as Assistant Manager at Rosary House in St. Louis, as a driver and transportation manager at the motherhouse, and as a seamstress in the Ecclesiastical Art Department. Since 2014 her ministry has been prayer and presence.


Teacher, principal, accountant, eldercare provider, driver, transportation manager, seamstress – consistent throughout her varied ministries was her strong commitment to deepening relationships with God and all of those around her. Through study of theology at Paul VI Institute in St. Louis, through retreats and workshops, and through fidelity to daily prayer, she grew in her knowledge and love of God.

Sister Mary Ann cared deeply for her parents, particularly in their elder years. When her mother moved to a nursing home, Sister Mary Ann made frequent trips to Quincy to be sure her mother was receiving good care. In community, she enjoyed being with her Sisters in quiet prayer and in sharing hearty laughter over a good game of cards. For six years, she shared community life in our house of formation, Benjamin House. There she was a gentle and encouraging presence for those who were moving forward in formation and for those who were struggling.

We will gather in Precious Blood Chapel at 4:40 p.m. on Sunday, December 3, 2017, for a Prayer Service of Thanksgiving. In keeping with her quiet, unassuming manner, Sister Mary Ann requested that there be no sharing of memories during this service. Sister Mary Ann chose cremation. Her cremains will be returned to St. Joseph Chapel at 9 a.m. on Monday, December 4, 2017, and the Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m., also in St. Joseph Chapel.

Sister Mary Ann is survived by cousins, friends, and her profession classmate, Sister Joan Oberle. Let us hold them in prayer as they grieve the loss of her earthly presence. And, let us all join Sister Mary Ann in singing God's praise that she now is relieved of her suffering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Janice".

Sr. Janice Bader