

Sister Audrey Hemsath, C.PP.S.

Born: November 4, 1935

Professed: November 22, 1987

Entered into Life: June 3, 2020

Verse on her memorial card:

**“The birth and glory of all is like the flower
Of the field, but the STONE is of value for
You who have faith.” 1 Pt. 1:24, 2-7**



June 4, 2020

Dear Sisters and Family of Sister Audrey,

Shortly after 2:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, our Sister Audrey Hemsath—and for many of you, your mother or grandmother—peacefully left this world and went home to God. Though she prevailed in her fight against Covid-19, it left her weakened and unable to continue in the struggle with her other health conditions.

Born on November 4, 1935, Audrey was the third of twelve children of Clifton and Louise (Kohler) Gillette. She was baptized at St. Peter Parish in St. Charles, on November 24, 1935 and was taught by our Sisters at St. Joseph Parish in Cottleville, MO.

Audrey married Kenneth Hemsath on August 29, 1953 and together they had seven children. Just a few days before their 26th wedding anniversary in 1979, Ken died suddenly of a heart attack.

Audrey was a devoted wife and mother who cared deeply for her children. She also was an accomplished seamstress, sewing everything from bed sheets to dresses for her daughters – often designing these simply by looking at a picture in a magazine. As her grandchildren were born, she took great joy in sewing for them and was exceptionally creative. She loved designing items to fit each one’s personality, whether that be clothing or cloth story books.

As a young girl Audrey had considered the possibility of religious life, but after meeting Ken, she chose marriage. Following her husband’s death, the thought of a religious vocation returned. After much prayer and discernment with a priest-friend, Sister Audrey entered our novitiate on November 1, 1986 and professed first vows on November 22, 1987.

Sister Audrey put her sewing skills to good use, serving in our Ecclesiastical Art Department (EAD) until her retirement in 2014. Sister Mary Cecile, Director of EAD, describes Sister Audrey as a hard worker, gracious, thoughtful, eager to learn, and a delight to work with. During many of her years with the EAD, Sister Audrey did couching, the very precise work of outlining the stitched designs with gold cord. When Parkinson’s began impacting the steadiness of her hands, Sister Audrey feared she would need to leave the department. Instead, she learned to sew altar linens, a work she enjoyed and in which she took pride.

Sister Audrey held a unique status in our community, our only Sister-Mom, and she belonged for a time to an inter-congregational group of Sister-Moms. Perhaps the more appropriate title would be Mom-Sister, since motherhood came first. Sister Audrey was very aware that her decision to enter our community was difficult for her children, but her love was never divided, only expanded to include two families. A woman with a big heart and a deep capacity for love, she was able to love and to give herself to both family and community.

Sister Audrey was preceded in death by her parents, by her husband, Kenneth, by her brother, William Gillette, and her sister Ann Ochs, brother and sister-in-laws, and by her two grandsons Matthew Hemsath and Jake Tuttle. Sister Audrey has many immediate relatives and relatives by marriage who can carry on her gentle strength and fidelity. She is survived by four daughters and three sons: Patricia (Jim) Montgomery, Catherine (Gary) Tuttle, Michael (Terry) Hemsath, Rose (John) Bakula, Morris (Lisa) Hemsath, Debra (Michael) Montalbano, and Paul (Karen) Hemsath. She is survived by 14 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great grandchildren. She is survived by four sisters: Virginia (Robert) Morgan, Grace (Samuel) Morgan, Louise (Daniel) Sjurseth, and Margie (Gary) Walker; and by five brothers: Glennon Gillette, Milton Gillette, Clifton (Patricia) Gillette, Jr., Donald Gillette, and Jerry (Sharon) Gillette. In addition, she leaves behind sisters- and brothers-in law: Ruby Gillette, Betty (Jack) Dreher; Beverly (Jerry) Hoffmann, Harlan (Darlene) Kolkmeier. In addition to these immediate family members, Sister Audrey also is survived by nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Sister Audrey chose to donate her body to science, but that is not possible because of the current Covid-19 pandemic. There will be a private burial in our convent cemetery on Wednesday, June 10, 2020, and a Memorial Mass later.

Sister Audrey chose the songs and readings for her funeral liturgy and noted that she chose Ephesians 3 as her prayer for her family: "I pray that he will bestow on you gifts in keeping with the riches of his glory. May he strengthen you inwardly through the working of the Spirit . . . Thus, you will be able to grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love and experience this love which surpasses all knowledge." Sisters, let us join Sister Audrey in this prayer for her family and for their consolation in this time of great loss. May their hearts be filled with the peace of knowing that their mother's love is now joined fully with Christ's love and remains with them forever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Janice Bader". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Sr. Janice Bader