

Sister John Antonio Miller, C.PP.S.

Born: September 23, 1942

Professed: August 10, 1963

Entered into Life: May 19, 2023

Verse on her memorial card:

“Show us how great is the call to serve.”



Dear Sisters,

After a valiant eighteen-month struggle with leukemia, Sister John Antonio Miller went peacefully home to God shortly before noon on May 19, 2023. Her sister and her niece were at her side asking the “angels to take her into paradise and the martyrs to welcome her.” It is easy to imagine that welcome: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Joann Miller was born in St. Louis, Missouri on September 23, 1942, the first of three children of Kenneth and Leona (Berni) Miller. She grew up in High Ridge, Missouri, and attended St. John the Baptist High School.

Joann was received into our novitiate on July 25, 1961, receiving the name Sister John Antonio. She professed first vows on August 10, 1963, and would have celebrated her 60th jubilee this summer. Sister John Antonio earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics at Fontbonne and a master’s degree in Gerontology and Health Services Management at Webster University.

Sister John Antonio was a woman of many talents as evidenced by her diverse ministries. She served as a seamstress in our Ecclesiastical Art Department, as a member of our post-Vatican II Renewal Team, as the administrator of our retirement center, and as the founder and Executive Director of St. Elizabeth Adult Day Care Centers (SEADCC).

In 1981, when adult day care was virtually unknown, Sister John Antonio established the first SEADCC site at St. Elizabeth Academy. She went on to establish multiple sites throughout the city and surrounding areas. In 1992, the Executive Director of the Alzheimer’s Association acknowledged her as “the person who put adult day care on the map in St. Louis.”

Sister John Antonio was laser-focused on the SEADCC participants, the term she insisted on using to include those whom most would differentiate as clients, staff, and family. She knew the names and stories of every participant at every site. Our community’s core values of presence, hospitality, reconciliation, and response to human needs guided every interaction and decision. These values were printed on the stub of every paycheck, and every employee could describe how they practiced these values in their daily ministry.

The primary ministry of SEADCC was the care of adults with special needs, but Sister John Antonio provided other services as well, including mentoring students from Meramec Community College, Fontbonne and St. Louis Universities. Another quiet service of great impact was that of offering employment to persons who needed a second chance. She demanded excellence and was a hard taskmaster, but in the words of one second-chance employee, “She made me a better person.”

Though always trying to avoid attention, Sister John Antonio received numerous awards for her leadership and dedicated service. Even now, she may cringe at these next sentences. She was honored as a “Woman of Achievement” by the Suburban Journals and KMOX Radio, given the “Servant of the Poor” award by the St. Louis Archdiocesan Committee on Women in the Church, and recognized with the “Community Support” award by the Center for Women in Transition.

Though she devoted far more than a 40-hour week to her ministry, Sister John Antonio took time for family and hobbies. She enjoyed biking, gardening, cooking, and reading to name a few. After entrusting SEADCC to the Incarnate Word Sisters, she took up beekeeping and numerous volunteer activities. When her grandnieces visited O’Fallon recently, she relished the role of teacher as she introduced the sisters and helped the girls locate on a globe the countries in which the sisters served.

Sister John Antonio was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her sister, Marian (John) Wuest, her brother, Kenneth (Rose) Miller, nieces and nephews, grand nieces and nephews, profession classmates, and friends. Please keep them in prayer, especially her sister, Marian, who accompanied her so faithfully these past months.

We will welcome Sister John Antonio’s body to St. Joseph’s Chapel at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, June 7, 2023. The Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 a.m. followed by her burial in our convent cemetery.

For her memorial card, Sister John Antonio chose the words, “Show us how great is the call to serve.” Service was her life: no request too large to tackle, always willing to go the extra mile. May she have rest from her labors for her good deeds go with her.

Sincerely,

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

Sr. Janice Bader