

Sister Michael Marie Burns, OSF
1939 - 2024

Sister Michael Marie Burns, OSF, age 85, passed away July 6, 2024, at The Alverno in Clinton, IA. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 13, at The Canticle, 841 13th Ave N in Clinton, with Rev. Michael Schaab presiding. Visitation will be from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, July 12, at The Canticle, where a rosary will be recited at 4:00 p.m. and a wake service begins at 6:30 p.m. Burial will be in St. Irenaeus Calvary Cemetery. Pape Funeral Home is assisting.

Judith Grace Burns was born June 16, 1939, in Clinton, the eldest child of Patrick and Hilda Grace (Brown) Burns. She was baptized at St. Mary's Church, Clinton, on July 2, 1939. She had five brothers, Patrick, Thomas, Robert, Joseph, and Timothy, and four sisters, Ruthann, Donna, Kathryn, and Mary.

Judith attended St. Boniface Elementary School and Mount St. Clare Academy in Clinton, graduating in 1957.

She entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent in Clinton on September 8, 1957, and received the name Michael Marie at her reception on June 16, 1958. She pronounced perpetual vows on August 12, 1963. Her novitiate classmate was Sister Marilyn Kapsch.

Sister Michael Marie received a B.A. degree in Elementary Education from Marycrest College, Davenport, IA; an M.P.S. from Loyola University, Chicago, IL; and an M.A. in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure, St. Bonaventure, NY. She also completed a two-year Spiritual Guidance Training Program at Siena Retreat Center in Racine, WI.

Sister Michael Marie taught elementary grades in Chicago, IL; Vail and Akron, IA; and Riverside, CA. She served as a college campus minister in Riverside, CA, and La Crosse, WI. She was Director of Religious Education at St. Gerald, Oak Lawn, IL; St. Benedict, Chicago, IL; and St. Pius X, Indianapolis, IN. In 2002, she moved to Chicago and ministered as a house manager and qualified support professional for Sophia House, Esperanza Community Services.

She retired from full-time ministry in August 2011 and moved to The Canticle in Clinton. There, she assisted on the hospitality and liturgy committees and served the congregation as a regional Associate Partnership Coordinator for several years.

Sister Michael Marie had a big heart with love for all, especially people living on the margins. She ministered to individuals with intellectual disabilities at L'Arche Clinton by serving on their spiritual life committee. She also offered a monthly prayer service for residents of Mercy South in Clinton. She provided spiritual direction to those in need, and regularly prayed for inmates on death row.

In her free time, Sister Michael Marie enjoyed painting nature, watching movies, reading novels, and playing cards. She moved to The Alverno on July 2, 2024, only days before her death on July 6.

She is survived by her brothers, Patrick (Monica), Thomas (Mary Ann), Robert (Susie), Joseph (Terri), and Timothy; sisters, Ruthann Notz, Donna (Joseph) Neilson, and Mary (George) Ivory; stepbrothers, Timothy (Mary) Leonard, Richard Leonard, Jay (Deb) Leonard, Edward (Annette) Leonard, Lawrence Leonard, and Joseph (Anne) Leonard; stepsisters, Suzanne Wilden, Elizabeth Reed, Mary Mallinger, and Jill (Brian) Lemke; stepsister-in-law, Tina Leonard; several nieces and nephews; and her Clinton Franciscan Family with whom she shared life for 66 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents; stepfather, Raymond Leonard; sister, Kathryn; stepbrothers, Robert Leonard and Patrick Leonard; brother-in-law, Karl Notz; and stepbrothers-in-law, Raymond Wilden and David Reed.