

Sister Agnes Schneider, OP



Born to Earthly Life on September 9, 1935

First Profession on August 15, 1955

Entered Eternal Life on October 31, 2021

AGNES (Luisa) Schneider was born on September 9, 1935 to Louis and Lidwina (Thelen) Schneider on their farm in St. Johns, Michigan. She was fourth of the nine Schneider children and attended school at Fowler Elementary and High School, being taught by many Racine Dominicans.

The significant influence of two particular Racine Dominicans, Ss. Leo Dohn and Lucy Edelbeck, prompted 9th grader Agnes to think seriously about religious life. “They had a big impact on me,” S. Agnes recalled, “the way they lived, their teaching, their very presence – everything about them drew me to their calling.” At her reception in 1953 she was given the religious name S. Luisa. She professed her first vows in 1955 and final vows in 1961.

She received a B.A. in Education from Dominican College, and like many Racine Dominicans of the time, Agnes ministered most of her early religious life in education. She began at Ss. Peter & Paul in Green Bay and then continued to teach throughout Wisconsin, including St. Mary in Mineral Point, St. John in South Milwaukee, St. Bernard in Madison and Sacred Heart in Racine.

It was during her tenure as a teacher that Vatican II began. It was a time of great growth and discernment for all Sisters, including S. Agnes, and that time emboldened both her passion and her powerful sense of justice. “The vows became much more meaningful. That era brought openness in conversation within the community and in the world around us,” said S. Agnes. She also had ministry experiences during that time working with migrants and those in the margins that would set a new ministry path in front of her. After 15 years of classroom teaching, S. Agnes was able to follow her heart to a very different ministry, rooted in her desire to create a more just world for all. Her interests and passions – and then subsequently her actions – were driven by justice issues in local, national, and international realms.

Business and math had always been strong interests for S. Agnes and she went back to school for an Associate Degree from Kenosha Technical College. In 1971 she entered the corporate world for what would be the next 16 years in various roles such as Computer Programmer, Programmer Analyst, Financial Manager, Bookkeeper and Office Manager. Eventually she landed positions which united her unique skillset with her passion at NETWORK in Washington, DC, the Center for International Policy & (WOLA) Washington Office of Latin America, and later at Sacred Heart Southern Missions in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Her skills, along with her deep sense of responsibility to help create a more just world, brought so much to the organizations she served.

After retiring from her Analyst and Finance days, she moved back to Racine and began her work with the Volunteer Center of Racine and later at Siena as the Coordinator of Socially Responsible Investing. You could also find her volunteering at many non-profits in Racine, many of which were taking on issues of social justice and racism.

S. Agnes saw the world as a student of life while always offering her wisdom, courage, strength, humility to those with whom she ministered. As she often told her Sisters, “Keep hope alive. There is lots of good in the world.” We are thankful for S. Agnes and for her powerful witness to the Dominican charism and her tireless work to bring about a more just world for all.

