

Sister Donna Marie Koenigsknecht, OP



Born to Earthly Life on August 1, 1937

First Profession on August 15, 1957

Entered Eternal Life on January 30, 2023

DONNA MARIE KOENIGSKNECHT was born on August 1, 1937 in Pewamo, Michigan. She was one of the seven children born to Leonard and Bernita, and she spent many hours working on the family farm. It was these important skills learned at a young age that would serve her well later in life.

The Koenigsknecht children attended Holy Trinity School in Fowler, where many Racine Dominicans worked as teachers. Donna Marie admired the Sisters so much during her school years, and very early on she felt the calling to religious life. She made her First Profession on August 15, 1957 and took Final Vows on August 15, 1963, and was known by her religious name of S. Leonard Marie for many years.

S. Donna Marie was always known for her willingness to serve, and her ministries reflected that. She began working at St. Pius in Chicago, and then Villa St. Anne in Oconomowoc, providing support services that helped to keep these organizations running smoothly. She then went to Our Lady of the Oaks in Pewaukee, where she spent 25 years helping to take care of the building and needs of the Sisters who retired there. She often said the rural setting reminded her of home, and she spent many hours gardening and in the orchard. "It was beautiful there and I enjoyed watching things grow and then being able to have the Sisters enjoy the produce," said S. Donna Marie. She did whatever jobs needed to be done, always able and willing to do the mundane as well as the hardest and most challenging jobs.

S. Donna Marie then came home to Siena and continued to support the Community in her quiet, dedicated way, always behind the scenes doing whatever she could to help. She was a driver, laundress and painter; she worked in food service and maintenance; she was a hairdresser, a seamstress and was a beautiful knitter. She sang in the choir and when they needed members, she joined the bell choir. She also loved to play cards and was always willing to play with Sisters at Siena or when her family came to visit from Michigan.

For many years she did most of the Christmas decorating at Siena, making the campus beautiful with trees, wreaths, lights and nativities at every turn. This past Christmas was no exception. She made things beautiful for the Sisters and got everything organized and put away before God called her home.

S. Donna Marie loved her Sisters, her family and her faith. Her manner spoke of who she was - capable, hardworking and prayerful. We are grateful for her faithful witness as a Dominican and are thankful for the gift she was to all of us.

