



Sister Audrey Affholder, OP

Born to earthly life: July 1, 1928
Religious profession: August 4, 1949
Entered eternal life: June 24, 2013

“Those who teach others justice
will shine for all eternity.”

Daniel 12:3

S. EVELYN LINS VOICED A SENTIMENT HELD BY MANY when she noted, “Audrey will shine as a star for all eternity.” As one of S. Audrey Affholder’s classmates, she knew her well and appreciated the gentleness and love S. Audrey brought to the children she taught. “She truly touched their lives beyond the classroom,” S. Evelyn recalled.

Story after story shared by S. Audrey’s other classmates, family members, sisters and friends reiterated the sense that she deeply cared about people, and she spent great time, energy and creativity in finding ways to make them feel both comfortable and special.

Ruth Marie was born to Joseph and Pearl Affholder in Madison, Wisconsin, on July 1, 1928. She was only six years old when her mother died, and Ruth went to live with her grandparents so she could attend St. Bernard School and “get religion.” When her father remarried a few years later, Ruth returned to live with him and her new stepmother, who was very good to her. The marriage gave her a little brother and sister, and she cherished them and their families throughout her life.

In seventh grade, Ruth began to think seriously about becoming a sister. But in 11th grade, her resolve was tested a bit when she met Richard: “the kindest, most gentlemanly boy I had ever known. I fell sweetly in love with him, and he seemed to reciprocate my feelings,” she remembered. At age 18, however, her desire to join the Dominicans won out. “Richard visited me, treating me to a ride on his motorcycle, but even that could not deter me this time!” she said.

When Ruth was received into the community, she became Sister Audrey. For 47 years, she “had the privilege of teaching God’s little ones.” She excelled as a primary teacher and was deeply loved and respected by her students. Her kindly nature, sweet temperament and gentle demeanor seemed the perfect fit for teaching six- and seven-year-olds.

Thus, in 1996, when S. Audrey retired from teaching, transferring her gifts to serving the elderly with equal grace and skill, many were surprised by the transition. The depth of care and commitment she shared so naturally with “God’s little ones” shifted just as naturally to Racine’s elderly population to whom she became companion.

“Every time she visited someone, she prepared a special snack pack with things she knew the person liked,” S. Joyce Ballweg, former Senior Companion Program director, said. S. Audrey was generous with her time, transporting other sisters to visit seniors, as well as serving as a companion for many seniors herself. When still able, she regularly spent six to seven hours daily working in the Senior Companion Program. “I was always impressed with the love and compassion she brought to her ministry,” S. Brenda Walsh, also a senior companion, noted. “She was committed to meeting people’s needs in mind, body *and* spirit.”

Even last Friday, three days before her death when she was not feeling well, S. Audrey visited five of her 12 current companions, listening to their cares and freely giving her love, as she had done so often with so many. Indeed, she will be missed. Yet, we believe she “*will* shine as a star for all eternity.”