

Obituary for Sister Francine Stallbaumer
Submitted by Benet Hill Monastery
Written by Sister Ana Cloughly, OSB



“Life is changed, not taken away.”

Unfailing in her faith in the resurrection of Christ, Sister Francine Stallbaumer, OSB offers the above words to comfort those she loved. Surrounded by family and her Sisters of Benet Hill, Sister Francine died peacefully on September 5, 2018.

Sister Francine was born on August 20, 1934 in Kelly, Kansas and baptized Elizabeth Louise. Her parents, Francis and Leona Stallbaumer (both deceased) were farmers in eastern Kansas and people of deep faith. Sister Francine was the first of their five children and is survived by her four siblings, Dorothy Peschel, David Stallbaumer, Louis Stallbaumer and Jane Keating. She once wrote of her family, *“I am grateful for so much. I feel blessed that my parents gave our family such a strong grounding in faith. So*

strong that I remember my novitiate director saying I had ‘been raised in a sanctuary of the Catholic Church’”.

Living out her faith was both a right and a responsibility that Sister Francine took very seriously. At the age of 19, she entered Mt. St. Scholastica, made her first profession in 1955 and her final profession in 1958. Recalling her final profession, she spoke of running her fingers over the ring given to each perpetually professed sister and feeling a profound sense of belonging.

Sister Francine graduated from Adams State University Alamosa, Colorado with a BA in Elementary Education and earned two Master of Arts degrees, one in Elementary Administration from the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado and the other in Adult Christian Community Development from Regis University Denver, Colorado. She taught at both the primary and secondary levels and served various schools as principal and in school administration for 30 years in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Wyoming.

One of the most important choices in Sister Francine’s life was to become a charter member of a new monastic Community and in 1965 she celebrated the foundation of Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In 1985 she took up a very new role as Pastoral Associate at St. James Parish in Denver, Colorado serving for 9 years. Parish leadership was an exciting and challenging role for Sister Francine. And God had more to ask of her. In 1994, due to a shortage of priests, Sister Francine was asked to fill the newly created position of Pastoral Agent at St. Mary Mission in Ault, Colorado. This was one of her favorite and most challenging ministries. As Pastoral Agent, Sister Francine could put all her administrative, organizational and pastoral skills to work. It was

here she called upon the people to realize their baptismal gifts and to work for the good of the mission community as well as for the wider community. One of her more satisfying endeavors was helping a family work with Habitat for Humanity to build a home.

When Sister Francine came home to the monastery in 1998, she hoped to quietly settle into Colorado ministry. But her leadership skills were needed, and she served the monastery as Assistant Prioress from 1999 to 2011. Continuing to organize activities at the monastery, she also served as Monastery Coordinator of Benet Hill Monastery from 2011 until her last days.

During her 63 years of monastic profession, Sister Francine believed her most important ministry was one of prayer. She held the world in prayer and especially those captive in the slavery of human trafficking. Sister Francine loved her life as a Benedictine sister. She dearly loved her family and she loved those she served. Most importantly, she loved her God.