



Name: Sister Judanne Stratman
Date of Birth: March 18, 1939
Place of Birth: West Point, Nebraska
Parents: Leonard and Angeline (Disher) Stratman
Religious Profession: August 15, 1958
Date of Death: August 14, 2019
Age: 80
Years Professed: 60

Wake Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Mary Louise Stratman was the first daughter born to Leonard and Angeline (Disher) Stratman at St. Joseph's Hospital in West Point, Nebraska on March 18, 1939. Later the family grew to include a sister, Susan and a brother, Bernard. Mary Lou, as she was called, was baptized at St. Mary's Church in West Point on March 21, 1939. Sister Thaddeus, her Dad's youngest sister, was Mary Lou's Godmother. When she received the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mary's on May 5, 1947, she chose the name Ann.

Her parents owned a grocery store during World War II and later moved to a farm, located in Aloys, Nebraska, about 10 miles west of West Point. Both the store and the farm required hard work, which showed Mary Lou, Susan and Bernard the strong German work ethic and the need for the family to have a strong faith and the need to work together. Extended family members gathered every week for visiting and sharing good country food! Her parents had a simple and strong faith and trust in God, which impressed Mary Lou and gave the foundation to her vocation.

Mary Lou and her family belonged to St. Aloysius Parish where she attended grades 6 to 8 in the Elementary School that was staffed by the School Sisters from Milwaukee, WI. She attended Guardian Angels School in West Point for the beginning years of her elementary and then for high school, where the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity taught. When Mary Lou was discerning her call to Religious Life she was attracted to the School Sisters of St. Francis. Her sister, Susan, was an aspirant in this community, which was another draw for Mary Lou. Mary Lou, however, also liked the Sisters who taught her at Guardian Angels School. She talked to Sister Martin dePorres Flavin and received the advice to pray to the Holy Spirit to know what God wanted. Her Aunt, Sister Thaddeus, was also very encouraging in this time of discernment.

Mary Lou's Parents were supportive of her desire to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. On February 19, 1956 Mary Lou wrote the following letter to Mother Edna:

Dear Reverend Mother,

Two weeks ago today, I, with eight other girls from West Point, visited your Motherhouse. This made me decide that I really wanted to go to the Convent. I had been thinking about it for three years. Last year my younger sister, Susan, went to the Franciscan Order in Milwaukee. After that I was undecided as to go there or to the Convent in Manitowoc. Sister Mary Paschal thought that a trip to the Motherhouse would help me decide and it has.

My parents are Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Stratman. I have one sister, Susan and one brother, Bernard. I belong to St. Aloysius Parish. After we moved to the farm, I attended St. Aloysius School for my 6th, 7th and 8th grades. I am now attending Guardian Angels School and expect to graduate from the 12th grade in May.

While I was in Manitowoc, I visited Sister Thaddeus, who is my father's sister.

Our Lord gave Himself to us and the best way to show our appreciation is to offer our lives to Him and try to spread His teaching to other persons who are not as fortunate as we. I also would like to teach and I think a Sister has more influence. I would like to ask entrance to your Community. Would you please send the application forms and the necessary information?

Sincerely, Mary Lou Stratman

Mary Lou's pastor from St. Aloysius Parish wrote to Mother Edna on March 9, 1956.

Dear Mother Edna,

May I recommend to you, Miss Mary Lou Stratman, who is desirous of becoming a Sister in your Community? She comes from an exemplary, Catholic family. Her personal sanctity is well known and her character above reproach. If it be the Will of God, I pray she may spend many fruitful years as a member of your Order. With God's blessing, I am respectfully yours, John F. Beacon, Pastor

Mary Lou's pastor from St. Mary's Church in West Point also wrote a letter of recommendation dated March 8, 1956:

Reverend and Dear Mother,

It is a real pleasure to recommend to you Mary Lou Stratman who aspires to become a member of your Community. She is a senior in our Guardian Angels High School and is a good student. Mary Lou is a very good girl, industrious and has the qualifications to become a good religious.

With best wishes I am very sincerely, H. J. Kaup, Pastor

Another recommendation came from Sister Bernetta, who was her Principal. She wrote that Mary Lou was a good leader and a good organizer. She was even-tempered, kind, industrious and charitable.

Mary Lou was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 22, 1956 and began classes at Holy Family College. When she was received into the Novitiate on June 13, 1957 she received the name, Sister Judanne. Her Mother had great devotion to St. Jude, so this may

have been a reason to receive this name along with her Confirmation name. Sister Judanne continued her education earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1964 with a Major in Biology and a Minor in Art. She received a Master of Arts Degree in Biology from Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles.

Sister Judanne loved to teach and was well prepared for whatever mission assignment she received. When Sister Judanne was asked to study, in preparation for being Novice Directress, she traveled to Rome to attend the ARC Program, which included the Scriptural and Theological Foundations of Consecrated Life in Apostolic Religious Communities. This opportunity for study in 1971-1972, included a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Assisi. In 1996 she earned a Master of Arts Degree in Religious Education from Notre Dame Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

Sister Judanne enjoyed living life! She was interested in Art History, especially works by Giotto. She liked photography, gardening, making rosaries, cleaning and driving a car. She was grateful for all the blessings God gave her, in particular for her family and friends who supported her through their prayer and example and for her vocation to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. She was grateful for the many opportunities and surprises that God gave her in life through her study, teaching, leadership roles, ministering with our Sisters in service to the Community and the Church.

At the time of her Jubilee, Sister Judanne reflected, "These experiences enhanced my life. Being with the enthusiasm and idealism of our young members, in my years as Novice Directress, was a true blessing. God has been shaping me as an Apostolic Franciscan Woman Religious to be more aware of His merciful presence and enduring power. In working with the our Sisters in St. Rita Health Center, God is further shaping me to be ready for His final call to union with Him. How blessed I am! How grateful I am!"

Sister Judanne expressed deep gratitude for all the care she received while in St. Rita Health Center. She was appreciative of all the Sisters who kept vigil with her. She greeted and thanked each Sister by name. Her journey to God's final call was also our journey with her as Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity.

Sister Judanne, may you rest in peace. Amen!