



Name: Sister M. Peter Stengl  
Date of Birth: October 4, 1920  
Place of Birth: Antigo, Wisconsin  
Parents: Louis and Anna (Suick) Stengl  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1939  
Date of Death: April 8, 2020  
Age: 99  
Years Professed: 80

#### Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Phyllis Mary Stengl was born in Antigo, Wisconsin, on October 4, 1920, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. She was the fourth of six children born to Louis and Anna (Suick) Stengl. It was a tradition for Catholic parents to name a child after a Saint. This practice enabled the child to have a saintly role model to inspire them throughout their life. Seemingly, the Pastor of St. Hyacinth Parish in Antigo did not consider Phyllis to be the name of a Saint, so Phyllis was baptized Felicia Mary on October 31, 1920. Phyllis was confirmed at St. Hyacinth Church in 1934 and took her Mother's name, Anna, as her Confirmation name.

Phyllis went to St. Hyacinth's Grade School where she was taught by the Stevens Point Franciscans. Phyllis had a close friend, Elizabeth, who was a neighbor. Phyllis took music lessons from Elizabeth's mother. Elizabeth went to school at St. John's Grade School where she had the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. When they were in sixth grade they began to talk about becoming a Sister. Both of them pestered their parents about entering the Convent after Eighth Grade. The parents insisted that they must finish high school first. The two girls must have worn their parents down, because they gave in and let them go to the Convent after their Freshman year.

Phyllis had no attachment to the Stevens Point Franciscans, so they decided to go to the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Convent in Manitowoc. Phyllis' mother warned her that she would be lonesome, and that she would not be able to come back home until she finished her Sophomore year at the Convent. After the year, if Phyllis felt that Convent life was not for her, then her parents would come to get her and take her home. Phyllis' friend, Elizabeth, lasted only one week, before her parents came to get her. Phyllis was just as lonesome as Elizabeth was, but she had to heed her mother's words and stay to finish her Sophomore year. As we know, Phyllis did stay to finish her Sophomore year and stayed 85 more years after that!

At the time of her Reception, Phyllis received the name, Sister M. Peter. In her first year of Novitiate, Sister Peter finished High School and earned her Diploma in June 1938. During her second year Novitiate she was a College Freshman. In March of that year Mother Perpetua Nothom called Sister Peter to her Office to tell her that she would be going to Bloomington, Wisconsin for two weeks to replace a Sister who was sick. The two weeks turned into five years. Sister Peter taught grades three to six and was organist. This is where she became a T O, teacher/organist, for the rest of her religious life.

Sister Peter took classes during summers to earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Holy Family College, July 1955, with a Major in Mathematics and Minors in Education and in French. She went on to earn a Master's Degree in Mathematics in 1959 from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 1964 she completed work for a Master's Degree in Education Administration from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

Sister Peter taught at ten Wisconsin schools over a period of about 20 years and was vice-principal for six years at Xavier High School in Appleton. Sister Peter was Western Regional Director for seven years and was elected to the General Administration for two terms and served as Director of the Apostolate. During this time, she needed to use realtor skills as she was given the task to sell the Regional House in Walnut California and the one in Elmhurst, Illinois, the farm house on Alverno Road and the Ozanam Home in New Berlin, Wisconsin.

No task was too challenging for Sister Peter to tackle. She oversaw the construction of St. Francis Convent, 1987-1988. She was Administrator of St. Paul Manor in Kaukauna and caregiver for Bishop Aloysius Wycislo in Green Bay. She served the Community as a driver, a homemaker. Postmistress, office helper and other tasks assigned. In 2014 Sister Peter moved to St. Rita Health Center where she was faithful to her Prayer Apostolate of praying for the Sisters and the people at St. Paul Elder Services in Kaukauna.

Sister Peter had a deep love for her Religious Vocation. At the time of her jubilee she reflected: "I couldn't have chosen a better vocation. Actually, God chose me for it, but I was and am glad I said yes to His calling. I can only remember the many blessings, the hundredfold that has fallen to my lot.

- The many Sisters with whom I have lived or been associated - their friendship is most sincerely appreciated and treasured,
- The loving care and concern of all my superiors who took the time to listen, correct and support me,
- The variety of challenging obediences that have made the years pass so swiftly,
- An education far beyond anything I would have had as a lay person,
- The unlimited spiritual opportunities, especially the daily celebration of the Eucharist,
- The best of healthcare in our doctors, dentists, hospitals, St. Rita Health Center Staff,
- The best is yet to come- the vision of God Himself!"

On Wednesday evening, after a supper of soup and ice cream, the St. Rita Health Center aids were getting Sister Peter ready for bed. When they were settling her in bed Sister Peter said, "God, come to get me!" God heard Sister Peter's prayer and came to take her home. The best finally did come, the vision of God Himself!

I did do a little research regarding St. Felicia. It was noted that Saint Felicia is the Patron of Farewells. Sister Peter did do much traveling in her years and needed to say many farewells. Her Pastor must have had a premonition when he baptized her. Thank you, Sister Peter, for your faithful witness as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity for 80 years. Thank you for being our Sister! May you rest in peace.