

Name: Sister Stephen Marie Luebbert
Date of Birth: November 11, 1934
Place of Birth: West Point, Nebraska
Parents: Stephen J. and Marie (Kriekemeier) Luebbert
Religious Profession: August 15, 1955
Date of Death: October 14, 2020
Age: 85
Years Professed: 65



Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Kathryn (Catherine) Christina Ann Luebbert was born in West Point, Nebraska on November 11, 1934 to Stephen and Marie (Kriekemeier) Luebbert. She was baptized at St. Boniface Church, Monterey, Nebraska by Rev. Clement Stratmann on November 13, 1934. Kathryn was confirmed at St. Mary Church in West Point on May 5, 1947. Kathryn was the third oldest of seven children. She had two brothers and four sisters.

The Luebbert family was not rich, however, they had what they needed. They had a strong German, Polish Catholic faith life, which was nurtured by her parents. The family was blessed with parents who cared about the children. They taught the children to care about each other. Kathryn especially remembered, with fond gratitude, the special attention shown to her by her father while she was growing up. Kathryn was born, slightly handicapped, with a paralyzed left arm. As she got older, Kathryn realized how necessary it was for her to have a feeling of well-being and security.

Kathryn met the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity when she attended Guardian Angels School in West Point. She graduated from Guardian Angels High School on June 1, 1952. Since the time that Kathryn was in the third grade, she had thought about being a Sister. After graduation she wrote the following letter, dated June 27, 1952, to Mother Edna:

Dear Mother Edna,

I would like to enter the Convent this fall. Would you please send me the application papers and any other information which you think is necessary? I would appreciate it if you would send these papers to: Sister Modesta, Memorial Hospital, West Point, NE.

Thank you very much.

*Sincerely yours,
Kathryn Luebbert*

Kathryn wrote the following letter, dated July 9, 1952 to Mother Edna:

Dear Mother Edna,

On June 27th I wrote a letter asking you for an application. I was reasonably sure of my entry this fall. I talked over my intention with my mother. She did not wholeheartedly approve, but I did not think

she had any serious objections. When she found I was really serious she said I was too young. Both my father and mother want me to go to college one year first. Though I am certain they would not refuse their consent, I feel I cannot, in dealing with such an important matter, go against their wishes. With your permission, I would like to keep the application. I am looking forward to entering the following fall. Please try to understand my predicament.

*Sincerely,
Kathryn Luebbert*

During her four years of high school, Kathryn worked part-time at the Farmer Union State Exchange in West Point. After graduation Kathryn continued to work for a year as a part-time bookkeeper and sales clerk in the dry goods department store.

Kathryn never gave up her heart's desire to become a Sister. On May 25, 1953 she wrote the following letter to Mother Edna:

Dear Mother Edna,

I wrote to you last year, telling you that I would like to become a Sister. However, circumstances did not permit me to go. I think these obstacles have now been eliminated. I would like to enter this fall, if you think I am still able to go.

Perhaps Sister Modesta told you about me last year. My left arm is slightly paralyzed, but I don't think it would hinder any work I might do. I have worked in a grocery store since I was a freshman in high school. I did not find the work difficult, even though my arm is not perfectly normal. Since I would like to teach, I don't think it would be much in the way. Would you please send me any information that I need to apply? Thank you very much.

*Sincerely yours,
Kathryn Luebbert*

Sister Modesta did write to Mother Edna on behalf of Kathryn to get application papers. Her Pastor, Father Kaup wrote the following letter of recommendation:

Reverend and Dear Mother:

Kathryn Luebbert of this parish wishes to enter your Community. I am very happy to recommend her most highly. She has all the qualifications that would make her a good Religious. With best wishes I am,

Very sincerely, H.J. Kaup

Kathryn was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 21, 1953. On her Reception Day, June 13, 1954, she received the name Sister Stephen Marie in honor of her Father and Mother.

Sister Stephen Marie completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Holy Family College in 1963 with a major in History and a minor in French. She continued her education earning a Masters in Education from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan. After teaching/being principal in Wisconsin schools for 16 years Sister Stephen Marie was Central Regional Director for six years. The following year Sister Stephen Marie was at St. Joseph Hospital in St. Paul Minnesota for a nine-month CPE Residency Program which would prepare her for the next twenty years when she would serve in Pastoral Ministry, Mission Effectiveness and Pastoral Care.

Sister Stephen Marie put her heart and soul into everything she did. She was gifted in art and cheered up many people through her messages penned in calligraphy. Sister Stephen Marie had an up-lifting personality and found the positive in every situation that she could. Sister became a resident of St. Rita Health Center in 2015. Her appreciation and kindness were always present for whomever she met. Even though the last days of her life were difficult, she still responded that she was fine, she was all right. She always had a ready "thank you" for all the care she received.

Sister Stephen Marie was very close to Jesus and she prayed for everyone to have this gift. She had great devotion for praying the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet. She had special intercessory prayers for her assigned Prayer Apostolate, St. Paul Elder Services.

In her Jubilee reflection Sister Stephen Marie wrote, "With a heart overflowing with gratitude, I say 'Thank you' to God, to Mary, my parents, my brothers and sisters, their families, my Community and to everyone who has touched my life." We in turn say, "Thank you, Sister Stephen Marie for the blessing you have been to each of your Sisters in Community. Thank you for saying yes to God's call to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. May God grant you eternal life. May you rest in peace."