



Name: Sister Annette Blonde (Sister M. Martin)  
Date of Birth: December 2, 1941  
Place of Birth: Green Bay, Wisconsin  
Parents: Clement Frank and Frances Regina (Reis) Blonde  
Religious Profession: August 15, 1961  
Date of Death: October 24, 2023  
Age: 81  
Years Professed: 62

Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Annette Esther Blonde was born to Clement Frank and Frances Regina (Reis) Blonde at St. Vincent Hospital in Green Bay, WI on December 2, 1941. Annette was baptized at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Green Bay on December 14, 1941 and received the Sacrament of Confirmation there on May 16, 1955. Annette was the third child with an older brother, Martin, and an older sister, Mary Ann, and one younger sister, Joni.

Annette grew up on a farm in what used to be Preble, Wisconsin. Besides farming, the family raised about 500 chickens for the Farmer's Market. They had a large apple orchard and vegetable garden. Along with the chores and the homework, the family enjoyed many good times together. At times the table and chairs were pushed to the side to make a dance floor and their Dad played a button accordion, a "squeeze box." Their Mom taught the children how to dance the polka and the waltz. When their Dad's sister, Aunt Rose, came over she would play the piano for a sing along! Another favorite memory of growing up was the evenings when their Mom and the children played baseball. Since their Dad had a bad heart, he would cheer from the porch.

Annette and her siblings attended St. Philip School in Green Bay. Annette knew about the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity through school and through her Aunt, Sister Digna Reis, her mother's sister, who was a member of the Community. Sister Celestine Holsbach, her 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, was especially helpful in answering Annette's questions about being a Franciscan Sister.

From little on, Annette wanted to be a Sister nurse. In the 8<sup>th</sup> grade she asked her parents if she could go to the Convent. Her Mom and Dad were not surprised because Annette talked about this for a long time. At this time her sister, Mary Ann, a sophomore at St. Joseph Academy in Green Bay said that she wanted to go to the Convent, too, however, it was to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross, the Bay Settlement Community. Their parents took them to visit both Convents, and would have preferred to have their daughters in the same Convent, however, the Bay Settlement Community did not have a nursing program for Annette. Their parents, not wanting to interfere with God's plan for their daughters, gave them the blessing to enter the Convent of their choice.

Annette wrote the following letter to Mother Edna dated May 15, 1956:

*Dear Mother Edna,*

*I am planning to join your Community. I am in the eighth grade at St. Philip School in Green Bay. Would you please send me an application blank?*

*Gratefully,  
Annette Blonde*

Mother Edna received the following letter of recommendation dated July 7, 1956:

*Dear Mother Superior:*

*I recommend Annette Blonde as an aspirant to the Religious Life. She belongs to a good, Catholic family. I feel that she will prove to be a valuable person to your Community.*

*May God bless you and all your Sisters.*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Theodore H. Verbeten*

Annette was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 22, 1956. When it came time to leave, their Dad said, "Girls, I want you to remember that if you find that this is not the life for you, the door will always be open." Mary Ann did join the Bay Settlement Community and became Sister Cecilia. On Reception Day, June 13, 1960, Annette was given the name Sister M. Martin. She returned to her Baptismal name after Vatican Council II and became known to us as Sister Annette. After a few years, one day their sister, Joni, asked their Mother, "Mom, do I have to go to the Convent, too? I want to be a Momma!"

Sister Annette attended Holy Family Academy to complete her High School education and received her Diploma May 26, 1960. She continued her education at Silver Lake College. Mother Edna asked Sister Annette to take classes to be a teacher and then she could go to school for nursing later on. She earned a Bachelor of Art's Degree May 19, 1974 with a Major in Elementary Education and Minors in Biology and in French. Sister Annette enjoyed the students very much, so her heart desire to be a Sister nurse was put aside. For fifty years Sister Annette taught in eleven different schools in the Diocese of Green Bay. She had a wonderful sense of humor that her students also enjoyed. This is evident in the poems they would write about her at the end of the school year. The following is an example:

*Sister Annette was our  
6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.  
She would always say to people who weren't behavin',  
"you're cruisin' for a bruisin'!"  
She was our spelling teacher  
And also, God's preacher.  
She sometimes used the phrase,  
"O helpless child"  
But she was always real mild and kind.  
She was strict when she needed to be.  
So, we took it seriously.*

*She is a nun  
Who loves everyone.  
She is a wonderful teacher  
And a great enricher  
Who believes we could achieve anything.  
So, here's to Sister Annette!*

When Sister Annette's health declined in 2013, she moved to St. Rita Health Center. Even though her body was wearing out, she was still able to help with operating the switchboard, doing hand sewing for the Craft Room and helping by writing letters. Sister Annette enjoyed crocheting, visiting and playing cards.

In her Jubilee reflection Sister Annette reflected on the Lord's goodness in calling her to be a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. Her heart was full of gratitude to God, her Sisters in Community and the dedicated love shown to her by her family. Jesus was always with her. She appreciated all the gentle care she received from the nurses and CNAs. She participated in Christ's work of redemption by accepting her sufferings and limitations. Sister Annette gave herself up completely and handed herself over totally to our Lord. Thank you, Sister Annette, for the witness you gave as a Franciscan Sister of Christian Charity. May you enjoy your eternal reward with our Lord.

Eternal Life grant to Sister Annette, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen!