



Sr. Maureen Mangel

BORN: April 1935

ENTERED CONGREGATION: September 1949

DIED: July 11, 2021

For her 60th Jubilee, Sister Maureen wrote, “While I long for ‘God-time’ my active nature is always alert to the needs around me. It is ministry for me to reach out to those I meet with a kind word, a gentle touch or even an encouraging hug.” She also wrote, “If it is true that ‘in God we live and move and have our being,’ then the Spirit Jesus promised is available at each moment to guide and strengthen us on our journey. I am ever grateful that I have chosen to walk this path and be a Sister of the Precious Blood ... and will happily accept as many more years that I will be granted.” Mo, as we Sisters called her, was granted 86 years of human life on this earth and about 6 weeks shy of 70 years as a Sister of the Precious Blood.

On April 13, 1935, Maureen was born in the evening, the youngest of seven children on a farm in Darke County, Ohio, and was baptized at Holy Family Church in Frenchtown the following afternoon. The house she was born in and grew up in was a renovated one-room schoolhouse. Growing up on the farm, Maureen was busy about many things, from taking care of farm animals to plowing, planting, gardening, cooking, canning and cleaning. Mo writes that during these times a “a true community spirit reigned and we felt blessed.”

Maureen in her youth, when asked the question of what she wanted to be when she grew up, would often say that she wanted to go to the convent. Her Aunt Terentia Cordonnier was also a Sister of the Precious Blood. Mo’s mother, Sister Terentia’s biological sister, Bernadine, reminded her of this answer when she was in the eighth grade. Accordingly, Maureen entered the aspirancy the next fall in September 1949. Maureen writes that she “spent the first year ... in the old basement of the postulate — quite crowded, but we did not know the difference. Fatima Hall was being built so we had the joy of scrubbing, washing windows and eventually moving into the new building in 1950.”

From that time, Maureen also learned from Sister Cyria’s teaching about the interior castles of St. Teresa of Ávila through art and drama. She writes, “the

seeds were planted and so began my journey toward a desire for contemplative prayer which was fueled by hours of adoration, especially day and night hours in the novitiate.”

After novitiate, Maureen had various teaching assignments in Rensselaer, Indiana; in North Dakota; in Ft. Wayne, Indiana; in Troy and in Botkins, Ohio. Following that, Mo was surprised to find herself missioned back to the Motherhouse to assist in the postulate while continuing studies in home economics. Maureen enjoyed working as part of the beginnings in our community of a formation team. Over a four-year period with that group, she saw the number of postulants go from 54 to 35 to seven to finally three. During that time Maureen enjoyed the team concept, having everyone in Fatima Hall, and living through the changes just after the Vatican II Council. Following her stint as assistant postulant director she directed the home economics department at Central Catholic in Lafayette, Indiana.

In 1971, she started ministry at the John XXIII Retreat Center in Hartford City, Indiana, along with a brief part-time stint as the vicar for religious for the Diocese of Lafayette. Mo loved putting the changes brought about by Vatican II into practice and working with adults. This ministry and this place, she called “her still point in a moving world.” She said, “Retreat work called out of me talents I never could have guessed were there, made use of my love of music and delight in offering hospitality to those who come to the Center. Each person becomes a kind of teacher to me who is called on to mentor others.” It was there that she learned to be a spiritual director and to give retreats. Mo retired from John XXIII in 1995. In 1996, in her retirement years, she worked with the Sisters of St. Joseph at the St. Joseph Center in Tipton, Indiana, doing much the same thing as she did at John XXIII.

In terms of Maureen’s training and education for her many ministries, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Dayton, a Master of Arts degree in interdisciplinary studies from Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York, and certification as

a major catechist for religious education in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. She participated in various workshops and training programs in psychology, spirituality, systematic theology, liturgy, ecumenism, Christology, Scripture, and marriage enrichment.

Finally, Maureen, as with anyone, had lived through many joys and struggles. She met these aspects of her life with much love, perseverance and hard work. In essence, Maureen loved being an unobtrusive caregiver. Even so, people always felt cared for by Mo. She always paid attention to the needs of others all the while searching for the peace that only God could provide.

In these last few remaining years, Maureen was on a steady pace of diminishment with her true self and spirit steadily vanishing from our view. However, I ran across a poem in her archive file that seemed to remind me of the Maureen I used to know. Without reading the whole poem, I leave you with a few lines. It is written by the poet Hafez, entitled “Now is The Time” and goes like this:

Now, why not consider a
A lasting truce with yourself and God

Now is the time to know
That all you do is sacred
Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child’s training wheels
To be laid aside when you can finally live
With veracity and love.

Why do you still throw
Sticks at your heart and God?

This is the time for you to deeply compute
The impossibility that there is anything
but grace

Now is the season to know that every-
thing you do is sacred.

And I would also add to that, Mo, every-
thing you did in your life until now was
sacred and everything you are doing
now with loved ones who have gone
before you is sacred. Bless you Maureen
and bless us. Amen.

— Sister Marla Gipson