

December 23, 2011

Dear Sisters, Associates, Relatives and Friends of Sister Anne Hays:

Sister Anne Hays died on December 16, 2011 at Marian Residence, in Alliance, NE. She was born on September 26, 1921 to Mr. and Mrs. Henry (Anna Reinsch) Hays on their sheep ranch outside of Gillette, WY. She was baptized Mary Kathryn and was the oldest of five children. Her grade school days were spent in a rural school. In 1935 she enrolled as a boarder at St. Agnes Academy. After completing the first three years of High School, Mary Kathryn decided to enter the community of The Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity at Marycrest in Denver.

Two other young women entered at the same time, at Marycrest in Denver in this New Province that officially opened on January 1, 1939. By then three novices had arrived from Stella Niagara. On August 17, 1939 she was invested in the Franciscan habit and received the name Sister Anne.

August 20, 1940 she made her first vows and started on a long missionary journey. During summers she received a B.A. in Education from St. Ambrose College in Davenport, IA. After 30 years at the Indian Missions in S.D. and two years at St. Mary's Academy in O'Neill, NE, her life changed. In 1974 she answered her call to begin doing pastoral work in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico. This lasted 31 years and ended in 2005 when she retired to Marian Residence. She returned to Denver for a time and in 2010 returned to Marian Residence.

Her great love for Jesus in the Eucharist was so manifest as she prepared children for the reception of their First Communion both in the States and Mexico. Sister Anne had a great trust in Divine Providence and several times when she needed money to pay for someone's doctor bill and/or medications, she would stop at the post office and find someone had sent her money for her use in caring for the poor. She certainly cared for the poor by going up the mountains on rough roads to get them and take them to the doctor, by paying their bills, by giving them rides to town or giving them anything she had.

During the past several weeks Sister Anne experienced great fatigue and stated she had chest and abdominal pain. After an x-ray on 12/1/2011 she was diagnosed as having pneumonia. Antibiotics were started and she spent much time resting. On 12/7/2011 she was admitted to the hospital. She was told she was very sick and her response indicated that if God wanted her to live she would and if He wanted her to die she was ready to go. As her condition became critical, she was unable to receive the Eucharist and on 12/15/2011 she returned to Marian to die. As the sisters prayed with her the next evening her breathing became very rapid and then very slowly slowed until 8:50 pm she went to the Jesus she so loved. Her parents and two brothers preceded her in death. Survivors are a brother and sister, nieces, nephews and her religious community.

During the Monday evening wake Barbara Finney gave a tribute to Sister Anne. Some of her words were, "Her faith in God and her religious vows carried her over the rough roads and hills of Mexico being a Mother Teresa to the Otomie people". Father Lou Nollette offered the Mass of the Resurrection on 12/20/2011 in the chapel at Marian Residence. His inspirational homily ended with these words, "Make love our home; make peace our table; and may forgiveness be our warmth". Sister Rita Cammack OSF, Provincial Minister, offered an equally inspiring reflection at the close. Sister Anne Hays was laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery where 127 of her Franciscan Sisters rest.

Her Sisters at Marian