Vita of Sister Mary Ann Lucke

Mary Ann Lucke entered this world on February 28, 1927 and at that moment her love of creation was born. The oldest of twelve children born to Martha Ricker Lucke and Ferdinand Lucke, Mary Ann quickly acclimated to farm life helping both her mother and her father. Four additional girls joined the family before her first brother was born, so she worked in the fields, learned to milk the cows and helped her mother care for her younger siblings. Her last sister, Karen, was born after she entered the convent.

Baptized on March 6, 1927 at St. Joseph Church, Fort Jennings, Ohio, she attended school and received her First Communion and Confirmation in that parish. She attended Fort Jennings High School, but entered the convent as a senior. She was seventeen at the time. She received the name Sister Mary Geraldine when she first received the habit on August 12, 1945. In 1968 she changed her name back to Mary Ann.

Mary Ann loved learning. She attended St. Francis College in Joliet for two years, but completed her BA in summers at Mary Manse College. She received her first Masters at Catholic University majoring in science and received a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Ohio Wesleyan. Mary Ann delighted in science and received multiple science grants which she enjoyed immensely. She taught school for thirty-six years at many of our missions and had repeat performances at New Washington and Bucyrus. She was very proud of the fact that while teaching at St. Joseph’s Elementary School in Tiffin she managed to get them a science table. She especially enjoyed the six years she taught science at Calvert High School in Tiffin.

After retiring from teaching Sister Mary Ann spent several years tending the elderly first in Glandorf and then a couple of years tending to her parents. She also worked as a seamstress, did some housekeeping and worked in the infirmary.

Prayer was a significant part of her life and in the year 2000 she felt a pull to a more contemplative life. She spent some months with the Poor Clares in Minolta, IL, but discerned that that was not the life for her. She returned to the Motherhouse in Tiffin and took up the duty as coordinator of Motherhouse transportation. She held that position for sixteen years.
Mary Ann appreciated nature. At her fiftieth jubilee she wrote, “I’ve experienced God’s majesty in places like the Smokies, the Blue Ridge Mountains, Glacier-Watertown, Jasper, Banff. The awesomeness of the Rockies was only surpassed by the Andes in Peru. Flying over the Alps to the Holy Land was a spectacular sight. One summer I saw the Austrian Alps close-up with my sister, Wilma, on our trip to Germany. God has given me some wonderful surprises.” She went camping in some of those places and even camped a couple of summers and into the fall on the edge of the convent grounds. There, sister guests were treated to dinner and smores cooked over the open fire.

Mary Ann’s love of nature also manifested in the orchids she grew inside and the flowers she tended on the convent grounds. One year after retiring from teaching she tended the fruit and vegetable gardens, and many years picked berries. In the 1996 edition of the *Wheatfields* she wrote an entertaining account of her “Beetle battles.” She recounts, “Early in June, when I saw Japanese beetles gorging themselves on our raspberries, I thought “This is as bad as the locust plague of ancient Egypt!” As a scientist geek she, of course, researched how to get rid of them. It wasn’t an easy battle. As she killed them she counted them. She wrote, “Some have asked why I bother to count beetles. My natural curiosity spurs me on in this disgusting task. I thought there were a million here, but up to August 9, I have eliminated 32,645 beetles – a far cry from one million.

St. Francis fish pond in the front of our grounds was also tended by Mary Ann. She loved animals as well. In her early years on the farm she enjoyed tossing the stick with their dog. In 1966 one of the sisters rescued a full-bred beagle. Though she was not responsible for Max, she did rescue him from the cornfield when he pulled his chain loose and ended up with it tied around several cornstalks. Many of us have the memory of Mary Ann sitting after supper with Tiger, the cat in her lap. Her love of animals like her love of all creation was lifelong.

Sister Mary Ann was preceded in death by her parents, Martha and Ferdinand Lucke; sisters Vera Menke and Alice Fischbaugh; and brothers Elmer, Donald, and John Lucke.

Our sister, Mary Ann, was welcomed home by Sister Death on Sunday, January 17, at 4:52 PM. At the time of her death she was serving the congregation as a Minister of Prayer and Presence.

May our sister rest in peace.