Vita of Sister Catherine Wechter

A baby girl was born June 18, 1928 to Anna and Albert Wechter. In Baptism at Mother of Sorrows Parish, North Auburn, she was given the name Rosemary. Rosemary was one of four children: she, Marcella, Jake, and Mary Ann.

Sister Charlene Young recalls being a neighbor to the Wechers. She said that they chuckled when on Sunday morning, they heard a “clapping” noise pass the barn where they sat milking. They knew it was the Wechers on their way to church in time to take their places in the back pew.

At age 19, Rosemary, stood in the chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis, Tiffin, and asked to be received into religious life. Her request was granted, and she was given the name Sister Catherine. In 1949 she made first profession in this Franciscan community. A cousin, Sister Alice Louise, was also a member of the community.

Sister Edna Ricker remembers well the round dances they had at Padua Hall when they were novices. Sister Catherine had real fun being a "swinger."

Sister Catherine was drawn to a ministry of health care, and in 1952 she graduated from St. Vincent’s School of Nursing in Toledo, Ohio, as a registered nurse. She served in health care at St. Francis Home, Tiffin; at Linton Hospital in Linton, North Dakota; and at the Motherhouse infirmary.

When Sister Michael Pauken was injured seriously in an automobile accident, Sister Catherine, who was working in the infirmary at the time, became her nurse. She served her friend faithfully with love and devotion for over 25 years - until Sister Michael's death in 2000. "I got more from Sister Michael than she got from me," Sister Catherine said.
Sister Catherine continued to reside at the Motherhouse but served at St. Francis Home until 2008. During this time she made a special effort to visit each sister residing at St. Francis Home. Regarding these visits she said, "I visited a few minutes with each one of them. I hope these visits brought them some encouragement, peace, and happiness."

October 16, 2009, she moved to the Home, receiving services that she herself had previously given. She said she had "more time for thinking, praying, reading, and sleeping," but she added that she didn't have "enough time to accomplish much." She noted that Room 307E gave her a nice view, looking south to the Elizabeth Schaefer Apartments. She was glad to see some familiar faces—several nurses and some residents who were at the Home when Sister Michael was there.

After seventy years of religious profession God invited Sister Catherine to leave her place at St. Francis Home, and to come home to heaven, where she would recognize other familiar faces—many of those she had cared for during their time of illness and need. She died On Friday, January 1, 2021.

She joins her brother, Jake, and her sister, Marcella, in death. Her sister Mary Ann survives.

When she celebrated fifty years of religious life Sister Catherine shared sentiments she, no doubt, would repeat today: "I am grateful to my parents, brothers, and sisters; to all the Tiffin Franciscans who taught me, to all who helped me along the way in the novitiate, and in nursing school; and the many others with whom I have had contact over the years in my ministry of caring for the sick and aged. Praise and thanks to God for many blessings."