



Sister Anna Mary Meyer, CSJ

July 3, 1936 ~ April 26, 2024

Anna Mary once wrote, "My life as a cowgirl, musician, teacher, pastoral and personal counselor has taken me down many paths and roads, but they are all guided by the Good Lord and carry out the same realistic purposes for which He put me on this good earth, that is His Work of Art."

Anna Mary was born in Quantico, Virginia. She said, "I was born into a Marine Corps family, my parents, James and Thelma and an older sister Thelma Christine. My arrival occurred in Quantico, Virginia near Washington, D.C. At about three years of age, we were transferred to Mare Island, California then to San Diego, Lynwood and back to San Diego where after 35 years of active duty including both World War I and World War II, Dad decided to retire and we settled in San Diego County for many years."

Her mother, Thelma Nordlund, sang with the San Francisco Opera Company for many years before her marriage. Ann Mary wrote, "Music was part of my being." Anna Mary played the woodwind instruments in youth and school bands and then in symphony and concert bands as an adult, and later taught woodwind instruments.

Another facet of Anna Mary's life before entering religious life was being a "cowgirl" for many years. She wrote, "I learned to ride horses at 5 years of age. I was involved in training, showing, and working cattle, with horses of my own, particularly when San Diego County had many working ranches and ranked ninth in the USA as a county, for total agriculture production." In her teen years she was very involved in 4-H work. She earned many championships in livestock. Later she was a 4-H leader, helping teenagers to gain a working business knowledge, and responding to animal emergencies at any hour.

Anna Mary recalled the bus ride to school from her rural setting began at 6:40 a.m. As a teen she said she picked boysenberries for Safeway stores, a flat weighing 45 pounds for 25 cents. She carried a stick to poke in the bushes for snakes.

Anna Mary attended Grossmont United High School in La Mesa, California. At that time it was the only school in the district, with an enrollment of over 4,000 students.

At the age of 26, she chose to become a Catholic. She worked at her home parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in La Mesa. Her duties included housekeeper, parish secretary, internal auditor, principal of the CCD program, "which was quite large and well attended." It delighted her some years later to read in the parish bulletins that former students she had taught were now in charge of various programs and

ministries in the parish. Anna Mary also sang in one choir and directed a second one in the parish. After her mother attended RCIA classes, she was baptized and Anna Mary was the godmother of her mother!

At the age of 36, Anna Mary entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Los Angeles on September 15, 1972. On August 6, 1973, she received the religious name, Sister Anna Mary. Her first profession followed on March 15, 1975, and final vows on August 15, 1978. The vow formula she wrote said: "In thanksgiving and gratitude to God who has called me and to all those who have preceded us on our journey to the Father, I stand humbly before the Lord this day, asking to seal forever the covenant of His love. 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.'"

As a postulant and novice, Anna Mary found "we all got on very well, partly because we were all musical to some extent." As part of her formation experience, she was assigned to St. Joseph Hospital, Lewiston for Pastoral Ministry. She had returned to Lakeside to care for her mother. While there Anna Mary took courses provided by the University of San Diego at Holy Trinity Parish in El Cajon, and received a Master Catechist diploma. When she left Lakeside, she was missioned to Daniel Freeman Hospital as staff chaplain, then to Marina Hospital where she remained for 18 years.

Before entering in 1957, Anna Mary attended Grossmont College for a two-year program. While in formation, she also attended the Mount taking courses in theology receiving her BA in 1974. Sister wrote, "While at the two Freeman Hospitals, I found myself serving on several active committees and also being part of the hospital's Speakers Bureau as outreach to the communities they served." For four years Sister worked with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles on medical benefits for priests.

After retiring at the age of 75 in 2011, she continued in Pastoral Care as a volunteer at Providence Tarzana Hospital and was a driver for the Carondelet Center sisters. In 2015 she became a member of the Holy Family Community at Carondelet Center. In 2021, Sister Anna Mary was one of the first group of Sisters to be transferred to St. John of God Center from Carondelet Center for more intensive care.

Sister Anna Mary always had a special place in her heart for Carondelet Center and called it "her home." Now may she know her true home with our loving and gracious God who best knows us and our hidden desires and needs.

~ *Sister Frances Baker, CSJ*