



**SISTER
M. KATE KUENSTLER, P.H.J.C.**

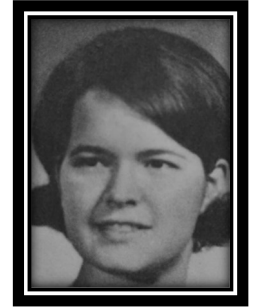


January 21, 1949 – October 28, 2019

Professed Vows August 5, 1970

SISTER M. KATE (KATHLEEN) KUENSTLER, P.H.J.C.

Sister Kate was born in St. Louis, Missouri on January 21, 1949, the adopted daughter of Lawrence and Lorraine (Buerster) Kuenstler. Her siblings include her brother, Matthew, and sister, Agnes (Schoultz)



Sister Kate grew up in Wendelin, Illinois and her interest in the Poor Handmaid Community began as a young girl in the Holy Cross Parish, where she was introduced to the Poor Handmaids' charism by her teachers.

Sister Kate entered the Poor Handmaids on August 25, 1967, and professed her vows on August 5, 1970. She received her B.S. in Education from St. Joseph College in East Chicago, Indiana, and began her first ministry in education as an elementary teacher for almost ten years at schools in Indiana and Minnesota. Sister Kate went on to receive her M.A. degree in Religious Education and ministered as a Director of Education and a Diocesan Consultant in the Springfield, Illinois Diocese and Belleville, Illinois Diocese.

Sister Kate pursued Canon Law and in 1992 she received her J.C.L. (Licentiate in Canon Law) and her J.C.D (Doctorate in Canon Law) from St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University, Rome, Italy. Her career in Canon Law ministry began as a Judge in Marriage Tribunal. Later, she initiated her own private practice as an independent Canon Lawyer specifically focused on being an Advocate for the Laity. Sister Kate's practice covered many states and countries, including Canada and Australia.



Sister Kate was a tireless defender of the canonical rights of lay people in the Church, especially the rights of parishioners. Her creative advocacy changed Vatican policy from automatically accepting US Bishops' decisions to close and sell vibrant churches to one that preserves churches as worship sites instead.

Following an unexpected illness, Sister Kate moved to Catherine's Cottage in January 2019 and then to the Catherine Kasper Home in May 2019. Sister Kate passed away on October 28, 2019, at the Catherine Kasper Home in Donaldson, Indiana. A funeral liturgy was held on November 2, 2019, with burial in the Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Donaldson, Indiana.