

Sister Damaris Zander, OSB

June 23, 1926 – November 28, 2017

Sister Damaris (Monica Magdalen) Zander, age 91, of St. Placid Priory, Lacey, Washington, died at Manor Care in Lacey on November 28, 2017. She was born June 23, 1926 in Bismarck, North Dakota to Franz and Monika (Kautzman) Zander.



Sister Damaris joined St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, making her monastic profession on July 11, 1945 and was assigned to St. Raphael's home in St. Cloud, MN.

Sister Damaris was a founding member of St. Placid Priory, which became an autonomous monastery in 1952. She continued to serve the church and her monastic community in the Pacific Northwest at Holy Rosary and Visitation convents (Tacoma) as a cook. She also made altar breads. In 1963 she attended a cooking school in Omaha, Nebraska, and also became an expert cake decorator. In 1970 she entered the Licensed Practical Nurse program and, in 1971, began her nursing ministry at St. Peter's Hospital in Olympia, WA. She also cared for the community's older members. In 1986 she left St. Peter's Hospital to care for the frail members of her community and to begin her work as Procurator and maintenance supervisor.

Sister Damaris was a moving force at the Priory, caring for grounds and the interior; flower arranging and decorating; and extending hospitality as guests. She served on the Monastic Council, the Benedictine Development Corporation and the Advisory Board for the Priory Spirituality Center. She decorated the Priory in ways that honored festive days, liturgical moments, celebrations, often simply bringing in beauty from the out-of-doors. Sister had quite the green thumb and our porch overflowed with gorgeous flowers. However she did have major issues with squirrels!

Sister was faithful in her support for the Mariners and the Seahawks, cheering on her teams until the last days of her life here on earth. She stayed in contact with her extended family and enjoyed their visits and hers to them. She accompanied Sister Mary Walczewski to Maine to visit a niece and family, delighting in God's creation there.

Sister Damaris was a founding member of The Priory Knitters and Spinners (now Priory Fiber Arts). As a gifted fiber artist, she crafted over 500 sheep, was part of the needle felting team, knit or crocheted plenteous prayer shawls and baby layettes. Her annual garage sale and "Christmas table" became famous, attracting people who otherwise rarely visited the monastery.

Sister Damaris' spirituality was expressed in her faithfulness to the Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharist, and in her daily faithfulness to *lectio divina*. Hers was a liturgical spirituality expressed in many different ways. She credited her involvement in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal with deepening her contemplative prayer life. She lived with a deep gratitude for life and all that came her way. She loved music, especially Neil Diamond. Sister Damaris celebrated her 70th Jubilee of Monastic Profession in 2015.

Sister Damaris was the last surviving founding member of St. Placid Priory. Her parents and 18 siblings, and numerous nieces and nephews preceded her in death. Surviving are her brother, Harry and sister Betty Leingang, and many loving nieces, nephews and grand-nieces and nephews. The Zanders are a close-knit family. She is also survived by her Sisters at St. Placid Priory.

Vigil Service: 7 pm on December 13, 2017

Mass of Resurrection: 2 pm on December 14, 2017

Donations in memory of Sister Damaris may be sent to St. Placid Priory, 500 College Street NE, Lacey, WA 98516.