BENEDICTINE SISTERS SACRED HEART MONASTERY in CULLMAN, ALABAMA

916 Convent Road NE, Cullman, AL 35055 ~ *www.shmon.org* ~ (256)734-4622

December 2, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE_____

CULLMAN—Sister Kathleen Christa Murphy, O.S.B., a Benedictine Sister of Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, AL, died peacefully on December 1, 2024, at the age of 83. Reception of the Body with Vespers of the Dead will be held at 4:45 PM on Thursday, December 5, followed by Visitation until 7:00 PM. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 2:30 PM on Friday, December 6, at Sacred Heart Monastery Chapel, with burial in the monastery cemetery to follow.

Born in 1941 in Northampton, MA, to Raymond L. and Kathleen M. Murphy, Sister Kathleen Christa was baptized Kathleen Bridget Murphy at Annunciation Catholic Church in Florence, MA. She was blessed with a close family with many extended family members living nearby. Sister Kathleen Christa was raised steeped in the Catholic faith and active in the local parish. After attending local Catholic elementary and high schools, Sister Kathleen Christa attended College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, MA, graduating with a B.A. degree.

Following college, Sister Kathleen Christa used her artistic gifts in a successful career in retail advertising. Success in this field led to promotions and greater levels of responsibility; however, she eventually tired of the values of retail advertising. Leaving the business world behind, she embraced a new way of life through a Catholic volunteer program, serving the poor in Colorado and in Brooklyn, NY. That path awakened in her a desire for religious life. She eventually became acquainted with the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman while attending a program for volunteers in Alabama. Sensing God's call, Sister Kathleen Christa applied for entry. She entered the community as a Postulant on August 15, 1991, and made her Perpetual Monastic Profession on November 29, 1997.

From her entrance into the monastic community until her death, Sister Kathleen Christa blessed the community with her deep life of prayer, her openness to the work of the Holy Spirit in her life, her artistic talent and creative mind. Some of her artwork is framed and hangs on monastery walls. Some pieces were intentionally temporary, simple drawings, often marked by humor, to brighten someone's day. A special artistic interest of hers was the creation of Ukrainian Easter eggs.

Sister Kathleen Christa had an innate sense of hospitality, and her years in active ministry within the community were spent in the Retreat Center. She assisted in administrative work, but her true gift was in the reception of guests and her listening ear. Countless retreat guests benefited from her caring manner and attentive listening. She also loved including guests in the community's liturgical prayer. In her years of ministry, she could often be found outside the chapel before the community's times of prayer, providing an orientation to guests so that they could participate more fully. She truly embodied St. Benedict's instruction to receive the guest as Christ.

Long-standing health challenges were a burden that Sister Kathleen Christa bore with deep trust in the ways of God. The lives of saints and spiritual writers inspired her, and Sacred Scripture and spiritual literature were particular sources of strength. The Psalms provided both inspiration and consolation for her. Sister Kathleen Christa stayed close to God through prayer, keeping herself always aware of God's presence with her. Even in her final days, she was a witness to the presence of God with us. Fittingly, she who always longed for God's presence, died on the First Sunday of Advent.

Sister Kathleen Christa was preceded in death by her parents and by her brother, Richard J. Murphy. Survivors include her sister, Mary M. Murphy; beloved nieces, nephews and their families; and her Benedictine Sisters.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, AL, 916 Convent Rd., NE, Cullman, AL, 35055 or at shmon.org/support-us.