

Catherine “Cathy” Martha Karels was born on August 3, 1930, on the family farm near Nassau, MN, to Paul and Clara Pillatzki. She attended District 8 Country School before continuing her education at Bellingham High School, graduating in 1948. Following graduation, Catherine moved to Montevideo, MN, where she worked for five years for various businesses. Through her brother, Luverne, she met the love of her life, Edwin Karels. The two were married on June 29, 1954, at St. James Catholic Church in Nassau, MN. Following their marriage, they made their home in Ortonville, MN, where they were married for 41 years, built a life together, and raised their family.

After welcoming their six children, she devoted herself to being a stay-at-home mother and homemaker. She took great pride in caring for her family and creating a home filled with love, warmth, and wonderful memories. During the years her children were growing up, she also worked at the local corn canning facility. Once her children were grown, Cathy began a new chapter working alongside Edwin at the Ortonville Flower Shop. The two delivered flowers together, a job she truly enjoyed.

Cathy was a two-time cancer survivor whose strength and perseverance were a testament to her determination and resilience. Her faith was also an important part of her life, and she was involved with her Catholic church group. In her spare time, she enjoyed embroidery, reading, gardening, cooking, and baking. She especially loved spending time with friends, visiting over a cup of coffee, and making memories with those around her. She also enjoyed going to the casino. Above all, she loved time with her children and grandchildren.

Cathy is survived by her children: Theresa (Charles) Rausch of Rapid City, SD; Barbara Schultz of Las Vegas, NV; James (Deborah) Karels of Tallahassee, FL; Julie (Michael) Jansen of Apple Valley, MN; Steven (Kelly) Karels of Batavia, IL; Michael (Jennifer) Karels of Edina, MN; grandchildren: Timothy, Kimberly, Gregory, Emily, Nichole, Heather, Joseph, Benjamin, Lindsey, Craig, Zachary, Andrew, Mitchell, Amanda; 27 great-grandchildren with one-on-the-way; one great-great-grandchild; one sister, Mary Nathe of St. Cloud, MN; one brother, Ralph Pillatzki; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Edwin Karels; her parents: Paul and Clara Pillatzki; five siblings; and son-in-law, John Schultz.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Catherine “Cathy” Karels

WHO WAS BORN
August 3, 1930
Nassau, Minnesota

AND CALLED TO HER ETERNAL HOME
October 16, 2026
Ortonville, Minnesota

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL
Wednesday, October 21, 2026 – 11:00 a.m.
St. John’s Catholic Church
Ortonville, Minnesota

CELEBRANT
Fr. Shawn Polman

READERS
Tim Rausch | Andrew Karels

EULOGY
James Karels

GIFT BEARERS
Hadley Jansen | Brexton Jansen | Sadie Rausch | Paisley Rausch

MUSICIANS
Diane Vangsness, Organist
Roman Taffe, Vocalist

SPECIAL SONGS
“Be Not Afraid” | “Amazing Grace”
“We Remember, We Celebrate, We Believe”
“One Bread, One Body” | “On Eagle’s Wings”

ACTIVE CASKET BEARERS
James Karels | Steven Karels | Michael Karels
Charles Rausch | Michael Jansen | Thomas Oakes

HONORARY CASKET BEARERS
Beloved Grandchildren, Great-Grandchildren, and Great-Great-Grandchild

INTERMENT
Mound Cemetery
Ortonville, Minnesota

APPRECIATION
Cathy’s family is grateful for your attendance at her services.
Your expressions of kindness and love are deeply appreciated.
Following the graveside service, please join the family for a time
of fellowship and refreshments in the church dining area.

Mundwiler & Larson Funeral Home – Ortonville, Minnesota

Our Mother has closed her eyes to rest,
called home by God to join the final blest.
A beautiful life, so full, so deeply lived,
who taught us how to love, to grace, to forgive.
To all the relatives and dearest friends,
her earthly story fades, but never ends.
She leaves a legacy that stretches wide,
a family that stands in love and pride.
Her six devoted children hold her dear,
carrying her strength through every passing year.
From them, the branches grew and beautifully spread,
with fourteen grandchildren by her wisdom led.
The circle widened with her gentle care,
as twenty-seven great-grandchildren filled the air.
And a sweet great-great-grandchild arrived to see
the timeless roots of her extraordinary tree.
Thank you, Lord, for the years she stood so strong,
for teaching us exactly where we all belong.
We let her go into Your holy embrace,
forever thankful for her love and grace.

Written by Michael Karels

Please use this QR Code to view
Cathy's online obituary and guestbook.

