

We of Nojoshing

Nojoshing – Indian word for the area where our pioneer members settled in 1849; it means "piece of land stretching into the water." The name was changed later to Saint Francis, Wisconsin.



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SISTERS of ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI, 3221 South Lake Drive, St. Francis, WI 53235-3799

We celebrate the memory of our beloved Sister Rose Marie (Louise) Kruse June 23, 1922 – April 29, 2023

Louise Kruse was born in Houghton, Iowa, to Steve and Mary (Menke) Kruse on June 23, 1922. She had six brothers and one sister. Attracted by "the very kind and friendly OSFs who taught in my home parish," she entered our congregation on September 4, 1944. When she became a novice in August 1945, she received the name Sister Rose Marie. She professed vows in 1947 and remained at the Motherhouse for a year as a cook.

Her first mission was St. Francis Major Seminary, where she served for a year before returning to the Motherhouse for a year, again as a cook. Then she transferred to the Cardinal's residence in Chicago, where she performed domestic work, 1950-1957. In a move to the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. School in Palos Park, Ill., in 1957, Sister Rose Marie transitioned to being a childcare worker for five years followed by another two years at St. Coletta of Wisconsin, 1962-1964. Sister Rose Marie returned to the Motherhouse between 1964 and 1967, where she served as a driver and in the laundry until she left the Midwest for St. Coletta School (now Cardinal Cushing Centers) in Hanover, Mass., ministering as a childcare worker from 1967-1976.

By 1976 Sisters had been given the opportunity to look for their own ministry, rather than being assigned. In dialogue with leadership in the congregation, Sister Rose Marie took a position as a teacher's aide at a day school for children with developmental disabilities in Fall River, Mass. She served there for eight years before making a transition to the Corrigan Mental Health Center in Fall River, where she was an occupational therapy assistant from 1984-2001. In 1987 she received a special award in recognition of her outstanding contributions in the field of mental retardation, from the Association of Retarded Citizens of Fall River, Mass.

While living in the Hanover area, she met Sister Roger Mills, RSM. They became good friends and a support to each other in their ministry and advocacy. In 1998 Sister Roger became an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi until her death in January 2001.

In May 2001 Sister Rose Marie retired and moved back to Milwaukee. She volunteered one day a week at St. Ann Center for Intergenerational Care and thoroughly enjoyed her ministry there. This was balanced with helping at the Cathedral noon sandwich ministry one day a week and in the Motherhouse library.

In 2015 Sister Rose Marie moved to St. Francis Convent due to failing health. In May 2019 she moved to the new St. Francis Convent where she lived until God called her home on April 29, 2023.

The Sisters who knew Sister Rose Marie well unanimously spoke of her kindness and spirit of hospitality. They said she developed good relationships with whomever she worked. She loved the boys in her care, who experienced her as firm but kind and were clear about the fact that they had to toe the line. Her athleticism was welcomed on the baseball diamond and lots of fun was had by participants and spectators. Growing up with six brothers certainly proved helpful to her in knowing how to relate to the boys in her care.

In 1997 when Sister Rose Marie celebrated her 50th Jubilee of Profession, she reflected on her life as a woman religious: *I praise and thank God as I celebrate my 50 years of Religious Profession. He has been most generous, guiding and calling me to various ministries I would never have ventured on my own. Each has proven to be a grace for me and others. I thank God for his continual love and fidelity to me.*

Her 60th Jubilee in 2007 and her 70th Jubilee in 2017 were celebrated quietly. The beauty of nature and the goodness of people had strengthened her spirit throughout the years. Daily liturgy and meditation were central to her daily routine.

When Sister Rose Marie's health began to decline more noticeably toward the end of April, the Transitus Service was prayed at her bedside on April 27. Sisters Ruth Mary Costello and Kathleen Denevan were present when Sister Rose Marie died peacefully at 6:15 p.m. on April 29, 2023, at St. Francis Convent.

Sister Rose Marie knew well that: "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26

†Marie Colette Roy, OSF, and Marcia Lunz, OSF