

# 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.



Newsletter of The New Assisi Archives of the SISTERS of ST. FRANCIS of ASSISI, 3221 South Lake Drive, St. Francis, WI 53235-3799

## We celebrate the memory of our beloved Sister Audrey Mozejewski formerly Sister Helen Mary July 30, 1931 – December 17, 2022

Sister Audrey was born at home in Milwaukee to Casimir (Casey) and Helen (Skotnicki) Mozejewski and was baptized immediately because it was uncertain as to whether or not she would live. She had one younger sister, Pat.

From birth on, Audrey had dealt with heart and lung issues, plus vision issues that should have slowed her down, but didn't. She was a tomboy and a book worm growing up. The family lived upstairs from her maternal grandparents, who were immigrants from Poland. From her grandmother, she learned the rudiments of the Polish language, which were further developed at St. John Kanty Grade School. Prior to entering first grade, Audrey's mother had taught her the alphabet, how to tell time, write her name and some basic arithmetic. First grade turned out to be boring and not very challenging.

Audrey's dad had taught her about the outdoors and from her mother she acquired a love of music, as they listened to the Saturday radio broadcasts of the opera together. Audrey started playing accordion at age eight and grew to love all genres of music. Her mother introduced her to the idea of a medical career in a most unique way. When Audrey accompanied her to medical appointments, her mother would manage to arrange for a visit to the lab so Audrey could look through a microscope.

Her mother's health was frail so Audrey helped with taking care of her sister and learned to cook, with her mother's instructions. Audrey's father died in 1946 and her mother died in 1951, the year after Audrey graduated from St. Mary's Academy.

The death of her mother changed life for both of the girls because they were underage and considered orphans. A family friend stepped in and adopted both

girls to keep them out of an orphanage. Audrey was already enrolled at Cardinal Stritch College (now University) and lived on campus. Her sister was taken in by the family friend as one of their own, which enabled Audrey to continue in school. She finished a bachelor of arts degree in biology and interned at St. Mary's Hospital, Madison, earning certification as a Registered Medical Technologist (ASCP). While a student, Audrey worked part-time and during the summers to contribute to the support for herself and her sister. After her sister graduated from high school, Audrey chose to follow her call to religious life and entered our congregation on January 27, 1958.

When she became a novice, on August 11, 1958, Audrey took the name Sister Helen Mary. After the Vatican II Council, she resumed her baptismal name. Audrey made first profession of vows on August 12, 1960, and took final vows on August 12, 1965. From the time she entered the community until 1982, she worked as a medical technologist at St. Ann Health Center. From 1968 to 1981, she also worked part-time at Trinity Medical Hospital in Cudahy, Wis.

Sister Audrey's transition to pastoral work took shape gradually. In 1981/1982, she completed three quarters of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge, Ill. In 1982, after many years of part-time study, Audrey received a Master of Theological Studies degree from St. Francis School of Pastoral Ministry in Saint Francis, Wis. She became a hospital chaplain at St. Mary's Medical Center in Racine, Wis., in 1984, but commuted from Milwaukee for many years until eventually moving to Racine. In 1990, she was recognized as a Certified Chaplain by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains.

In 2002, Sister Audrey retired from hospital chaplaincy but remained in Racine as a volunteer scripture teacher at St. Paul the Apostle Parish. In 2014, she moved to Clare Hall in Saint Francis and to the new St. Francis Convent in 2019.

One of the comments Audrey received after a quarter of CPE stated: “Audrey brought some uniquely personal gifts to share with anxious, hurting people. I think of her warmth, her openness, her sincere interest in others, her basic philosophy of life – always hopeful, yet always realistic.”

Audrey’s philosophy of life was kindled in part by her father who taught her how to fish when she was just six years old. She lived by the principles of fishing:

- Learn from someone who knows how to fish;
- Know the depth of the water;
- Use the right bait;
- Keep learning.

Jubilee celebrations bring to the fore the gifts we have received and the generosity of our God. In the words of Sister Audrey, we can hear her gratitude:

#### **Reflection on 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 2010**

I praise and thank God for the gifts and talents God gave me to serve His people as a medical technologist, a hospital chaplain, and teacher of scripture to adults. God’s guidance, love and support that I received came through the people God sent into my life. Some came for a short time; others for a longer time whose love and friendship saw me through the ups and downs of life. Because of that love, I was able to enjoy life through fishing, reading, sports and music. I thank God every day for the gift of life and the support, friendship and love of those close to me.

#### **Reflection on 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 2020**

I appreciate the care and compassion given to me all these years by the community. It was also through the supportive relationships that blossomed into much joy and love. God blessed me with many friends who were knowledgeable in theology and scripture. They enhanced my own spirituality so that my prayer life was enriched. It gave me much inner peace.

Sister Audrey’s health began to decline in fall. On Monday, December 12, she sensed that her final journey to God was nearing. Sisters Diana De Bruin, Kathryn Dean Strandell, Jane Denning, Ruth Mary Costello, Mary Hau, Marlene Stawski, and employees Kamia Beasley and Nancy Reed prayed the *Transitus Service* with her. That afternoon Bishop Richard Sklba spent a delightful hour with Sister Audrey, and she told him it would be their last visit. Later, her friend Father Bill Dietzler anointed her. Sisters began sitting with her on December 13, and Sister Mary Hau was present when Sister Audrey died peacefully and pain free on Saturday, December 17, at 10:20 p.m.

Audrey’s strong love of scripture bids us to pray with her:

“O Wisdom, O Holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.” The O Antiphon for December 17.

~ *Marie Colette Roy, OSF, and Marcia Lunz, OSF*