

# 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 Rita Ann Haderer**  
*formerly Sister Katrine*  
**December 6, 1937 – December 15, 2023**

Sister Rita Ann was born in Sycamore, Ill., to Harry and Catherine (Herrmann) Haderer. Along with two older brothers and younger twin sisters, she grew up on the family farm and attended a one-room school for the first six grades. "I didn't have Catholic schooling, but I learned religion at home," she said. She participated in many activities in high school, including band. She attended Northern Illinois University for two years. She then worked as a secretary and traveled extensively. Until she entered the community, she was an active member of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Hampshire, Ill.

Attracted by our work in special education, Rita Ann, at age 25, entered our congregation, the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, on September 6, 1962. As a novice, she was given the name, Sister Katrine. She professed first vows in 1965 and final vows in 1970. She chose to return to her baptismal name after Vatican Council II.

Sister Rita Ann continued her education at Cardinal Stritch University, completing her bachelor's degree in 1967. She taught in Chicago Heights, Ill., for a year. Sister Rita Ann was missioned to St. Coletta School in Hanover, Mass., in 1968 and to Braintree St. Coletta Day School in 1974. Working with special-needs youth led her to earn a master's degree in education/learning disabilities at Cardinal Stritch University in 1976.

Sister Rita Ann taught math and tutored in the reading center at St. Agnes School, Milwaukee, and then taught in the learning center at St. Mary's Academy. She transitioned to youth ministry in 1978, working at Annunciation Parish in Aurora, Ill. She subsequently held a similar position at St. Patrick Parish in Dixon, Ill., for four years. Further assignments took Sister Rita Ann to serve as director of religious education at St. Rita Parish, Racine, Wis.; St. Isidore, Bloomingdale, Ill.; and St. James, Mukwonago, Wis. She was director of Christian Formation for parishes on Milwaukee's east side from 1992-1995.

Sister Rita Ann went back to teaching elementary grades at St. Lawrence and then at Our Lady Queen of Peace Schools, both in Milwaukee. A sabbatical from 2001 to 2002 was an enriching experience for her.

From 2002 to 2003, Sister Rita Ann worked in the Milwaukee public school system serving as a special education teacher. She then moved to St. Catherine School in Milwaukee and served as a Learning Specialist and Supportive Consultant until 2011.

In ensuing years after her retirement in 2011, she volunteered her skills in a variety of ways and places, such as tutoring, distributing Holy Communion to the sick, and assisting with administrative tasks. In 2021, her health needs necessitated a move to St. Francis Convent.

In the last few months of her life, Sister Rita Ann required frequent hospitalizations. Father Jim Schroeder, SCJ, anointed her on December 15, 2023, at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center with Sisters Ruth Mary Costello, Joanne Schatzlein, and Rose Sevenich present. She died peacefully a few hours later while Sister Rose was with her.

Sister Rita Ann's desire during her lifetime was to work with developmentally challenged youth. She found ways to do that in direct work with these youth but also in diagnosing and teaching students with learning challenges, primarily in elementary schools. Her work in this latter setting was recognized in 2010 by St. Catherine School, which nominated her for the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award given by the Milwaukee Parent Choice Program. She received a glass trophy engraved with her name and the name of the school.

The experience and skills learned growing up on a farm served her well in her gardening activities along with her appreciation of nature. She found great satisfaction in sharing the abundance of the fruits and vegetables she grew in her backyard.

Her love of travel never waned. She recounted that during her sabbatical she wanted to visit the Sisters in Baltimore. On her way there by car, she stopped to visit Sisters and Associates in Hanover and Lowell, Mass., and Carrollton, Ohio. This was not exactly a direct route to Baltimore, but it gave great joy to Sister Rita Ann.

For this traveler, God has mapped her last journey. May she rest peacefully in the arms of God.

*~ † Sisters Marie Colette Roy and Marcia Lunz*