

# 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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## **We celebrate the memory of our beloved Sister Rose Martin (Alice) Weldgen, OSF February 13, 1938 – November 26, 2024**

Alice Louise Weldgen was born in Fort Atkinson, Wis., to George and Mary (Mauel) Huber, the youngest of 14 children. Both of her parents died before Alice was 13. In 1956, she was adopted legally by Harry E. Weldgen. Sister Edna Mae Weldgen (†2015) had been one of her teachers. Another adopted sister was Sister Barbara Weldgen (†2009). Sister Rose Martin wrote, “*I felt special to have two families; the youngest of 14 and the youngest of five.*” Alice was attracted to The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi by “their loving care and kindness to others and their dedication and peace-charism.” She entered our congregation in 1957 and received the name Sister Rose Martin when she became a novice in August 1958. She made her first profession in 1960 and final profession in 1965.

Sister Rose Martin's ministries began with education. She was an elementary school teacher and principal in Milwaukee, Franklin, West Allis, and Sheboygan, Wis. She was the director of Daystar for Battered Women and health care activities therapist at Villa Clement and Marina View Manor, both in Milwaukee. After retiring in 2009, she volunteered in health care as a companion for the elderly and for OSF on-call emergencies.

In addition to her involvement in active ministry, Sister Rose Martin earned a bachelor of science degree in education from Cardinal Stritch University in 1967 and a master's degree in administration and leadership from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1976. In 1992 she was certified as a Milwaukee Area Activities Professional.

For about nine years in the 1970s and 1980s, Sister Rose Martin lived with the Sisters in the convent at St. Aemilian Child Care Center, but ministered in other locations. Her fun-loving spirit was shared with the Sisters in the Milwaukee area to celebrate Halloween. She provided an opportunity for visiting, enjoying good food, and dancing to live music. Costumes were optional.

Some years later, Sister Rose Martin was invited to serve on the board of directors of St. Aemilian-Lakeside. She felt privileged to follow in the footsteps of all the Sisters who had served at St. A's since its founding in 1850, the first mission of The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. She spent countless hours studying all the materials and information she could in order to contribute meaningfully to the work of the board. At

the same time, her sense of humor and joy was always present. When she had to resign due to health reasons, it was noted that she left behind a legacy of dedication and laughter.

There was never any apology from Sister Rose Martin about her approach to life. She shared that *“I made up my mind, because I have a great delight in acting humorously, I’d use that gift from God and do everything I could to make the projects we were working on fun. I’d wear a funny hat when everyone else was dressed up, or carry crazy signs. People put up with me and laughed about it. They bet on me coming dressed uniquely, which I always did.”*

Sister Rose Martin was energized by friends and family, and sharing faith, fun times, and music with them. She loved nature and some of the ways she got close to God’s beauty were with walks in the woods and cross-country skiing. One of her hobbies was doing household repairs.

She volunteered in October of 2009, along with more than 80 Sisters from 18 religious congregations, in the inaugural “Nuns Build” event to help in the rebuilding of houses devastated by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, La. After morning prayer, the Sisters spent the next 10 hours each day on a work crew. Sister Rose Martin said that *“Drywalling was not a skill I took to New Orleans, but I came home with a great deal of expertise.”*

Sister’s reflective nature is expressed in the thoughts she wrote at the time of her 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of Profession in 2010. *“As a woman religious, I marvel at the many opportunities for us to hear the struggles and needs of other men and women. Many of our older members helped to create a trusting relationship with laity, and it continues to be a grace to us as religious members. Witnessing to a deep love of God and Gospel has been a legacy from the example of many compassionate women. Humor, learning from mistakes, and positive attitudes from lay friends, relatives, and cherished members of my order have touched, inspired, and enriched my life. What tremendous gifts from God as I celebrate 50 years on the journey with each and all!”* In 2020, her 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee celebration took place quietly in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

Throughout the years of her failing health, Sister Rose Martin remained engaged in life and treasured all who kept up with their relationship. On November 7, she was enrolled in hospice care. On November 22, Sisters began keeping vigil with her.

God called Sister Rose Martin to enter the fullness of everlasting life at 4:53 a.m. on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. She had been anointed by Father Jim Schroeder, SCJ. Her niece, Rahna Reich, and Sister Ruth Mary Costello were present when Sister Rose Martin died peacefully.

*“Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you virtuous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!” (Psalm 32:11)*

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