

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 St. 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 Francis Marie (Catherine) DeLany October 6, 1920 – October 21, 2020

Sister Francis Marie, baptized Catherine, was the daughter of Edward and Frances (Roets) DeLany. She was born and lived in North Lake, Wis., and the third of four daughters to become a Sister of St. Francis of Assisi. Her sisters were Sister Dolora (†2004), Sister Kenneth (†1997), and Sister Patricia. She also had three brothers who are deceased.

Catherine attended grade school in North Lake and high school at St. Mary’s Academy. Her attraction to our congregation was nurtured by the sisters who taught summer vacation school at her parish in North Lake and her interaction as a boarder with the sisters at St. Mary’s Academy. She said “she had a good feeling about the sisters” and this led her to enter our congregation on January 7, 1938.

At reception as a novice on August 2, 1938, Catherine received the name Sister Francis Marie. She professed vows on August 12, 1940, and continued her college education for two years, obtaining a bachelor’s degree in Latin from St. Clare College, now Cardinal Stritch University. Her teaching ministry then began with fourth graders at St. Sebastian, Milwaukee, in 1942, but she was transferred after a year to Lima, Ohio, to teach high school because a Latin teacher was needed. This was a welcome move for her because she enjoyed the Latin language so much, and she also taught French.

After seven years in Lima, Sister Francis Marie served for three years as dean of resident students at Cardinal Stritch University while studying for her master’s degree in Latin from Marquette University.

Except for one year between 1953 and 1974, Sister Francis Marie taught high school at Waynesville, N.C.; Early, Iowa; St. Mary’s Academy, Milwaukee; and Wisconsin Rapids (1962–1974). In the smaller high schools, a teacher could be called upon to teach a variety of subjects. In addition to Latin and French, Sister Francis Marie at times taught English, history, algebra and science.

Her one-year break from teaching high school, 1961–1962, was spent at the University of Rennes (France) where she earned a diploma in French Language. This opportunity came because Sister Serena Halfmann had received a Fulbright scholarship to study language in France, and at that time, sisters did

not travel alone. The students of both sisters benefited from their studies abroad.

In addition to teaching for 28 years, Sister Francis Marie served at Cardinal Stritch University in the registrar’s office from 1974–1986. During that time, she was among the five founding members of a small local community called Umbria. After Vatican II, our congregational administration had encouraged sisters living in large institutions to seek smaller residential communities.

Sister Francis Marie left the demanding duties of registrar in 1986 for service as a receptionist and switchboard attendant at St. Coletta School, Jefferson, Wis. She served there until 1993, when she retired to Clare Hall in Milwaukee. In retirement, she volunteered in the Archives and later in the Cornerstone Gift Shop at the Motherhouse.

Latin was Sister Francis Marie’s favorite subject, which she pursued in her undergraduate and graduate college studies and taught at the high school level. What was her favorite part of teaching? She responded with “the students.”

In her personal life, Sister Francis Marie was energized by good conversation, good reading, lectures and the natural beauty of creation. She viewed her choice of vocation to religious life as a “good life.” When faced with the need for more care, she found it difficult but experienced contentment and tried to accept her limitations as best as she could. What never diminished was her beautiful smile.

Declining health necessitated a move to St. Francis Convent in 2007 and in 2019, Sister Francis Marie moved into the new convent building and lived in Clare Circle. In 2020, she celebrated her 80-year jubilee of profession, her 100th birthday on October 6, and on October 21, God called her home to celebrate eternal life. She had been anointed on October 16 and Sister Ruth Mary Costello and Joanne, a nurse on duty, were with Sister Francis Marie when she died peacefully at 6:55 a.m. With her we acclaim in Latin:

*Gloria in excelsis Deo. Hosanna in excelsis Deo.
Deus Providebit.*

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