

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.



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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 Ramona (Nasaria) Negrette July 28, 1927 – June 3, 2022

Nasaria Negrette was born in Guernsey, Wyo., a small town near a mining town where her father worked. Her parents, Paz and Solada (Ramirez) Negrette, were natives of Mexico; a gift from them was teaching Nasaria to speak the Spanish language. As the second oldest of 12 children (five girls and seven boys), Nasaria was “always responsibly engaged at home – child care, housekeeping, and cooking.” These parental lessons would become evident in her adult years of ministry.

The family moved often because her father needed to move with the work in order to provide for the family. Nasaria had many new school experiences, always feeling like she had to catch up – Lyman, Neb.; and Huntly and Sunrise, Wyo. Through the years, her father transitioned from working in the mines to farm work. When Nasaria was in her teens, the Negrette family moved to Torrington, Wyo. It was her family’s weekly visits to St. Joseph Home in Torrington that introduced her to the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. The Sisters’ “dedication to the services to the poor and needy and their welcoming and joyful spirit” struck a chord within Nasaria. A spark was lit!

After a few years of visiting at the Home, Sister Irene Boehmer called Mother Superior and made the arrangements. At the age of 21 years, Nasaria was travelling across the Midwest, by herself, to an unknown destination – Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to enter our congregation on October 31, 1949. She recalled that it was difficult to adjust to a change in culture, and to have someone else in charge of everything, whereas she had been given a great deal of responsibility at home. She was homesick because she did not have visitors – the family still called Torrington home. The means to visit Milwaukee was not available to the Negrette family.

When Nasaria became a novice on August 11, 1950, she received the name Sister M. Ramona. As a second-year novice, Sister Ramona was assigned to housework at St. Francis Major Seminary, Milwaukee. She professed vows on August 12, 1952, and continued her mission at the seminary until 1966. “I did everything that could have been done there,” she said. “I felt very much a part of the whole environment of the seminary.” Sister Ramona was transferred to the Motherhouse, where she was a seamstress and gave domestic service for five years. She then spent two years as a student, preparing to work with Spanish-speaking people. Once Sister Ramona left the Motherhouse, her call would take her to ministries she never would have probably dreamed of doing – Hispanic ministry: at parish and diocesan levels; pastoral ministry as pastoral associate and youth minister; sacristan and teacher.

Sister Ramona's first stop was St. Rose, her home parish in Torrington. She returned to Milwaukee for another year of school, and then went back to Torrington, where she continued parish ministry until 1982. "The greatest challenge is to enable people to help themselves," she stated. In 1982 – 1983, Sister Ramona studied for a year in the Hispanic Institute at Mundelein College, Chicago. With a certificate in hand, Casper, Wyo., became her destination. She was engaged in pastoral ministry and was diocesan associate director of Hispanic ministry for five years.

An interesting opportunity crossed Sister Ramona's path in 1988. She travelled to Japan to become a teacher at St. Mary's International School. She worked with Sister Frances Miller, OSF, (†2017) principal of the Readiness Program. This particular program was designed to prepare five-year-old boys to smoothly transition into an English-speaking school. I wonder if having seven brothers provided her with natural intuitions when teaching these boys?

You may ask, "What did Sister Ramona do in her times of leisure?" She enjoyed sewing, taking walks and reading. In fact, she taught herself to swim by reading a magazine article and then trying out the strokes. Once she learned to swim, she took the opportunity to do some scuba diving. I wonder, did she ever learn to water ski? That was a dream of Sister Ramona. She was energized and inspired by quality time with family, friends, her Franciscan community and with people who challenged her to grow. She also cherished prayer time, the Mass and meditation. Her goal was to learn something new each day.

Upon returning to the States in 1989, Sister Ramona once again became involved in Hispanic ministry in Idabel, Okla. By 1991, she was named associate director of Hispanic ministry in the Diocese of Boise, Idaho. From 1995–1998, Sister Ramona could be found in the food service department at the Motherhouse and living with the St. Joseph House of Prayer community. In 1998 Hispanic ministry was calling again – St. Paul Parish in Nampa, Idaho. Here she was pastoral associate and closely associated with Hispanic ministry. At this time, Sister Ramona also chose to live closer to her mother. After five Idahoan years, she retired to the Motherhouse area; first at Clare Hall and eventually becoming a member of the Clare Circle community in the new St. Francis Convent.

Words from The Most Reverend Joseph Hart, D.D., Bishop of Cheyenne, best describe her ministry of serving the Hispanic community in the states of Wyoming, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Idaho.

Sister Ramona has done a splendid job in Wyoming, and how fortunate we have been to have her here and to be able to work with her. She brought many gifts, among them her very kind and gentle approach to life and her obvious concern for all of us. She leaves our state with our prayers and best wishes.

And now, Sister Ramona will give the last word in her own words – taken from her Golden Jubilee reflections:

My passion is to become more into Christ's likeness and "let go" and "let God" mold me according to His will and in His own time!

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
Psalm 119:105

~ † Marie Colette Roy, OSF
~ Celia Struck, OSF