

Sister Helen Borszich

September 1, 1935—December 4, 2015

Arleen Elizabeth Borszich was born to Anthony and Florence Ferris/Borszich on September 1, 1935, at the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. She was baptized at St. Francis Mission, in St. Francis, South Dakota, and confirmed at St. Thomas the Apostle, in Mission, South Dakota.

Arleen went to school at Rosebud Reservation and Mission, South Dakota. She had contact with the Franciscan Sisters as they taught religion classes during the summer at St. Francis Mission. In high school, Arleen attended St. Mary's Academy in O'Neill, Nebraska, and lived in the boarding school run by the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity. During that time, she felt a call to religious life. She entered as a candidate in February, 1952, and professed first vows in August, 1954. At this time she received the name Mary Helen.

Sister Helen received B.A. degree at Regis College at Denver, Colorado, in 1965. In addition, she acquired a certificate from Nebraska Initial Junior Elementary in 1959; and at Loretta Heights College in Denver, Colorado, she achieved a certificate from the Focus on Leadership program ("Training for Retreats and Spiritual Direction"). Her ministries were in teaching and administration in Denver, Colorado, along with Holy Rosary Mission and St. Francis Mission in South Dakota.

Sister Helen had a calling to work among the poor, namely the Native Americans and the Lakota. She stated, "I believe they have strengthened my faith, supported my call to be with them, and above all, they taught me how Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection are a real part of one's life." "My vision of a church leader is one who shepherds the flock with the Lord's love and compassion." Sister Helen had a great love and a dedication to the Lakota people, and they for her. She was given a Lakota name Wakan Win, which means Holy Woman, a special honor among the Lakota people. In her studies, Sr. Helen wrote, "I want to become a real Christian Franciscan woman in my journey to the Father."

Sister Helen moved to an apartment in Alliance, Nebraska, in 2005. The Alliance community experienced her gentle-loving presence, as well as, the quick wit and impish smile. The Marian Residence Sisters and staff were familiar with her quiet strength as she visited and prayed with those in need of her gifts.

After a serious illness, she moved to Marian Residence, Alliance, Nebraska. She continued her ministry of service to all she met: Sisters, staff, family and visitors. Even though she was not able to say much, Sister Helen's wit and humor were in her facial expressions and in her eyes.

Sister Helen died Friday, December 4, 2015, in the early hours of the morning. The Sisters she lived with gathered around her bedside to pray for her. On December 8, 2015, Sister Sarah Manchester led the wake service at Marian Residence. Sister Helen's sisters: Bernadette/John Usera, Camilla/Roger Maestas, brother Tom/Connie Borszich, and many nieces and nephews came for the wake and funeral. Sisters Leandra Schaller, Rita Neyens, Patty Podhaisky, Liz Fuhr, Rita Cammack, Maureen Murphey, Mabel Meng, Karen McCrory, Joan Linenbrink and Jane Schneider also attended the wake and funeral.

The funeral was held at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska, on Wednesday, December 9, 2015. Father Matthew Keller (nephew), and Father Roy Pasala concelebrated her Mass of Resurrection. Her burial was at Calvary Cemetery in Alliance, Nebraska.

Sisters of St Francis, Marian Residence