

Sister Loisjean (Lois Jean) Carlson

September 15, 1942 - May 13, 2016

On September 15, 1942, Loisjean was born in Lisco, Nebraska, to Merle and Lucille Carlson, the fifth of six children, and the sole girl. Loisjean was the 'princess' among her five brothers. Her relationship was especially close to her deceased brother Gerald "Jerry" who was a priest of the North Platte diocese and was 10 years her senior. Besides being close friends they ministered together in the parish in Harrison, Nebraska.

Loisjean's call to the Sisters of St. Francis it seemed began with Sister Elenius Pettinger sitting down with her father and telling him about the Aspirant school in Alliance, Nebraska. Loisjean felt Sister Elenius was very influential with her father and Loisjean attended and graduated from the Aspirant School (accredited through St. Agnes in Alliance, Nebraska).

Loisjean entered the Sisters of St. Francis at Marycrest, Denver, Colorado, on July 16, 1960, and at her reception on July 15, 1961, received her Mother's name Lucille (after Vatican II she returned to her baptismal name.) Loisjean made her first profession July 15, 1963 and final vows August 11, 1968.

After her first profession, Loisjean entered a diploma school of Nursing at Mercy Hospital in Denver, Colorado, and later received a BS in Nursing from Minot State. Healing based on Gospel love was central to Sister Loisjean's caring relationships to others and herself. Loisjean's ministry was enhanced by her Masters in Pastoral Ministry studies in Christ the King Seminary, Aurora, New York in 1988. She worked in the area of drug addiction and later moved to the ministry of grief counselor in a Kearney Funeral Home.

She was invaluable to the staff, the families, and friends of loved ones who had to walk through sometimes incredible tragedies. Her ability to empathize, support, guide and companion people who lives had been disrupted by the pain and suffering of the death of a loved one, earned her a special place in the hearts of many.

Almost as a hobby, Loisjean used her healing touch in the practice of reflexology. She managed to hit just the right sore spots. All she needed to transport a person into this heavenly dimension was a foot stool, three towels, an oily lotion and a pinch mayonnaise.

What Loisjean knew that one could not divide body, mind, and soul so her holistic approach to healing has always been inclusive of all three spheres.

Loisjean as a Franciscan loved all things scriptural which inspired her: in spiritual direction for the "busy people's retreats", in talks she provided generously in the diocese and workings with the Catholic Daughters, in the Kearney, Nebraska, labyrinth group and much more. The liturgical and communal life of the church was one with the heartbeat of Loisjean's life of ministry rooted in prayer. Loisjean suffered much health wise and had many close calls with Sister Death which gave her the wisdom and compassion she shared in her friendships and journeying with others.

Loisjean in her last more than month long hospitalization in CHI Health Good Samaritan of Kearney, Nebraska, was accompanied by the Franciscan sisters, family, and friends. She breathed her last early May 13th attended by her dear friend Elaine Hyde. Sister Loisjean's life was truly celebrated by the people of Kearney where she shared several decades of her life. Her wake was held the evening of May 15th in Prince of Peace Church, Kearney, followed by a reception. On May 16th, the Mass of the Resurrection and meal were held at the just renovated St. James Catholic Church flanked by the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters, and a large honorary guard of her friends. Sister Rita Cammack, the provincial, spoke of Loisjean "never being indifferent", and Sister Karen McCrory, and all of Loisjean's Mary Our Lady of the Prairie Regional Community: Sisters Rita Neyens, Jeannine Hershiser as song leader and soloist, and Elizabeth Fuhr attended. The celebrant was Fr. Matt Koperski and concelebrants were Fr. Joseph Hannappel and five other priests of Kearney. Loisjean's youngest brother Don Carlson and his entire family were present. Loisjean was laid to rest at St. Elizabeth Cemetery, Oshkosh, Nebraska, next to her brother Fr. Jerry and their parents.

Loisjean was preceded in death by her two brothers, Jim and the Rev. Gerald "Jerry" Carlson. She leaves to celebrate her life with the Sisters of St. Francis, her three brothers, Tom Carlson and his wife, Jacqueline, and Don Carlson and his wife, Susie, all of Wharton, Texas, and Charles Carlson and his wife, Carolyn, of Boise, Idaho; aunt, Marjorie Myles of Chappell; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and close friends. Loisjean, may you rest in peace.

Mary Our Lady of Prairie Community

(Quotes from the 50th jubilee notes of Loisjean Carlson in 2013 are in italic)