

## SISTER GENEVIEVE CUNY

July 16, 1930 – June 19, 2021

Carmelita Cuny was born to Wilson Cuny and Florence Twiss on July 16, 1930, in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. She was baptized July 20, 1930, at St. Joseph Church on Cuny Table near the Bad Lands in South Dakota. She was confirmed October 2, 1940, at Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, she was a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation. She had six brothers and five sisters.

Sister Genevieve received her elementary and secondary education at Holy Rosary Mission School on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. After graduation she attended Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa on a two-year scholarship, taking commercial courses. It was at this time she recognized God's call to be a Franciscan sister.

Sister Genevieve entered the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity and was received August 15, 1952. She made temporary vows and received the name Genevieve at Marycrest in Denver, Colorado, August 15, 1954, and made final vows at Marycrest in Denver, Colorado, August 15, 1957.

Sister Genevieve captured the spirit of openness, energy, and joy while living on Cuny Table: *Ps 65 . . . where pastures of wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves and valleys deck themselves with grain, and they sing and shout with joy.* It was here she acquired the nickname Pansy, a beautiful flower that grows easily. With this spirit she accepted each change of ministry, where God called her to serve.

Sister Genevieve exemplified the Lakota value of generosity; she offered her time and gifts to make life better for many. In all her ministries, Sister Genevieve empowered people and encouraged them to be who they were.

Sister Genevieve earned a Bachelor of Arts in History in 1959 from Regis College in Denver, Colorado. She taught for twenty years at St. Mary's Academy in O'Neill, Nebraska; St. Agnes Academy in Alliance, Nebraska; Red Cloud School, Holy Rosary Mission in Pine Ridge, South Dakota; and St. Francis Mission, St. Francis, South Dakota. She completed her Masters Degree in Business Education in 1967 from the University of Detroit in Michigan.

As a Pastoral Minister, Sister Genevieve returned to St. Francis Mission in 1975 and Holy Rosary Mission in 1981-1984, both in South Dakota. She served on the board of the Tekakwitha Conference, a North American Native American organization that turned its focus to "the role of the Native American in the church, and the importance of the gifts of the Native American to the church." In 1985, she earned her Masters Degree in Religious Studies from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois. At that time, she accepted the position of Director of Native American Catechetics, developing and implementing the catechetical program to teach the faith to children and adults on the Pine Ridge Reservation for the Rapid City Diocese. In 1996 through 2000, she returned to Red Cloud School, Holy Rosary Mission in Pine Ridge, South Dakota to serve as Director of Catechetical Formation.

From 1991 to 1995, she served as Secretary and Treasurer of Sacred Heart Province, Denver, Colorado. Sister Genevieve was General Treasurer for our international congregation at our headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 2000-2005.

In September of 2005, she began as Associate Director for the Franciscan Associates of Sacred Heart Province, Denver, Colorado.

Sister Genevieve moved to Alliance, Nebraska to be a member of Marian Residence Community in 2009. She continued her outreach ministry to the associates on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations until 2013. Sister Genevieve continued her favorite pastime, taking long walks and enjoying the flowers of many colors.

Sister Genevieve was admitted to Box Butte General Hospital in Alliance, Nebraska on June 14, 2021, when she had great difficulty swallowing and breathing. She was very dehydrated, and it was determined she had double pneumonia. Her nieces and brother Ray were notified; they came to sit with her at the hospital. On June 18, 2021, Sister Genevieve returned to Marian Residence on comfort care. She died at 1:00 a.m. on June 19, 2021. Sisters, staff, and friends sat and prayed for Sister Genevieve. As was the custom, sisters gathered around the bed and prayed the rosary.

The Rosary and Funeral liturgy were at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. The rosary was led by Sister Sarah Manchester, Vicar, and the Mass of Creation was celebrated by Father Tim Stoner. In attendance for the rosary and mass were the sisters from Marian Residence (Sisters Maureen Murphy, Paula Archuleta, Geraldine Clifford, Francesca Delgado, and Bernadette Clifford), Sisters Sarah Manchester, Gloria Shuffer, and Leandra Schaller (the Provincial Council), several Associates, and Sister Genevieve's brother Ray Cuny, her nieces and a great nephew. The rosary and Mass were shared virtually through ZOOM with Sisters, Associates, friends and family of Sister Genevieve.

Sr Genevieve's body was taken to the Sioux Funeral Home on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Pine Ridge, South Dakota following the funeral. On June 20, 2021, her family had visitation, a viewing, and lunch at Rocky Ford, South Dakota. Sister Genevieve was buried in the Holy Rosary Historical Cemetery, Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Father Peter Klink presided at the burial with traditional Catholic prayer and with customs and rituals of the Native Americans. Sister Genevieve Cuny is the last of our sisters to be buried at Holy Rosary Historical Cemetery.