

Sister Bernadette Clifford
August 6, 1937 – March 8, 2022

Sister Bernadette Clifford was born on August 6, 1937 in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to Herbert H. Clifford and Jessie M. (McGaa) Clifford. August 14, 1937 she was baptized Anita Clare Clifford and confirmed in 1947 at Holy Rosary Mission on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Anita was the first born of six brothers and six sisters. She was raised near Kyle, South Dakota. Her schooling began in 1944 at Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, South Dakota. She and her brothers and sisters were boarders at Holy Rosary Mission. Anita graduated in May of 1956.

Anita left Kyle, South Dakota, September 16, 1956 to join the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in Denver, Colorado. She received the name Sister Bernadette and her habit when she made temporary vows on August 15, 1957. She professed her perpetual vows at Marycrest, Denver, Colorado on August 15, 1964.

Sister Bernadette was a student at Regis College in Denver, Colorado, where she received a BA in Education in 1963. She was an elementary teacher from 1960 to 2003. Sister Bernadette taught at St. Elizabeth's in Denver, Colorado, St. Agnes in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and St. Mary's in O'Neill, Nebraska. Sister Bernadette taught Religious Education to the students at St. Francis Mission, St. Francis, South Dakota. From 1989-1997 she was Religious Education Coordinator at Our Lady of Lourdes at Porcupine, and Holy Rosary Mission on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Sister Bernadette taught religion to the third graders at St. Agnes Academy. The last two years she served as a teacher's aide at St. Agnes Academy.

She volunteered to go to Rome, Italy to teach the fourth graders at our International School at the Generalate, the main office for our General Minister and Counselors. During her years in Rome, Sister Bernadette was able to witness two conclaves, one to elect Pope John Paul I and the election of Pope John Paul II. Because Sister Bernadette worked in the Curia, she was able to have a private audience in the Papal Palace several different times.

After many years of teaching the little ones, Sister Bernadette retired and moved to Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. She ministered to the Sisters as part-time sacristan and had a prayer ministry.

February 27, 2022, Sister Bernadette was taken to the Emergency Room at Box Butte General Hospital in Alliance, Nebraska. She was admitted for tests to determine the cause of confusion and decline in her health. A blockage in the kidney was found and it caused an infection. Sister Bernadette was flown to the United Healthcare Hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado. Tim McDonald drove Sister Jane to Fort Collins so she could be with Sister Bernadette during her stay in the hospital. The blockage was removed but the infection could not be contained. March 8, 2022, Sister Bernadette died peacefully. Sisters Elizabeth Fuhr and Jane Schneider were with Sister Bernadette. Her body was brought to Bates and Gould Funeral Home in Alliance, Nebraska.

The rosary and funeral liturgies were at Marian Residence in Alliance, Nebraska. Father Matt Koperski led the rosary. Afterwards, those who wished, shared memories and stories about Sister Bernadette. Family and relatives of Sister Bernadette came for the wake and the funeral. Present were the sisters residing at Marian Residence: Sisters Maureen Murphy, Geraldine Clifford, Paula Archuleta and Francesca Delgado. Sisters from Denver were Sisters Elizabeth Fuhr, Sarah Manchester, Sen Nguyen, and Patty Podhaisky. Sisters Joan Linenbrink and Jane Schneider, of Alliance, Nebraska, as well as associates, staff, and parishioners also attended the wake and Mass.

March 18, 2022, Father Matt Koperski celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial. Fathers Steve Deaver and Gerald Harr were concelebrants. Sister Bernadette was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Alliance, Nebraska.

Sisters of St Francis of Penance Christian Charity, Marian Residence Community