



Sisters of St. Casimir

2601 WEST MARQUETTE ROAD • CHICAGO, IL 60629-1817

(773) 776-1324 • www.ssc2601.com

SISTER LUCILLE ZELVYS **February 7, 1935 – March 1, 2019**



Sister Lucille Zelvys was born on February 7, 1935, in Taurage, Lithuania, to Peter and Albina Zelvys. She and her sister Nijole were identical twins. As the dangers of the war zone drew near, the Zelvys family was forced to flee to Germany where the government had established refugee camps for displaced people. Everyone expected to return home, but Lithuania was given to the Soviet Union. In 1949, Sister Lucille's family emigrated to the United States. There, in Chicago, they began a new life.

The family moved into the North Side apartment their sponsors had rented for them. When it came time for high school, Sister Lucille and her sister decided to attend St. Casimir Academy in Marquette Park, where many Lithuanian immigrants had settled. Because the girls found it difficult to travel to school in the winter, after a year they transferred to St. Clement High School. Following graduation, Sister Lucille worked in an office while earning 27 credits at DePaul University.

Sister Lucille had been contemplating religious life. She prayed to the Blessed Mother to show her the way. At the age of 19, Sister Lucille asked to enter the Sisters of St. Casimir. Her letters of recommendation praised her maturity, her ability, and most of all her faithfulness.

Sister Lucille professed her first vows as a Sister of St. Casimir on August 15, 1957, celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1982, her Golden Jubilee in 2007, and her Diamond Jubilee (60 years) in 2017. She continued her studies, earning a B.A.

degree from Marywood University in Scranton, PA, an R.N. from St. Francis School of Nursing, and, eventually, a B.S.N. from Loyola University.

Sister Lucille began her ministry as a teacher. For six years, she taught elementary grades at Providence of God and Immaculate Conception (Brighton Park) schools in Chicago and at Sacred Heart Elementary School in Emerson, Nebraska.

In 1963 Sister Lucille was asked to go into the medical field. After graduating from St. Francis School of Nursing, she served in both hospital and school settings, including Antelope Memorial Hospital in Neligh, Nebraska; Villa Joseph Marie High School (school nurse); Loretto Hospital in Chicago (nursing supervisor); and Maria High School (school nurse and home nursing instructor for juniors and seniors).

Sister Lucille ministered for 35 years at Chicago's Holy Cross Hospital. There she took on many demanding roles such as ICU nurse, nursing supervisor, and special procedures assistant where she aided in complex medical processes. In commenting on her health care ministry, Sister Lucille said, ". . . There were a few times I had the opportunity to initiate life saving measures for a patient, and those moments were very rewarding. But the most important thing I learned was the importance of doing the Lord's will."

When she had to discontinue active nursing, Sister Lucille offered to write hospital protocols. Her efforts helped improve care. She also collected and analyzed thousands of patient satisfaction surveys for Holy Cross Hospital. In recognition of her work, Sister Lucille was honored at a leadership meeting with a standing ovation as the speaker proclaimed, "When it comes to tracking Holy Cross Hospital progress, and doing it meticulously, Sister Lucille is in a league all her own."

Sister Lucille continued her health care ministry when she moved to the Motherhouse in 2007 by assisting with the care of Sisters in the infirmary. Sister Lucille also asked to take care of setting up for daily Mass and all liturgical functions. She performed these tasks with great love and reverence.

Sister Lucille continued to use her great computer skills to serve others at Franciscan Village by facilitating communications between the Motherhouse and

the Sisters. She also put her skills to work by using Skype to keep in touch with her family in Lithuania. Love for her homeland remained in her heart.

Appreciative of all she had done in her life, Sister Lucille reminisced at her Golden Jubilee, "As I look back over the past 50 years, I feel grateful to God for blessing me with His graces in so many ways and letting me live long enough to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our Community's founding."

Although Sister Lucille experienced deep suffering toward the end of her life, she died peacefully on the morning of March 1st. Her last words were spoken to the nurse who was assisting her, "Lord, please take me." Hearing her prayer and affirming her life-long faith, God took her home.