



# Sisters of St. Casimir

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## Sister Maureen Juozapavicius October 5, 1926 – July 29, 2019



Sister Maureen was born on October 5, 1926, to Anthony and Eva Juozapavicius. Her parents were born in Lithuania and came to the United States seeking freedom from the Russian czar and a better life for themselves and their children. Their life was not without its hardships. Sister Maureen's mother died in 1928 during the birth of her fourth child, Anthony. The first child died at the age of two; the second child was still born. Sister Maureen was the third child and was only two years old when her father was left with the care of two small children.

In God's providence her father found a very good woman who became the caregiver for his children. Sister Maureen said that it was this woman's prayerfulness and goodness that influenced her spiritual life. Sister Maureen loved her and called her "mama." This woman's daughter was a Sister of St. Casimir, Sister Virgilia, whom they would visit at the Motherhouse. It was during those visits that Sister Maureen said she had felt God's presence and was drawn to religious life.

Sister Maureen attended Nativity BVM grade school and St. Casimir Academy, both of which were staffed by the Sisters of St. Casimir. She would help the Sisters with whatever needed to be done and said she could never forget the cookies and lunch breaks they provided whenever she helped them. The Sisters were wonderful to her, helping her during some of the more difficult moments of her life. One of these occurred when her father re-married, and Sister Maureen felt that she had lost once again someone who was "mama" for her. Sister Virgilia continued to be there for her during her teen years when Sister Maureen was not sure what to do with her life.

As she came to the decision to ask to enter the Sisters of St. Casimir, Sister Maureen was given September 8, 1943, as her entrance day. This had great significance for her because it was the feast of the Blessed Mother to whom Sister Maureen had a great devotion. She saw it as a fitting way to begin her life in God's service. At the time of her reception into the novitiate on August 15, 1944, she received the name Maureen in honor of Mary.

Sister Maureen's desire was to serve in health care. She had always wanted to be a nurse and before she entered someone had offered to pay for her education. In the community, she was asked to study to be a teacher. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Marywood College in Scranton, PA, and was sent to teach. God's ways are mysterious and through the ups and downs that Sister Maureen encountered in her 35 years in elementary education, she said she learned to understand and have empathy for others.

Sister Maureen taught at Nativity BVM School, Saint Joseph School, Saints Peter and Paul School, Our Lady of Vilna School, All Saints School, and Immaculate Conception School in Chicago, IL; St. Norbert School in Northbrook, IL; St. John School in Roswell, New Mexico; Our Lady of Guadalupe School in Clovis, New Mexico; St Mary School in Custer, MI; and St. Clement School in Florida.

After receiving a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Loyola University in Chicago, IL, Sister Maureen was missioned to Maria High School. From 1973 until 1981, she counseled students in both personal matters and in helping them with difficulties they were encountering in their studies. She also taught classes in Psychology and Business Math. Throughout those years Sister Maureen continued to deepen her understanding, learning new things that would help her be a better teacher and counselor. In a folder found among her possessions are numerous certificates of programs and courses that she took. She was definitely a lifelong learner. High school life offered opportunities to chaperone field trips with students as well as a week tour in London and nearby places.

In 1981 Sister Maureen's dream of working in health care became a reality as she was sent to prepare for ministry in pastoral care. She received certification as Chaplain from Northwestern, Rush Presbyterian, Loyola Hospitals by the National Association of Catholic Chaplains. In looking back at her years at Holy Cross Hospital, where she ministered in this capacity for twelve years, she said: "The most rewarding and memorable experiences in pastoral care were encounters with people as they reconciled with God , accepted with serenity what was happening in their life as it was ending, or were able to continue living their life with hope. One of my most significant memories was of a gentleman who was very ill and close to death. Our daily conversations led him to seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation after forty years. He died peacefully, and because of that grace his daughter remains in touch with me to this day. Being a companion during times when God's action is recognized in a person's life is a very moving moment that one never forgets."

In addition to her ministerial life, Sister Maureen was gifted in many ways. She had an artistic ability to create beautiful cards and posters with her calligraphy. She knitted and crocheted intricately designed afghans and was always willing to teach others to do the same. When the community would display some of the handwork of our Sisters, Sister Maureen always had items to contribute. African violets flourished under her tender care and were the gifts she brought to many Sisters when they were recuperating after an illness. If someone was looking for a place to live, Sister Maureen always had connections and was able to respond to that

need. Her love for young people brought her to volunteer for Mercy Home for Boys and Girls, making phone calls to thank donors for their support of these young people. Sister Maureen participated in the Rush Alzheimer's Study for twenty-four years. She also loved baking. Every Sister was remembered on her special day with something Sister Maureen baked. Who could forget her delicious apple cake, banana bread, plates of cookies, or her famous rum balls, never skimping on the rum.

In 2007, Sister Maureen moved to the Motherhouse as the community was discerning some major decisions. She wanted to do everything possible to be able to keep things as they were, especially through her efforts in vocation ministry, in which she was always a willing participant in any events that were planned to make our life known and to accompany young women in their discernment. Sister Maureen cared deeply about the community and its future. She was a woman who "walked the talk." When the Sisters began the move to Franciscan Village, Sister Maureen found it difficult to accept and struggled with what was being asked of her even after she moved. It was another great loss in her life. But at the Village she was her true self, a people person, kind to everyone, always offering to help.



In the last season of her life, Sister Maureen suffered from dementia and was moved to a memory care unit where she was lovingly welcomed by the caregivers and other residents. It was a difficult time for Sister Maureen. She kept affirming, "I can still do things. I can still teach. I can still work at the hospital." When the caregivers learned that Sister Maureen had been in pastoral care, they asked her to be a spiritual advisor for anyone who would care to talk with her. They made her an official badge with her title on it and let the other residents know that she was available. Sister Maureen was all smiles at this recognition. It was an opportunity for her to be there for others, something that had been so much a part of her life and who she truly was.

Sister Maureen had the joy of celebrating her Silver Jubilee in 1971, her Golden Jubilee in 1996, and her 60<sup>th</sup> Diamond Jubilee in 2006. In reflecting on her life, she wrote, "As I review the sixty years of my vowed life, I am grateful for all the blessings received during those years. I am grateful not only for the bright and carefree days, but also for the challenging and painful ones that helped create the mosaic of my life that God in his providence fashioned. God used me as an instrument to bring his goodness to others."

Sister Maureen was called to her eternal home on the morning of July 29. To many of us it was a shock. Several Sisters commented that it was such an appropriate day for Sister Maureen's homecoming. It was the feast of St. Martha, who welcomed Jesus to her home and served him. A part of the prayer at Mass that day reads, "Almighty and ever-loving God whose Son was pleased to be welcomed to St. Martha's home as a guest, grant, we pray, that through her intercession, serving Christ faithfully in our brothers and sisters, we may merit to be received

by you in the halls of heaven.” Sister Maureen lived that call. In a memoir of her life, she wrote, “I just want to help make the world a better place, and to help people live a better life until God calls us, His beloved, home.” On the morning of July 29, Jesus was there, welcoming our Sister Maureen home.



Sister Maureen is survived by her nephews Daniel Joseph and Anthony (Jessica) Juozapavich and grandniece Nina Juozapavich.

Sister Maureen’s parents, Anthony Juozapavicius and Eva Kasarskis Juozapavicius, her brother Anthony Juozapavich and sister-in-law Nina Juozapavich preceded her in death.

***Living members of Sister Maureen’s Profession Class are:***

Sister M. Lourdine Ramoska  
Sister Margaret Mary Mazgelis

***Deceased members of Sister Maureen’s Profession Class are:***

Sister M. Josine Vendzelis  
Sister M. Damien Margis  
Sister Ann Barbara Wilim  
Sister M. Angela Balchunas  
Sister M. Brunona Encheris

**Visitation and Wake Service: Saturday, August 3, 2019**

Franciscan Village Chapel  
1260 Franciscan Drive, Lemont  
Visitation: 10:15 a. m.– 11:30 a.m.  
Wake Service: 10: 45 a.m.

**Mass of the Resurrection: 11:30 a.m.**

**Celebrant: Rev. Tom Kasputis**

**Interment at Saint Casimir Cemetery**

**Funeral Director: David Gaidas**