



# *Sisters of St. Casimir*

2601 WEST MARQUETTE ROAD • CHICAGO, IL 60629-1817

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## **Sister Marilyn Kuzmickus, SSC July 15, 1938 – April 30, 2022**

Nita Kuzmickus was born to Anton “Curly” and Helen (Tauchas) Kuzmickus, in Waukegan, IL, on July 15, 1938. Nita was the oldest of three daughters, and she attended St. Bartholomew Grade School in Waukegan. Nita grew up in a family where faith and love flourished.



After graduating from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, she left home with two of her cousins and a girlfriend from Waukegan to become an aspirant with the Sisters of St Casimir and to attend Maria High School in Chicago, which opened its doors September 8, 1952. On February 2, 1955, Nita became a postulant. She graduated from Maria in 1955 having taken classes during the summer to complete her high school course work in three years.

On August 15, 1955, Nita was received into the Novitiate and was given the name Sister Marilyn. On August 15, 1957, she made her profession of temporary vows, and on August 15, 1962, she made her final profession as a Sister of St. Casimir. Sister Marilyn ministered for her first eleven years as an elementary teacher in grades 4, 5, and 6 in Chicago at St. George School (Bridgeport), Immaculate Conception School (Brighton Park, ), and Sts. Peter and Paul School (West Pullman). During the summers of these years, Sister Marilyn was able to complete her B.A. in Education from Marywood College in Scranton, PA in 1964.

In 1969, Sister Marilyn was asked to study at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, where she received her M.A. in Spirituality in 1971 in preparation to become formation directress for the new members of the community – postulants, novices, and temporary professed sisters -- until 1983. Sister Marilyn became a member of the Religious Formation Conference in the Illinois region and served as chairperson in Illinois and a member of the National Board.

Sister Marilyn was also an instructor in the inter-community novitiate program and was often called upon to be a guest speaker for various religious communities. The groups of those entering were much smaller than in the past, so Sister Marilyn worked with nearby communities so that the novices and temporary professed had larger groups with whom to interact. She maintained contact with some of the Directresses of the other communities throughout her life, including the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago in Lemont.

In 1978, Sister Marilyn was elected as Assistant General Superior for two terms. During these years, Sister Marilyn coordinated the process of revising the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir as called for by Vatican II. Shortly after that, Sister M. Joanela Fayert, General Superior at the time, asked Sister Marilyn to begin working on the beatification Cause of Mother Maria. With much research and numerous interviews with people who knew our foundress, she and Sister M. Agnesine Dering became the co-editors of the book entitled, "The Founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir," Mother Maria's account of the Congregation's founding. Sister Marilyn shared her new insights on Mother Maria with the Congregation in her Light and Life Institute as well as Light and Life publications. While focusing on the Cause of Mother Maria, she directed that emphasis be placed on Mother Maria's distinctive spirituality as a means to deepen the Sisters' life of prayer, community, and service. Eventually, Sister Marilyn became the postulator of the cause until she was elected General Superior in 1988, an office which she held until 1998.

Sister Marilyn's years in leadership were very challenging and changing times. The uncertainty and instability of these times required a depth of spirituality, a capacity for discernment, and a new vision and Sister Marilyn brought these attributes to the Congregation. She represented the Congregation well in professional circles and was respected by many.

While in leadership, Sister Marilyn was an active member of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. She participated in annual assemblies and made connections: with other communities with Lithuanian roots (Pittsburgh Franciscans, Sisters of Jesus Crucified, Brockton, MA, and the Sisters of the Immaculate Concep-

tion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Putnam, CT) These communities would meet annually. Additionally, when she was at LCWR Assemblies she made it a point to connect with any of our IHM Sisters from Scranton, PA who were there.

After a sabbatical at Catholic Theological University, Sister Marilyn was asked to research the life and spirit of Servant of God and eventually became the Diocesan Postulator for the Cause of Mother Maria, a position which was both a privilege and blessing to her.

Sister Marilyn loved her family. She enjoyed spending time with them and having them visit her. She enjoyed seeing her sisters' children and grandchildren grow. One of her nephews, John Heintz, lived in California, and she often wrote to him. This was one way she could stay connected.

Sister Marilyn loved celebrations and most of her milestones in her religious life were just that: On August 15, 1957, her first profession day, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, was the celebrant for the Mass because it was also, the Golden Jubilee of the Congregation. In 1982, her silver jubilee coincided with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sisters of St. Casimir – with a special homecoming with speakers focusing on the spirit and charism of Mother Maria Kaupas. And in 2007, Sister Marilyn celebrated her golden jubilee as the Congregation celebrated its Centennial.

Sister Marilyn's care for the mission and ministry of the Congregation was evident throughout her life. She had a deep faith in our God, which enabled her to continue when life became difficult. Her gentle, understanding ways helped her to look compassionately and with love with all she met.

Sister Marilyn loved life. Her warm smile and sense of humor captivated those she met within the community, her family, and so many others.

In 2014, Sister Marilyn moved to Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL, where she shared her prayer and presence with our Sisters there as well as the residents and caregivers. Eventually, as her health needs became greater, Sister Marilyn moved to Mother Theresa Home where she could get the additional care that she needed. On the morning of April 30, 2022, God called her home.



She is survived by her sisters, Celia (James) Heintz (Lawrence, Kansas) and Mary (James) Losch (Kenosha, WI), three nephews, John Heintz, James Losch, and Michael Losch, and a niece and goddaughter, Andrea Heintz (Joe) Tangari, and great nephews, Sam Tangari, Mitchell, Nathan, and Christopher Losch, and great nieces, Maggie and Cate Losch.

Living member of Sister Marilyn's Profession Class:

Sister M. Janine Golubickis

She is also survived by the Sisters of St. Casimir.

Sister Marilyn's parents, Anton and Helen (Tauchas) Kuzmickus preceded her in death.

Deceased member of Sister Marilyn's Profession Class:

Sister Lucille Zelvys

Deceased Sister relatives of Sister Marilyn:

Sister M. Almarita, SSC (aunt)

Sister Mary Bridget, O.Ss.R (aunt)

Sister M. Ignatia, SSC (cousin)

Sister Marlene Petruska, SSC (cousin)

**Rites of Christian Burial**

**May 10, 2022**

Franciscan Village Chapel

1270 Village Drive

Lemont, IL 60439

**Wake Service: 10:00 a.m.**

**Visitation: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**Mass of the Resurrection: 11:00 a.m.**

**Celebrant: Rev. Michael Nacius**

**Organist/Cantor: Gia Sokas**

**Flutist: Anna Belle O'Shea**

**Interment: Saint Casimir Cemetery**

**Funeral Director: Lack and Sons**

**Livestream link**

<https://www.asimplestreaming.com/smkuzmickus/>



Sister Marilyn with her 1993-1998 leadership team:

First row: Sisters Immacula, Margaret Petcavage, Marilyn, Agnesine. Second row: Sisters Margaret Zalot, Mary de Sales and Teresita.