



Sisters of St. Casimir

2601 WEST MARQUETTE ROAD • CHICAGO, IL 60629-1817

(773) 776-1324 • www.sistersofstcasimir.org

SISTER ZITA PETKEVICIUS, SSC December 24, 1928 – June 14, 2023



Sister Zita (Aldona Petkevicius) was born to John Petkevicius and Sally Smigelskaite Petkeviciene on December 24, 1928, in Kaugonys, Lithuania. She was one of seven children.

One of the happiest days for her was the day in 1991 she heard that Lithuania was free, something for which she had been praying for many years. The last time she saw Lithuania was in 1940 when she was 12-years old. At that time, the Nazis came into her home, having just shot and killed her father in a wheat field in her backyard, and took her with them and shipped her to a German prison camp, leaving behind her 3-year-old sister Ona and her 5-year-old brother Jonas. Her mother and grandmother were not at home at the time. She never saw her family again. Later, the Nazis also imprisoned and killed her mother, two other brothers and a twin sister.

Yet Sister Zita (Aldona) was strong. She escaped from the prison camp on a day when the soldiers were executing a group of prisoners. She dug a hole with her fingers and crawled under a barbed-wire fence, badly scratching her back. Bleeding, she ran through the woods, went through a long sewer pipe and emerged in the woods again. This time she was found by two German sisters who were picking berries and mushrooms. These two women, bathed, clothed, fed, and hid her. She lived with them for thirteen years until she came to the United States (Columbus, OH) in 1956 and eventually to the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Casimir on January 5, 1957.

On August 15, 1959, Sister Zita made her first vows. She was soon missioned to St. Francis Convent in Indiana Harbor, IN to use her dietary skills in providing meals for the Sisters teaching in the school. Sister Zita continued ministering in dietary services in various convents, including the Motherhouse where she also made hosts. Her ministries took her to Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania. She especially enjoyed her time at Villa Joseph Marie and St. Joseph Home for the Aged from 1987-2009. Her ministry was sewing for the residents of the Home, but she also assisted Sister Elaine, principal at Villa Joseph Marie, ensuring doors

in the school were locked and all lights were out after weekend and evening events. Of course, she enjoyed the spacious and beautiful grounds and opportunities at the Villa, including the apple orchards for apple picking, the swimming pool for refreshing breaks on hot days, the table in the community room for playing (and mostly winning) games of checkers, and her computer for mastering a few computer games.

In 2009, Sister Zita returned to the Motherhouse to celebrate her Golden Jubilee and to live in the Motherhouse community. She reflected on her life experiences and wrote about them in *Journeys*, the SSC Newsletter: “What I experienced after I was taken to Germany, especially the loss of my family and my home, was very painful and I commend it all to God who knows and understands everything. I came to the United States in 1956 and sought out the Sisters of St. Casimir who welcomed me into their community.”

Since 2014 she served as a minister of prayer and presence at Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL. For her 60th Jubilee celebration she wrote: “I thank God for protecting me and guiding me to a new life in my vocation. I also thank God for my religious community and for all the blessings that have come to me through them.”

Sister Zita...Enjoying life:



ENJOYING A PICNIC AT LASALLE MANOR IN PLANO, ILLINOIS WITH HER SISTER FRIENDS: (CLOCKWISE FROM FRONT LEFT) SISTERS REMIGIA, BENIGNA, FELICITA, SERAPHIA, ZITA, SEBASTIAN, AND AGNESINE



SISTER ZITA ENJOYING A COMPUTER GAME



Sister Zita was preceded in death by her father, John Petkevicius and her mother, Sally Smigelskaite Petkeviciene, her brothers Feliksas, Zigmas, and Jonas, and her sisters Aleksandra, Anastasija, and Ona.

Sister Zita is survived by two cousins: Milton (Paula) Burnett of Peabody, MA, and Elaine Burnett of Gloucester, MA.

Members of Sister Zita's Profession Class of August 15, 1959

Living Members: Sister Mary Louise Andrulonis
Sister Margaret McTaggart
Sister M. Deborah Romanuski
Sister Theresa Papsis

Deceased Members: Sister Berenice Staines
Sister Regis Pribish
Sister Marylynn Dombrosky
Sister Jeanne Moceyunas
Sister Noreen Garb

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

Visitation, Wake Service, Mass of the Resurrection

Wednesday, June 21, 2023
Franciscan Village Chapel
1270 Village Drive
Lemont, IL 60439

Visitation: 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Wake Service: 11:00 a.m.

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

Celebrant: Father Ken Baker

Interment: Saint Casimir Cemetery

Funeral Services: Lack and Sons

