

Sister M. Lucy Edelbeck, OP
Born to earthly life: October 18, 1922
Religious profession: August 4, 1942
Entered eternal life: April 19, 2018

I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a loving purpose and that in the struggle for righteousness, we have cosmic companionship.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



The Edelbeck Farm in Wausauke

“I hope to be remembered... as someone who lived on Earth, expressed compassion to creation,

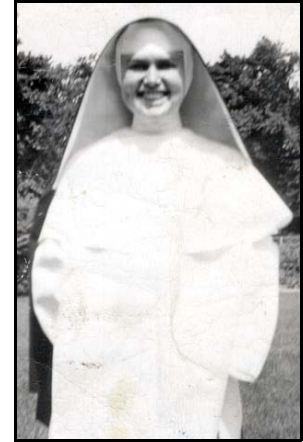
listened deeply with my heart, and experienced communion with those most neglected and abused,” Dr. King’s reading began. Sister Lucy could have written that!

Eleanore Christine Edelbeck, daughter of Caroline DeGroot and Anton J. Edelbeck and fifth of twelve children, was born on October 18, 1922, on the family farm near Wausauke, Wisconsin, and baptized at Saint Augustine Parish there. In this large Dutch-Bohemian family, she learned early in life to care for, teach, and mentor others, and unabashedly to speak her mind.

When Eleanore was eight, her older sister Lucy joined the Racine Dominican community as a postulant. She was received into the novitiate In August 1931 as Sister M. Eleanore of Saint Catherine of Siena, and would make her first profession two years later.



After graduating from high school, seventeen-year-old Eleanore followed her big sister, entering the Racine Dominican community on August 29, 1939. On August 4, 1940 she received the habit and the name Sister M. Lucy of the Five Wounds. She pronounced her first vows on August 4, 1942 and her final vows on August 15, 1948.



Profession Day, 1942



Lucy and Eleanore with brother Fred and parents

In 1951, after several years of summer-school classes, Sister Lucy received her bachelor of arts degree from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. Over the following summers she earned her master's degree in mathematics from Creighton University in Omaha in 1961 and her doctorate in chemistry from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge in 1970.

Lucy's first mission assignment was to Saint Charles School in Burlington, Wisconsin, where she taught for three years. In 1945 she began teaching high school at Nativity Parish in Detroit, from where she moved on to Holy Trinity in Fowler, Michigan (1947 to 1952),



Teaching at St Catherine's High School, 1953

Saint Catherine's High School in Racine (1952 to 1953), and Saint Clement High School in Center Line, Michigan (1953 to 1954). She was again at Saint Catherine's from 1954 to 1961, and then at Saint John's High School in Little Chute (1961 to 1962). From 1962 until 1969 she taught chemistry at Dominican College in Racine, then took a year off to complete her doctorate at Louisiana State University before returning to Dominican until its closing in 1974. At that



A family gathering

point she turned her energies to campus ministry, first at Harper Community College in Palatine, Illinois, and then (1977 to 1981) at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The latter work evolved first into ministry to young adults (1981 to 1988), including the establishment of Emmaus House (1988 to 1996), where over time many young men and women lived a very simple lifestyle, eating vegetarian meals in solidarity with people who could not afford to eat meat. Emmaus House residents committed themselves for a year to work with and learn from Milwaukee's people living in poverty. These volunteers found an atmosphere of love, support, prayer and sharing. They learned about social injustice and how difficult it is to change unjust systems; they also learned to live a simple lifestyle that would influence them the rest of their lives. In speaking of Emmaus House, Lucy said, "I think each of us in our journeys has come to the realization that our faith has called us to do something about making the world a more just place to be in." She retired from these ministries in 1996.

Lucy's creative gifts extended to poetry and calligraphy, with the former contributing to a collection edited by Sister Pat Chaffee, *A Piece of Ice on a Hot Stove* (1987)— "On Laurel Ridge," "After a Night at the Emergency Rest Shelter," and "On Highway 70, At the Cafe on the Bayou." And she used her calligraphic skills to create "Lucy's Cards" (privately sold



Sisters Eleanore and Lucy, 2012



Diamond Jubilee, 2017

and distributed.) These skills, along with her intense interest in feminist spirituality, enriched her retirement years at Siena Center.

On April 4, 2018, Lucy was transported to the emergency room at All Saints Hospital in Racine for evaluation of a low blood oxygen level. But because that facility was filled, she was shortly transferred to Elmbrook Memorial Hospital in Brookfield and admitted there. Tests indicated a blood clot in her lungs and possibly a recent "mild" heart attack. On April 9 she was discharged to Lakeshore for rehab, but improvement was tentative at best, with oxygen levels declining. She died peacefully early Thursday morning, April 19. She was ninety-five years old.



In the chemistry lab at Dominican College, about 1965

On the occasion of her diamond jubilee in 2017, Lucy had written: “Being a Dominican has enabled me to live among excited, dedicated, joyous women who have inspired, encouraged and walked with me in joy and support. They have taught me to live the gospel fully. Through the inspiration of these women, I have been able to live and work among those who are poor and left behind by society. I have spoken out often in voice and in writing for women, especially in our church, who have been denigrated by society and church. I have been enabled to inspire countless women who struggle to reach for their place in society and church.”

Lucy had requested a memorial communion word service and natural burial. The burial took place at Our Lady of the Oaks in Pewaukee on April 21. A memorial service was celebrated in the Siena Center chapel on April 26.



Lucy and Jean Ferstl