

Sister Celia Evers, OP



Born to Earthly Life on October 12, 1935

First Profession on August 15, 1956

Entered Eternal Life on October 23, 2024

CECILIA THERESA EVERS was born on October 12, 1935 in Little Chute, Wisconsin. She was one of 14 children of Martin and Mary Evers. She enjoyed being outside, loved art and did well in school. The Evers farm was a warm, loving place and Celia had a happy childhood.

Three of Celia's aunts were Racine Dominicans, along with two uncles who were priests, so she had many people in her family who lived a religious life. She visited her aunts often and found them to be joyful, faith-filled and deeply committed to working with the poor, which had quite an impact on her. When she felt the call to religious life, she knew it would be as a Racine Dominican Sister. Her first profession was on August 15, 1956 and she took the religious name S. Martha, before changing her name to S. Celia in 1968.

S. Celia received a B.A. in Education from Dominican College and was a primary school teacher, dedicating more than 24 years to Catholic schools. She taught in Wisconsin and Michigan, including SS. Peter and Paul in Green Bay, St. Patrick and Holy Trinity in Racine, St. Louis in Caledonia, St. Victor in Monroe and St. John in Little Chute. During her teaching tenure, she co-authored and published Language Arts Activity Cards, which combined her love of teaching and reading with her artistic talents.

After teaching, she felt a call to be a missionary and work with the poor. She talked with a childhood friend who was a priest about this call, and he encouraged her to join him in Kingstree, South Carolina. S. Celia said she heard the cry of the poor during those years. As she described it, "the sounds of the Church in the Southeast are the cries of hunger - hunger for physical food, hunger for something to relieve the pains of poverty, hunger to be able to read and hunger to hear the word of God." Her work during this time would prepare her for the next chapter, which was a continent away.

A group from South Carolina was looking for people to minister in Kenya and S. Celia was one of the first to volunteer. From 1986-1998 she did retreat ministry and social outreach at the Ukweli Reflection Centre in Kisumu, Kenya. Of her time in Kenya, S. Celia said, "In Africa, each day was meaningful. Daily trusting that God was very near and dear in a country plagued with sickness and poverty, but so alive with beauty and faith." She would always say that her time serving the poor in Kenya was meaningful and life-changing.

After returning from Africa, she was in parish life and social outreach in Rosedale, Mississippi before she came home to Siena in Racine. She was a Sacristan and prayer leader and could always be counted on for spiritual guidance. And that deep call to minister to the poor was always with her, and she stayed committed to causes in Racine that addressed food insecurity, homelessness and lack of access to services.

S. Celia once said, "my vowed life has become more interesting and more challenging as the years pass. I find myself energized by the mission and filled with love for God's poor." We thank God for the gift of S. Celia and the example she gave of taking care of the least among us, just as Jesus taught us to do.

