

Sister Joyce Quintana, OP



Born to Earthly Life on February 8, 1938

First Profession on August 15, 1958

Entered Eternal Life on February 18, 2022

JOYCE CECILE was born February 8, 1938 in Denver, Colorado, the third of four children to Bernard & Helen Quintana. The family moved to Santa Fe when she was two years old and she would always consider Santa Fe her home. She was taught from a young age by Racine Dominicans at school and she frequently helped them with whatever needed to be done. “They were a very happy bunch,” she remembered, “I was impressed by how they were filled with joy.” Joyce thought about the sacrifices that the sisters made in leaving their Midwestern homes and families to serve in New Mexico. “I thought, if they can sacrifice like that to show their devotion to Christ, so can I,” she said.

She answered her call to join the Racine Dominicans and was given the name Sr. M. Felice of the Holy Name of Jesus. She made her first profession on August 15, 1958 and her final vows on August 15, 1964.

She received her B.A. in History with minors in English and Philosophy from Dominican College in Racine in 1960. She later went back to school for her master’s degree and in 1988, she received an M.A. from New Mexico Highlands University in New Mexico.

Education and justice were important to S. Joyce and it shaped her ministries throughout her life. For her first five years in ministry, she served as a teacher at St. Mary in Kenosha, St. Mary in Racine and St. John in Hubbardston, Michigan.

She then embarked on her South America missionary experience in LaPaz, Bolivia. Her four years in Bolivia profoundly influenced her. Some of her ministries included census work in the barrios of La Paz, being involved with a program to prevent tuberculosis among the poor, organizing programs to empower Bolivians to educate their fellow-citizens and train upper middle class young women from the university to teach religion to children in the barrios. “It really opens you up to immerse yourself in a totally different culture,” she reflected.

When she returned to the States, an opportunity came up for her to be the Neighborhood Coordinator at St. Patrick Parish, Racine. One of the many tasks she held was Administrator of the Legal Aid Society when it opened in 1971, which served more than 800 people in its first year. She worked to expand services to those on the margins who didn’t qualify for legal aid assistance or couldn’t afford it on their own. She interpreted for Spanish speaking clients, helped with records and answered questions on family problems or welfare. She was a trusted resource and friend to many during that time. Her later years saw new ministries, and she brought to each one her caring nature and her heart for justice. S. Joyce worked for many years in financial institutions as manager, branch manager, vice-president, and mortgage loan underwriter throughout New Mexico. She was widely considered an advocate for the poor in the banking industry, where their voices were typically not heard. She also served four years as the principal of Holy Cross School in Santa Cruz, New Mexico.

She returned to Racine to serve as an Administrative Associate during the consolidation of Catholic parishes in Racine. She was the Program Director of the Adult Learning Program which was housed for 26 years at Siena. With her strong love of education, she worked with members of the Racine community who needed help speaking, reading and writing English. She understood that helping adults to understand the language meant they could obtain a better job, get a driver’s license, become a citizen and feel a part of their community. She also helped facilitate the integration of our Adult Learning Program (ALP) into the Racine Literacy Council in 2006 and stayed on as site coordinator and English as a Second Language (ESL) Tutor. When she saw a need, S. Joyce was there to help in any way she could. She served as the Siena Center House Coordinator, was a member of the Racine Interfaith Coalition and was an active member of the Immigration Task Force.

Over her lifetime, S. Joyce has helped people from all over the globe, spending her life doing everything she could to help break down barriers for others and teach them the lessons they needed to grow. Her words and actions are the lessons she has now left each of us to follow.

