

Sister Caryl Hartjes, CSA

Sister Caryl Hartjes, CSA, formerly Sister Theodine, died peacefully October 31, 2021, at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Caryl Patricia was born in Appleton, Wisconsin, on June 22, 1935, the daughter of Theodore Hartjes and Alice Susan Ronning Hartjes. From her father, Caryl learned to love nature and the outdoors, while her mother instilled in her a love for music, dance and education. Caryl began playing piano and violin in 4th grade. After graduating from Appleton West High School in 1953, she was encouraged to become a professional musician; however, Caryl was determined to be a nurse and enrolled in St. Agnes School of Nursing, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, graduating in 1956. She entered St. Agnes Convent in 1957 and made her profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes as Sister Theodine on August 15, 1959, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



Her BS in Nursing from Marian College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin (1960), her MA in Theological Studies from Maryknoll School of Theology (1983) and her study of Spanish paved the way for Sister Caryl to engage in ministries of healing, advocacy, and peaceful protest for the poor, the innocent, and the vulnerable, including Mother Earth, throughout her life. She began by serving as a head nurse and night supervisor at St. Agnes Hospital, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. At St. Anthony Hospital in Hays, Kansas, she supervised the labor and delivery room, the nursery, and the women's medical surgical unit. She also developed a county-wide home health program and assisted in implementing the ICU unit in the hospital. In 1971, Sister Caryl moved to Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish, East Harlem, New York. There she was a parish nurse making home visits and collaborating with the Little Sisters of the Assumption and Mt. Sinai Hospital to hold clinics in the church hall for those with no access to health care and to design educational programs for local women. From 1980-1981, Sister Caryl served as a nurse at Clínica Santa Inés in Waspam, Nicaragua, allowing another sister a much-needed sabbatical. Her service in Nicaragua completed, she returned to East Harlem, New York, as a community organizer and coordinator of family health programs. In 1984, she joined the staff of The Newburgh Ministry, Newburgh, New York, a drop-in center for street people.

In 1989, Sister Caryl moved to Navajo, New Mexico, serving the Native American community at St. Bernard Parish. The following year, she was appointed to CSA regional leadership for the sisters ministering in the Southwest. At the completion of this role, she enrolled in a one-year internship in ministry to persons living with HIV/AIDS at Damien Ministries in Washington, DC. She then became a staff member at Rainbow Home of Berks County, an HIV/AIDS residence located in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. Sister Caryl returned to Fond du Lac in 2000 to work first as an employed nurse and then a volunteer CNA at Hospice Home of Hope. She engaged in a variety of other volunteer activities including visiting and offering spiritual support to inmates, facilitating the JustFaith Program at Holy Family Parish, singing and playing her violin and bells in local choirs, and serving on the Board of Directors of Waupun Memorial Hospital and several non-profit boards in the Fond du Lac community.

For several years, Sister Caryl joined the yearly peaceful protest held at Ft. Benning, Georgia, to call upon the U. S. government to close the School of Americas (SOA), a combat training school for Latin American soldiers. Its graduates were consistently involved in human rights atrocities and coups. In November 2002, Sister Caryl committed civil disobedience by crossing the line into the school property causing her to be arrested for felony trespassing. Sentenced to three months in a federal prison, April-July 2003, she served her time in support of the thousands of people who lost their lives through acts of violence committed by SOA trained soldiers.

In May 2018, Sister Caryl joined the community of sisters at Nazareth Court and Center in Fond du Lac where, until the time of her death, she continued to inspire all who knew her with her passion for life, diversity, and social justice along with her love for God's beautiful creation.

Sister Caryl was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Juanita (Nicolai) Makaroff; brothers-in-law, Adam Shewchuk and Arthur Harwig.

She is survived by her sisters Jean Hartjes Shewchuk and Dolores Harwig; nieces and nephews; and the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Following her wishes, green burial has taken place at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, Fond du Lac, WI. Visitation will be held at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, WI from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. and from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 22, 2021.

A prayer service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on November 22, 2021, in the Nazareth Center Chapel. Please check in for the Visitation and Prayer Service at the 375 Gillett Street entrance only.

A Memorial Mass for Sister Caryl will be held Monday, November 22, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Father Kenneth Smits, Capuchin, presiding.

Memorials may be directed to the CSA Mission Advancement Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and Hospice Hope for their care of Sister Caryl.

Zacherl Funeral Home is serving the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.