Sister Jude Connelly, OSF
Professed 1965

“Nothing is so strong as true gentleness. Nothing is so gentle as true strength.”
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

After a life of healing and compassionate service, Sister Jude Connelly died in Franciscan Hospice House in Tacoma, Washington, on Holy Thursday, March 28, 2024. Born in San Francisco, California, to Patrick and Elsie, she later moved with her parents and brother to Tacoma, Washington, where the family were members of Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Parish. She met the Sisters of St. Francis while in nursing school at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Tacoma. Wanting to be of service to others and to live a life that supported singleness of purpose, she entered the congregation in 1962 and made her first profession of vows in 1965. Her many years as a health care professional took her to the Diocese of Baker and the Archdiocese of Seattle. She earned a BSN from the University of Oregon and an MA in Hospital Administration from Xavier University, but her most cherished achievement in education was her Clinical Certification in Pastoral Education from the Interfaith Ministries of Hawaii.

Jude devoted her life to the well-being of others, first as a nurse, and later as an administrator. Sister Patty Michalek recalls of her friend, “She loved people and had a gift for being ‘sister.’ She was as comfortable with the hospital CEO as she was with the janitor. They were both equally important to her.” In addition to hospital administration, she spent 18 years as the administrator of St. Ann’s Convent, the retirement home for the sisters in the West until it closed in 2019. Jude wrote of her time at St. Ann’s saying, “We enjoyed the little fun happenings as significant, and we embraced the more difficult losses, decline, and death as a loving community journeying together in faith.” It was during her time at St. Ann’s that the difficult decision was made to close St. Ann’s and move the sister residents to Assisi House in Aston. Jude shared that, “the sister residents responded in obedience and witness to their love for the wisdom and care of the community. The strong bonds of the sister residents and the local communities supported the move of each sister to the Assisi House. The expression of love during this time of moving was very inspiring for me. This was true community to me.”

Sister Jude was grateful for her vocation and once wrote, “I have enjoyed my life with its opportunities and challenges. Most meaningful are the people I met along the way. They have enriched my life and helped me strive to become my true self.” She noted that her volunteer experiences in Haiti and Nicaragua and the teamwork she experienced on these trips were a highlight of her ministry. Sister Anne McNamara shared of her friend, “Living the gospel and making it relevant in this day and age was a priority for Sister Jude. Creating awareness through working with others for the common good was her greatest joy.” In addition to her ministries in hospitals and at St. Ann’s, Jude spent one year as coordinator of volunteers and planning at St. Francis House in Puyallup in 2000 and returned in 2019 as a volunteer where she served until the time of her death. In her free time, Sister Jude enjoyed art and art museums, cooking, and gardening. Jude, your efforts to encourage those who enjoyed your guidance and care, showed your true strength. May you rest now in the awareness that you, too, have crossed the threshold of life into Life Eternal with the God who is All Goodness.

All services will be held in at St. Leo Catholic Church, 710 S 13th St, Tacoma, WA 98405. The viewing will be on Thursday, April 18 at 6 P.M. The Funeral Mass will be held on Friday, April 19, 12:10 P.M. (PT). Internment of ashes will be in Calvary Cemetery in Tacoma. Mass will be livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/@st.leoparish4626.