

# *Sister Florence Lorraine Petsch, OSF*

*Professed 1982*

*“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” ~ Psalm 90: 2*



Florence Lorraine Lajeunesse Petsch was born in Fort Washakie, Wyoming, the third of eleven children born to Rachel and Herman. The Lajeunesse family belonged to the Shoshone Tribe, and made their home on the Wind River Reservation, where they were active members of St. Stephen Indian Mission. Florence graduated from Fremont County Vocational High School.

Although she sensed a call to religious life while in high school, Florence's path first led her to marriage. She met Don Petsch, and they were married in 1951. She devoted herself to family life — caring for her daughter Martha, supporting Don, and helping work the cattle ranch. After 19 years as a homemaker, she began working at St. Stephen's School as the home school coordinator. After being widowed at 45, Florence turned to prayer to discern the next chapter of her life. The call to religious life returned, and she entered the congregation in 1979, making her first profession in 1982.

Sr. Florence began her ministry in Washington at St. Ann Infant Home in Spokane and St. Joseph's Hospital in Tacoma, before moving to Oregon where she spent seven years as a hospital and hospice chaplain at St. Elizabeth Community Hospital in Baker. She then studied at Saint Louis University in St. Louis and interned as a therapist at Queen of Peace Recovery Center.

In 1990, Sr. Florence returned home to St. Stephen's Indian Mission on the Wind River Reservation, where she ministered for 23 years as a parish outreach minister and house coordinator. She visited the homebound and elderly, bringing friendship, prayer, and the Eucharist, and made regular rounds to hospitals and nursing homes. On Sunday mornings she led religious education for younger children. She was also active in the Wyoming Council of Catholic Women and, as an enrolled member of the Shoshone Tribe, engaged faithfully in tribal affairs.

Sr. Teresa Frawley, Florence's sponsor when she entered the congregation, reflected: “Growing up in a large family and Tribe gave Florence a special understanding of the joys, struggles, and ups and downs of everyday life. She had a quiet wisdom and a simple but profound approach to solving life's problems and dealing with the ills of humanity.”

Sr. Florence was also a gifted craft designer. Those who attended her Silver Jubilee may remember the table centerpieces she made for the occasion — cloth moccasins filled with orange and red paper flowers fashioned to resemble Indian Paintbrush, Wyoming's state flower.

Sr. Florence was a loving daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, and community member. Her life of service will continue to inspire all who had the privilege of knowing her. Thank you, Sr. Florence, for your good way while you walked among us.

*All services will be held at Assisi House on Friday, June 12, 2026. A Christian Wake Service will be held at 9:30 A.M., with Mass of Christian Burial at 11 A.M. Internment of Ashes will be held privately at a later date.*

*[Watch the livestream of her services.](#)*

