

January 21, 2020

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Eleanor Louise Birdinground, went to the heavenly camp on December 28, 2019. She was born on April 14, 1946 a daughter of Andrew and Inez (Reed) BirdinGround. She was a member of the Whistling Water Clan, and a child of the Bad War Deed.



Eleanor was a devout Catholic and a woman of faith. She was a Eucharistic Minister, prayed the Rosary daily and became an Associate of the Sisters of St. Francis in 1997. She was taught by the sisters at St. Xavier School in St. Xavier, Montana and knew in elementary school that she was called to follow the ways of St. Francis. Her sister Georgia Bad Bear and aunts, Annette Couture, Myrtle Howe, Rose Ann Reed and Shirley Bad Bear are also Associates and we send our sympathy and prayers to them and to all of her relatives and friends.

When Eleanor was interviewed for St. Anthony Messenger by Associate Carol Ann Morrow she explained the beautiful blending she finds between her Native American prayer practices and her Catholic beliefs. Each morning she would “cedar” her house as a blessing and compares this to Catholic sacramentals and practices that she treasured.

A friendly, kind, and loving person, Eleanor adopted and helped raise many children. She made sure her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren were raised in the Catholic faith with a Catholic education. She participated in sweats and handgames and when younger she was a strong athlete and a gifted horseback rider.

Associate Judy Hillmans remembers her contagious giggle and smile and how she deeply cared about her family. She has fond memories of the immersion experience Eleanor helped lead at Oldenburg, sharing her customs, dance, prayer and food.

Eleanor was one of the first Board members of Prayer Lodge in Montana when it began in 1992. The Prayer Lodge became a second home to her and supported her desire to fast and pray. Her dedication to Prayer Lodge was included in her Associate commitment when she promised to give herself, “to the Lord, His church and the Prayer Lodge.”

Sincerely,

Carolyn Meyer