



Name: Sister Juana Lucero
Date of Birth: September 30, 1930
Place of Birth: Sacaton, Arizona
Parents: Victor and Edith (Pablo) Lucero, Sr.
Religious Profession: August 15, 1952
Date of Death: November 6, 2020
Age: 90
Years Professed: 68

Reflection by Sister Natalie Binversie, Community Director

Juanita Louise Lucero was born on September 30, 1930 in Sacaton, Arizona to Victor and Edith (Pablo) Lucero, Sr. She was baptized in St. Anne's Church in the Village of Santan, Arizona. Juanita, her two sisters and one brother were shown how to live a faithful Catholic life through the example of their parents. They were very active in the Church Community. Every Sunday when the family went to Mass, the parents always made it a point to thank the Priest, Father Matthias, for coming to the Mission Church to offer Mass. The beginning of Juanita's call to be a Sister began at the time of these Sunday morning rituals. Father Matthias would look at Juanita and ask her if she was going to be a Sister. Juanita did not know what a Sister was, but she always answered, "Yes, Father!" When Father Matthias was transferred to another Mission, Juanita's mother would remind her of Father's question.

Juanita's Dad worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, so the family moved frequently to accommodate her Father's work assignments. Juanita began her formal education at Santan Day School. After completing her elementary schooling, Juanita went to Albuquerque Indian School in New Mexico for her first year of High School. She attended one year at St. John's High School in Laveen, Arizona and graduated from North Phoenix High School June 2, 1950.

As often happened when Father Matthias was at the Mission, Father Hubert Mounier, the Mission Priest would visit the people. Father Hubert knew of Juanita's desire to be a Sister. After she graduated from High School Father Hubert asked Juanita's parents if she could stay with the Sisters at St. Peter's Mission in Bapchule for a few weeks to find out more of what it meant to be a Sister. This experience confirmed for Juanita that this is what God wanted her to do. She wrote the following letter to Mother Edna, dated June 13, 1950:

My dearest Ven. Mother Superior,

I am very much interested in becoming a Franciscan Sister. I am a High School graduate and am very interested in the teaching of others. I also think that I have all the requirements and health and faith for becoming a Sister.

I have had talks on this subject with the Sisters at St. Peter's at Bapchule and they have advised me to write and ask for an application for the August group, if it was possible to do so. I hope and know that you will not have much trouble with me, as I am willing to do anything to please Almighty God.

I will come to a close here and will be waiting for an answer from you soon. In the meanwhile, I'll be praying for the best. Good Bye! May God bless you, Mother, and I'll be writing.

*Sincerely yours,
Juanita Lucero*

My address:

*Miss Juanita Lucero
Box 455
Chandler, Arizona*

Juanita was accepted and entered Holy Family Convent on August 19, 1950. Her "Yes, Father!" became a reality. In a Jubilee reflection Juanita recalled her arrival. She was taken to St. Al's, the homeroom for the Postulants. She immediately felt right at home, because right above the door was the painting of the Child Jesus. Juanita knew she was where God wanted her to be, because as a child, she had a dream of the Child Jesus calling her. The image of Jesus she saw, was exactly like the one above the doorway. Juanita was warmly welcomed and accepted by her classmates. She left a small family in Santan to become a member of a large Franciscan Family! As a Postulant, Juanita began her studies at Holy Family College. At the time of her Reception, June 13, 1951, Juanita received the name, Sister Juana.

Sister Juana graduated from Holy Family College in 1958, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a Major in Education. Sister Juana felt privileged to have earned a Master of Arts Degree in Elementary Education in 1982 from Arizona State University. Sister Juana's education prepared her to teach and serve people in Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa and Arizona. Sister Juana saw the Child Jesus in all of God's people, especially in the little children she was privileged to teach. In her reflection she wrote, "The children I taught and the people I've met have touched my life with love and given me the gift of being able to accept and love people of all cultures."

Sister Juana's Jubilee reflection continues: "God's 'best' grace to me has been to work with 'my people', the Akimel O'Odham of the Gila River Indian Community. While missioned at St. Peter Mission, Bapchule, I was graced to teach and share daily, the Pima Culture and Language with hundreds of Indian children. As an Elder of the Tribe, I have done my duty in passing on our values, traditions, customs, legends, songs, dances, prayers and language to the next generation."

Sister Juana moved to St. Rita Health Center in 2011. Sister Juana appreciated being a resident in St. Rita's. She would tell family and friends that living in St. Rita's was like living in a Resort! Everyone waits on you! She enjoyed reading, playing cards, storytelling, good humor, knitting and spending extra time in prayer. She was a member of the Prayer Apostolate, praying faithfully for St. Peter's Mission in Bapchule. In trust we believe that she will continue to intercede for all the needs and intentions of the Mission. Sister Juana, thank you for being our Sister in this family of Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity! You have enriched the life of everyone who came into your life! On Friday afternoon, you heard the Child Jesus call you, to go home with Him. As you responded, since you were a child, you said, "Yes, Jesus!" This time, you knew He was inviting you to end your earthly journey.

Eternal life grant to Sister Juana, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.
May she rest in peace. AMEN!