Sister Rita Pearce, a Sister of Mercy of the Holy Cross, age 88, died August 4 at Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living in Merrill, WI.

Rita Jean was born on November 18, 1931, in Wausau, WI, daughter of John and Sophie (Sherfinski) Pearce. She entered Holy Cross Convent in Merrill, WI, on July 16, 1950, and professed her vows on August 20, 1952. She was in her 68th year of ministry at the time of her death.

Sister Rita also known as Sister Jacqueline in her early days, received her education at Our Lady of the Holy Cross High School in Merrill, WI; The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, MN; Edgecliff College, Cincinnati, OH; and Alverno College, Milwaukee, WI.

She ministered in religious education in Mercer, WI, and Luling, LA; elementary education in Deer Park, OH, Rhinelander and Antigo, WI. She also ministered as a supervisor at St. Jude Baby Village, New Orleans, LA. Sister was also assistant to the coordinator of the senior sisters at Holy Cross Convent, Merrill, WI.

Sister Rita is survived by her family of Holy Cross Sisters and associates, cousins and friends. Preceding her in death were her parents and brother, Father Valery Pearce.

Visitation will take place at Taylor-Stine Funeral Home, Merrill, WI, Friday, August 7 from 9 to 11 AM. Strict social distancing and mask requirements will be in place. Graveside service and burial will follow at 11:30 at St. Francis Cemetery, Merrill, WI. Taylor-Stine Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Merrill, WI, is assisting with arrangements. A special thank you to Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living for their care of Sister Rita.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be designated to the Huss Fund and sent to: Holy Cross Sisters, 1400 O’ Day Street, Merrill, WI, 54452.

REST IN PEACE!