

Peace & All Good

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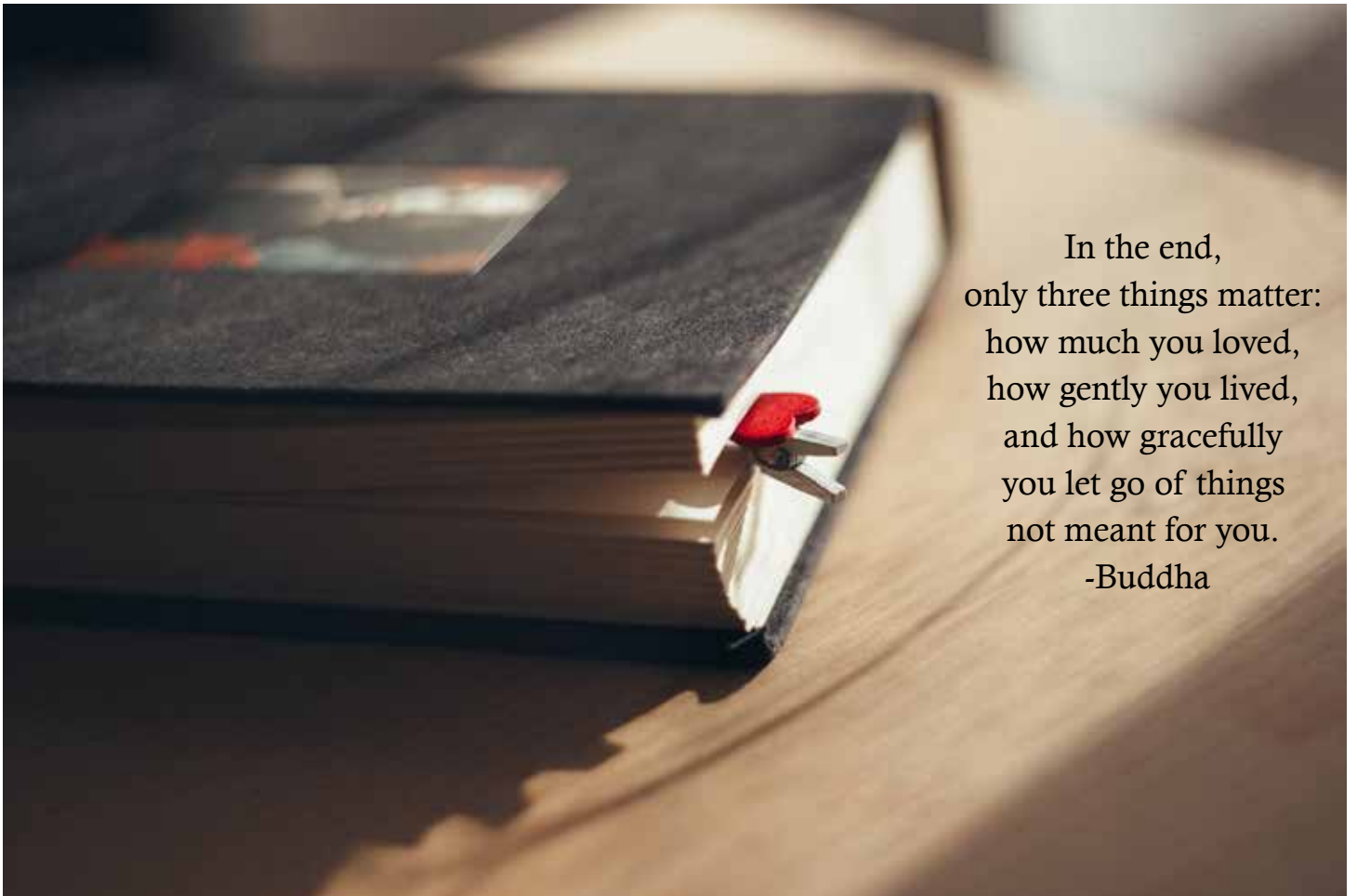


**Life Stories of the Sister of St. Joseph of the
Third Order of St. Francis and our Associates**

5/20/20

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In the end,
only three things matter:
how much you loved,
how gently you lived,
and how gracefully
you let go of things
not meant for you.
-Buddha

“Rivers do not drink their own water, trees do not eat their own fruit, the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is ... Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.” Pope Francis



Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, the calendar date is June 2, 2020. You will receive this Peace and All Good Life Story Issue in September. Besides the COVID-19 Pandemic, chaos rampages across our world because of systemic racism. “Essential” is the word of our days now...and I’m remembering a quote from *The Little Prince*; “What is essential is invisible to the eye.” That’s where faith, hope, charity, kindness, passion and compassion come to mind. As all of this is happening, The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis are experiencing “a liminal point.” As a congregation, we are positioned on the threshold of a doorway... a moment of significant change. Do you remember reading the article in the Annual Report about all of us moving to one central area... that being Marymount Congregational Home in Garfield Heights, Ohio? It has begun. By the end of summer 2020, as you are holding this publication, all Sisters will have moved from St. Joseph Motherhouse (established 1901), our founding holy ground in Stevens Point, Wisconsin to Marymount Congregational Home (established 1924) in Garfield Heights, Ohio.

We are like an arrow that has been released and is soaring in open air challenged to give ourselves completely in hope and trust to Divine Providence. We believe that Jesus stands firmly with us in the process of change. It’s like St. Francis said, “The journey is essential to the dream. The dream that began in 1901 is still coming to fruition in God’s perfect time. Uncertainties, questions, turbulence and the unknown all sharpen our faith and awareness of why we were born and for whom we live as the SSJ-TOSF congregation. For as the quote above says, “No matter how difficult it is ... Life is good when you are happy (and we really are); but much better when others are happy because of you.”

As you read these life stories, you’ll hear the echo of that quote rebounding time after time. You, dear friends, are all a part of our story, a part of the SSJ-TOSF family. Where one of us is, you are right there with us. Now, more than ever, we count on your prayerful and financial support. We are always mindful of being good stewards with your contributions. It is with joyful hearts that we think of you in prayer as fellow travelers.

In closing I’d like to share what a friend and colleague sent to me. She finds horoscopes entertaining and recently sent me one that she thought was noteworthy. It read: “It’s time to let go, sell, give or toss away. The quest for less brings gorgeous, peaceful moments. The best you own and experience will have the characteristics of being compact, quiet and inward-oriented.” That captured my liminal space very well.

I pray that God who gives all good things to those who believe, will keep you happy, healthy, safe and at peace. Now, more than ever, we join hands and hearts in praying for peace in our world. Amen!

Sister Sandy

Sister Sandy Lasecke, SSJ-TOSF
Mission Advancement Ministry

Sister Edmund Antoniewicz & Sister Irmina Bula



Sister Edmund and Sister Irmina

“The Children are our vocation and vacation”

Sisters Edmund Atoniewicz and Irmina Bula will forever be joined together, not just because they share a religious congregation but also because of a joint history-making ministry they shared for more than 30 years.

Sisters Edmund and Irmina, who had worked together in the health field for many years, created a foster home and care facility for the severely disabled children by opening their own home to them. The Sisters' Treatment Group Home operated for 35 years in Two Rivers, WI and served 84 children. It was a home that welcomed those whom Sister Edmund called God's "Little Angels." Their home was always a welcoming place for other Sisters, friends and family. The two Sisters were known as the greatest of hostesses. Their meals, hospitality and generosity were unbeatable. Guests always left with arms full of food to last a couple of days but memories to last forever. Before the Sisters started that joint venture, a lot had happened in their lives. Sister Edmund, the older of the two, had fewer years in religious life. She entered the congregation in 1957 at the age of 33.

Harriet Antoniewicz (Sr. Edmund) was born on Oct. 22, 1924 in Milwaukee, WI. She was the daughter of Bernard and Blanche Antoniewicz. She graduated from SS. Cyril & Methodius School in 1938 and then attended high school. Before deciding to answer God's call to religious life, Harriet worked in a variety of positions - in a laundry, as a cab company dispatcher, at Western Union and as a medical records librarian at Milwaukee County General Hospital. On Sundays, she would take her mother to vespers at St. Adalbert Parish in Milwaukee. This is where she met the Sisters of St Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. Harriet was invested on Aug. 10, 1957, receiving the name Sister Mary Edmund.



Sister Irmina (left) pictured with Mary Jo and Sister Edmund (right)

In 1961, Sister Edmund completed the Medical Records Technician certification program at Marymount Hospital in Garfield Heights, OH. She worked as medical records librarian at hospitals in River Falls (WI), Wakefield (MI) and Two Rivers (WI). She was one of the “pioneer” Sisters who opened St. Joseph Home and Hospital in River Falls. This was where she first met Sister Irmina. Sister Edmund served as admissions officer, switchboard relief, transcriptionist and other duties as needed and assigned. From 1964 to 1971, she brought her talents to Divine Infant Hospital in Wakefield. All this time, she said, she and Sister Irmina shared the dream of caring for children who were abused, abandoned and forgotten.

Meanwhile, Sister Irmina, who was born Gertrude Bula on Jan.12, 1926 in Antigo (WI) to Angelina and John Bula, entered the congregation on Aug. 15, 1940, professing final vows on Aug. 10, 1948. Sister earned college degrees from Alverno College in Milwaukee in 1955, and then Cardinal Stritch in 1957. Sister Irmina became a registered dietitian in 1960.

When Gertrude Bula made it known she was entering the convent, she said one of the farm hands on her family farm remarked: “She’s too good a cook to go to the convent.” She was honing her hostess skills early!

Sister Irmina’s ministry began as a kindergarten and first grade teacher in Milwaukee and Stevens Point, WI from 1944 to 1961, and then as a dietitian at facilities in Wisconsin and Michigan. For the commentary for her 60th Jubilee in 2001, she wrote: “Throughout my life, I kept in touch with the Lord by prayer and conversation with Him and I realized that ‘All things are possible with God’ and it was He who gave any success to the work of my hands. It was He who accomplished all I had done. When the Lord said, ‘I am with you always,’ He meant it and it was a powerful affirmation for me.”

Sister Irmina added: “When the Lord says, ‘Come follow me,’ it is a call to unity by public profession ... a call to a way of life centered in Jesus. It is a call to be lovers, counter-balancing injustices with generous hospitality and unselfish availability to one another and all people. By following His way, we will be used by God far beyond our own powers, affirming that our work is the Lord’s for the Lord has called us into it.”

Sister Edmund, for her part, addressed the role of prayer in her life in a similar reflection. She said, “Prayer for me is anything that raises my soul to God: an outburst of the heart, a glance upward to Heaven, a cry of gratitude and love expressed in moments of sadness or gladness. It

is communication with the Lord, who I know loves me.”

Their lives took a dramatic turn on Nov.16, 1972. With the approval of the Manitowoc County Department of Social Services, the two eager Sisters welcomed the first children into their home. For the first few years, they continued working full time, each taking a different shift so that someone would be with the children at all times. By 1977, it became apparent that ministry to the children sharing their home was full time. The children had developmental and physical problems that required constant care.

“From the very beginning, we decided to ‘sacrifice our steady footing’ and lay our lives on the line in dedication to foster children,” Sister Edmund said. “Our goal was to live out a life for the glory of God through service to His people, especially the poor - in this case, the mentally and/or physically handicapped children. ‘Before you, O Lord, our lives. What good a life if it is not given away?’”

In explaining how the group home got its start, Sister Irmina told Appleton Post-Crescent reporter Kathy Walsh Nufer in 1987: She (Sister Irmina) was working as a dietitian at Holy Family Hospital in Manitowoc and Sister Edmund was working as a medical records librarian when they saw an advertisement recruiting foster homes. They sought and received permission from their congregation’s leadership to try it. They were so successful that they expanded to group home status. Gradually, Manitowoc County asked them to take more multiple-handicapped children. The county contracted with the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis for their services.

Over the years, the Sisters’ group home garnered much positive press coverage. In a March 8, 1987 article, Nufer wrote:

“Visitors walk up the front sidewalk, past the shrine to the Blessed Virgin and step into an atmosphere of appealing order and cheerful warmth. A special family lives here.” At the time, seven youngsters whose multiple physical and mental disabilities call for round-the-clock care, were in residence. All suffered severe brain damage. Most have cerebral palsy and scoliosis. Three are tube-fed because they can’t swallow. All are epileptic. Some were born with multiple handicaps and rare diseases; others were tragic victims of an adult’s violent abuse. They are children nobody wants or whose parents aren’t able to care for them.

“He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.”

-Friedrich Nietzsche

Nufer describes how the Sisters have a kind word or a pat on the cheek for each resident “They know they are loved. The Sisters are tuned into every nuance of their behavior. They recognize when a child is happy or sad, comfortable or in pain, just by the tone of the noise they make or by the expression in their eyes. They made it their mission in life to love the ‘little angels’ God sends them.” This might mean a middle-of-the-night run to a hospital emergency room, or as Sister Irmina recounted, holding one 13-year-old girl in her arms to feed her. She even slept in the same bed with one girl so her seizure thrashings would wake her immediately and she could respond. The home had a therapy center in a nearby garage.

It also meant one of the children might accompany the Sisters on retreats or to workshops. Other Sisters who lived near the group home in this small community on Lake Michigan’s shore would sometimes take turns caring for the residents to give the full-time caregivers some respite.

During their 35 years as foster parents, they said they always maintained that the children “are their vocation and their vacation.” The Sisters said that their energy comes from ‘The Lord’s providential presence; the gift of Franciscan loving, caring and joyful Sisters helping out, and our love for the Lord’s very special children.”

For her 75th Jubilee in 2016, Sister Irmina reflected on her work with the children. She said, “For more than 35 years, I have ministered to children with severe disabilities; some had physical and mental impairments that limited walking, speaking, seeing and other life activities. Jesus modeled compassion and love for those with disabilities during His lifetime. He always took time to cure the blind, deaf, mute, lame, crippled and those with skin problems.

Jesus has been my guide as I cared for and loved each of my little ones who came to me as infants, toddlers and small children. Through the care and love given these little ones, they were comforted and felt the love given them. When it came time for them to leave because of age or death, I grieved because I loved them dearly and deeply. They were my children in almost every sense of the word.”

Sister Irmina said that one of the children, Mary Jo, touched her life profoundly. “She came to me when she was five days old and had a life expectancy of five years, but she lived to be 38 years old. She will always have a place in my heart.” Mary Jo is buried as a family member in the cemetery at St. Joseph Motherhouse in Stevens Point, WI.

“This ministry has helped me to accept my own limitations and I thank God for giving me the experience of these precious little ones,” said Sister Edmund.

The Sisters’ good work received recognition from the press and through awards. On Dec. 17, 2003, they were recognized as a Wisconsin Treasure. The Sisters and their ministry were featured in a broadcast of DW Radio and nominated by Stephanie Klett, the host of Discover Wisconsin Television and Radio. The criterion for being selected was that the person, group or organization epitomizes Wisconsin at its best.

In 2008, the two Sisters were honored at the annual conference of the Franciscan Federation with a Peacemaker Award during an event in Denver, CO. This is given to those whose life and actions serve as a model for others and inspire a deeper sense of Franciscan evangelical life.

Sisters Edmund and Irmina lived in a retirement home in Wisconsin Rapids, WI. Together they truly embodied the Franciscan example of evangelical life as St. Francis imagined it. Sister Irmina lives without Sister Edmund now as Sister Edmund went to her dear Jesus on June 25, 2019. As Sister enjoys the Face of God and the Communion of Saints, she is also diligently preparing a place for her dear friend to join her in Heaven one day.



“They know they are loved”

Sister Florence Pasowicz (Sister Mary Mark)



*Sr. Florence celebrates
50 years in Religious Life*

“It is not happy people who are grateful. It is grateful people who are happy.”

That was the quote chosen by Sister Florence Pasowicz for her 60th Jubilee celebration in 2014. It helps sum up her cheerful disposition, her winning smile and has seen her through the many, many ups and downs of her life.

It is a life that began on March 20, 1933 in Pulaski, WI. Florence is one of 13 children born to Walter and Mary Pasowicz. She attended Assumption BVM Parish and School in Pulaski, where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. Life was not always easy for the family, who farmed in Pulaski. Mary Pasowicz, her mom, suffered from a muscle disorder so Florence quit school after eighth grade to help care for her. “I didn’t particularly like school anyway,” Florence admitted, “and I was happy to help out at home.” After her mother died, she went to live with one of her sisters, who was pregnant at the time and helped her until the baby came. After that, Florence moved to an apartment in town near the Pulaski shoe factory where she worked.

At one point, Florence visited her aunt, Sister Perpetua - a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis - “and she told me I belonged in the convent,” Florence said. She had another aunt - Sister Alexiana - who also was in the SSJ-TOSF congregation. Florence entered the Sisters’ congregation in 1951. She completed high school and entered the novitiate in 1954, receiving the name Sister Mary Mark.

Sister Mark began teaching in 1955 at St. Peter School in Stevens Point, WI. This was the same school that was the birthplace of the congregation. She spent six years there before moving to St. Matthew School in Wausau, WI. All the



Sr. Florence’s Keenager years

while as she was teaching she was also taking classes and working toward her bachelor's degree in education through St. Norbert College in De Pere, WI. She graduated in 1968. That was during the time she was assigned to Immaculate Conception School (1967-1971) in Iron Mountain, MI. Sister Mark then returned to Stevens Point in 1971 to teach at St. Joseph School. In those days one was reassigned every three to four years.

Though teaching wasn't always easy for Sister Mark, people who knew her during this time appreciated her quiet smile, her calm demeanor and her uncanny ability to connect with people easily and make friends. Sister recalled being at St. Matthew School in Wausau and being asked to move suddenly to Iron Mountain when another sister was unable to complete her teaching assignment. It was the first time she was asked to teach double grades and



Sister Florence's first assignment in 1958 at St. Peter's School, Stevens Point, WI

though it was difficult, she managed to teach her third and fifth graders. Sister Mark left Iron Mountain when parishes were combined and others closed.

One memorable experience that she carries with her, she said, was during Holy Week in Iron Mountain when they were looking for the pastor to begin Mass. They discovered he had died from a heart attack. "That is one of those things I will never forget," she said with a shake of her head.

In 1978, Sister Florence "turned the page" in her ministry. (After Vatican II, many Sisters chose to go back to their baptismal name. So from here on, we shall refer to Sister Mark as Sister Florence.) She moved her quiet caring ways from the classroom to parish ministry. The people in Stanley, WI, were the beneficiaries of her spiritual and physical care from 1978 through 1985.

"Rev. Leonard Kaiser, the pastor in Stanley, affirmed me along with every person working in the parish ministry,

blessing our endeavors with a special ceremony of dedication. This new ministry introduced me to the adult parishioners and their families, and extended my work to ecumenical outreach in the area which really broadened my perspective," she said in a Jubilee reflection. "Later, this experience served as the foundation for my work as director of St. John's Keenagers, a live-in home for independent elderly men and women. Here my gifts of managing the home were developed and appreciated."

The Keenagers home was located in the former convent of St. John Parish in Menasha, WI. According to the Sisters who knew her at this time, the Keenager ministry was really where Sister Florence was in her element. She worked diligently and tirelessly with and among the people. Sister Florence also worked closely with Father Wilbert Staudenmaier, whom she met while working in pastoral ministry in Stanley, WI. In addition to operating the nonprofit facility, Sister would take produce that Fr. Staudenmaier grew or acquired through other means and would can or freeze it. Some of her handiwork was given to area food pantries to help those in need. Sister Florence also helped out with meal preparation at the home and won rave reviews for her meals. Sister wisely applied her expertise to help the nonprofit turn a profit. That made her deeply happy.

Sister Florence served in Menasha as administrator and director from 1985 until illness struck in 2003. It was at this time that she faced serious brain surgery and had to return to the Motherhouse in Stevens Point to recover at their Maria Center, the care facility for the SSJ-TOSF congregation. "My gratitude overflows for those Sisters who helped me during this long ordeal," she wrote in 2014, "especially Sister Linda Szocik who attended to me while hospitalized and Sister Augusta Majewski, who taught me to speak and read again. I am so grateful to God that, 11 years later in 2014, I was able to celebrate my 60th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis."

"In all my years in religious life, I have always looked forward to and enjoyed the gatherings of our Sisters at homecomings, general meetings, chapters, jubilees and so many other events," she said. "The liturgies are so inspiring, as are our daily gatherings for community prayer in our beautiful chapel, right within our home. Today, I began my day by rising early, enjoying a cup of coffee and then praying for my family and for all those whose lives have touched mine over the years."

In 2018, reflecting on her lifetime of experiences, Sister Florence said, "I've had many experiences" - lots of

heartaches and multiple successes, all of which helped Sister amass lifelong friends from everywhere she lived. Her first plane ride, she said, came when one of her former students flew her from Stevens Point to Iron Mountain for a celebration honoring her.

During her retirement days at St. Joseph Motherhouse, Sister Florence visited the Sisters in Maria Center (the nursing facility) - taking them for walks or wheelchair rides. "Having been in that situation myself, I know how long and lonely the days of infirmity can be," she said. The Center closed in 2017.

She summed up her life with the words: "In sickness and in health, I praise God who has been so very good to me!"

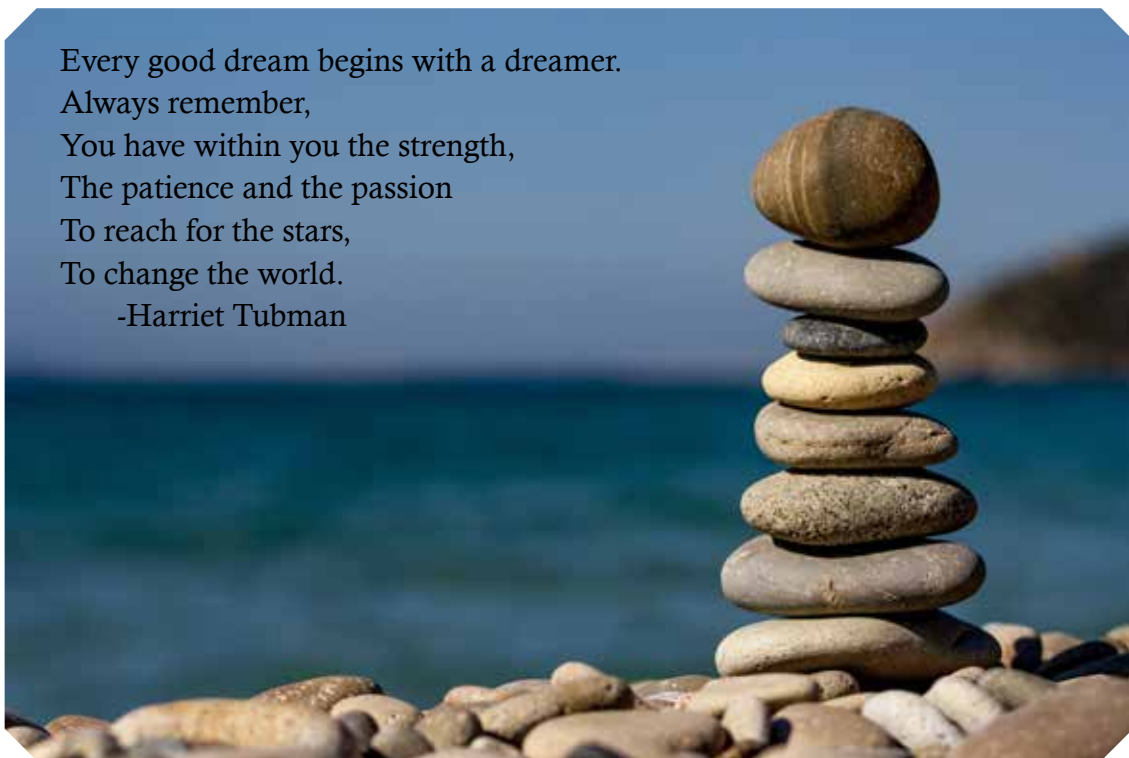


*Sr. Florence on a NU Step at Marymount Place
in the Activity Room*



*Sister Florence in St. Joseph Motherhouse Chapel,
Stevens Point, Wisconsin*

Every good dream begins with a dreamer.
Always remember,
You have within you the strength,
The patience and the passion
To reach for the stars,
To change the world.
-Harriet Tubman



Sister Francis Therese Woznicki



In the 80's



1954

Like St. Francis, our one and only Sister Francis Therese heard God speak in the depths of her soul and made it clear to her that she must live the life of the Gospel.

As she herself reflected on the occasion of her diamond Jubilee in 2012, “My vocation was sparked when I encountered a compelling hunger for love in a group of at-risk teenagers at Parmadale.” She felt that only God’s love could fill their needy hearts but in the depths of her being she desired to say yes to the call of unconditional love. She knew as clearly as St. Francis did in the Porziuncola over 812 years ago that: “this is what I seek, this is what I desire with all my heart.”

Mary Jane Woznicki was born in Cleveland, OH on August 21, 1932 to Polish immigrants, Tom and Mary Woznicki. She grew up with three brothers – Thomas, Edmund and Ted – and attended St. John Cantius School in Cleveland. After graduating from eighth grade, Mary Jane completed her high school studies at Marymount in Garfield Heights, OH. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis congregation on August 22, 1951. Mary Jane was invested on August 10, 1952 as Sister Francis Therese. Her first profession of vows came two years later in 1954, with final vows being professed on August 10, 1959.

It is noteworthy that after the Saturday Mass at Blessed Trinity this past August 10th, Sister was joyously signing letters to lawmakers concerning the nation’s gun violence dilemma and she shared how “ecstatic” (her word) she was to be celebrating the 67th anniversary of her investing and to be taking action on an issue that so concerned her and many others. She died the next day, on August 11th, 2019.

The curriculum vitae of Sister Francis Therese reads more like that of ten people than a single soul whose life’s work touched the lives of so many varied people and places. Sister studied at St. John College in Cleveland and graduated from Ursuline College in June of 1956. Her ministries through the years were richly varied.

From 1956-1959 Sister was a teacher of Science, English and Home Ec. at Marymount High School. After professing her final vows she and two other of our Sisters were sent to Rome from 1959-1962. They studied at Regina Mundi, the first Pontifical Institute of Theology for Women in the world. Sister was privileged to be present at the solemn opening of Vatican Council II, an international event that marked a significant historical moment in our Church and in the soul of Sister Francis Therese.

Where is one sent after three years of such studies in Rome? Sister was named Directress of Postulants, of



Listening to a question

course, from 1962-1964 in Garfield Heights, Ohio and from there to Directress of Scholastic Novices from 1964-1967 at Immaculata College in Bartlett, IL.

Sister's ministries were as diverse as the flowers she so loved to grow wherever she lived. She attended to them with the same compassionate discernment and intensity that she relied upon in all areas of her life.

Sister Francis Therese served as a First Councilor of the Congregation from 1968-1972 in South Bend, Indiana. After that she was elected Provincial Director of Marymount Province from 1972-1975.

As in any life, there are those pivotal moments of significance that are surely Spirit-led. This was true for religious congregations and in particular Franciscan Third Order Congregations. In 1968, twelve women's congregations formed the beginning of what would become the Franciscan Federation. Sr. Francis Therese was appointed to a committee to prepare a spiritual

document to serve as a resource for all the Franciscan congregations to use in their renewal efforts. Sister Francis Therese was the principal writer of: *Go To My Brethren*, A Spiritual Document for Apostolic Congregations of Franciscan Women. This proved to be seminal in the development of The Third Order Rule which was being prepared and soon approved in Rome by Pope John Paul II in 1982.

Sister's retreat work blossomed and her ministries led her to Koinonia Home, Tabor Consultation Center, the then Ascension Parish (now Blessed Trinity) and the Franciscan Center at Marymount which she founded and whose direction she shared with Sr. Jean Ehasz.

A 2009 article gives more insight into Sister's philosophy about spiritual direction: she explains that in her ministry of spiritual direction, she uses the gentle practice of "bio-spiritual focusing when words are not enough." Focusing is a body-centered experience. When using bio-spiritual focusing, the director does not choose what is important, but rather allows the individual to select the path to his or her interior. It is an incarnational way of experiencing God. This approach recognizes that the Spirit of God is at work in the body, spirit and mind of a person.

Many of us remember our dearly beloved friend as listener, spiritual companion and animator of souls. Anyone who has been to the holy ground of her humble office at the Franciscan Center remembers the rocking chair of love that faced her own chair where God's love shown in her countenance. We know that she was able to be attentive to our souls because of her own unfailing attentiveness to the voice of God within her. Sister Jane Blabolil shares: "I was privileged to see a paper upon which Sister Francis Therese



Gathering with friends for prayer and conversation



Celebrating Moments with Friends

typed 'My Daily Practices of Prayer'...

- Morning or pre-dawn:
- On Waking: Offering to the Sacred Heart and the Angelus both of which are a renewal of my Consecration
- Sung prayer with Francis. Franciscan office. Memorial funeral cards (which she saved and prayed with on the anniversary of that soul's passing),
- The day's Missalette readings,
- The Prayer of Abandonment of DeFoucauld and her own personal renewal of Vows.

And that was just the morning! In bold letters across the middle of that page of Daily Practices she typed: A SIGNIFICANT PERIOD OF CONTEMPLATIVE/CENTERING PRAYER OF PRESENCE IN GOD'S LOVING PRESENCE.

Sister Francis Therese was a living prayer! She would be the first to pipe up and say, "I am not a Saint." Anyone who ever had to wait for Sister Francis Therese because she had just one more person that she had to see... or one more note that needed to be written... or one more call to be made... or one more change in the time she would ask you to meet her, knows that there were those moments when all we could do was to practice the holy art of patient waiting. However... there is hope for all of us, as Sister was a Franciscan through every fiber of her being and deeply believed in the on-going conversion that marks our unique Franciscan Charism.

August 21, 2019 would have been the 87th earthly birthday of Sister Francis Therese. We celebrated that day as well as the day she entered into eternal life, no less on

the Feast of St. Clare, at peace in her home, coffee cup on one side, prayer book on the other... soon to be surrounded by many of the Sisters who love her and were her friends.

All who knew Sister Francis Therese surely have a eulogy in their own heart to honor her memory. Delivering the eulogy, Sister Jane said: "I believe she would encourage us to gaze into faces of our brothers and sisters here gathered and see the child of God that each one of us is."

Sister Francis Therese's own words, written at the time of her 60th Jubilee, were a Fitting Response that led all into the celebration of her life. These are her words to us today as well:

Francis urges... 'Let the sisters and brothers always be mindful that they should desire one thing alone, namely, the Spirit of God at work within them.' "As I continue trying to do this day in and day out, I fall in love over and over again."

Sister Jane ended her reflection by quoting an excerpt from *Go To My Brethren*:

"With Francis, I want to praise and love and worship YOU, O God, urging others to do the same and making of them, brothers and sisters, as I go on my way.

When I have tried to sell all and follow you, give me the grace of true discipleship with the peace and joy of the Beatitudes, the kind of love touched happiness that knows no abating – only overflow.

And before my eyes close in death, let me know that I have traced the loveliness of Your face in the lineaments of those I have tried to love and serve and sanctify in Your Truth."



A tearful smile

“The more you praise and celebrate your
life, the more there is in life to celebrate.”
-Oprah Winfrey



Jude (Brilowski) Jones

(A Temporary Vocation Testimonial)



Enjoying a Moment

“The journey is essential to the dream.”

-St. Francis of Assisi



Jude in habit 1965, Known then as Sister Kim

If you drive a short distance east on Highway 10 from Stevens Point, WI, there is a Bank on the southwest corner of Highway 10 and Brilowski Road. It is an imposing, beautiful structure in the midst of a thriving commercial intersection and across the highway from Fleet Farm. In 1953 it wasn't a big Bank that occupied that lot, but rather a small, cozy rural schoolhouse where I attended first grade, a short distance from the farm where I grew up. My memories of that year are pleasant. The room was filled with kids from grade one through grade eight, taught by our wonderful teacher, Mrs. Worzella. We learned together and played together like a little family ages 7-14... all getting along very well. During the Christmas holiday, we put on a splendid Christmas pageant about the very first Christmas and the birth of Baby Jesus. In the spring we wandered over to the field occupied most recently by Applebee's to play softball. Of course, there were no businesses established in the area yet. We lived out in the country and the school was surrounded by farms, farmland and woods. We were country kids having the time of our lives.

My parents were parishioners of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church and it was decided that in second grade I would attend the parish school. Mr. Shemanski picked me up in his gigantic yellow school bus each day along with all



Out and about enjoying the labor of others

the other kids who lived in the country who also attended St. Stan's. I had many cousins who lived in town who also went to St. Stan's and felt proud that I, too, would now be going to a Catholic School with them. And so my relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis had begun. My second grade teacher was Sister Catherine, who was young and beautiful and I would have done anything for her. My third grade teacher was Sister Rosemary, who was older and very gentle and kind. In fourth grade, I had a lay teacher, Mrs. Morrill, who I liked a lot and I thought it was very cool that she lived just down the street from my aunt and uncle. Sister Blandine was my fifth grade teacher, a good teacher but strict and firm. Sister Michaeline was a sweet and wonderful woman who taught us in sixth grade. Sister Virgilia impressed me with her stunning artistic talents all through my year as a seventh grader. Finally, in eighth grade I was in saintly, tiny Sister Egidia's class. It's the year that I remember the best with friendships formed and strengthened, some of which are strong, true and treasured to this very day. Each time we have a class reunion, someone brings our eighth grade graduation class photo and we never tire of reminiscing about the last, perfect year in grade school. Of course, our First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation all stand out as milestones in our grade school experience. The Sisters prepared us well, teaching us about the splendor of the Eucharist and our lifelong relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Bless my dear parents for sacrificing so much to send me to Maria High School, an all girl Catholic School. I know that the tuition was a hardship for them, but I never heard them complain about it. An entirely different school experience awaited us at Maria. Moving to different rooms between classes, uniforms, saddle shoes, lockers, gym

class, a school full of girls only, a yearly retreat, a yearly school play, semester exams, religion classes taught by Father Henry Lee, that perfect little chapel, Mass in the gym attended by the entire student body, many more new friends, clubs, music and song, four years of unbelievable experiences and the wonderful Sisters who taught us a million different things... who taught character education by their actions, who opened our minds to new ways of thinking, who organized an amazing array of activities for us to participate in, and who were friends and mentors, with the gifted Sister Mary Adalbert at the helm as principal. It was during those high school days that I decided that I, too, wanted to enter the convent and have a "Sister Mary" name of some sort, and to be a disciple of Christ with a vocation in the community of Sisters who had nourished my soul and given me this outstanding education. I wanted to live a life of service to others as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

And so, in September of 1965, I entered the convent... the Motherhouse in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. I remained in the convent for four years. The first year I was a postulant at Immaculata Convent and College in Bartlett, Illinois. Year two I became a novice, Sister Mary Kim, a name I loved, and it was the year I spent in South Bend, Indiana. Year three, the second year of my novitiate, was again spent at Immaculata, and year four, the first year of temporary vows, I was sent to St. Bridget's Catholic School in River Falls, Wisconsin to teach second grade. Those were wonderful kids and we had a great year together but thank God they didn't know that I had never taught before or hadn't yet had any training as a teacher. The Holy Spirit had to have been with me and those kids in that classroom. It was at the end of that school year that I left the convent,



At the Garden Plants Dome in Milwaukee, WI

deciding, after all, that this wasn't the way I wanted to spend the rest of my life. But I wouldn't trade those four years for anything. I would do it all over again in a flash. Again, some of the women I spent time with during those four years became lifelong friends who I love dearly. The life skills I learned and the experiences I had are priceless and have served me well. The confidence, knowledge, holiness, empathy and caring that I gained are treasures that can never be taken away.

The town of River Falls wrapped itself around my heart and had an enormous impact on my life. I loved that place. After leaving the convent, I returned home to Stevens Point and attended the University of Wisconsin for a year. But River Falls pulled at my heart. I moved back in 1970 and while attending the University of Wisconsin there I met my future husband, Tom, just after he came home, having been in the army for three years. It was love at first sight! We always say that God was saving us for each other. I was in the convent while he was in the army. We both had enjoyed extraordinary experiences as we trekked from place to place before we met, and now it was time for us to



Jude and Tom enjoying a hug in front of their 1931 Ford Model A



At the Botanical Gardens in Montreal

be together. Six months after meeting in the student center at the university, we were married. We have celebrated our 49th wedding anniversary this past June 19, 2020 and are blissfully happy.

So, I can truly say that the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis have had an enormous impact on my life and continue to do so to this day. Since that first day in Sister Catherine's second grade classroom until now as I'm writing this story, I have loved the Congregation of Sisters who have and continue to impact my life. I am in contact with former Sisters and current Sisters. Their beautiful hearts and loving friendships will be a part of me always. I will be forever most grateful.

“Let the Lord catch you. Let yourself be caught by Him and then let Him dispose of you utterly. Let God use you without consulting you.”

- St. Teresa of Calcutta



“Be the reason someone believes in the goodness of people.”

- Karen Salmansohn

Denise Ranger

(A Temporary Vocation Testimonial)



Attending an Event



Denise in full habit 1960, known then as Sister Irene

My family lived on the West side of Chicago; my sisters, Barbara and Elaine and I attended St. Mel's grade school and Providence High School. We lived in a red brick, two story, two family home that Grandma and Grandpa owned.

Mr. and Mrs. Flynn lived upstairs with seven children. Grandma and Grandpa lived across the street. We relocated to Bellwood in 1956; my brother Denny was born in May of that year. I never took college prep classes; I always dreamed of getting married and having a family. We attended St. Simeon's Catholic Church in Bellwood.

After graduation from high school I worked as a statistical typist at Automatic Electric in Northlake for two years. When I was 19, I believed God was calling me to serve him. On August 10, 1959, four days before turning twenty, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph at Lourdes High School in Chicago. I volunteered to work in the kitchen. The congregation had other plans; they had me attend college. It wasn't easy, especially since I had been out of school for two years. I was blessed with wonderful teachers at Immaculata College. I'm grateful to Sisters Madeline, Fidelia and Judith.

A year later, again on August 10th, we novices were sent to the Motherhouse in South Bend, Indiana. Sister Julianna was our spiritual and formational guide. It was especially interesting for me because as an "older" novice with a driver's license I often had to switch the white novice veil to a black one in order to be out in public. Sister Julianna and I would recite the Franciscan Beads in a low voice as we walked from store to store.

On August 10, 1961, our entire group made our first profession vowing poverty, chastity and obedience for one year. We renewed those vows every year anticipating final profession on August 10, 1966.

After our first profession we all returned to our own provinces. My group was supervised by Sister Virginella (Josephine Marie). I was 22; Sister Virginella recognized I had a lisp. As a speech therapist she worked with me to correct this. Our group became the first to receive a second year of college before being assigned to teach. The



*Denise and Family, 1985.
Left to Right, Joe, Denise, John, Jim*

first half of the year we were at Immaculata College. The second semester Sister Madeleine became an instructor at St. Joseph's of Rensselaer, Indiana's campus in Calumet City, Indiana. I drove the four of us (Sisters Madeline, Alexanne, Judy and me, Sister Irene) to classes.

In 1963 I was assigned to teach 5th grade at St. Mary of Perpetual Help School in Chicago's Bridgeport neighborhood. The minute I walked into that classroom I was home. I fell in love with teaching. Again, Sisters Fidelia and Madeline were instrumental in preparing me for this task.

In 1964 my assignment was changed to teach in the suburb of Streamwood which I did for two years. My group would make their final profession on August 10, 1966. The anticipation of taking the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience for life impacted me. I knew I couldn't promise those vows for life. In 1965 a priest from my St. Mel's Grade School, Father Christe Malone, came to Streamwood to counsel me. I knew I wanted to be married and have a family.

There is no doubt that the Sisters of St. Joseph had a tremendous effect on my life. Specifically: Sister Diane, our Postulant Mistress, guided me with kindness and gentleness. Sister Noella, respected for her tedious job in laundry service. Sister Julianna, our Novitiate Mistress, helped me become more confident and enabled me to grow in being more responsible. Mother Mary Benjamin inspired me to holiness. It was easy to respect and admire her. Sister Virginella's (Sister Josephine Marie's) yearlong efforts working with me to correct a lisp which resulted in being able to successfully teach youngsters. Sisters Madeleine and Fidelia were so ahead of their time. I was well prepared to step into the classroom. I admired their talents and respected the guidance they gave me. Sister

Roselle, our choir instructor, had such an easy going personality. She tolerated those of us who couldn't sing without making us feel badly. Sister Phyllis, a member of my group, inspired me by her humility, conscientiousness and appreciation for her vocation. Sister Alexanne, a member of my group, utilized her God-given brilliance and talents for His glory. She was a top student, a terrific artist, a wonderful singer...everything came easy to her. Sister Judy, a member of my group, continues to be a dear friend. Whatever she did was done well and without any fanfare. She taught me to appreciate and love reading.

I value the seven years I was a Sister of St. Joseph, TOSF. I sincerely believe God chose me to have a temporary vocation. When I got home I continued my education and in May, 1967 graduated with my bachelor's degree in elementary education from St. Joseph's Rensselaer, Indiana.

In June, 1967 I met John Ranger and after a few dates I knew I met the man I was going to marry. At the end of August John proposed and in June of 1968 we were married.

Our son Jim was born in April of 1969 2nd our son Joe was born in October of 1970.

We relocated to Peru, Illinois and I was a stay at home Mom until the boys were in grade school. In 1977 I was a part time teacher for seven years at St. Joseph's grade school. In 1985 I was hired to work as an educational consultant for the LaSalle County Regional Office of Education in Ottawa. I chose to commute to Joliet to earn my Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Illinois State University which I accomplished in June of 1988.



*Denise and John celebrate 50
incredible years and also have the
privilege of being servers at their
anniversary Mass*

Both of our boys graduated from college. Our son Joe had a normal childhood but at the age of 23 he was diagnosed with Bipolar – a serious and persistent mental illness.

After teaching and coaching for six years John went into Administration. He ended his career at Roosevelt Grade School, Peru, IL after being there 21 years as a preK-5 principal. He chose to retire in June, 1994 when Illinois gave him the incentive of adding five years to his age and five years to his experience. John allowed me to continue with my job. He held various positions, one being the administrator at LaSalle Catholic for three years. I retired on April 1, 2002.

John and I and our son Joe moved to Crossville, Tennessee mid-April of 2002. In October Joe relocated to Knoxville to live independently under the care of the Helen Ross McNabb Center. He had a counselor visit him weekly. John and I were active members of NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness and taught “With Hope in Mind” classes to caregivers of persons with serious and persistent mental illness. We also served as officers in our local affiliate. A highlight of our classes was Joe’s visit where the attendees asked him questions. We are sorry to say we lost our dear son Joe to suicide on July 17, 2018.



Just a sampling of Denise’s designer masks for COVID-19



Left to Right, John, son Joe, Denise

Today Jim, Kandice, 5 year old Ethan Joseph and 2 year old Zelma Grace live in Arvada, Colorado. We feel so blessed to have these darling grandchildren.

We are active members of St. Francis of Assisi Church. We are altar servers together. John is also a lector and I am also a Eucharistic Minister. John was just installed as a 4th degree Knight of Columbus. John loves to golf, exercises regularly at the Wellness Center; I golf a little and I’m an avid seamstress and love to bake. During the COVID-19 isolation I was able to sew 300 masks for Protecting the Plateau and 310 masks for our church office.

We continue to appreciate our love for each other and feel very blessed to be married to each other. On June 8, 2018 we celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary.

May there be a gentle calm residing within you today. Believe that you are planted where you can grow best. Be happy and secure in your inherent gifts and potential. Trust all with fruition in God’s time.



“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep
your balance you must keep moving.”
-Albert Einstein

Sister Jane Blabolil



*President of SSJ-TOSF
Central Board 2008-2013*

*“What is essential is
invisible to the eye.*

-Little Prince

Playing her harmonious flute

Music, playing the flute in particular, has been a lifelong spiritual practice that Jane Blabolil felt as a deep calling long before she recognized the presence of God in her life.

Music, playing the flute in particular, has been a lifelong spiritual practice that Jane Blabolil felt as a deep calling long before she recognized the presence of God in her life.

Sister Jane Blabolil, SSJ-TOSF, was not raised Catholic. In fact, she was not raised with any traditional religious upbringing. In 1914, as the story goes, when it came time for her mother to be baptized, her grandmother did not have the required five dollars to pay to the church. As a result, the sacrament did not take place, setting the tone for a distance between her family and the church that would last throughout her childhood and into her adult life. She recalls occasionally visiting churches with neighborhood friends as a young girl. “You were either a Czech Catholic or you were a free thinker. My family were free thinkers,” Sr. Jane remembers.

Growing up in Old Brooklyn, Ohio, she found a guiding force in her deep passion for music. From a young age,



she dreamt of becoming a flautist. Her uncle played in the Cleveland Orchestra, and Jane earned a music scholarship to Baldwin Wallace University. But when she shared her



In Concert

dreams of playing the flute in the Cleveland Orchestra with her flute teacher (also a member of the Cleveland Orchestra) he soundly discouraged her, saying: “There are few flute positions in any orchestra of any size in the U.S., and women are seldom chosen.” At the time, there were only two women in the Cleveland orchestra: a harpist and a second violinist. Jane was encouraged to be a music teacher instead, a career she had no interest in pursuing. And it was all or nothing for young Jane, so she stored her flute in a closet and did her best to close the door on her musical dreams.

Jane quickly changed course and went on to complete her undergraduate degree, becoming an English teacher at Euclid High School. Always a planner, she set and accomplished many goals over the next 10 years, including financial independence and home ownership. But despite her professional and personal fulfillment, she felt a deep longing and curiosity about faith and social justice, reading voraciously to fill the void, including the works of Thomas Merton and Sheila Cassidy’s *Audacity to Believe*.

Always curious about the Catholic Church, she was surprised and attracted by the social justice committee and the exceptional music group at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in

Willowick, Ohio. Little by little she entered more fully into the life of the church and attended a Women’s Renewal that awakened her heart to consider a deeper commitment. She was invited by the church organist to take her flute out of retirement and join the choir. It impressed Jane that even though she was not yet a member she was welcomed to be one of the community. Jane felt herself come alive again. Her relationship with the Sisters and the Church developed and deepened over time. She remembers looking at herself in the mirror one day and saying “You’re going to become a Sister,” followed immediately by the thought, “You’re nuts!”

At the age of 35, the woman who would become Sr. Jane Blabolil, SSJ-TOSF, made arrangements to sell her home, walking away from the career and life she knew and devoting herself to God and God’s people.

“I wanted to make a lifetime commitment,” Sr. Jane said. “Many young people today will make a choice, but not a commitment. One of the most significant things about a lifetime commitment to me was saying: ‘I will be there. You can count on me, whether I feel like it or not. You can trust that I will be present.’”

Prior to entering the novitiate, Jane traveled to El Salvador to visit a friend on the Cleveland Diocesan Mission team and fell in love with the people. As part of



Sister Jane with a Peruvian woman from the mountains who spoke Quechua



Sister Jane and a friend volunteer at an all-day clinic for Hispanic women while health concerns are addressed. Sr. Jane serves as a bi-lingual interpreter for those who speak only Spanish.

her religious training, she would later spend three months in Peru, before coming back to the United States to profess her vows. She soon felt pulled to resume her work in Peru — work that would last twenty years, immersing her in a life of service, culture and community. The Sisters shared in the struggles of the people and along with them lived through many years of terrorism.

She remained in Peru until her aging mother's health care needs called her home in 2006. Two years later, as someone who was not raised Catholic and who came to her vocation later in life, Sr. Jane was surprised to be elected as President of her community, the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. She held the position for five years before transitioning to her current ministry. "I thank God for my vocation, a vocation which has deepened with the years. I'm still amazed at the places I've been and the people with whom I have been blessed to work."

Through the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland's Generative Spirit Initiative, Sister Jane Blabolil and nine other Cleveland-area Catholic Sisters participated in a year-long Ministry Leadership Program which paired a young adult working in a Catholic school with a religious Sister to provide an opportunity for a positive intergenerational formation experience around faith, spirituality and the call to serve.

Each young adult is employed at a school that was established by and/or has a strong connection to a women's religious congregation. One hope is that this will enable a better understanding of the congregation's mission and its impact on the school community.

Sister Jane was paired with Aaron Colton, Theology Teacher at Trinity High School. One of the requirements for the young adult was to create a Mission Integration Project with the support of the Sister companion that brings to life the mission of the school and/or the charism of the Sisters.

Both young adults and Sisters benefited from their sharing and mutual encouragement of one another.

These days, you might find Sr. Jane in any number of Cleveland Clinic locations across Northeast Ohio as a Spanish interpreter, a culmination of her life's work that she never could have imagined during her long-ago "goal-setting" days. And music continues to be her first love, a spiritual offering that she shares with a local congregation each week.

Encouraging the next generation of social justice allies and spiritual seekers, Sr. Jane says, "Each generation is called to its own contribution. I believe strongly that the youth of today will respond and do what is theirs to do."

--Interviewed and Written by Pamela Turos



Sr. Jane and Aaron Colton, Teacher of Theology

"Grace will always take us deeper than we thought we could go, keep us longer than we thought we could stay and provide us more than we could ever expect."

- Anonymous

Associate Hernan Benigno Cabeza Lopez



Hernan and his family walking through town

When Hernan Benigno Cabeza Lopez was just a teen of 16 years of age, he was invited to a teen retreat that helped him get to know a God who is a friend.

He writes: “When I was an adolescent, I did not feel comfortable being around priests because they walked around with their cassocks and I observed they preached about a God far away.” But at that teen retreat, he said, he met a God “who is close to me and who is simple to understand, who is my friend, a very close friend. Many nicknamed Jesus ‘el Flaco’ (or ‘the skinny one’ as a kind of closer kinship)”.

“I began to go to an area far from me called Callao to help out talking to delinquents on the street. I also went to the el Fronton prison, which at that time was located on the Island of San Lorenzo. I loved this labor, but it was so very far away. Then at the invitation of my friend, Judith, I began to assist at San Martin Chapel. I thought ‘why not help out the people in my own barrio that is near my house?’”

Hernan was born on June 28, 1960, in Lima, Peru. His father abandoned him a few months after he was born and went into the jungle area. “He suffered from alcoholism and felt he would get cured by going there,” he said. “Ever since I was very young, my mother would take me to Comas to the house of my aunt. In 1964, they asked my mother to take care of the house of one of my mother’s sisters. This land was in the first zone of Tahuantinsuyo,” which is the area closest to the bottom of the foothills where a large avenue runs.

“At that time, my mother was offered a job to work for the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. When Our Lady of the Rosary School was being constructed, I stayed in the house to take care of my two brothers, Javier and Norlando. We were locked in the house until my mother returned from work. I was 6 years old then and had to give the bottle to my sister who was 3 and to make the meal for my brother, Javier, who was 5.”

In 1967, his mother bought a piece of land in the 4th zone. First, they lived in esteras, which are woven bamboo walls. In the winter, the air comes in and it is quite cold. Hernan said the family built the walls little by little. His mother paid off the loan for the land with the money she earned from her work. His mother eventually remarried and Hernan’s stepfather moved in with them. His stepfather is the father of his two younger brothers. He also has two older brothers from his biological parents. They lived with his aunt.

When it was time for school, Hernan studied one year in the parish school before moving to the public school because finances were so tight. “When I was about 9 or 10 years old, my stepfather would wake me at 5 in the morning to dig ditches to help construct our house. I always tried to be a good student. Because of the good treatment by my stepfather, I tried to work hard and continue to study.” During vacations, he would clean houses, work in construction and paint houses.

“When I was 17,” he said, “something unexpected happened in my family. At that time, I had a deep desire to travel to the USA. I worked hard to save my money for the



Hernan’s mom when the family was young and she worked as a cook for the early Sisters

trip and for a passport, but my mother became very sick with uterine cancer. She had to be hospitalized and needed an immediate operation. So all the money I saved needed to go for her operation and medicines.” He continued to take odd jobs and visited his mother in the hospital. He also was taking care of his four younger brothers and sister. His money ran out. For one week, he said, all they had was bread and water. He didn’t want to ask anyone for help, but Father Miguel Kelly came to their house and pressed him about their situation. Father Kelly helped him get work in the rectory. “From that time on, I owe God so much. For me now my faith is of total giving to help out those in need, especially the very poor.”



Construction of concrete stairs leading to the Oscar Romero Center

“When I began classes in the National Institute, I would study until late at night. I began working in Miraflores (an area far south, way on the other side of Lima) cleaning houses until 9 p.m. I would arrive home a lot of times at 10 p.m. to eat my supper and then study. But I had a big problem. My stepfather would turn off the electricity, so I had to use a candle to study. Until I completed all my studies, I had to constantly look for ways to earn money because I did not have a permanent job.”

In 1981, Sister Monica asked Hernan to work as a caretaker for the parish property in the third zone. This gave him financial help in addition to his other jobs outside of the parish. This meant that Hernan had to live on the grounds with his wife. His three children were born during the time they lived there in a very small one-bedroom place. He had to be present to open the grounds whenever anyone needed to come to the chapel or when construction was taking place. In addition, he had to keep an eye out for robbers. Also, at this time, people wanted to invade the area to set up a home for themselves.

In 1984, he began working at the National Institute of Mental Health (Honorio Delgado Hideyo Noguchi) as a nursing technician, taking care of psychiatric patients.

In 1998, he married “the woman that God had chosen for me.” In 2000, he and his wife began studying at the university to become professional nurses. “It was a tremendous sacrifice to study and work during five years, so it was hard to take time to be with my children. In those five years of study, we had three children. In addition, my free days were dedicated to constructing an apartment,” he said. Hernan was building an apartment onto the second floor of his mother’s home.

“I would get up at 5 a.m. Those were years of much sacrifice but also of great personal satisfaction for me and for my wife as well,” he said. “Now we have completed our studies in mental health and I am studying to get a master’s degree in politics and public negotiations and management. Right now, I am working as the one in charge of nurses dealing with addictions. Many think that having this job will get you a better salary. But it is not like that. In addition, one has to stay longer at work when you would like to do the things for your home.”

Hernan also finds time to do volunteer work. This has included coordinating the choir at San Martin de Porres Chapel, being a catechist, coordinating the Confirmation program and helping in the soup kitchens and on the Health Committee. In 1981, for example, he helped women’s groups that were on the Health Committee. There was no access to medical help at that time, no health center, no doctors nearby. Doctors did not want to come to the area. “We struggled for years with the state to receive permission to construct a health center,” he said.

Upon receiving permission, “together with Sister Monica, we faced the challenge of constructing one. With that in mind, we began organizing fundraisers, like chicken



Christmas celebration with his staff at the Psychiatric Hospital

or beef dinner sales, so we could little by little make something real good for our people. The Sisters of St. Joseph-TOSF helped us in this initiative. We were able to construct two large buildings for different areas like mental health, programs for tuberculosis, dental and medical, and an area for the control of a healthy child. There also is a laboratory for physical exams.”

Other highlights of his volunteer efforts are:

- 1983: “We had the opportunity to protect the land to construct a Parish Youth Center because the people wanted to invade the area to build their homes. “We made a project and sent to Adveniat in Germany for funding. They approved it in 1986, but that was during the government of Alan Garcia.” The people suffered terribly then. There were long lines to obtain food and basic needs. “All the prices were elevated, especially construction materials including the iron poles that are put in the columns of any construction in this area. We were only able to construct an auditorium, three classrooms and a wall around the whole parish compound.”
- 1984: “I had the opportunity to be the leader of the Defense Committee of the Third and Fourth zones of Tahuantinsuyo. We fought to get transportation into the Fourth zone and to do projects to get the main streets



Leading the Stations of the Cross through the streets

asphalted through the whole community.”

- 1987: He helped organize a shop for helping teens in high school to pass equivalency tests and to help those who are preparing for university. They helped about 50 youth enter a university in a country where many cannot get into a university because there are not enough places in the school for all to study. “All of this labor I did because I was never able to prepare myself as a youth to go to a university. I see many youths who do not have economic resources. For this reason, I wanted to give others the opportunity to study in a university.”

- 1999: He was involved in a project to get sufficient running water in the Jesus de Nazaret sector of Tahuantinsuyo. “We presented it to a non-governmental agency called Manos Unidada Espana – United Hands of Spain. They approved it in 2000 and they designated me as responsible coordinator.”

- 2002: He was elected leader of the National Federation of Helpers, Technicians in Nursing and Sanitation in Peru.

- Since 2016, he has been a member of the commission of the Association of Owners in Tahuantinsuyo. The group works to obtain water, natural gas and electricity at a cost that people can afford. One of the achievements of this commission is that the gas connection in the homes be given according to economic levels in the hope of helping the very poor, he said. “My experience in this total giving is that many people easily forget who is doing the work for these works and who struggled to get them,” he said. “I never expect economic recognition. I would like that people will be united and in solidarity. But my experience teaches me that when the people achieve their objectives, they forget about the organizations who worked for them. There isn’t a constancy nor a commitment to maintain their values. But I am satisfied that I did all that was possible to better the well-being of the citizens.”

In 2010, Hernan made his commitment as an associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph-TOSF. “When the priests of the Missionary Society of St. Columban left our parish, the Sisters invited me to become an associate,” he said. “I had just gotten married and the Sisters invited both my wife and me.

In his free time, he likes to read, listen to music from his country, do activities to help people reflect, help in his parish, and be with his family. He also is learning to play guitar. Sister Josephine Espinos said, “Hernan helps us whenever we have emergencies or needs in our convent.”

Hernan concluded with: “I have never received special recognition, but yes, the thanks, the applause for the work, the many thing I have done ... my giving has been done without expecting anything in return. Many things I do to help the economy of the family. I do it out of love of the other, just like Jesus gave not expecting anything in return. I seek to be consistent with what I say and do. If we don’t assume responsibility we do not maintain our principles and values.”

-- Sister Josephine Espinos helped with the writing and translation of this article.

“If you lose your life for the sake of my name, if you leave behind all fortune and fame, then my heart shall be your home. Every child shall be your own.”

- Danielle Rose



Associate Josephine Soltysiak



Doing a little bit of everything these days

“Taking life one day at a time, one hour at a time” is the philosophy that Josephine Soltysiak has always lived by.

Josephine first encountered the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis when her children attended St. Barbara School in Chicago. “I was active in St. Barbara Ladies Guild and St. Joseph Auxiliary. We did things for the Sisters,” she said.

“I think I became an associate before I knew what an associate was,” she admitted with a chuckle. “Sister Clarisa Tomasek had me down as someone who helped. It was through her that I became an associate.” Josephine’s “official” commitment as an associate was in 2010, though her association with the congregation began much earlier.

Born Aug. 17, 1926 in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago, she said her family life “was not very good.” Her parents were alcoholics. “Married life was better,” she said. Josephine and her husband, Walter, have five grandchildren in Chicago and Colorado along with eight great-grandchildren. Josephine lost her husband in 1984.

Josephine has worked since she was 15. At age 55, she and her brother started a business, B&J Wire, Inc. “We didn’t have a business background,” she said. “We were workers.” They designed, built and sold point-of-purchase racks for displays in stores.

Josephine moved to Clare Oaks in Bartlett, Ill., where she continues to happily do volunteer work with the sisters and associates living there. “I help with their projects,” she said. She has fun and likes to be productive.



“These days, I get up, shower, take my medicines, have breakfast and go to Mass. I enjoy swimming three days a week. I look forward to attending events and gatherings here at Clare Oaks. I like to keep busy.” In her leisure time, she said, she enjoys playing cards or games with the sisters in their community room in their residence.

“What am I doing these days? I say a little bit of everything,” she said.

Over the years, Josephine has been honored for her volunteer work in her church and community. Her awards include the Christifideles Award at Holy Name Cathedral for her dedication and volunteering at St. Barbara’s; the Sister Mary Grande Award was an acknowledgment of her work at the school. Finally, for her industrious volunteer work, she received the Hanover Park Award.

“I feel I’ve had a full, blessed life. I can’t ask for anything more. I get to live at Clare Oaks, and every day I thank the Sisters of St. Joseph-TOSF for letting this place get built.”



Josie’s 85th birthday celebration



Josie receives an award

“Your goal in life is to find the people who need you the most, to find the work that needs you the most, and to find the project that needs you the most. There is something out there just for you.”

-Nadal Ravikant

*Thank you to our wonderful
SSJ-TOSF Employee Family!*

Charlene Figge



Executive Assistant to the SSJ-TOSF
Leadership Team

Cindy Matteson



Director of Health Care,
Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Financial Officer

Lois Lawler



Part-time Secretary

Mia



Fuzzy Human Companion

Rick Parker



Assistant Director of Finance

*“Don’t cry because it’s over.
Smile because it happened.”*

-Ludwig Jacobowski

Teran Wilkinson



Director of Finance

Lori Klaips



Housekeeping

*“The best way out
is always through”*

-Robert Frost

Jessica Heindl



Culinary Artist

Kathi Chojnacki



Culinary Artist

Dan Broton



Maintenance

Allison Ferg



Campus Administrator

Beth Kedrowski



Receptionist

Kami Albright-Loomis



Sister Companion and Part-time Receptionist

Heather Nimz



Part-time Receptionist

St. Joseph Motherhouse



*"Tis better to have loved and lost
than never to have loved at all."*

-Saint Augustine



"I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I ended up where I needed to be."

-Douglas Adams

Ways to Give

Cash

Cash can be used immediately for the purpose you intend and provide a tax savings. By itemizing these deductions on your federal income tax return, you may qualify for a tax benefit. Many of our friends support the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis with an annual monetary gift.

Stock

Gifts of stock that has appreciated can save you from having to pay taxes on the capital gains. You may also qualify for an income tax deduction.

Bequest by Will

Including the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis in your will is one of the simplest forms of planned giving. Simply designate a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate. A bequest can reduce the amount of your taxable estate and may increase the actual amount available to loved ones.

Life Insurance

Making a contribution of life insurance can provide a substantial gift. The value of an ordinary policy at the time of the gift is tax deductible. If you continue to pay the premiums, they may also be tax deductible as charitable contributions. If you donate a paid-up policy, the cost of purchasing a new paid-up policy at your current age is the value of the charitable deduction.

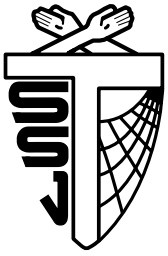
Beneficiary Designations

You may name the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis as the beneficiary of a retirement IRA, savings account, and/or certificate of deposit.

Planned Giving Strategies

You may set up trust and annuities as a way to give a larger gift and reduce your estate taxes at the same time.

If you have questions about how to make a gift, please contact Sister Sandy Lasecke in the Mission Advancement Office at 216-518-2152 or slasecke@ssj-tosf.org.



Sisters of St. Joseph
of the Third Order of St. Francis

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