



Peace & All Good

*You did not choose me; I chose you and
appointed you to go and bear much fruit.
~John 15:16*



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

Jubilee 2021

Rita Schmitt

On the pages of this special issue of Peace & All Good, you will find the memories and stories of this year's Jubilarians. Thank you to all the Sisters who wrote these delightful biographies about their years in the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis.

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From the Central Board



Welcome to our Jubilee issue of Peace and All Good.

In her book, *We Live Inside a Story*, Megan McKenna uses this image of the Matryoshka Dolls to illustrate the way in which all of our lives are intertwined in the universal pattern. The smallest doll represents our individual story, the unique journey and special relationships that shape each of our lives. Then that doll is placed inside a larger one, which can be seen as the community of people with whom we relate, and then an even larger one, symbolizing our religious tradition, and so on until the largest doll contains the entire human story.

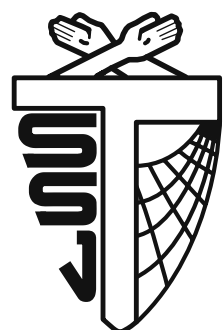
The following stories of our Sister Jubilarians reflect this universal pattern. As you read the description of their experiences, ministries and memories of events and people, you will discover their unique personalities and gifts that they have shared throughout their years of service. Each of them has contributed to, and helped to create, the larger story of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order of St. Francis. They know what it is to “live inside the story” of St. Francis and St. Clare in their desire to live the Gospel. Their deeply human experience of following “in the footsteps of Christ” can inspire each of us to do the same. We are grateful for their example, and for the ways that they have been “building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12) by responding to the needs of our time.

Sisters Marge, Judith, Michelle, Barb



Mission Statement

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



Dedication to Jesus Christ involves us intimately with His liberating and reconciling mission — to make God more deeply known and loved, and in so doing, draw all persons to fuller and freer life.

Together with all our Sisters and Brothers who strive for a more just world, we undertake those activities which will promote the material and spiritual development of the human family.

(The Constitution of the SSJ-TOSF, articles 30 & 37)



Sister Benjamin Chrapczynski

~ 80 years ~

At an early age my greatest desire was to follow the Lord's call. My mother prayed and encouraged me to follow that call. I entered the convent in August of 1940 and received the habit in 1941.

I attended high school at St. Joseph Academy in Garfield Heights, Ohio, and in 1945 began teaching elementary school. For 47 years I was teaching in Michigan. I then returned to Ohio where I continued to teach for the next 13 years.

After completing 60 years of teaching, the Lord helped me to continue serving others by directing me to join the S.T.A.R.S. program - Seniors Teaching and Reaching Students - in the public schools. Secondly, I was helped and directed by the Lord to reach out to seniors. Again with the Lord's help, I joined a Ministry of Home Visiting. Many elderly parishioners were not able to attend Mass anymore. About once a month the Home Visitors took them Holy Communion and a Parish Bulletin. There were about 40 parishioners from the church in this program.

There have been many opportunities that I recall for which I am grateful to the Lord Who helped me in my vocation as a Sister of St. Joseph, TOSF. Many children whom I have taught have been baptized and received Holy Communion. They were children who came from other countries like the Philippines, China, Europe and Uganda. Being a Home Visitor was so much to be thankful for as well. Seeing the parishioners that were elderly and being able to visit with them was a blessing.

I especially cherish many unforgettable memories of helping others to love God and all other people. This remains true because the people with whom I served, shared life, and worked with have been a reminder of the goodness and patience of God Who loved me and has remained with me at every moment of my life. At the present time I can use my time for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading.

God is good - - - life is good - - - what we make of it is up to us. I thank God for all that He has done for me during these wonderful 80 years.



"I was helped and directed by the Lord to reach out to Seniors"

"If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded."

~ Maya Angelou



Sister Jane Frances Koszarek

~ 80 years ~



"Praise God, all you nations; Glorify God, all you peoples, for steadfast is God's kindness toward us, and the fidelity of the Lord endures forever."

~ Psalm 117

Jubilee time crystalizes one's ability to reflect upon God's love and action in life. It provides a blessed opportunity to enter more profoundly into an awareness of God's steadfast fidelity and loving embrace as experienced throughout one's life. It is no wonder that Sister Jane Frances identifies Psalm 117 as a favorite.

In recalling early childhood days, having lived within a rural farm setting, she came to know and appreciate the provident and enduring love of God through the gifts of creation and the love and support of family. Within that context, she says, "The words of Jesus, 'Come follow me' resonated within my heart and mind." She recognized this as an invitation to dedicate herself to the praise of God and a life of service to God's people as a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis.

As an educator and within congregational administration, Sister Jane Frances' service has touched the hearts of many not only through her outstanding professional competence, but more specifically, through her compassionate heart and willingness to be of assistance in diverse and creative ways. Those seeking understanding and insights found in Sister Jane Frances a listening, comforting presence, a companion in the journey of life. She says, "It is God's unconditional, steadfast love which inspires me, motivates me, and fills my life with meaning. My hope and trust in God continues to support and sustain me in responding to the inevitable challenges of life."

It is evident that Sister Jane Frances has remained deeply grateful for life---its experiences, its joys, lessons and delights, whether they be of great significance or of pure simplicity. With appreciation for the thoughtfulness of others, she remains grateful for any kindness shown. It is her preference for the butterfly which evokes profound meaning as a symbol of transformation, new life, gentleness, exquisite beauty and delight, inspiring one to live with faith and hope throughout transitions in life.

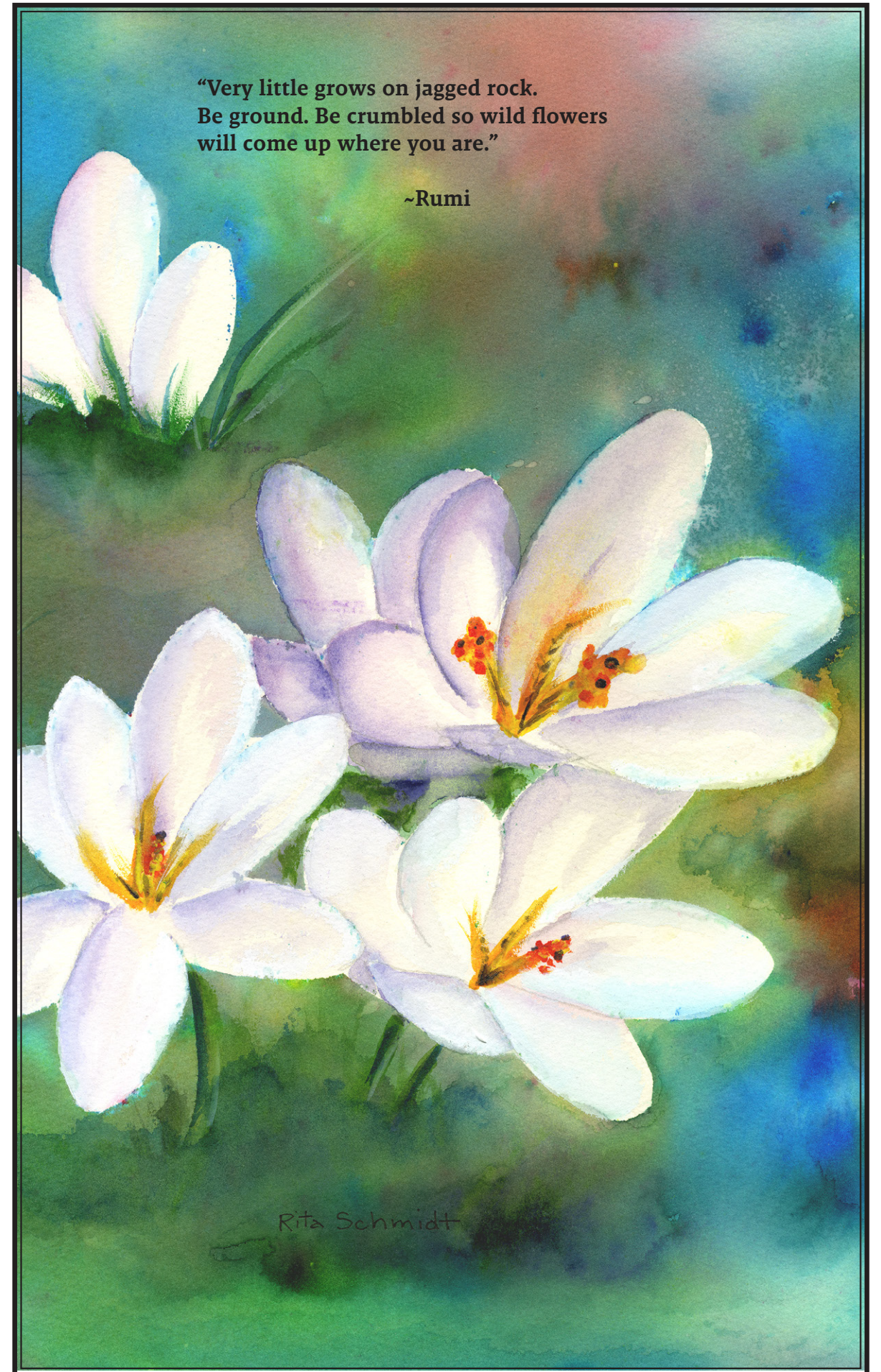
With a peaceful heart she shares, "To have fulfilled my dreams, to have lived through love in God's company, is most satisfying. It is a gift that prompts deep, sincere gratitude. My prayer continues for all whom I have been privileged to know."

"No act of kindness no matter how small, is ever wasted."

~Aesop

**"Very little grows on jagged rock.
Be ground. Be crumbled so wild flowers
will come up where you are."**

~Rumi



Rita Schmidt



Sister Anne Maslanka

Sister Alberta ~ 75 years ~



Truly, my life has been a living out of God's promise ...

For those who love God
all things work together unto good. (Romans 8:28)

I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF, with six other young women resolving to pray daily the words of the seven brothers in 2 Mac. 7:1-40.

Seven we have entered into battle,
Let us receive seven crowns, O Lord,
And SUFFER NOT OUR NUMBER TO BE BROKEN

Early in our formation we embraced the call to Religious Life. We prayed for the grace of perseverance. SUFFER NOT OUR NUMBER TO BE BROKEN. Today we praise and thank God that we are still "SEVEN." Three of our number are in Heaven, four of us remain to live out our commitment until we are called "home." How could we not celebrate this gift of perseverance as we observe our 75th Jubilee?

Since our first commitment until the present time, I think about how our world has changed ... and how Religious Life has evolved. What has never changed, however, are the truths expressed in the words of the song: "In Every Age" based on Ps. 90.

In every age, O Lord, You have been MY Refuge,
In every age, O Lord, You have been MY Hope,
Long before the mountains came to be,
and the land and sea and stars of the night.
Through the endless seasons of all time,
You have been my Refuge. You will always be.

During this time of Jubilee, I recall with joy and gratitude my years of ministry which surprises me. My ministries were varied and fulfilling as God's Spirit led me from teaching and pastoral ministry to parish and hospital chaplaincy. Within the SSJ-TOSF congregation I answered the call to serve in various administrative positions. Each one of these ministries was a special gift for which I will be forever grateful.

My prayer of gratitude and my strength is knowing that throughout my life, the Unchanging God has been with me and will be with me to the end of my days. And so, with a grateful heart..."MY SPIRIT GIVES THANKS" for all the graces I have received... all the places in which I have served and all the wonderful people I have encountered on my life's journey. All the gifts given and received during my 75 years as a vowed religious would not have been possible were it not for my congregation, the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF. I bless the day God called me to serve.

**"Not how long, but how well you
have lived is the main thing."**

~Seneca



Sister Clarita Iwanski

~ 75 years ~



Jubilees are an opportunity to reflect and to be grateful for the memories that our life's journey has brought. As I celebrate my 75 years with the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, I do so with a feeling of mixed blessings.

I am filled with gratitude for the 75 years that God gave me with the Sisters, but this past year came with some difficulties and challenges as I had to leave Stevens Point, Wisconsin for the last time.

I was filled with sadness and even now find it hard to talk about. As I left, I knew I would never see it again - the convent and all the many people I left behind. I had spent so much of my life there. Not so long ago, we were given a framed picture of our chapel there. It is a nice remembrance that shows the beauty of the chapel through its stained glass windows. It fills my heart with joy.

All of my life I have been "gifted" with many gifts. I am grateful for my parents and my family, and for the Catholic faith in which they and the Sisters helped me grow through my parish and education at St. Peter School and St. Joseph Academy in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

When I answered my calling to the congregation, I saw it as an opportunity to share my Catholic faith with the children I taught and their families in Wisconsin and Puerto Rico. I have enjoyed all of my ministries tremendously, but one of the brightest times was my time in Puerto Rico. I really, truly enjoyed my work and the people there, many of whom I continue to call friends. Puerto Rico is filled with warm, friendly people who lift your spirits. They are very giving people who would give you their last cup of coffee if you needed it.

As the convent in Stevens Point closed, I moved to Marymount Place in Cleveland. It was difficult to move, but the Sisters welcomed us and I enjoy being with them. It became harder once the corona virus hit because we could no longer walk between buildings to visit one another. We are often confined to our rooms for longer periods of time. One opportunity that I have welcomed is getting to know new people here. This assisted living facility is not just for the Sisters, so getting to know the men and women who share this facility has been nice.

Life, especially this past year, has been filled with adjustments, but I remain grateful to God for the many, many blessings He has given me over the past 75 years with the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. Thank you, God, though the greatest gift I've received is the gift of life itself.

**"Wherever you stand be
the soul of that place."**

~Rumi



Sister Mary Liguori Slawinski

~ 75 years ~



Blessings and peace to all. Jubilee 75! How gifted I am in celebrating this Jubilee. When did this all begin?

I know you will smile at my story but it is true. This is how it began. While skipping home from kindergarten I would be overjoyed to meet our Sisters on their way home from school and they would greet me. They would then say, "Sally, what will you be when you grow up?" My quick response was, "Sister, I will be a Sister just like you."

As I grew up I would pretend I was a Sister. My brother would tease me but I kept my desire in my heart. Finally I entered my high school years. I wanted so much to enter the convent. "Only when you graduate", my mother would say to me. However, after enough pleading, Mom relented and I entered in my senior year. I entered the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph TOSF, on August 27, 1945.

You can't help but keep memories in your heart. This one causes me to smile. In our class there were seven of us. A year of preparation for learning how to become a well-trained Sister. Our opening ceremony was in the chapel. The Bishop and guests were waiting. Soon the chapel doors were opened and in marched seven brides for Jesus. They processed to the main altar, were blessed, and received a bundle which was the new garb. Then they left the chapel only to return shortly. Upon re-entering, they were robed in the full habit of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, TOSF. The only difference was the white veil instead of black to signify they were novices. Can you picture that?

I credit the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF for the influence they had on my vocation to religious life. Like I said before, I spent much time associating with them. They were always loving, helpful, caring and kind. I will always appreciate all I learned from them. "I will be a Sister just like them."

I really enjoyed my ministry of teaching. I spent many of my years working with 5th and 6th grade boys and girls. They were challenging. The greatest gift was my assignment to teach God's special children. I did this for thirteen years. The youngsters were happy, very loving, and eager to learn. The ministry was a blessing.

Seventy five years is a time full of blessings and, yes, it has had its ups and downs but I could always turn to Jesus, Mary and the Holy Spirit and I would experience peace in my heart. For this I will be ever thankful to my God.

Thanks, Dear Lord, for the call to this congregation and all the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF who influenced me. Their example was a blessing. Thanks also to my biological sister, Sister Mary Peter. She is a true friend.

"God is love."

**"Your belief and your work
will speak for you."**

~Maya Angelou



Sister Martha Cherney

Sister Justine ~ 75 years ~



My sister-in-law told me that I came home from school on the first day and asked my mom; "Why wasn't I born a Sister because they have no hair or feet"? I have no idea what my mother replied but she prayed for me every day that if this is what I truly wanted, I would be a Sister.

It was not until the fifth grade when I began to take more notice of Sisters and enjoy helping them after school. They were always kind and nice to me and everyone and I wanted to be just like them... kind and nice to everyone.

I wrote to the Bedford Sisters but never received a reply from them. One day I just asked a Sister if I could talk to her about being a Sister. I told her that I'd like to be a homemaker. The next day she asked me to stay after school. It was then that she surprised me with a list of things I would need to enter the convent. For some reason, my mother was surprised that I wanted to be a Marymount Sister. We did not know much about the Marymount Sisters ... just that they were Polish - not Slovak! After a few weeks, we set the day that I would enter the convent ... February 2nd Things were going fast, and I was so excited. Yes! I was going to be a Sister!

It has been said of Sister Marty, "Sister makes nice things and makes things nice. She has hands of magic that can turn out a gala meal, provide an attractive quilt or brighten up a room with her cross-stitch framed picture. She is a joyful presence to those she serves." Sister Marty has said, "Bring your joy forward; do not place it on the back burner." Well, there is a multitude of SSJ-TOSF and others who can testify that she has lived those words to this day.

On the occasion of Sister Marty's 70th jubilee she said, "The most rewarding aspect of my ministry has been my love of baking. Decorating cakes for all occasions brings me humble joy as the recipients view their special cake for the first time. I have long believed that one eats first with their eyes, so it is very important that my cuisine is pleasing to the eyes." Sister remains grateful to this day for being mentored by Sister Zita in the Marymount bakery. Sister Zita also taught her to work with pastel chalks and other media.

All those talents were put to good use as a teacher of kindergarten at Transfiguration in Cleveland and at St. John the Baptist in Dearborn, MI. Her skills really blossomed when she became a homemaker and concentrated on food service. She furthered her talents when she served at St. Francis Mission in Greenwood, MI and then for fifteen years at St. Joseph Hospital in Meridian, Mississippi.

There was an interlude in Sister Marty's relationship to the SSJ-TOSF congregation. She re-entered the congregation in 1995. "I thank God daily for calling me back," said Sister, "for giving me a second chance to be a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis". At the time of her re-entry, she worked at Lakewood Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, with Jim Perko, a certified executive chef. Her retirement at St. Anthony Parish in Belleville, Michigan reaped more magic to the delight of many. She has never lost the charm of making nice things and making things nice.

Today, you can find Sister Marty enjoying her retirement years back home ... living in community with her Sisters at Marymount Place where it all began.

**"God doesn't require us to succeed.
He only requires that you try."**

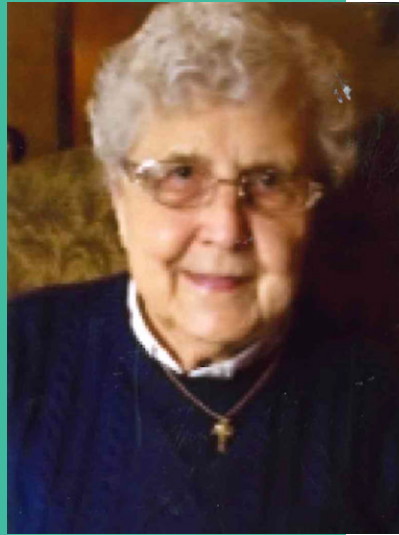
~Mother Teresa



*"Why wasn't I born
a Sister because
they have no
hair or feet?"*

Sister Melanie Adamski

Sister Sebastian ~ 70 years ~



I was born on November 18, 1925, the daughter of Joe and Fannie Adamski. I was baptized at St. Casimir Church on Christmas Day and lived in Terryville, Connecticut.

I met the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis through the church choir. Answering the call to religious life, I entered the congregation at its Marymount Provincial Home in Garfield Hts., Ohio, in 1946. At my investing I received the name of Sister Mary Sebastian.

After novitiate, I headed to Michigan to teach first at St. John the Baptist in Dearborn, and later at St. Francis School in Detroit. In 1953 I left teaching to attend St. John College in Cleveland to complete my bachelor's degree. From there I taught at St. Hyacinth in Cleveland and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lorain, Ohio. In 1959 I taught at Regina High School in Harper Woods, Michigan, then at St. John Cantius High School in Cleveland, Ohio.

In 1963 I traveled to Connecticut to teach at Holy Cross School in New Britain, and later at Our Lady of Mercy Junior High School in New Britain, as well as at St. Paul High School in Bristol. I found that my teaching ministry was most rewarding and enjoyable. However, in 1997 after almost fifty years of teaching, I retired.

At my retirement I received two grants from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland, allowing me to spend two summers there to study and discover more about my Polish roots. Retirement also gave me the time to become a member of the Connecticut Coalition for Peace, a group of peacemakers opposed to building and launching nuclear submarines. In addition, I shared my interest of social justice with my apartment building neighbors by hosting a weekly prayer meeting. I encouraged everyone to have a globe in their homes and to read about world news and events. Then once a week we gathered in my apartment to share our news stories. As each person shared their story, we would locate it on the globe, discuss the situation and then offer the situation to God in prayer.

Recently I have spent my time rereading past letters from our early leadership teams. The thoughts and ideas expressed in these letters leave me with a warm feeling in my heart for all that our community has accomplished. At the age of 95, I continue to thank God for the rich and rewarding life I have led serving God's people as a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis.

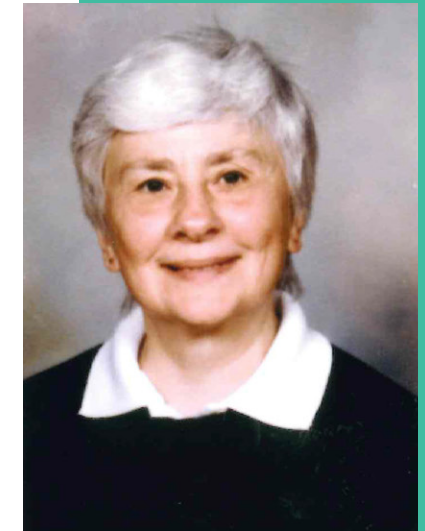
“Faith in action is love, and love in action is service.”

~Mother Teresa



Sister Lucine Mikes (In Memory)

~ 75 years ~



Sister Lucine, (Stephanie Ann) born on November 5, 1928, was the ninth of twelve children of Albert and Anna Majkrzak. Her loving parents provided their children with an excellent education taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF at St. Hyacinth School in Cleveland. Sister Lucine's deeply religious family, coupled with the admiration of Sisters at school, influenced her joyful response to God's call to vowed religious life on September 9, 1945. She was invested on August 6, 1946. Two of her sisters also entered religious life. Sister Grace Ann became a Bernadine Franciscan Sister, and Sister Joan of Arc entered the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF.

A graduate of Marymount High School, Sister Lucine earned a bachelor degree from Ursuline College and a master degree from the University of Detroit. She taught in schools in Cleveland, Michigan, Connecticut and Illinois. Sister taught classes on various levels: elementary, high school, and college. It was during her time teaching on the college level that she had her family name changed from Majkrzak to Mikes making it easier for others to pronounce her name. She followed in the footsteps of her older brother who changed his name to Dr. Frank Mikes.

Sister Lucine was gifted with many talents and used them wisely. She loved to be challenged to provide for the needs of the times. When Trinity High School went co-ed in 1973, Sister Lucine saw this as an opportunity to introduce a drafting program at the school. The *Universe Bulletin*, the Diocese of Cleveland's Catholic newspaper, had featured a story about the program. She was the only Sister in the Diocese of Cleveland to teach computer aided design.

As an educator, Sister Lucine was dedicated, had the ability and personality to relate well with the students, and is fondly remembered. As a religious she was deeply in love with her God and acknowledged that all good in her life was gift from Him. To quote her own words, "I am grateful to God for my loving parents, family, friends, and for my community which gave me the opportunity to utilize the talents God has given me." As her life's work here on earth was coming to completion, she longed to be united with her God. The Lord welcomed her home on April 10th, 2012. Well done good and faithful servant.

“When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life or the life of another.”

~Helen Keller





“And then the flowers came covering the land; beauty everywhere!”

~Kathy Sherman, CSJ

Sister Angelora Grossman

~ 70 years ~

The first time I considered becoming a Sister was in high school when we were asked what our future plans were. My mother wanted me to wait until I graduated, but after my sophomore year, I insisted that I be able to enter the convent. Finally, mother gave in and on Labor Day Monday, September 4, 1950, I entered the convent. In one of the rooms there was a statue of the Sacred Heart. Next to it on a bulletin board were the words, “You have not chosen Me. I have chosen you.” What a welcome that was for me!

Teaching for forty-three years I learned much and provided a variety of opportunities in and beyond the classroom to my students. These ‘out of school’ excursions expanded students’ knowledge and experiences that were not available in the classroom. Traveling with our school plays to entertain and inspire other children and adults in the community and participating in the Living Stations of the Cross are two examples that broadened the horizons of students. Collecting and distributing food to organizations gave students a charitable awareness and compassionate feeling for the less fortunate among us. My life experiences have been enriched by doing mission work in the West Indies (Islands in St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Dominica) for four trips, then two trips to each (Jamaica and Kenya). This gave me a whole different taste of working with the poor. All of us who have participated in these adventures were hoping to do a lot of good for them, which we did, but upon returning home, we realized we received much more than we had given.

The following prayer that was given to me some years ago, sums up what I have done and what God might still have in store for me.

“I know, my lord, that countless works can be done for you. But out of all of these works, you, in your love want only certain works to be done by me. You alone know the works that will be mine. You reveal these works to me step by step. I cannot know, as you, how each work is linked to the work before and the works you will do hereafter. Sometimes I lose my path, but you always wait for me with infinite patience. You are the shepherd who returns me steadily to the pasture of my own work. My life experiences help me be present in the simplicity of my heart to each work that you have laid out for me. Amen.”

“When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”

~Maya Angelou



“I insisted that I be able to enter the convent.”



Sister Anne Marie Luberda

Sister Mark ~ 70 years ~



Whenever I reflect on my past and present life as a Sister of St. Joseph, TOSF, I am deeply grateful for the blessings and the memories. My childhood experiences with my parents and my other relatives: caring, serving, praying, and celebrating holidays together, are something I treasure. These were moments that stopped time and brought happiness. It was at one of these moments when my cousin and I talked about religious life. He went to John Carroll University and became a Jesuit, and I went to Marymount and St. John College.

Following Nursing graduation from St. John's in 1960, my ministry in health care began in Meridian, Mississippi in times that were extremely challenging. However, the Sisters, staff, and volunteers worked hard to offer the best patient care. It was also a time of planning to replace the 27 bed old hospital with something larger. Department directors and supervisors planned with Sr. Margaret Majewski for the future St. Joseph Hospital on Highway 39 North, down the road from the Navy Jet Base. Our staff increased by hiring available nurses who were wives of the student Navy Pilots. It was 1963 and we now had a new hospital, a heliport, and accommodations for the Sisters.

In 1970, I left St. Joseph Hospital for Washington University, and received two Master's degrees in nursing and hospital and health care administration. I then continued my Health Care Ministry in Michigan, where I managed, administered, and served in hospitals and clinics. When possible, I taught Management, Nursing and Medical Assistant classes at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor. My ministry also included serving as Eucharistic Minister at St. Mary Student Parish and St. Francis of Assisi Parish, both in Ann Arbor, as well as serving on the Finance Committee at St. Mary's.

In my retirement, I participate in research as part of the Research Team, and serve on the Village at Marymount and Marymount Health System Boards. To make life interesting, I also respond to requests for participation in Health Care Research Projects.

In my Bible, I have a card from the Chapter of 1979. It seems to sum up my life and ministries very well. I took the liberty of changing the 'we' to 'I':

*I hold a treasure of Past, Present, and Future,
not made of Gold, but of Earth:
The Fire of Love, with the Water of Life, the breath of Spirit*

"The whole secret of a successful life is to find out what is one's destiny, and then do it."

~Henry Ford



"I hold a treasure."

Sister Cecilia Zielen

Sister Rosanne ~ 70 years ~



In 1950, I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. I can hardly believe that I've been a member of this Congregation for 70 years. Presently, I live at Clare Oaks in Bartlett, Illinois. As a resident of Clare Oaks, I have been a member of the Advisory Council, served on various committees, built relationships with residents, welcomed newcomers and shared times of joy and sadness with the women and men who live here. These daily interactions have forged bonds of caring and friendship in many ways.

"This above all: To thine own self be true" has been a significant motto for me as a Sister of St. Joseph, TOSF. Community life, retreats, education, travel, and ministry presented many opportunities and challenges to be true to my own self. As a biology, earth science, and physical science teacher at Lourdes High School, I participated in many workshops and classes that opened up a whole new world of perceptions and experiences.

While serving in Congregational Leadership on the Provincial and Central levels, I visited our Sisters in various parts of the United States and Peru. Witnessing their lives in community and ministry was inspiring and life-giving.

For many years I wanted to be a missionary in a foreign country. To fulfill this dream, I attended the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio. There I studied Spanish, Hispanic culture, theology and aspects of ministry in a multicultural setting.

When I returned to Chicago from San Antonio, there was an opening in a new youth ministry program of the Chicago Archdiocese where many Puerto Rican and Mexican families lived. Through this program I organized monthly meetings for parents, youth ministers and high school students of the Humboldt Park and Logan Square areas.

While serving in a multi-cultural parish, I was responsible for the religious education program for public school students, adult education, and the RCIA program. I was able to fulfill these responsibilities with the help of faithful and competent volunteer adults.

Reflecting on my 70 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, TOSF, awakens in me profound gratitude for family, community, ministry, and travel. "To thine own self be true" continues to challenge me to be open to the Holy Spirit in my daily life and in whatever the future holds.

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

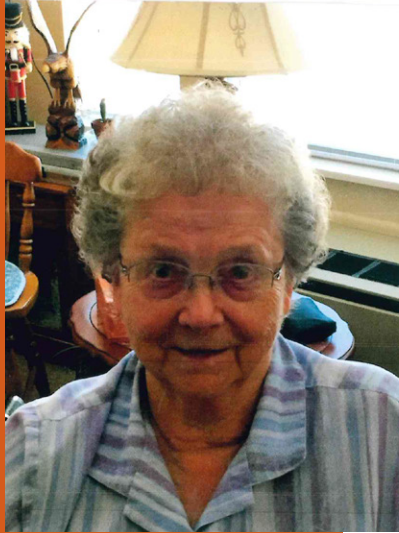
~Maya Angelou

"These daily interactions have forged bonds of caring and friendship in many ways."



Sister Dominica Fick

~ 70 years ~



Pinch me! Am I sleeping? It's been 70 years since I began living my dream of becoming a Sister of Saint Joseph of the Third Order of Saint Francis. I attended Sweetest Heart of Mary High School in Detroit, Michigan. Shortly after that, the explosion began. One day I told my mother I was going to the convent. She put up a fuss, so I had to wait a while. After she left for work I caught the next train to Garfield Heights, Ohio. The Lord called me, yes He called me, but forgot to tell those concerned about me. I was encouraged to accept this as a way that the Lord had something "special" for me to do.

I received my B.S.E (Bachelor of Science in Education) from Sisters College in Cleveland, Ohio and a Masters of Arts from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. The thought that the Lord had something "special" for me to do remained with me as I taught school in Connecticut, being a principal and teacher in California, and a teacher in Michigan and Ohio. I enjoyed these activities very much.

Next came the position at Marymount Congregational Home in Garfield Heights as Director of Management. I served there many years, still wondering when that "special" sign would show up.

The years have caught up with me, and now I am retired and residing at Marymount Place. It's not so bad. I just have to sit and relax and wait for the "special" something I was told the Lord had for me. But, do you know what? I was living that "special" something all my years. Praying, teaching, and many other activities and projects was my way of praising the Lord and all His creation all along.

"If one has courage, nothing can dim the light that shines from within".

~Maya Angelou



Sister Francesca Grzeslo

~ 70 years ~



Directors note: This sketch is lengthier than others because Sister Francesca has not written for publications before this nor will she again. So, please enjoy this once in a lifetime writing.

So, where were you for 70 years serving God and His people? Adventurous me? Take my hand and journey with me as we backtrack to my wee years.

I was born into the human "Grzeslo" family in June of 1934, the 10th in line and the third girl of 11 siblings. I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis family after a three-day Freshman retreat at Lourdes Academy in Chicago.

My life became an instant adventure as I entered aspirancy for a year and postulancy for another. Being received into the SSJ-TOSF as a novice in 1951, I had my residence in South Bend, IN for one year. From there, I entered the mission field at St. Mary of Perpetual Help in Chicago teaching Kindergarten with Sister Ambrosine as my lead teacher. As my adventure continued, I sought out master primary teachers to learn how to teach to the best of my ability. "He will conceal you with His opinions and under His wings you will find refuge."

My next mission was St. Stanislaus with my novitiate directress, Sister Venantia Uszleras, my superior and principal. Sister Angeline, my lead teacher, kept Sister Robert Nowak and myself very alert to the 'tricks-of-the-trade'. It was a life gift to work with Sister Angeline, who continued to help and guide us while in her eighties. The travels of life from 1956 to 1970 commissioned me to serve the little ones at Holy Rosary in Gary, IN, St. Simeon in Bellwood, IL, St. John the Evangelist in Streamwood, IL, St. Patrick in Walkerton, IN, and St. Joseph in Denver, CO. Were there challenges? Yes. Did I experience failure? Yes. Had there been days of anxiety? Yes. The Psalm continued to light my way.

After the closure of St. Joseph School in Denver, I received a call from Sister Rita Marie Malachinski, program directress of the Bartlett Learning Center (BLC), our congregation's academy for special needs children. I was invited to join the staff there. Sister Rita Marie asked if I would stay five years. As it happened, I stayed four times as long ... 20 years. Those were years of great learning, great experiences, and great blessings. Within three summers I earned my master's in special education and spent another summer at St. Coletta's College, a 'hands on' approach in their Special Ed Program.

My ministry at BLC was truly a gift to me. I taught from 9 AM until 3 PM at which time I collected my 'brood' of 12 boys (ages 4-19), readied them for roller skating, swimming or a picnic at the park. During the winter, I conducted an hour-long exercise program in the evenings. Once each month we would visit a restaurant to check out the menu and our manners. One of our favorite dishes was FIORITO'S PIZZA. Swimming events prepared the children to participate in the Special Olympics where they earned many medals, badges, and other well-deserved recognitions.

During my twenty years at BLC I served as a teacher/childcare worker. Later, on weekends, I offered home care to attend my mother's failing health. When mother was called Home to her Creator, I was free to venture into new experiences.

Marge Naczki, one of our early associates, asked me to come live with her when she returned to Arizona after 18 years of a variety of ministries. Sister Marge White was then our Mission Directress. When I spoke with her, she asked only one question, "Are you wanting to run away?" My response was, "I could have done that long ago if that was my intention". She gave me her blessing.

That was the beginning of my new adventure, living with an associate hundreds of miles from my normal residence, in a land of little rain, long hot summers and no SSJ-TOSF's. Sister Shawn Lee, the leader of our Congregation, caught me on one of my last

(Continued on Pg.20)



"I served there many years, still wondering when that 'special' sign would show up."

"Are you wanting to run away?"

Sister Francesca Grzeslo (Cont.)

~ 70 years ~

days in Bartlett, IL. "So glad for your adventure, Francesca. You will get to localize with the California Sisters when you get there. I wish you well." I never forgot those warm, encouraging words. SSJ-TOSF's would be part of my life after all.

This adventure began in August of that same year with an educational sabbatical when I earned a teacher's certificate for the state of Arizona. After some course work and preparation for a teacher's test, I did pass the test and received my certification. As was my gift in life, my first job in Arizona was 1st grade at St Mary of Perpetual Help School. I spent 9 years there in Glendale, but I hoped to experience working in a poorer area.

My next stop was at a needy St. Matthew School in the heart of Phoenix. It took me an hour to drive to school. Early each morning I often witnessed the ladies-of-the-evening closing their business off the street.

I was invited to work in a new rather elite school only 20 minutes from home. No more did I have to share the road with 1 ton semis waiting for workers to release cars on their way home from work. I moved from a room of cracked desks, broken chairs, and pigeon spotted walls to a room filled with sparkling new furniture, loads of teaching items, and children dressed in snow-white sneakers and spotless uniforms. That was quite an adjustment along with high expectations from doctors, lawyers, and other professional parents of our students. My reputation was one of holding students to high standards and quality work. After 9 years there, I was beyond retirement age and at a salary bracket that the parish was unable to pay so, I was 'inched' out. During the first months of my last year of teaching, I sought God's guidance to reveal my next adventure. Each evening after supper dishes were washed, I hopped into my car and drove 3 minutes to the Eucharistic Chapel of my parish to pray for direction. Where do You want me now, Lord?

Associates Jan and Jean, twin nurses at the school became my researchers. Who would hire me at my age (77)? Who would pay my high salary? Where, Lord? WOW! Sun Lakes Indian Mission, Reservation School needed a 1st grade teacher. I got the job. Seven Franciscan Sisters of Divine Charity lived on the Reservation. At the interview, I was told to get an apartment in town.

The years at Pines Indian Reservation were good years as I enjoyed learning the Pima culture, their Native food choices, rituals, interests, and spirituality. The Sisters wore a modified habit even when summers racked up high temperatures. They often invited me to their spiritual events. We prayed the Divine Office together, had weekly adoration, celebrated Franciscan feasts and special liturgies. We celebrated holidays with delicious meals and fun events. These were memorable years because it connected me with others dedicated to God. It was a wonderful time for me as I was surrounded by women consecrated to the Lord.

During those years at the missions, a new Grey Franciscan men's group was formed. Their goal was to attend to the youth of the reservation addressing the problem of alcohol and drug abuse.

Contacting a virus (not COVID) that developed into cellulitis from a cracked tooth changed my life! I was told I couldn't live alone and had to decide where I wanted to retire. Aging and health issues determined my move to Marymount Congregational Home in Ohio. Since then I have been hospitalized and recovered several times. I am learning to accept retirement and to live a slower pace. Now I live among my SSJ-TOSF family once again in Community and will be with them until the 'Amen', when God calls me Home.

"For you has He commanded His angels, to keep you in all your ways. Since she clings to Me in love, I will free her; Protect her, for she knows My Name. When she calls, I shall answer 'I am with you'. With length of life, I will content her. I shall let her see My saving power."

So concludes Psalm 91 and so concludes my reflection of seventy years serving as a Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. I am grateful to our gracious God for my vocation, for my parents who witnessed their strong relationship with God to me, for the many persons who supported me along this journey, for the Sisters and AZ associates who witnessed their great love of God and for all of you who shone like stars in your own brightness giving me light in my times of darkness. I thank you!

(Thanks to Sister Dian Majsterek SSJ-TOSF guest contributor)

"The heart of a servant is the sanctuary of God"

~Ps. 3:16

Sister Jean Ehasz

Sister Agnes Therese ~ 70 years ~

As I celebrate 70 years as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis Congregation, I am very grateful for many blessings in my life. One being the opportunity of meeting our Sisters as a student at Marymount High School (which hadn't been my first choice of a high school in 1947). They were more friendly, caring, and hospitable than my grade school teachers. There was just a different spirit among the Sisters that spoke to me and called me to them and to the ministry of teaching which was the farthest thing from mind at the time.

Another outstanding blessing is my awareness of the many people who have touched my life in different ways and have allowed me to touch theirs too because of my ministry to them.

The ministry I became involved in after my 37 years in education has greatly influenced me and my daily living. Since we, as all Congregations at the time, were challenged to look into a renewal of the original spirit of our founders/foundresses, we began to delve into the Franciscan Third Order. This interested me so much that, as a part of my Sabbatical year after leaving education, I chose to be a part of a three month Franciscan Program in Winona, Minnesota. Those three months were very special to me. Upon my return to Cleveland I found that a decision had been made to begin a way of sharing our Franciscan Spirit by the founding of the Franciscan Center at Marymount. I spent the next 10 years, along with Sister Francis Therese Woznicki as Co-Founder and Co-Director, getting to know Francis and Clare of Assisi and the Third Order Regular better. As we shared retreats, programs, prayer services, etc. with our Sisters and others in our area, my own knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a Franciscan deepened.

These are only two very important aspects of my religious life for which I am most grateful. Both of them have been significant in making all of my 70 years a blessing from the Lord.

**"There is a candle in your heart,
ready to be kindled."**

~Rumi

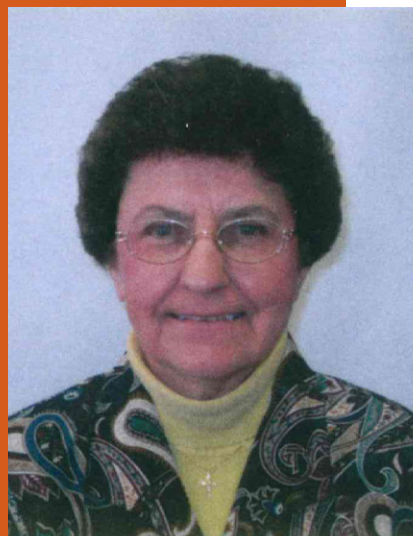


*"I am grateful that I
have shared faith, joys
and sorrows with all
of God's people."*



Sister Joan Butkiewicz

Sister Josetta ~ 70 years ~



Life, family, vocation, community, talents, and nature - - - gifts from our Creator, are often taken for granted. In reflecting on seventy years in community, I realized that God truly dwells in and labors in these gifts. The Sisters that taught me at Holy Cross School in Elyria, OH, inspired and encouraged me in responding to my call to religious life.

Throughout the years, teaching and studying for certification prepared me to minister as: teacher, catechist, and pastoral minister, thus enabling me to enrich the lives of students scholastically, but more importantly to instill within them the means to live well-balanced and productive lives.

Reflecting on my many years in community, GRATITUDE resonates clearly for the gifts of love and service which shapes not only emotions and thoughts but also actions and deeds.

This year of my firm re-commitment to religious vows, is a year in which I have and continue to encounter the deadly COVID-19 virus, questioning its impact on many individual and social lives. Its limitations have been extensive and exhausting; relegated to phone calls and e-mails. However, more than that, it has created for me a contemplative environment. It has provided me the opportunity to delve into my physical and spiritual self, for which again, I am grateful. It has widened my world view as to how precarious life can be. A recent article in *Occasional Papers* solidified my dependence on our Creator all these years "knowing with surety that the Holy One who accompanies does not abandon ... We are holding in tenderness and compassion a future that will not include us".

**"... Looking upwards, I am filled with strength...
looking within, I discover peace."**

~Apache Prayer



Sister Louise Szerpicki

Sister Ann Marie ~ 70 years ~



My Early Years (about 25 to 80)

For years, I believed my life's water glass was ½ full throughout mid-life, as opposed to ½ empty. Ignoring reality, I wanted to see it as ½ full, telling myself it was so. But with sageing ageing upon me, with honesty as guide, --- accompanied with gifted wisdom, I know with certainty my life's glass was ½ empty. I have lived with that- expecting NO sympathy over this bent attitudinal reality. Neither am I going to tell you how challenging, unpredictable life's path has been. Why was that so? To be sure, there is no "fault-pointing at another." Except to realize the status of my human instability, my naivete ... , and my need for extended, persistent, deeper / broader human development: it was all "in the clay" I was born into (the marrow of who I am.) But most off all, it was my need for a personal Lord.

My Latter Years (about 80 until the Lord calls)

Where I now see positivity in my life is only through the graced presence of my Lord. I could jump on clouds and tree tops over the realistic attitude the Lord awakened in me. Yes, it is He who gives me enthusiasm for another day. And, now with deeper sageing ageing within, I can see more clearly, love more deeply, and invite others to join in this wonder - of -- wonders called:

Frequent Living in the PRESENT MOMENT,
living with INTENTION

Which leads to an inner freedom of conviction that I am me and God--is--God. And, the me-in-me is okay, good enough, ready for the Lord. Need I say at this time, if asked: "Yes, my glass is pretty full; perhaps, as full as it will ever get until I enter the Beyond with my Lord."

**"Pursue some path...in which you can
walk with love and reverence."**

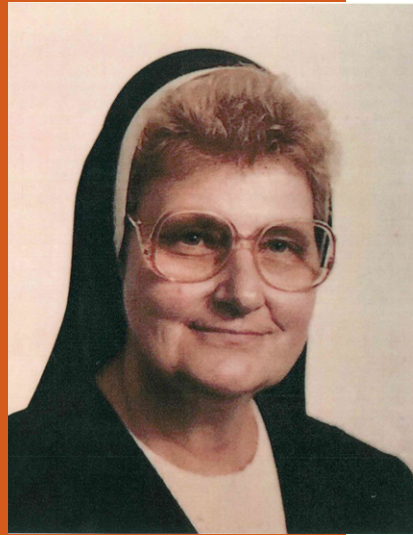
~Thoreau



*"It was all 'in the
clay' I was born into
(the marrow of
who I am)"*

Sister Marlene Hostetter

~ 70 years ~



The Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF have been, and are, an intimate part of my life for the past seventy years. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, my early education and Christian formation took place at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. It was there that I learned, through the example of the Sisters and my family, to celebrate the ordinary moments of life. It was there that the seed of my religious vocation was planted by my grandparents. They took me to God's House daily, to say hello to Jesus and His Mother. It was there, at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, that I knew I was loved and that teaching was my lifetime goal.

Of my seventy years in the congregation, I taught school for sixty-three of them. My ministry enabled me to use the gifts and techniques I acquired at Marymount High, St. John Teachers' College, Villanova University, and the Catholic University of America. Teaching has helped me to be open to the Spirit, to care for the earth, to recognize God's presence in my students, and smile because Jesus walks with us.

The closing of St. John Teachers' College and the opening of the 1975 General Chapter, enabled the possibility for me to change ministry and still remain faithful to mission. I was elected as a co-provincial of Marymount Province, serving the Sisters in the Ohio and Connecticut regions. This was a gift. It was an opportunity to reach out to others. It was the first time in my life that I felt free enough to accept the power within me, to shape and determine my life with integrity and fidelity according to the Gospel and spirit of the SSJ-TOSF congregation.

As I celebrate my 70th Jubilee, I am grateful for all that has been, for all who invited me to walk with them on life's journey, and for a faithful God who continues to nurture and sustain me and the human family. Daily, like St. Francis and St. Clare, I ask, "How can I make God more deeply known and loved?"

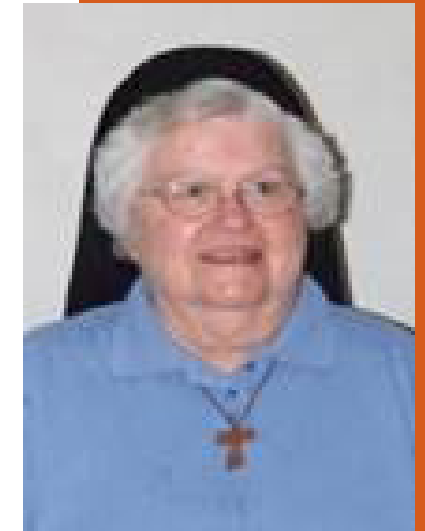
**"When you do things from your soul,
you feel a river moving in you, a joy."**

~Rumi



Sister Rita Marie Malachinski

~ 70 years ~



Celebrating 70 years as a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis fills Sister Rita Marie with joy for the journey that she embarked teaching children who had difficulties learning. She started teaching elementary school children, but her heart went out to the struggling children. Sister knew they needed special help that could not be given in the setting she was in. She then proceeded to work towards a degree in Special Education. During this time Sister had some experience with helping these special children. She had the heart and knew how instinctively to meet their needs. Sister Rita Marie was happy that she discovered the plan God had for her.

Using her talents and deeply driven desire to continue in this ministry, Sister was given the opportunity of developing and administrating the Bartlett Learning Center (BLC) that was geared to teaching and housing children with special needs. A professor taught her how to apply for grants. Sister Rita Marie applied for grants so that other Sisters could get an education in this field as well. They then became the faculty and House Mothers of the Bartlett Learning Center. BLC flourished under her leadership.

Sister Rita Marie had a special talent for administration. After leaving BLC, she became a principal of two schools that were struggling to stay open. With her expertise both schools not only remained open but also grew in enrollment.

As her years for retirement were nearing, Sister Rita Marie embarked on yet another ministry. She wanted to assist Sisters that needed special care themselves because of illnesses. She devoted her time and care for Sisters Lorraine and Connie Szymandera who taught in her schools and resided with her. Sister also helped take care of her mother. Her two sisters shared this loving responsibility with her.

Since this was a new ministry, Sister Rita Marie worked towards obtaining a certificate in Health Care as a nursing assistant and another in occupational and physical therapy. During her retirement at Clare Oaks in Bartlett, IL, she volunteered for night duty tending the needs of Sisters in Skilled Care. Sister was energized, able, and willing to be of service. Little did she imagine what God had planned for her in these ministries, each different but each one enjoyed and challenging. For all of this, Sister felt she had been blessed and has been most grateful.

Two years ago, Sister entered a new phase in her religious life. God has called her to rest with Him. Due to several health problems, she retired from her ministries to become a resident in the Assisi Health Care Assisted Living Center in Bartlett, IL. During her two years there, Sister Rita Marie still reaches out in concern for the needs of the residents living there. She continues to wish that she could serve others and she does but in a new way. Sister has not lost her love and desire to support people who are struggling.

We never know what God has planned for us and Sister feels blessed with many years of dedicated service in the ministries that she chose to give her whole self and life to.

(Offered by Sister Barbara Koza, SSJ-TOSF)

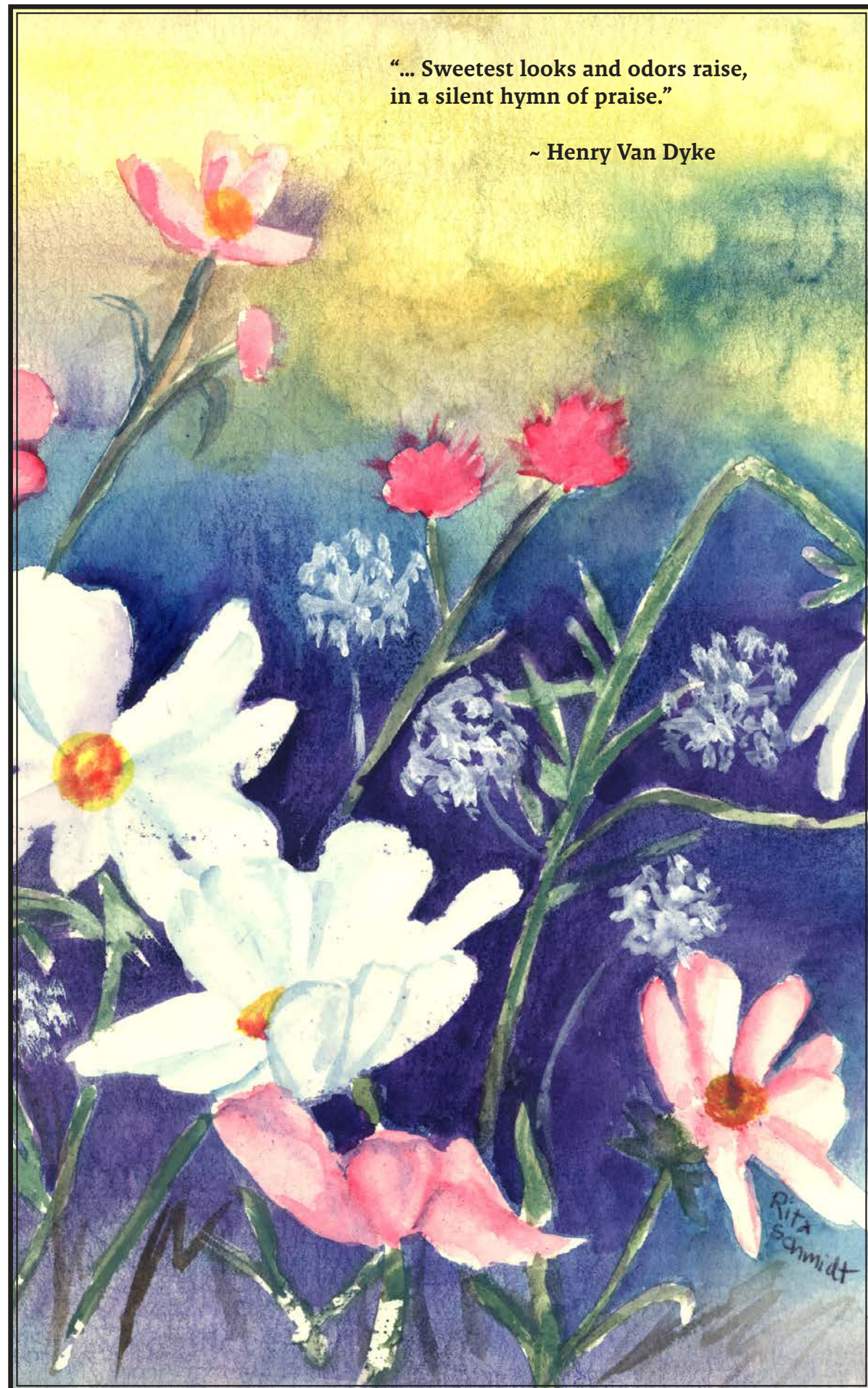
Sister Rita Marie says, "I am most grateful for all the lives that I have been able to touch in my 70 years as a Sister. Each person I was able to interact with has been a blessing to me, and a true gift of God. The one ministry that most influenced me was my time at BLC. I loved being able to relate with children that needed my help. I am grateful that the Center was and still is a success today."

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

~William Jones



*"Sister has not lost
her love and desire to
support people who
are struggling"*



“... Sweetest looks and odors raise,
in a silent hymn of praise.”

~ Henry Van Dyke

Sister Bernadine Lepak

~ 60 years ~

And as the song goes; “I’m on the top of the world looking down on creation and the only explanation I can find is the love that I’ve found ever since you’ve (Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis) been around. You have put me on the top of the world.”

It is with much gratitude, I thank my fellow Sisters and family for being positive role models and for their support and encouragement on my Journey. It has been a remarkable journey filled with many experiences, happy memories, and rewarding blessings.

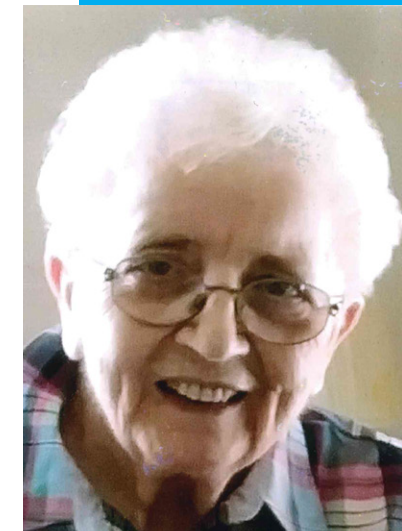
For more than 30 years, I was an elementary school teacher, principal and Religious Education Coordinator. For the last 16 years of active ministry, I energized the Sisters in activities at the St. Joseph Motherhouse in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Activities varied, bringing smiles and joy to the Sisters especially in the Maria Center, where ill and infirm Sisters were cared for.

In addition to activities, I also volunteered for on-call duties. I had the opportunity to take the Sisters to the emergency room. On one occasion, I took Sister Julie Rdzak. After the doctor examination, she was diagnosed to live six to eight hours. The chaplain prayed the prayers of the dying and gave Sister Holy Communion~ (Food for the journey). While I prayed in the quietness of the room, Sister in an audible and excited voice, called out: “Daddy, Ma-ma Mary!” I knew she was being embraced by her loving family. A special memory I’ll never forget!

In 2015 I moved to St. Joseph Motherhouse and continued to lead activities and to spend time with our Sisters. My life took a turning point in 2019. As of October 2019, I transitioned to Marymount Place, an assisted living facility in Ohio where many of our Sisters reside.

In March 2020, Covid-19 changed our world with its challenges - social distancing, wearing masks, and lockdowns. I pray that the Lord strengthens us with hope and peace during this pandemic.

Looking back, I thank God for all who came into my life. And for all those who have given me hope and love on my journey as a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis.



*“You have me on the
top of the world”*

**“To do some thing, however small, to make others
happy and better, is the highest ambition, the most
elevating hope, which can inspire a human being.”**

~John Lubbock



Sister Cecilia Marie Morton

~ 60 years ~



I have experienced Christ's love very deeply in my life. I've known His strength, His power, His goodness, and His understanding. I've seen His justice, creativity, and patience at work even in the midst of storms. Therefore, I feel a strong need to love God in return and to serve Him and His people through the Roman Catholic Church.

Even since my childhood, God has played an important role in my life. Those who raised me were constant reminders of His love. They taught me to let Him lead me each second, each day.

I find myself often in the position of giving to others what God so generously has given to me. I don't always find responding to His call easy. In fact, it can be very difficult, especially when it means overcoming my own self in order to be able to give to others as He would want me to do.

As for my ministry, I feel God calls me each day to serve Him by working with young people, particularly helping them to grow in dignity, in pride in themselves, and in their culture, family, community, Church, and world. In order to be responsible persons, they must believe in themselves and in those around them.

I believe young people today must know, believe, and deeply experience God in their lives. They must learn to pray, and their prayer must be very real and very personal. They must learn discipline and self-control. They must be taught to let God lead them and to trust His leading by reflecting upon His action within their life situations.

Someone once said, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world". I agree. Nowadays, people seem so isolated. It is very hard to form community or get people seriously concerned about each other. The majority will not be involved in the struggle for justice even if it is for their own benefit. I believe it is crucial to show our concern for those around us.

If there is any call today, I believe it is a call to care. I believe there is a call for strong black men and women to show that care through a life of dedication as lay ministers of service or Sisters of Judith (A group of lay women that belong to a religious community - the Handmaids of Mary) and as clerics and religious. Dedicated and consecrated persons are needed to show people the way to the Father.

Such persons are especially needed in times like this when many are confused, frustrated, and despairing. Consecrated persons are needed to give renewed hope and trust in God. They are sorely needed to give prayer support and encouragement. They are needed to show forth God's love as only those who know it can. It is because I believe this, that I will continue working to affect this in and through my ministry.

"In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference."

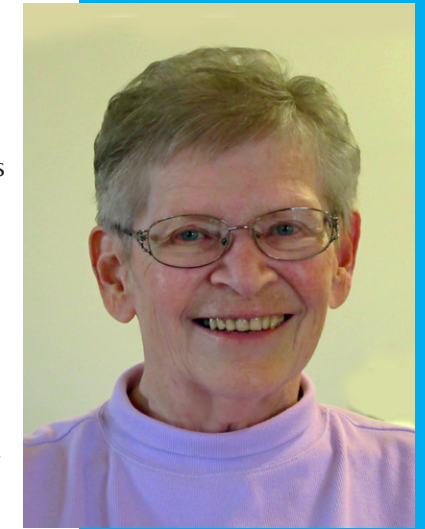
~Pope Francis



"If there is any call today, I believe it is a call to care"

Sister Dorothy Monikowski

Sister Barbara ~ 60 years ~



As I think about my story and my life's journey, I stand in awe at the many and varied ways God has called and led me over these 60 years. I have been witness to incredible world events; I have met several thousand people in my ministries on two continents, I marvel at the evolution of technological progress, I watch with anticipation the changing face of religious life; and I have traveled to parts of the world which linger with awe in my memories. Given the opportunities for relationships, education and ministry which were Spirit-led and which my Congregation afforded me, I stand in profound gratitude for all that God has given me.

Among my most cherished gifts are my parents, Frank and Genevieve Monikowski. I was born on a cold, snowy February morning. My Dad named me "Dorothy". My name comes from the Greek, *doron theos*, which means "Gift of God"! This name has been a call and a mandate to me through the years.

I grew up in a happy, loving, hard-working and close-knit family on the northwest side of Chicago, in a neighborhood called "Bucktown". After graduating from Josephinum High School and working for a while, I entered the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF, on January 8, 1961. I became acquainted with the Sisters through a high-school friend who was planning to join the Sisters. Thus began the journey of religious life for me which held more surprises than I could have ever imagined!

For 10 years, from 1964 to 1974, I served as a teacher and principal in schools in Illinois and Indiana. In 1974, I served in Provincial Administration at Immaculata Convent, Bartlett, IL, with responsibilities in ministry and education. This was followed by an invitation to work in the Chicago Archdiocesan School Office as a consultant for teachers and principals.

In 1982, I once again was elected to serve in Provincial Administration. When this term was completed, I went for studies at Loyola University, Chicago, and earned a Master's Degree in Organizational Development in 1988, supplementing the Master's in Educational Administration and Supervision granted by Concordia University in River Forest, IL.

My mission and motivation as an organizational consultant has been the mandate given by Jesus to St. Francis: "Go and repair my house." I was hired by the Archdiocese of Chicago as the Associate Director of Planning during the tenure of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. Working with this Cardinal was a great blessing in my life, even though the work itself was both challenging and rewarding. Among the projects I managed was helping parishioners and ministers face the necessity of closing and/or merging over 40 parishes in the Archdiocese, across both Cook and Lake Counties. On my journey, this was among the most challenging work I had ever done. Yet, little did I realize that this helped prepare me for the work that was still to come.

In 1992, I began to work independently as a consultant and facilitator. I have been led to people and places beyond my expectations. My work of "repairing God's house", of helping to renew the vision of groups, of mending the spirit and relationships among people, of transformational planning for the future, of helping to open avenues of communication, of developing leadership skills, of merging and consolidating groups, of facilitating the work of groups in size from three persons to over four hundred at national convocations, and of building avenues for conflict resolution, have all helped to repair God's house. Over the years, I served close to 100 organizations in 20 States and in Brazil. Many of these commitments were simultaneous and spanned several years, some even up to ten or eleven years.

There have been many special people in my life who have supported and encouraged me through the good and the tough times. Some have been in my life for a reason, some for a season, some for a lifetime. They form a special fabric of love that I carry deep in my heart. For them, I will always be grateful.

Now as a Jubilarian of 60 years and as a resident at Clare Oaks, I continue our mission to foster and to value relationships with many who live and work here, as well as with family and dear friends in the area. In my desire to continue to "Go and repair my house", twice I was nominated for and elected to serve on the Advisory Council for Independent Residents. As Council Members, we serve as liaisons to operating committees here at Clare Oaks, plan and conduct All-Resident meetings, and attend monthly Council meetings.

As I begin my 6th decade of Commitment as an SSJ-TOSF, I return to words that inspired me many years ago in our document called SEARCH: My life is a continuous pilgrimage in which I ponder what I see and hear as I seek the living Christ. Together! My Sisters, Associates and friends continue to create and explore the spirit that will lead us into our future to bring beauty and goodness and truth to everydayness, to lead us into tomorrow with confidence.

"This name has been a call and a mandate to me through the years"



Sister Dorothy Ann Krolkowski

Sister Cheryl ~ 60 years ~



I was born in Cleveland, Ohio and entered the SSJ -TOSF Congregation in 1960. After novitiate, I attended St. John College of Cleveland where I was introduced to spiritual writings that influenced my way of being with my God and with others. One of the writings is "The Reed of God" by Caryll Houselander. The words, "She (Mary) was not asked to do anything herself, but to let something be done to her. She was not asked to renounce anything, but to receive an incredible gift." Those words are embedded in my heart and have shaped my soul. I have not received an incredible gift, I have received many and for that my heart is grateful.

I am grateful that my parents modeled a life of simplicity. Raising five children on a modest income was not an easy task. Dad, at times, worked two jobs. Mom sewed many of our outfits, mended our clothing and hung the wash to dry on an outdoor line. Once I heard mom telling dad that she envied their friends who appeared to have so much more than they did. My dad's reply was, "Jean, Why do you always compare yourself to those who have more? Why don't you compare yourself to those who have less?" My dad's words still influence my choices. To my mom and dad I say, "Thank you for the values you instilled in me and the love that surrounded me."

I am grateful that God put a passion in my heart and soul for teaching. Someone once asked me when was I the happiest. Without hesitation I blurted out, "When I'm with the children. Most of my teaching career was spent teaching second grade. Being with those 'fresh from God' encouraged me to look at everything in a new way. I learned from the children to see all things as if I was seeing and experiencing them for the first time. Thank you to all the children I taught and to those I interacted with as principal, director of religious education and child care administrator.

I am grateful for the years I spent in Provincial Administration. Leadership within the congregation presented a great challenge. It forced me to think outside the box, to make informed and prayerful decisions on political and religious issues and to embrace and learn from people different than myself. It was a challenging time but it was a blessed time for me. Thank you my Sisters in community for having given me the opportunity to serve in that capacity.

Everything in life is a gift. The hardships, disappointments, illnesses I've experienced...all have been opportunities to deepen my trust in a faithful God Who never leaves my side. Thank you God for those curves in my life.

My sixty years in religious life have taught me to be open to God's Invitations and to the surprises that come with them. I Am grateful for all that has been, grateful for all that is and I await with eagerness for all that will be.

"It is your road, and yours alone. Others may walk it with you but no one can walk it for you!"

~Rumi



"I am grateful that God put a passion in my heart and soul for teaching."

Sister Elaine Ann Robleski

Sister Rosamund ~ 60 years ~



Reflecting on my 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph of the third Order of St. Francis, I see that the Lord has truly blessed me and allowed me to grow in many ways for which I am most grateful. Throughout the years, I have been called to share my talents within a variety of ministries which included the culinary arts, religious formation secretary, secretary to the faculty at Regina High School and ministering in the health care field as a medical transcriptionist for 25 years.

With praise and thanks for 60 years in Religious life, I am currently grateful to be able to spend more quiet time in prayer, reading and reflecting on God's holy presence in my daily life. "Praise God Who is so good for God's love endures forever"! (Psalm 136) My love of nature also helps me to have a deep appreciation for all the beauty of God's creation. I love music and still enjoy playing the accordion from time to time. I just can't seem to resist playing the polkas!!

The gifts of endurance and encouragement of the congregation and friends have reinforced my faith and hope in challenging times. For praise and thanks for 60 years in Religious life I pray: May God bless and keep us. May God's face shine upon us and be gracious to us. May God look upon us with kindness and fill our souls with joy. Praise God for His continuous blessings.

"Your belief and your work will speak for you."

~Maya Angelou

"I just can't seem to resist playing the polkas!!"



Sister Josephine Espinos

~ 60 years ~



I will allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart ... She shall respond there as in the days of her youth (Hosea 2:16-18) These were the words the Spirit put on my heart during a retreat weekend In 1992. After much soul searching with prayer, fasting, and months of discernment, I realized God was calling me back to vowed religious life, after having left the congregation 12 years before and then becoming a lay associate 5 years later. Even during the months of uncertainty as I discerned what did this message mean, somehow I knew in my heart that "the desert" always signified for me a call to return to Peru.

It has been in Peru that the Spirit has put another call on my heart, "The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Blessed be the Lord." I am not capable of doing great projects. In terms of ministry, I simply try to be present to the people in Our Lady of Fatima chapel here in Tahuantinsuyo and work with a group of seniors in Casa San Jose. Also we, Sisters, try to support a children's home, which provides for up to 500 from birth to university studies. There at Community Children of the Holy Family, I went with a team to do catechesis in very humble conditions for about 10 years.

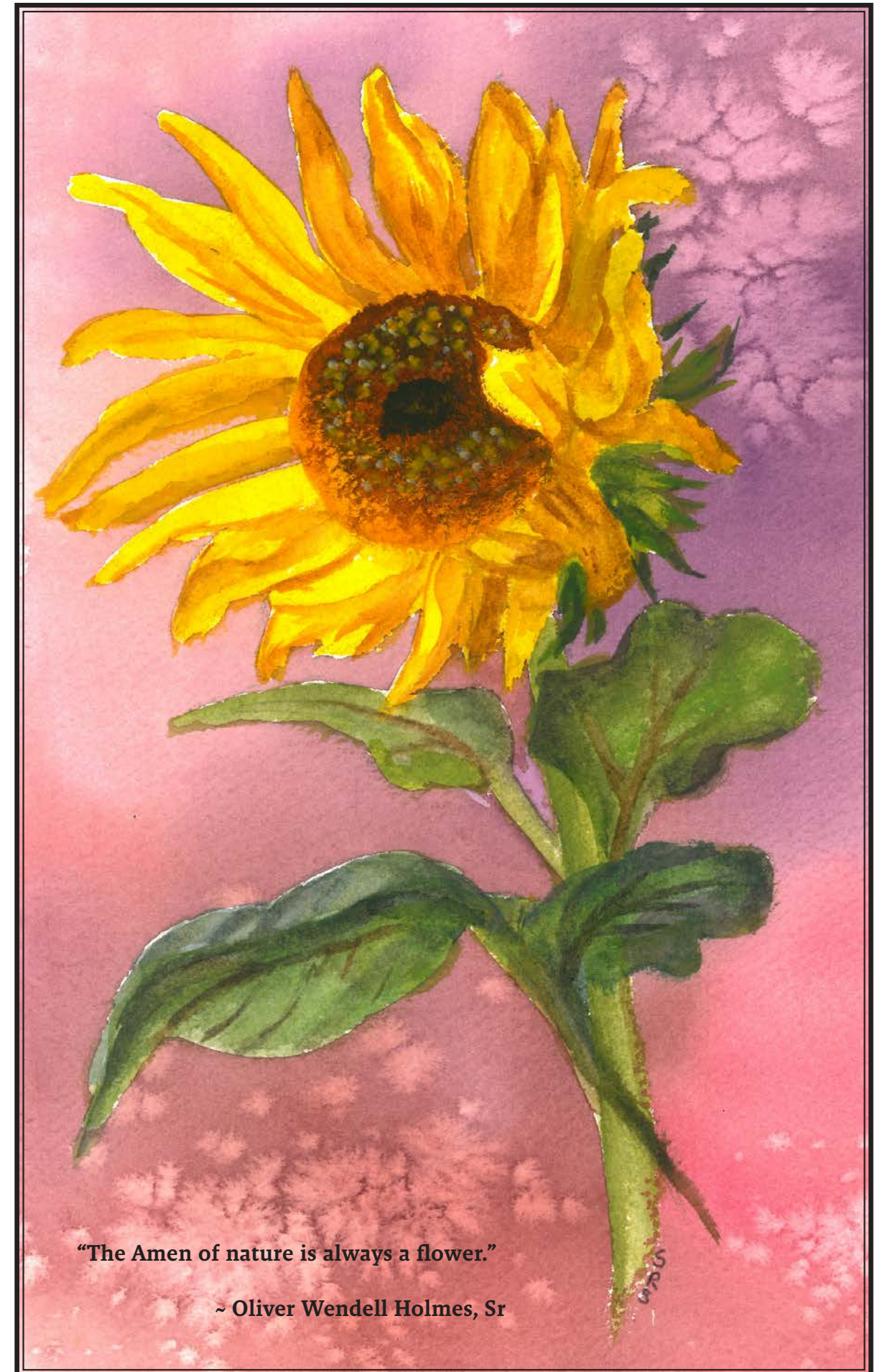
I always consider it to be a great honor for me to share this call with Sister Monica Lachcik, to be part of the lives of the Peruvian people. My heart beats to the rhythm of their music and my mouth waters to the taste of their food. But in all the activities of being a part of their joys and sorrows, I find my greatest call in simply answering the door and trying to be the listening ear of Jesus and His mother Mary- to hear their pain and be a part of their life. Sometimes I really don't know what to do because we can never solve all of their problems. We simply do what we can.

God continues to place messages on my heart. On retreat in 2016, the Spirit said to me "Be open to the surprises of the LORD, WITH JOY!" I've learned God never leaves us abandoned, even during this Corona Virus time, when our congregation is in serious discernment as to our future.

The Spirit continually opens me up to new surprises, as I have to let go and trust that -All Will BE WELL. God never abandons us in spite of our weakness, working in all the chaos going on around us. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH. WE TRUST IN YOU!

"It's not about how much you do, but how much love you put into what you do that counts."

~Mother Teresa



"The Amen of nature is always a flower."

~ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr

Sister Kenneth Bielski

~ 60 years ~



Sister Kenneth Bielski spent her grade school years as a student at St. Josaphat School in Cleveland, Ohio where she grew up with our Sisters as her teachers. She was inspired by them to join the Congregation's aspirancy program during her high school years and graduating from Marymount High School in June, 1961, entering the novitiate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis in August. She pronounced her first vows in 1963 and her final vows in 1968.

Her early ministerial career found Sister Kenneth serving at St. Hedwig's Parish in Akron, Ohio Transfiguration Parish in Cleveland, and at the residence of Bishop Floyd Begin in Oakland, California.

In the early 1970s, Sister Kenneth took over the management of the kitchen and bakery at Marymount Congregational Home and oversaw the preparation of meals for the Sisters in the home as well as the residents of the Clare Hall Skilled Care facility. During these years, she perfected the art of cake baking and decorating, and her wedding and jubilee cakes were true works of art. Many would say that they were too good to eat, but they would immediately add that they also tasted so good that just admiring them was never enough!

In 1982, Sister Kenneth became the chief cook, foods manager, and director of the kitchen at the Cathedral of St. John, the diocesan home of Cleveland bishop Anthony Pilla. She served in this capacity under both Bishop Pilla and Bishop Lennon.

It was evident very early in her religious life that Sister Kenneth possessed both the heart as well as the varied abilities of a real homemaker. Over the years, she attended specialized classes and workshops that put the "finishing touches" on her many natural gifts in cooking and baking.

Sister Kenneth has a gentle, quiet way of communicating the genuine love of God to those with whom she comes in contact. She regularly visited the sick in local hospitals and faithfully attended wakes and funerals, and accompanied the dying as a trained hospice volunteer with the Hospice of the Western Reserve.

In her retirement years, Sr. Kenneth volunteers at Trinity High School where she assists with the Pre-Professional Internship Program and the school cafeteria. At Marymount Congregational Home, Sister Kenneth makes sure no sister is left behind after evening prayer as she holds the elevator till all are aboard. She cares for each and every person she can serve or help.

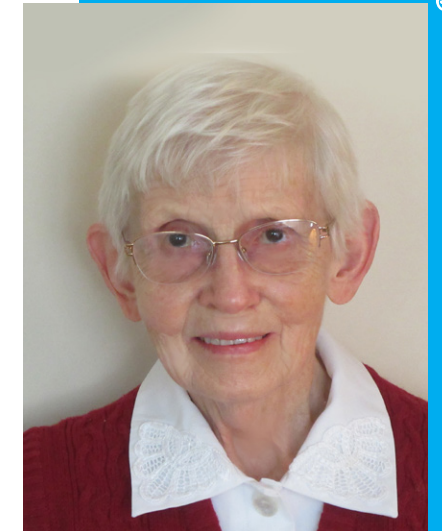
"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year."

~Emerson



Sister Mary Ann Walentowski

Sister Simon ~ 60 years ~



My life began in 1943 in South Chicago, Illinois. I lived with my parents, Edward and Estelle and my younger sister, Carol. We were members of Immaculate Conception Parish. Most of our relatives lived in close proximity to our home so we were able to visit with them very often. Members of my family had their own relationship with God and they practiced their faith accordingly.

When I was very young, I had a great desire to be a farmer or a Sister. THE SISTERS WON! The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis were my teachers at Immaculate Conception School and I often helped them after school and also during the summer.

I joined the Sisters of St. Joseph after I graduated from the 8th grade. As an aspirant, I attended Lourdes High School together with the Lourdian girls.

After I became a professed Sister I usually lived in large communities. My work opportunities included: cook, baker, CNA, housekeeping and grounds worker.

At Lourdes High School I had the responsibility of being the manager of the cleaning staff.

At Clare Oaks I enjoy helping the residents in the Health Care Center. I also enjoyed volunteering in a food pantry and at an animal shelter.

I am very grateful for all of the people in my life who inspired me by their example and thoughtful and inspiring words. My spiritual life is enhanced by participating in the Mass, meditation, reading and music.

I am very grateful for my vocation and the privilege of serving for 60 years.

"Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies."

~Mother Teresa

"THE SISTERS WON!"



Sister Monica Lachcik

~ 60 years ~



I was born on June 12, 1943, (Sister Monica Lachcik Kropidlowski) daughter of Monica and Joseph Lachcik. My family included two older sisters: Mary (RIP) and Lucy, and two younger brothers: Joseph and Thomas.

I attended St. Salomea's School in Kensington, Illinois for 8 years. There I was influenced by the Sisters of St. Joseph, TOSF. Right after the 8th grade, at the age of 13, I entered the aspirancy program and finished 4 years of High School at Lourdes High School.

When I was a first year novice all congregations of Religious women and men were asked by Pope John XXIII to send 10% of their members to be Missionaries to South America. I signed up but, because I was a Novice, I had to wait till I was professed.

During this waiting period I finished my University studies and received a Bachelor's degree in Education at St. Josephs in Indiana. I taught children on a primary level at St. Mary of Perpetual Help in Bridgeport, St. Barbara's, St. Simeon's in Bellwood, and Holy Rosary in Gary, Indiana.

Then on June 24, 1972, Sister Josephine Espinos and I went to Lima, Peru - South America, where our Sisters had lived and worked since 1964 in the parish school, Our Lady of the Rosary.

What a privilege this was for me. I came to love and cherish the Peruvian people the work with the women, teaching reading and writing, formation of the Health Clinic with these wonderful people, creating a bakery, a kerosene station, a noodle making project. After years, it was wonderful to see these wonderful women taking over and realizing their potentials on all levels: family, community and political leaders.

In addition, I worked in the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary in the sacramental programs with the Columbian Fathers at the beginning and now with the diocesan priests and laity. We built up a library in the convent for the children to be able to do their homework and to take time to read. Many of our dear friends worked in the library attending the children.

We are blest with the most wonderful Associates: men and women, couples and single persons. They have been by our sides working, reflecting, helping in all that we do. They have taught us to understand the culture and the needs of the Peruvian people on all levels. We meet once a month to pray, reflect on our congregation and to plan what needs to get done.

I am thankful to my congregation for allowing me to fulfill my deepest dreams of being a Missionary here in Tahuantinsuyo, a pueblo of about 70,000 people who live on the side of the mountain hills of the Andes. They have created a city with schools, parks, clinics, churches etc. I have been with the Peruvian people for the last 49 years. The support of the leadership and the Sisters had been outstanding.

The Peruvian people have become my family and friends, and an inspiration to continue to follow Jesus in my vocation as a SSJ-TOSF

I ask God to continue to bless me and the Peruvian people as they struggle for a better life on all levels.

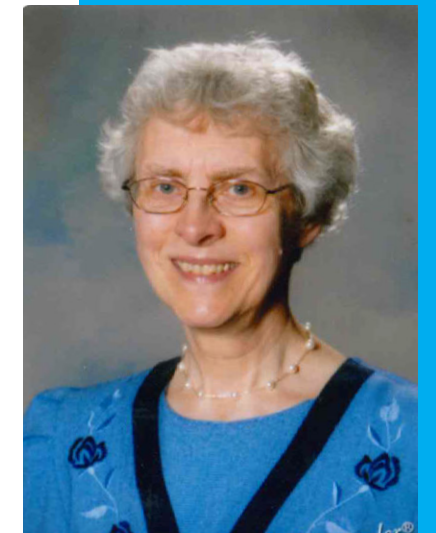
I am grateful to my congregation as I celebrate this year 2021, my 60 years as a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. I thank my family and friends for their constant support throughout these 60 years and beyond.



"When I was a first year Novice all congregations of religious women and men were asked by Pope John XXIII to send 10% of their members to be missionaries"

Sister Rita Schmidt

Sister Juanita ~ 60 years ~



When I reflect on this year of Jubilee, it is a time of gratitude and hope. One of the most obvious lifestyle changes when I retired was the change in the nature of my days. Life takes a different pace now. Time becomes more meaningful. Time now becomes a companion on the way. The present finds its way into the center of my soul as it has never done before.

Life is now. But did I ever stop to notice it? I did what I did in all those earlier years in ministry (teacher, administrator, chaplain), because those were the tasks of life then. But the task of life now is, simply life. What I haven't lived till now is waiting for me still. Behind every moment the spirit of life, the God of Life, waits. God gives me the space and time to realize that without the past, I could not possibly live this present so well. I am indeed grateful for the blessings of being a Sister of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. With them I listen to and follow the Spirit's own rhythms as It moves with us.

One lesson I learned since I last wrote a reflection 10 years ago is to make the most of the present moment. Time to pursue new interests is a benefit in my venture into retirement. I always had a deep appreciation for the vividness and transparency of watercolor painting. I was grateful for the SSJ-TOSF congregational leadership encouraging me to honor the artist in me and develop my artistic talents.

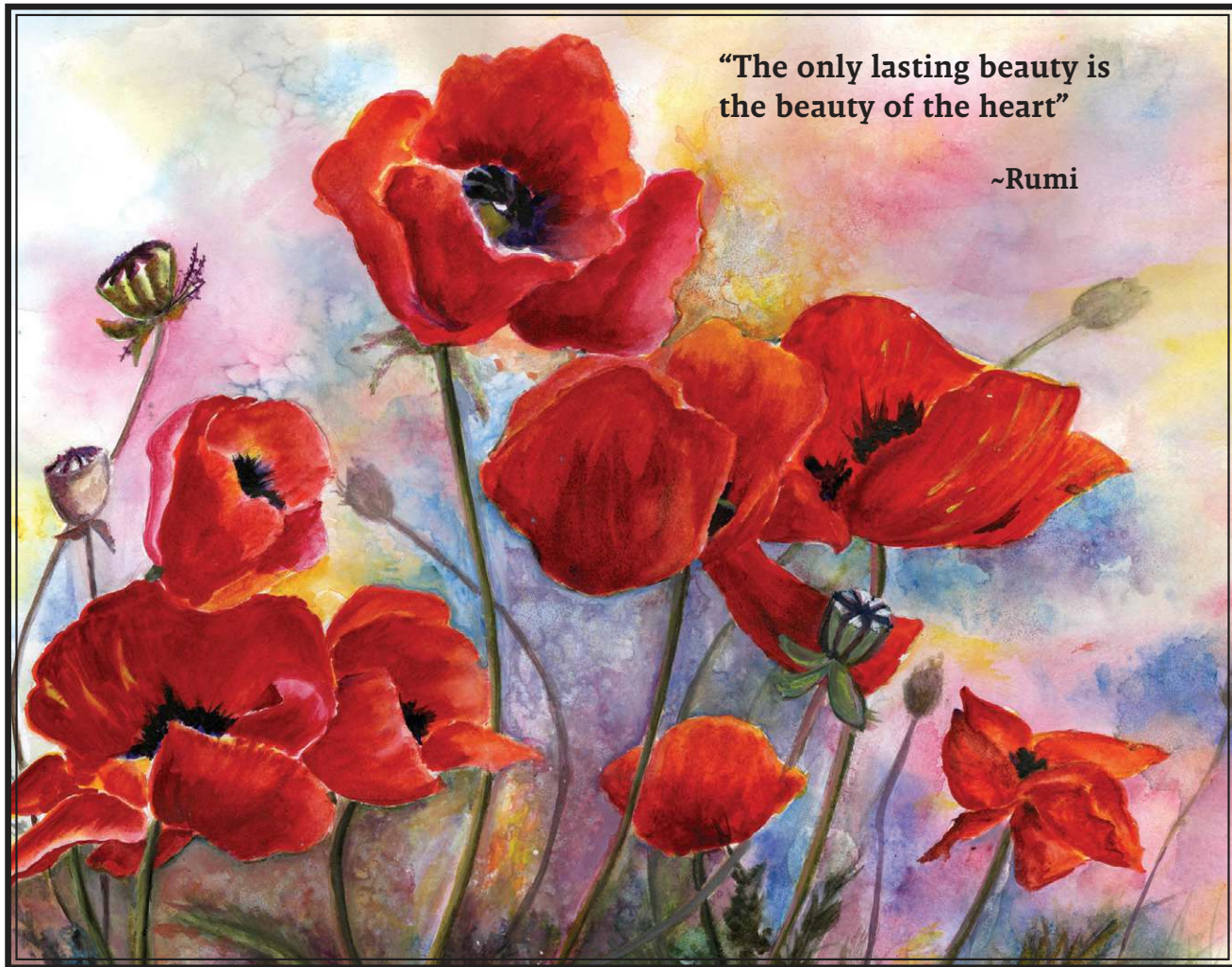
Today I have an art studio on the first floor of Marymount Congregational Home. Through the creation of my floral and landscape paintings, in a sense, it makes the world stand still long enough for me to glimpse the mystery of God in the beauty of nature. Nature in all its beauty brings joy and goodness of God in my life. The creative imagination is a path to the sacred.

"The SSJ-TOSF congregational leadership encouraging me to honor the artist in me and develop my artistic talents"

"God gave us memory so that we may have roses in December."

~J. M. Barrie





“The only lasting beauty is the beauty of the heart”

~Rumi

“Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.”

~Psalm 144:15

Ways to Give

Cash/Check/Online Donation

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.

Honorariums/Memorials

Make gifts in memory or in honor of family and friends.

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 after other disbursements. 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 deductible.

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 trusts 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.

Special Memorial Mentions

~ 80 years ~



Sister Irmina Bula

(January 12, 1926 - October 21, 2020)

~ 60 years ~



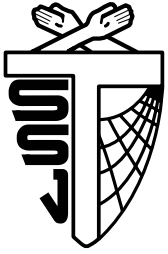
Sister Caroline Cervený

(May 9, 1943 - April 12, 2020)

“May the Lord smile upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord .. give you His peace.”

~Numbers 6:25-26

Please see the 2020 Annual Report to read their published stories



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

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Peace & All Good

Jubilee 2021

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