

JUBILEES

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Sister Mary Jo Kearns, RSM

50 YEARS

When Mercy Sister Mary Jo Kearns was a second-grader at St. Catherine School, Spring Lake, the principal came to her class for a visit.

During the visit, the principal, a Sister of St. Joseph, conducted a show-of-hands poll. She asked how many boys in the class wanted to become priests and how many girls wanted to become sisters. What she didn't know was that she would inspire one little girl's vocation.

"She [principal] asked how many girls wanted to be sisters," Sister Mary Jo said. "Well, of course, at that age, most of the girls raised their hands. I was sitting up front, so I heard the remark she made to our teacher. 'That's what they all say now,' she said

"Well, I was indignant. She didn't believe me. That's how I know today that I wanted to be a sister way back then.

"When I told my parents I wanted to be a sister, they were both very supportive."

Sister Mary Jo said her mother encouraged her to be a Sister of Mercy because she believed they were less strict than the Sisters of St. Joseph. The Sisters of Mercy were primarily a teaching community in New Jersey, and Sister Mary Jo's aunt was a

Sister of Mercy.

Sister Mary Jo said she joined the Sisters of Mercy Sept. 8, 1963, mainly because of her aunt.

As a teacher, Sister Mary Jo said she taught everything from fourth through eighth grade in schools in the dioceses of Trenton and Metuchen; St. Matthew's, Edison; St. Mary's, Alpha; St. Catherine's, East Keansburg and St. James, Red Bank.

In 1986, she co-founded the Mount St. Mary House of Prayer, Watchung, a spiritual center dedicated to nourishing adult spiritual growth in an atmosphere of hospitality and prayer. There, Sister Mary Jo has offered a variety of programs.

Describing her work, Sister Mary Jo, a member of Spiritual Directors International, said, "I love my ministry at the House of Prayer. Through the years I've been inspired by so many people I've met who come here for

"I love my ministry at the House of Prayer. Through the years I've been inspired by so many people I've met who come here for retreats, spiritual direction and a variety of programs."

retreats, spiritual direction and a variety of programs.

"I've also been able to offer programs and retreats around topics I find interesting: the opera, comics and even bicycling. About four times a year I offer a grief recovery program which has touched so many people since 1991."



She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education; master's degree in religious studies; and certificates in spiritual direction, retreat direction and grief counseling. — Amy Herzog



Congratulations

SISTER REBECCA PIATEK, C.S.S.F.

AS YOU CELEBRATE YOUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

May God bless you always!

WITH LOVE AND GRATITUDE FOR ALL YOU DO

THE ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY,
PARENTS AND STUDENTS
PERTH AMBOY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Sister Cynthia Babyak, CSSF

50 YEARS

Reflecting upon her 50 years of religious life, Sister Cynthia Marie Babyak is filled with gratitude for the many blessings and joys of life as a Felician Sister. Throughout those years, she has served in a variety of ministries, “blessed by each and every ministry, by each person whom I have served, and by each person who has touched my life.”

Her current ministry as Campus Minister of Bishop George Ahr High School is no exception. “Serving as Campus Minister is so rewarding. I love it!” Sister Cynthia said. “Being able to share my faith and love of God everyday with others is such a gift—whether it’s praying with a student or an adult who is going through a difficult time, planning a retreat, taking part in service activities with the students and adults, or simply being available to help the students whenever and whenever I am needed.”

Her family instilled in Sister Cynthia a love of God and a dedication to serving others. The example of her parents volunteering at the parish, receiving the sacraments, praying, and serving others “was a tremendous influence in my life,” Sister Cynthia observed. “They taught me that giving means not expecting something back in return. They taught me that you simply give from the heart.”

Born in Passaic on May 4 to George and Helen Babyak, she was raised in Garfield, in Bergen County. She grew up with her older sister, Michaelena [Gordon], in a family of music aficionados where a love of music was

fostered. “My grandfather played in a band, my mom and aunt played the piano and I played the accordion,” she said. Music permeated her childhood home and large family gatherings always included music. “We liked to celebrate family, and we did in grand style.”

As a student at Immaculate Conception High School in Lodi, Sister Cynthia saw in the Felician Sisters a happiness, a joy and a dedication to helping others. So inspired by the Sisters’ example, she joined the Felician community after graduation.

A life-long educator, Sister Cynthia has served at numerous schools, including Saint Stanislaus Kostka, Sayreville and Saint Michael’s School in Lyndhurst. She has also served as principal of her alma mater, Immaculate Conception High School, Lodi, and has taught religion, mathematics, and chemistry at Bishop George Ahr High School prior to her service as Campus Minister, a position she has

held since 1994.

Sister Cynthia has received several awards including the 1994-1995 Educator of the Year Award from the Diocese of Metuchen as well as the Saint Thomas Aquinas Award from Bishop George Ahr High School.

Throughout her religious life, she has prayed to the Blessed Mother and Blessed Mary Angela Truszkowska, foundress of the Felician Sisters. “Both women were strong, compassionate and gentle women. They were women of hope, women of courage—women from who

“Being able to share my faith and love of God everyday with others is such a gift...”



we can learn much,” said Sister Cynthia.

“They are a source of strength to me, as is my Felician community, my prayer life—which gives me much strength and peace, and my favorite Scripture passage: ‘... with God all things are possible.’” (Mark 10:27)

— Gabby Geraci

Sister Rosemary Hudak, RSM

50 YEARS

While attending St. Mary High School in Perth Amboy, Mercy Sister Rosemary Hudak heard many vocation talks, but like most teenagers, religious life just did not appeal to her at that time.

After graduating from St. Mary’s, young Rosemary began working as a teller for Perth Amboy Savings and Loan Association. Although she was happy with her job, she sought direction in her life from God through prayer.

“It [call to religious life] was just a constant nudging from God,” said Sister Rosemary, who was then a member of Holy Spirit Parish, Perth Amboy. “I began to go to Mass every day and pray about it. I had a very deep desire to give my life to God in some way.”

“Previous to that, I only talked about getting married and being a mom to a big family. So it was quite a shock to my parents. I worked for three years before entering the convent in 1963. I turned 21 that November.”

She earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Georgian Court College, Lakewood, and several years later became certified as a bereavement counselor and chaplain.

During the past five decades, she has served her religious community in a variety of posts. Her first assignments were teaching in elementary schools in

the Diocese of Trenton.

Then, for about 10 years she ministered at St. Joseph Parish, Toms River. “I have enjoyed my ministry experiences, especially parish work, because I met and worked with so many wonderful people who influenced my life in a positive way,” she said.

Sister Rosemary also ministered at the Bayshore Senior Day Center, Keansburg, where she was assistant administrator and later program director before assuming her current position at McAuley Hall Health Center, Watchung.

“I loved my experiences with the members of the Senior Center for the same reason as being involved in parish work,” she said. “In both positions I also enjoyed the variety in my day. I never knew what the day was going to bring. I found meeting and working with different people energizing.”

“In my present position, I love being with my Sisters in Mercy. Many of them were mentors to me as a young sister and it is an honor to serve them.”

At McAuley Health Center, Sister Rosemary serves as the life coordinator, which is similar to a chaplain, for the Sisters of Mercy. “I support them in any way I can,” she said. “Sometimes that means shopping for what they need. I pray with them,

“I have enjoyed my ministry experiences, especially parish work, because I met and worked with so many wonderful people who influenced my life in a positive way.”



comfort and encourage. We share stories and laugh a lot. I keep them updated on the happenings in our religious community. Most times, I just listen.”

— Amy Herzog

Sister Mary Elizabeth Roberts, RSM

60 YEARS

As a child, Mercy Sister Mary Elizabeth Roberts did not dream of being a religious. But as she grew older, she felt called to join the Sisters of Mercy. "I always admired them," she said. "I respected the type of things that they did, and I felt attracted to the life. I haven't regretted it one day."

Sister Elizabeth was born in Philadelphia. She had one brother and two sisters. When she started school, she came to know the religious order she would one day enter. She attended St. John School, Collingswood, and graduated from Camden Catholic High School. The Sisters of Mercy taught at both schools.

After high school, Sister Elizabeth enrolled at Georgian Court College, Lakewood, which was founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. She earned a bachelor's degree in humanities. She entered the order Sept. 24, 1953, and made final vows Aug. 17, 1959.

As a young religious, Sister Elizabeth taught second, third and fourth grades at the School of St. Elizabeth, Bernardville, and St. Mary School, Alpha.

"When we first entered, the Sisters of Mercy were in education," she explained. But "I knew I was not cut out to be a teacher. At that time, I felt it was too confining."

Always attracted to nursing, Sister Elizabeth enjoyed taking care of elderly sisters in the infirmary at the community's motherhouse, Mount St. Mary in

Watchung. In 1966, she was finally able to pursue what would become her lifelong ministry.

That year, she and one other sister were permitted to study at St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing, Trenton. The Sisters of Mercy had built McAuley Hall

Health Care Center, Watchung, and were in need of nurses. With credentials in nursing, Sister Elizabeth began working at McAuley Hall where she stayed for 10 years.

She then went to Syracuse, N.Y., where she earned certification as a geriatric nurse practitioner from the State University of New York and subsequently worked as a nurse on the cardiac floor in St. Joseph

Hospital, Syracuse.

In the mid-1980s, Sister Elizabeth returned to Watchung and was appointed administrator of McAuley Hall Health Care Center. She served there until it became a state-licensed nursing home. Since that time, she has been living at the Sisters of Mercy motherhouse and serving as a full-time visiting nurse with Holy Redeemer Home Care.

"I love it," she said. "It's been a wonderful, wonderful experience. There's a lot of autonomy in the home-care nursing ... It's one-on-one or one-on-families. There's a lot of holistic care in home-care nursing."

"I really enjoy every day that I live. I enjoy being a part of this religious community and the compan-

"I like my job, I like my life and I'm very blessed to have this vocation."



ionship of the sisters that I live with, and the people that I encounter in my ministry ... I like my job, I like my life and I'm very blessed to have this vocation."

— Teresa Murphy

Sister Mildred Rossiter, RSM

60 YEARS

Mercy Sister Mildred Rossiter always wanted to be a teacher, and for more than five decades, she has realized her dream.

Born in Somers Point, Sister Mildred described her family as particularly devout. She was the oldest of six children, with four sisters and one brother. The family went to church often and were always very involved in the parish, Sister Mildred recalled. Her father served as an usher, and like many of the other young women, she was a member of the Blessed Virgin Mary Sodality.

While in school, she was often asked to help out with the younger students. She credits the experience as a teacher's helper with first giving her a love of teaching. She was also active in Girl Scouts and volunteered with her younger sister's Brownie troop. Sister Mildred said she "always enjoyed helping others learn new things."

After graduating from St. Peter Elementary School, Pleasantville, Sister Mildred entered Holy Spirit High School, Atlantic City, where her teachers were Sisters of Mercy.

When she saw how the Mercy Sisters related to others and how they interacted with each other, Sister Mildred said she was attracted to their lifestyle. "It just seemed like a good fit for me," she said. In 1953, she entered the Sisters of Mercy and professed her final vows in 1959 at Mount St. Mary, Watchung.

Sister Mildred earned a bachelor's degree in ele-

mentary education from Georgian Court College, Lakewood, and a master's degree in elementary education as a reading specialist at Seton Hall University, South Orange.

Her assignments included teaching at Sts. Philip and James, Phillipsburg; St. Mary, South Amboy; St. Joseph, Keyport; St. Joseph, North Plainfield; and Saint Francis of Assisi Cathedral, Metuchen.

She served as principal of St. Matthias School, Somerset; St. John School, Collingswood; St. Peter the Apostle School, New Brunswick; and as teacher and principal at St. Mary School, Perth Amboy.

"Each experience was unique and the people that were there — the students in the school and the faculty — were all unique," she recalled. "It was diverse and enjoyable."

Reflecting further on her many years in the classroom, Sister Mildred said she loved "working with the children, seeing them grow and develop as students and seeing the effect of Catholic teaching on them."

She added, "I have always admired the commitment of the parents to Catholic education, and enjoyed the interaction with so many good people."

Sister Mildred recently retired from her position as the coordinator of the religious formation program at St. Matthew Parish, Edison.

"I am grateful to all the people who have been a part of my life over these past 60 years," she said. In the

"I have always admired the commitment of the parents to Catholic education, and enjoyed the interaction with so many good people."



years to come, she hopes to continue to be of service as a Sister of Mercy whenever and however needed.

— Teresa Murphy



Above, Mercy Sister Rosemary Hudak accepts a gift from Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski in recognition of her 50th anniversary as a religious. Sister Rosemary was one of 22 religious women and men honored at the evening prayer service held in conjunction with the World Day for Consecrated Life. Below, worshipers at the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi, Metuchen, included many in consecrated life as well as supporters from schools, parishes and beyond the diocese.



Dolores Kearney presents Mercy Sister Margaret Mary Smith with flowers at a reception held in the Cathedral Community Center after the Prayer Service. Sister Margaret Mary celebrated 70 years of service to her religious community. Many jubilarians received tributes from family, friends and parish communities.



During the evening ceremony, jubilarians hold candles, which symbolize the light of Christ. In his remarks, Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski, who led the liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi said their presence and ministry was "absolutely essential to our diocese." He also thanked the sisters and brothers representing the 42 religious orders in the diocese for their work and their love.

DIocese HONORS JUBILARIANS FOR SERVING AS LIGHTS OF CHRIST

By Joanne Ward
Editor-in-chief

METUCHEN — The light of Christ shined brightly in the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi as Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski led the diocese's prayer service for those consecrated to God and the celebration of its jubilarians Feb. 3. Most of the 22 religious marking a significant anniversary this year sat in the front pews while the rest of the cathedral was filled with their families, friends, members of their religious orders, representatives from Catholic schools and many who simply came to pay tribute to them.

During the evening ceremony, candles were lit by the congregation, symbolizing the light of Christ, song and incense filled the air and prayers were lifted up to God.

The highlight of the celebration was the recognition of the jubilarians from Mercy Sister Mary Kateri Smith, a religious for 75 years, to six religious who are marking 25 years of service. The jubilarians renewed their vows and afterwards Bishop Bootkoski presented each with a gift.

In a reflection, Mercy Sister Elizabeth O'Hara, who celebrated her 60th anniversary, asked the young men and women, as well as the children present to

walk with her as she shared "two childhood images which anchored my vocation to religious life."

The first image Sister Elizabeth spoke of was a large framed picture of Jesus kneeling, leaning on a rock, weeping over Jerusalem. It was in the vestibule of Our Lady of the Star Sea Church in Atlantic City. "As a child, I looked at that picture hundreds of times and the response was always the same. 'I wanted to comfort Jesus,'" she said.

The second image came to Sister Elizabeth one day at Mass. She said she was no more than eight years old. The gospel that day began, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather your children together as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings." Recalling that gospel, she said, "At that moment my fate was sealed. Jesus and I had a mutual understanding. We were bonding."

About 30 years later, Sister Elizabeth said she "began to connect these images theologically to love." She said she realized that through images, through the senses, Jesus had been inviting her, calling her to religious life. She then went on to answer the question, "How do we in consecrated life — love?"

Her answer was direct, "We love when we follow the example of Jesus.

We gift others with the gift we have been given. We bring comfort to the suffering, counseling to the confused, truth to the seeker, and forgiveness to the sinner. And in all of this we are anchored by our commitment to Jesus and our gratitude for the example of his life and the extent of his love."

In ending her reflection, Sister Elizabeth spoke directly to the silver jubilarians telling them, "We who have walked the 20th century path...look to you to minister to the needs of the 21st century."

Bishop Bootkoski called the prayer service a very special time in the diocese and told the religious, "Your presence, your ministry among us, is absolutely essential to our diocese." He thanked the brothers and sisters representing many of the 42 religious orders in the diocese for their work and their love. "We thank God for the gift of you," he said.

In her remarks, Religious Teachers Filippini Sister Ascenza Tizzano, diocesan delegate for Religious, expressed gratitude to all who had come to share in the jubilarians' celebration and the gift of consecrated life. She thanked those celebrating significant milestones in their religious life for their dedication to God, their church and their communities.

"Today we are all encouraged by

this beautiful ceremony that makes the light of Christ very present to us," said Sister Ascenza.

In 1997 Blessed John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. The celebration follows the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2, a day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. Those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Christ to all peoples.



Top, Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Sister Lucia S. Flores serves as a reader; middle, Religious Teachers Filippini Sister Ascenza Tizzano, diocesan delegate for Religious, offers remarks. Left, Mercy Sister Elizabeth O'Hara, who is celebrating 60 years as a religious, gave the reflection at the Prayer Service.



—all photos by Mike Ehrmann

When Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski bestowed a papal honor on Mercy Sister Elizabeth O'Hara in 2004, he told her "You are a gifted, selfless woman after the heart of Catherine McCauley [founder of the Sisters of Mercy]." His remark was based on not only the decades of service Sister Elizabeth had given as a teacher and pastoral associate, but also her extraordinary ministry during crucial times in the Diocese of Metuchen.

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Sister Elizabeth coordinated the diocese's World Trade Center Disaster Relief Program. In that position, which she held until 2004, she assisted 110 families within the diocese who had lost a family member, as well as hundreds of others who suffered financial losses or were unemployed as a result of the attack.

"It was very intense work," Sister Elizabeth said. "But it was very gratifying work, and it was important work."

Prepared for dealing with disasters, from 2000 to 2001, Sister Elizabeth, serving with Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen, was appointed as a case manager for families in Bound Brook and Manville who suffered losses as a result of the Tropical Storm Floyd flooding.

Sister Elizabeth has also served as an advocate for sexual abuse victims in the diocese. And when the diocese undertook its first Synod, Sister Elizabeth served on the preparatory commission, as a delegate, and then on the commission for synod implementation.

In her religious order, too, Sister Elizabeth was called to challenging tasks. From 1986 to 1990, she was a member of the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey. For the next four years, she served as vice president of the regional community of the Sisters

of Mercy of the Americas in Watchung. In 1998 she was appointed secretary of the organization, a post she held until 2000.

Born in Philadelphia, Sister Elizabeth was one of seven children. She credits her family, her parish and her experience as a Catholic school student with inspiring her religious vocation. She entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1953, the same year she graduated from high school, and professed her final vows in 1959.

"I always wanted to be a sister," Sister Elizabeth said. "And that's what I did as soon as I was old enough."

Sister Elizabeth earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Georgian Court College, Lakewood; a master's degree in chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; and a doctorate in organic chemistry at Rutgers University, New Brunswick.

After professing her vows, Sister Elizabeth spent more than 20 years in education, teaching just about every subject and every grade level. After ministering in a number of Catholic schools in the dioceses of Trenton and Metuchen, Sister Elizabeth served 11 years as associate professor of chemistry in Georgian Court College (now University).

"I always considered myself basically a teacher, even though I did many different things," she said. "I loved teaching, and as I get older I enjoy keeping in contact with different students," many of whom have continued their education in chemistry."

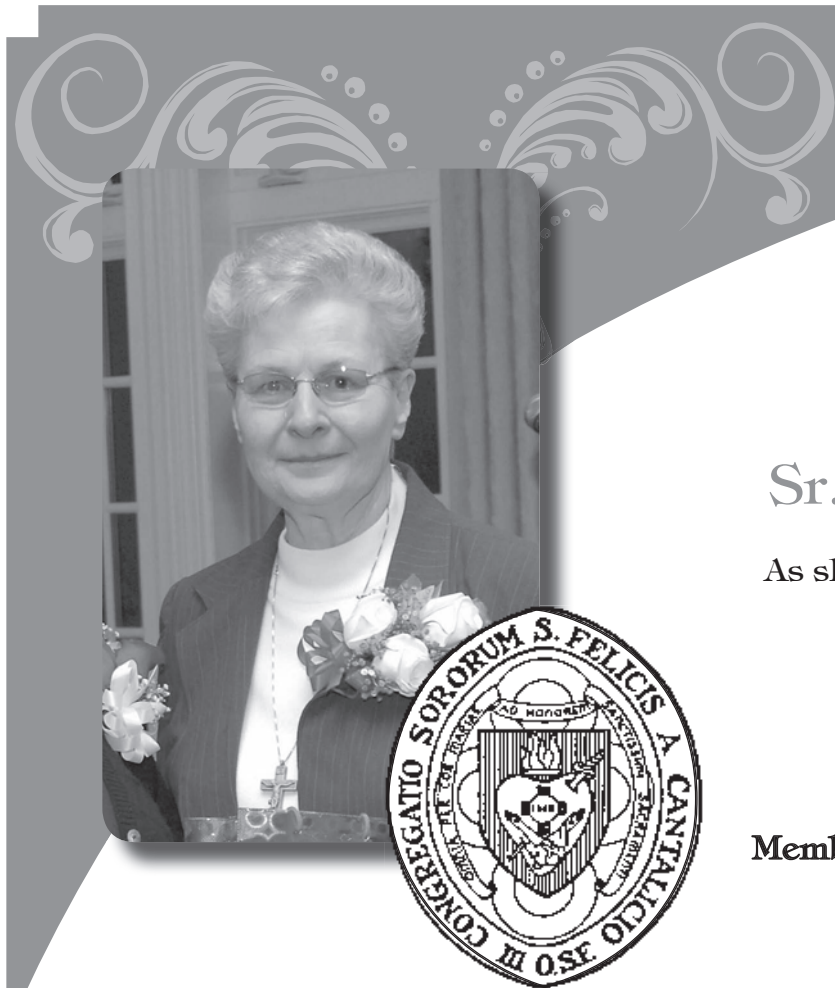
In 1977, Sister Elizabeth, responding to a call, became a pastoral associate in a number of posts throughout the Diocese of Trenton, including teaching computer skills to residents in a drug and alcohol treatment facility.

Sister Elizabeth's last position, from 2004 to 2012



was as the archivist for the Sisters of Mercy in Watchung. She retired from that post when her religious order decided to centralize all archives in one national location in North Carolina.

— Teresa Murphy



1963-2013

Congratulations to
Sr. Cynthia Marie Babyak, C.S.S.F.

As she celebrates her 50th anniversary as a Felician Sister

We thank you for your leadership,
 dedication and spiritual guidance

Sincerely,

Members of the Bishop George Ahr High School community
 Administration, faculty and staff

Sister Mary Amadeo Morganti, RSM

60 YEARS

Mercy Sister Mary Amadeo Morganti has no regrets about entering the Sisters of Mercy one year after she graduated from high school in 1953. "To me, all my life it's been a privilege to live with such women, who share your values and ideals," she said. "The sisters are always willing to help in any situation. They are totally committed to the work of the Lord."

Sister Amadeo was the middle daughter of three girls born to the late Amadeo and Louise Morganti in Trenton. She attended Saint Joachim School in Trenton from kindergarten through eighth grade, where she was taught by the Religious Teachers Filippini Sisters. She then attended Cathedral High School, Trenton, where her teachers were the Sisters of Mercy.

"I knew for a very long time, even grade school days, that I was being called to religious life," she recalled. Although her father resisted the idea of her entering the convent, hoping that his daughter would go to college and get married instead, Sister Amadeo entered the Sisters of Mercy Sept. 24, 1953.

"I can't even believe it's 60 years later," she said. "It doesn't feel like it at all."

Sister Amadeo earned a bachelor's degree in math with a minor in French from Georgian Court College, Lakewood; and a master's degree in education, specializing in physics, from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Her first assignments were in elementary schools. She taught fourth grade at St. Mary Grammar School, Perth Amboy, and sixth, seventh and eighth grades at Our Lady of Victories School, Sayreville. There she enjoyed helping students put on an annual play and working on its scenery.

Sister Amadeo also taught math and physics at St. Mary's High School, now Cardinal McCarrick High School, in South Amboy, and at Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watchung.

Following her service in education, Sister Amadeo was appointed director of Mount Saint Mary's buildings and grounds, a position she held for 13 years. She spent the next 12 years serving as the Mount's assistant treasurer and is now tutoring freshmen in mathematics.

"I loved teaching. I really missed it when I got the other positions," she said. "I'm enjoying being back [in education] tutoring freshmen."

Sister Amadeo said she has always enjoyed the camaraderie of the sisters, who work and play together and assist each other with crafts and numerous projects.

"Working for the Lord requires a total commitment," she said. "You know, commitment is a difficult word today in many ways, not just for religious life. But I know it requires total commitment. Maybe some things do get rough, but you don't just quit on the first hurdle... it requires all your energy, all your love, all your time.

"To me, all my life it's been a privilege to live with such women, who share your values and ideals."



"Yet none of this can compare to what the Lord gives you in return. In the midst of trials, you're granted peace. When all seems hopeless, there is hope. In times of sadness, there is joy, comfort when distressed and encouragement when you feel lost. All this because you're sharing it with so many people in the same situation."

—Teresa Murphy



Sincerest CONGRATULATIONS

SISTER RUTH BOLARTE, IHM
as you celebrate
 YOUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY
 OF CONSECRATED SERVICE

With our prayers and best wishes.

THE DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL LIFE › OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE
 OFFICE FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY › OFFICE OF RESPECT FOR LIFE

Rejoice in the Lord always ... again I say, Rejoice! ~ PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Sister Annette Duignan, RSM

60 YEARS

Even though Mercy Sister Annette Duignan is officially retired, she still is actively ministering to the people of God. As a volunteer at St. James Parish, Woodbridge, she takes care of children of working parents in the after-school program, and serves at the parish food bank – two ministries she finds “very rewarding.”

Sister Annette was born in Trenton, where she attended St. Mary Cathedral School and St. Mary Grammar School, taught by the Sisters of Mercy.

“They were outstanding with regard to caring for children,” she recalled. “They made you feel that you were important. My father passed away when I was 3, and the attention they gave me really meant a lot. They were very loving.”

When she graduated in 1953, Sister Annette told her mother she wanted to enter the convent. “I always wanted to be a nun,” she said.

She was the youngest of eight children and her mother was hesitant to let her daughter enter the convent. “She thought I was too young,” said Sister Annette, who was 18 at the time. “But I insisted. I said I wanted to be a nun all my life, and finally she gave in.”

Since that day, she has never regretted entering religious life. “I’ve always enjoyed being a nun,” she said without hesitation.

Sister Annette studied at Mount Saint Mary Acad-

emy, Watchung, as a postulant, and then enrolled in Georgian Court College, Lakewood, where she became certified to teach.

On Aug. 17, 1959, Sister Annette professed her vows in Mount St. Mary Motherhouse, Watchung.

She taught at the elementary level, primarily seventh and eighth grades, at various schools in the dioceses of Trenton and Metuchen for many years. Her assignments included: Sacred Heart Parish, South Plainfield; St. Joseph Parish, Keyport; St. Catherine Parish, East Keansburg, St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral, Metuchen; and St. Francis Cabrini Parish, Piscataway.

In 1970, she was appointed principal of Sacred Heart School, a position she held for six years.

“Honestly, I liked it but I enjoyed teaching more so than being in the administration,” she said. “Just because you had an opportunity to get to know the children, and you were able to bring them close to you, so that you knew something about them. A lot of the children were very outspoken, so they would tell you their problems and ask for your guidance, and I liked to do that... That meant a great deal to me.”

To this day, several of sister’s former students still like to visit with her.

“I feel that religious life has changed a great deal

“A lot of the children were very outspoken, so they would tell you their problems and ask for your guidance, and I liked to do that... That meant a great deal to me.”



in the 60 years that I have been a nun,” she said. “In the beginning, you didn’t get involved with people socially. Now we’re urged to do that, and to extend ourselves. I think that’s a very good thing, because people see a different side of us, that we too are human.”

— Teresa Murphy

Sister M. Josene Harowicz, OSF

60 YEARS

Bernardine Sister M. Josene Harowicz loves working with children and has been doing so for more than five decades. “I think children are adorable because they are so innocent. You can’t help seeing God through them,” she said.

A preschool teacher at St. John Vianney School, Colonia, Sister Josene said, “Sometimes, the children come to me and say, ‘You’re the best teacher I ever had.’”

“This always makes me smile because when you really think about it, I’m the only teacher they’ve ever had.”

Born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Sister Josene was the youngest of 10 children. She describes her family as very religious. They prayed together every night and dressed up for Mass each Sunday. They had, she added, a particular devotion to St. Joseph.

Sister Josene said she is grateful to her parents for encouraging her in her vocation. She credits her vocation to the Bernadine Franciscan sisters who taught her at St. Stanislaus Elementary School in her hometown. She went Mount Alvernia High School in Reading, Pa., which had been established by the Bernardine Sisters. It became a college in 1958 and today is Alvernia University.

After entering the Bernardine Sisters in 1953, Sister Josene earned a bachelor’s degree in educa-

tion at Misericordia College, Dallas, Pa., and a master’s degree in elementary education at Villanova University, Villanova, Pa.

She then served as a teacher of the first, second and third grades at several Catholic schools in Pennsylvania. In 1970, she was sent to Puerto Rico to serve as principal of the Bernardines’ Sacred Heart School, where she remained until 1976.

From 1979 to 1987, Sister Josene was principal of St. Casimir School, Riverside, in the Diocese of Trenton. She was principal of Christ the King School, Manville, from 1987 to 1992.

Since 1992, she has been living at St. John Vianney. She plans to continue teaching for as long as she can. When people look at her, she wants them to know “that I’m special

in the eyes of the Lord, and they’re special in the eyes of the Lord.”

Reflecting on her 60 years as a religious, Sister Josene said she has no regrets about her vocation. “I have been very fortunate to live with some very holy women,” she remarked. “When I needed them, they were always there.”

And what will she do when she can no longer teach: “I’ll pray – double.”

Sister Josene’s advice to others is, “Remember, every time you get up, have a positive thought. You

“I think children are adorable because they are so innocent. You can’t help seeing God through them.”



get up in the morning and you just thank God that you’re alive and that you can go and do his work.”

— Teresa Murphy

Sister Margaret Mary Smith, RSM

70 YEARS

Mercy Sister Margaret Mary Smith was born and raised in Atlantic City, with “sand in the shoes.” In fact, the blond curly-haired child loved the beach so much, she cried to go back even after getting sun poisoning. The other memory that stands out from her girlhood in Atlantic City is how devoted she was to the Sisters of Mercy, her teachers at St. Nicholas School.

“I admired them immensely,” she said. “I didn’t know there was any other kind of sister.”

By the time she was in fifth grade, she knew she wanted to become a religious. She graduated from Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watchung, in 1943. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Georgian Court College, Lakewood.

When Sister Margaret Mary was serving at St. Mary Parish, Perth Amboy, the pastor came to her with a special request. “That was about 1957. It seems there was a woman in the parish who kept after monsignor for help for her son. The woman had an emergency operation for appendicitis when she was carrying her son, and he was born with cerebral palsy. She was a special education teacher, but did not feel able to prepare her son for the sacraments,” she recalled.

“I didn’t even know about special education,” Sister Margaret Mary said, “but the woman kept after monsignor, and he offered to pay for me to attend classes.” Sister Margaret Mary went to Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y., on Saturdays before switching to Seton Hall University, South Orange, where she earned a master’s degree in special education.

That was the start of a long and illustrious career in special education for Sister Margaret Mary. “It really was my life’s work,” she said.

The next year, the Knights of Columbus offered aid to start more special education classes around Perth Amboy. What started with just one student, soon blossomed into 33 by 1961. When she transferred to St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral Parish in Metuchen in 1962, parents brought their children from all over Middlesex County as soon as the classes became available. The families helped provide supplies for classes that were being formed in 19 other parishes. The groups decided to name themselves the Holy Innocents Society. They were approved as a diocesan society by Bishop George Ahr in 1965.

Sister Margaret Mary’s next assignment was back at St. Nicholas as a full-time special education teacher. “I love working with children...seeing them respond and learn,” she said.

Word of her work spread, and in 1971 she was asked to be director of Special Religious Education in the Diocese of Trenton. In 1977, Sister Margaret Mary became the director of Special Education in the Diocese of Camden. She promoted growth of local parent groups, encouraged activities, and supported efforts to educate the public about special education students’ rights.

Sister Margaret Mary also worked with adults. She began organizing night classes at Holy Spirit High School. Soon she was approached by a group of parents to start a group home for older mentally handicapped people. They received no help from the diocese, the city, or the state. “The families worked very hard to make it come about. They were a joy to work with,” she said.

The name Mary’s Manor was chosen for the home, and it opened in 1990 with six clients. As the director, Sister Margaret Mary operated and lived in the home.



Alongside a legal expert and a fundraiser, she was in charge of morals, encouragement, and prayer. She also helped establish Trinity Manor in Toms River, a group of homes owned and operated by families of the residents.

In 1999, Sister Margaret Mary Smith retired to Gabriel Hall at Mount Saint Mary. “It was a long, busy life, and things that I started are still going,” she said.

— Reanin McRoberts

*Congratulations and Heartfelt Thanks to
Our 2013 Jubilarians*

50th Anniversary

Sister Cynthia Marie Babyak

Sister Mary Rebecca Piatek



FELICIAN SISTERS
OF NORTH AMERICA



Sister Mary Daniel Schroeder, RSM

70 YEARS



For six decades, Mercy Sister Mary Daniel Schroeder served the Lord through the ministry of music. In doing so, she made a lasting impression on many lives. "It was always thrilling to sing in the Sisters Choir with Sister Daniel, she made us all sound like angels," recalled Mercy Sister Judith Ward.

Sister Daniel earned a bachelor's degree in music from Georgian Court College, Lakewood, and a master's degree in music education from Boston University. She continued her studies at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart; Pius X School of Liturgical Music, Purchase, N.Y.; and in Westminster Choir College, Princeton.

For many years, Sister Daniel spread the joy of music through classes she taught at St. James School, Woodbridge; Notre Dame High School, Lawrenceville; Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watchung; and Phillipsburg Catholic High School, Phillipsburg.

She has also served as pastoral music director in St. Joan of Arc Parish, Marlton, and St. John Parish, Bushkill, Pa., and pastoral musician in the parishes of St. Theresa, Succasunna; St. Joseph, Lake Orion, Mich., and St. Luke, Detroit.

After retiring, Sister Daniel volunteered in the music ministry of Mount St. Mary until she became ill.

Born in Easton, Pa., Sister Daniel took her final vows Aug. 1, 1949, in Mount St. Mary Motherhouse in Watchung. She made a positive difference not only in the lives of her students, but on all who know her.

"Sister Daniel taught me to be a department chair and gave me a sense of self confidence," Sister Judy said. "We thoroughly enjoyed team-teaching art and music together on the high school and college levels."

Editor's Note: Due to illness Sister Daniel was unable to be interviewed.

A Prayer for Vocations

Lord, Jesus,
we ask you to send more servants to your people.
Choose from our parishes, from our homes,
from our schools and colleges,
an abundant harvest of apostles for your Kingdom:
priests,
sisters, brothers, deacons and lay ministers.

We pray that those you call may never lose awareness of the dignity and need of their vocation.

O Virgin Mary,
Mother of the Church,
teach to all those the Master calls
to say a joyful "yes"
as you did at the Annunciation
Amen

— United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops

Congratulations



BROTHER JOHN SPALDING, SC

50 years of consecrated religious life

BROTHER KEVIN FINNEGAN, SC

Saint Joseph Alumnus, 1974 • 25 years of consecrated religious life

BROTHER MICHAEL MIGACZ, SC

Saint Joseph Alumnus, 1983 • 25 years of consecrated religious life

**THE STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF AND ALUMNI
OF ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL**

Sister Mary Kateri Smith, RSM

75 YEARS

Sister Mary Kateri Smith grew up in Beverly, N.J., along the Delaware River in Burlington County. When she was two years old, her mother died and her home life became difficult. She feels the religious life saved her from a troubled youth. "If I hadn't been a Sister of Mercy, I don't know what I would have done," she said.

When she was 16, Sister Kateri wrote to Mercy Mother Theresa, the principal at Camden Catholic High School. They had never met, as Sister Kateri attended public school. She had heard of the Sisters of Mercy through her oldest brother and sister, who attended Camden Catholic and she knew that Mother Theresa treated them well.

In her letter, she explained who she was, what was happening in her life and expressed her desire to become a sister. Mother Theresa was familiar with the family and she responded to the letter. "I never knew she was the Reverend Mother. Nothing like going straight to the top," Sister Kateri said with a twinkle in her eye.

Within two weeks, the Reverend Mother visited to talk to Sister Kateri about becoming a religious. They decided she would go to Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watchung. School was a struggle for Sister Kateri, but she made it through and was accepted as a postulant in the Mercy Sisters.

Before she professed her vows, Sister Kateri started thinking about names. She wanted to be Theresa, after the Reverend Mother who had made it possible for her to become a religious. She also had two backup names. She really wanted Theresa, but was realistic. "I knew I wasn't going to get what I wanted," she said.

Mother Theresa did have a name in mind for the young novice — Kateri. "Do you know who she is?" she asked.

"She's an Indian girl," she replied. The original Kateri,

in fact, was a Native American girl from New York State whose mother died when she was young. She was taught by French Jesuits and moved to Montreal after converting to Catholicism in the 17th century.

"I accepted the name," Sister Kateri said. While it may not have been her first choice, it turned out to be a good fit. Both Kateris have very independent spirits. A likeness of the "Lily of the Mohawks" sits on Sister Kateri's bookshelf at McAuley Hall. "She didn't really look like that," she says of the figure in braids and traditional Indian clothes, "but that's how she's represented." It is said that when the recently canonized saint became a Catholic, she experienced a happiness she had never felt before. Sister Kateri felt the same way upon entering the religious life.

She became a Sister of Mercy in 1938, graduated from Rider College (now Rider University), Lawrenceville, and became a teacher. She went on to study French, first spending a summer in Canada. She then went to the Assumption School in Massachusetts, where she was taught by French priests.

Sister Kateri spent her life teaching. "I loved teaching. I liked kids and kids liked me." She taught French to high school students in Atlantic City, Trenton and South Amboy. Every school was different and she tried to treat each student with kindness. Her work in French sent her traveling to Paris with several teachers and students. She also made a trip to Lourdes.

Sister Kateri does have one regret. "I'm not fluent — I can't speak like a native," she admits. Yet over the years she has received letters in French from her former students. Sister Kateri also taught English and worked in guidance and social services. She found that being a counselor was very fulfilling.



Reflecting on her jubilee, Sister Kateri can hardly believe she is marking 75 years as a Sister of Mercy. But she felt a calling from God and knew there was no other path in life for her. "If I hadn't gone to the convent I don't know what I would have done. I knew I didn't want to get married. It was a life I wanted to give to God."

— Reanin McRoberts



The Brothers of the Sacred Heart New York Province

congratulate

Brother John Spalding, sc

**as he celebrates
50 years of religious profession**

Brother Kevin Finnegan, sc

and

Brother Michael Migacz, sc

**as they celebrate
25 years of religious profession**

With all men and women we are called to holiness in keeping with a personal vocation in the Mystical Body, which the Holy Spirit sanctifies and directs through his gifts. It is this same Spirit who has caused the religious life to arise at the heart of the Christian community. It is he who has inspired in us the desire to consecrate ourselves to God in the Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. (Rule of Life #3)