

Sisters of St. Joseph celebrate 33 jubilarians

Women honored at September 24 liturgy/reception

EDITORS' NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles on women religious celebrating their jubilees this year.

Thirty-three Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester are celebrating their jubilees this year. The order honored its jubilarians with a Sept. 24 liturgy and reception at the motherhouse, 4095 East Ave., Pittsford.

Monsignor William H. Shannon, who celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination in June, was the celebrant.

The order's Public Relations Office asked the following women religious celebrating their 70th, 60th, 50th and 25th jubilees questions about their ministerial careers. The following are selected remarks by those sisters who wished to share their thoughts. For more information, call 716/586-1000, ext. 72.

Celebrating 75 years

Sister Angela Marie Bell is a native of Rochester.

"All through my religious life, I taught the second grade. I loved doing this because this was the grade where children made their first confession and received their first holy Communion. I prepared them to the best of my ability. I feel God rewarded me with long years of life during which I enjoyed many of His graces and blessings."

Sister Bell is currently active in prayer ministry.

When asked what it was like to enter the convent 75 years ago, **Sister Rosalie Maier** said: "I had a Victorian upbringing so you can imagine my astonishment on being kissed in welcome by the whole community on my entrance day! That was in 1918 on Augustine Street. Because of the 1918 flu epidemic, I had the shortest postulancy of anyone — only two months — and then I was sent to Immaculate Conception School to replace a sister who died. I had 68 first graders in one room!"

As many of her students will testify, Sister Maier, a native of Rochester, became one of the best teachers the congregation ever had at Nazareth Academy and Nazareth College.

Celebrating 70 years

Sister Francis de Sales Murphy is a native of Elmira.

"All of my 46 years of teaching were rich and enjoyed. My travels over the years took me from Rochester to the furthest points of the diocese, and to Selma, Alabama. I had the wonderful experience of teaching children from 7 to 14 and they helped to keep me young at heart.

"From teaching I went to work at Mercy Hospital in Auburn, and for five years I was privileged to share in another aspect of people's lives," she added. "I am grateful to God for being a Sister of St. Joseph and in sharing in so many lives."

Sister Murphy is currently active in prayer ministry.

Celebrating 60 years

"As a Sister of St. Joseph my main ministry has been teaching children at various levels," said **Sister Dorothy Cooney**, a native of Rochester. "My greatest happiness was in teaching small children and starting them on their long journey of school years. They always seemed to me like flowers budding and bursting into full bloom, praising God. On the opposite end of the spectrum, through the Literacy Volunteers Program, it was my privilege to work with adults who needed help in the basic skills of reading. They, too, were like flowers budding and blooming in their joy of learning."

Sister Cooney currently teaches at Christ the King School in Irondequoit.

Sister Marie Emily Cooney is a native of Rochester.

"Of all my ministries, being congregational archivist was the one I liked and enjoyed the most. My older sister was also a Sister of St. Joseph and it was through her that I came to know so many of the sisters. Working in the archives was like meeting them all over again. I found the work not only interesting but fulfilling and it increased my love and appreciation for the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, not only the Rochester SSJs, but for all the other congregations of SSJs.

"I also found teaching kindergarten and directing choirs, plays, and operettas a rewarding experience because the children involved just seemed to blossom," she added.

Sister Cooney is currently active in prayer ministry.

Sister St. Joseph Creighton, a native of Elmira, has served as a nurse anesthetist at St. Joseph's Hospital, 555 E. Market St., Elmira, for 45 years.

She also spent five years at Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma, Ala.

Her other experience at St. Joseph's included working in the Oncology Department and the Emergency Room as a phlebotomist and as a patient service assessor through phone calls to previous ER patients.

Currently, she is on call as a phlebotomist and receptionist.

Sister Marie Xavier Fox is a native of Oak Hill, N.Y.

"For He Who is mighty has done great things for me ... I am deeply grateful for all the wonders God has done for me throughout these 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, which have constantly called me to the awareness that God calls each of us to give our lives in a particular way to Him. What we do is His work, as God lives in each of us loving us into eternity.

"I am grateful, too, for all the wonderful people I have known and who have touched my life with theirs. They generously shared their lives with me in so many ways and in a real sense have given me the example and inspiration for sharing my own life in a lifelong commitment to serve God and others."

Sister Fox is currently a sacristan and



St. Joseph, patron saint of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester.

pastoral visitor at St. Ann's Home, 1500 Portland Ave., Rochester.

"I was a member of the biology department of Nazareth College of Rochester for 43-and-a-half years, and served as chairperson of that department for more than 30 years," said **Sister Grace Geisler**, a native of Rochester. "To teach students about the beautiful creations that came from the hand of God was a most rewarding experience, and I am truly grateful for it.

"Now, as assistant archivist at our motherhouse, I have the opportunity to learn about the growth and contributions of our congregation to the church," she added.

Sister Geisler is now the order's assistant archivist.

Sister St. Edward Lannon is a native of Susquehanna, Pa.

"St. Joseph's Hospital supervisor on M3 was fulfilling my vocation in making Christ known and loved by kind treatment of my neighbor in ministering to the sick.

"Sister Francis Xavier Dailor helped me in my vocation by her gracious assistance and kind advice. I have been happy in my choice and this is a time for thanksgiving."

Sister Lannon is currently active in prayer ministry.

"I have lived each of my ministries to the full whether in Auburn, Geneva, Corning, or Rochester," recalled **Sister Mary Ida Lynch**, a native of Alexander, N.Y. "I feel that somehow each of them got me ready for what I consider my 'best' ministry, where I have loved and been loved, accepted and been accepted, grown in the love of God, the congregation, and the Sisters in particular. Being here at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary has been a grace I wish everyone could enjoy!"

Sister Lynch currently serves as the local coordinator for the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.



Sister Marie Lawrence Mayer is a native of Rochester.

"Another milestone — another opportunity to ponder and appreciate more fully the graces and blessing of religious life!"

Sister Mayer is currently treasurer for convent services for Nazareth Academy Convent.

"Since 1988 I have been a volunteer at Mt. Carmel Hospice (in Rochester)," said **Sister Bernadette McNeil**, a native of Rochester.

"After each visit I come away feeling I was a better woman for my contact with the dying patient."

Sister McNeil is currently active in convent services.

Sister Joseph Francis O'Connor is a native of Auburn.

"These 60 years of religious life have been most happy ones for me. My career began teaching primary grades in our Catholic schools in Rochester, Canandaigua, and Dansville. These last 25 years I have had the privilege of teaching in my own hometown, Auburn, at Sacred Heart and Blessed Trinity Schools. I thank God for these happy, rewarding years."

Sister O'Connor is currently involved in convent services.

"Two areas of ministry that I particularly enjoyed were teaching eighth-grade boys and teaching Afro-Asian studies at St. Agnes High School," recalled **Sister Marie René Pegnam**, a native of Rochester.

"Eighth-grade boys are challenging because from September to June they change daily from being little boys to being young men. I would call them fair, fresh, and friendly.

"My community prepared me well for teaching Afro-Asian studies through special courses on India at Cornell University, on China at Harvard University, and on Japan at Columbia University," she added. "These studies added to my interest in history and politics. The University of Rochester provided foreign students to visit my classes. My abiding interest in history and politics continues during my retirement."

Sister Pegnam is currently active in prayer ministry.

Sister Catherine Quigley is a native of Rochester.

"Rejoice with me, my friends, again I say, Rejoice."

Sister Quigley is currently active in prayer ministry.

"The religious life enables one to serve God in a special way. Teaching children to love God and honor, love, and obey their parents and elders, is im-

