

Milestones

Sisters of St. Joseph honor 31 marking jubilees

PITTSFORD — Thirty-one Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester are marking their jubilees this year. The order will honor these women religious on Friday, Sept. 22, with a liturgy and reception at the SSJ Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave.

The congregation's public-relations office asked women religious celebrating 75, 70, 60, and 50 years various questions about their ministerial careers. The following are selected remarks by those sisters. For more information, please call 716/586-1000, ext. 172.

75 years

Sister Florian Reichert, SSJ, is a native of Corning. She joined the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1919



and began her long association with secular and liturgical music as a teacher at Nazareth Academy and Holy Rosary School. She served as supervisor of music for the sisters, teaching Gregorian chant and the techniques of classroom music to the congregation's novices. She also served as the order's director of liturgy from 1955-71.

"Teaching and working with our young sisters always filled me with joy and admiration as I watched them mature into professional women religious with a deep appreciation of liturgical music and the arts," Sister Florian said.

Sister Florian is "actively retired." She is currently preparing her third book of poetry and also creates art cards and prayer services.

When asked about her vocation, Sister Florian observed, "The very calm sense of feeling at home as soon as I entered the SSJ Novitiate doors helped me to sense that life as a woman religious was right for me. God's great love and grace have always seen me through as I walked the journey of these many years."

70 years

A native of Rochester, **Sister Teresa Clare Ehrmentraut, SSJ**, enjoyed her career teaching typing and shorthand at the high school and college level.



"It gave me a feeling of satisfaction to know that the knowledge obtained and the skills required in my classes would enable the students to enter the world of business fully prepared to meet the demands they would encounter," Sister Teresa Clare said.

In addition, Sister Teresa Clare served as archivist for Pittsford's Nazareth College of Rochester and was secretary to the late Dr. Alice L. Foley, college president. Sister Teresa Clare remembers Foley with fondness, recalling, "Dr. Foley was generous in her service to the public schools and to the students, staff and faculty of Nazareth College; she was a noble woman."

Sister Teresa Clare now participates in prayer ministry at the SSJ Motherhouse.

Sister Mary Matthew Fennessy, SSJ, is a native of Wilkesburg, Pa. She began her teaching career in 1926 at Holy Apostles School in Rochester and retired in 1985 after serving as a classroom assistant at Our Lady of Perpetual Help for 15 years.



"My years at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish are especially memorable to me," Sister Mary Matthew said. "I was privileged to teach many groups of varying racial and cultural backgrounds and to grow in love for them."

Sister Mary Matthew added, "Following my vocation to religious life has been, I feel, the right choice for me. The noble ideals and saintly lives of those about me have been an ongoing example and a wonderful spiritual support. The opportunity to hear Mass daily and to receive the sacraments so very often, has been an enormous help in my spiritual life."

Currently, Sister Mary Matthew participates in prayer ministry at St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

A native of Elmira, **Sister Mary Lourdes McCarthy, SSJ**, taught Latin and history at Geneva DeSales High School and Elmira's Catholic High School, prior to obtaining a doctoral degree in sacred doctrine from St. Mary's College in Indiana.



Sister Mary Lourdes began teaching theology at Nazareth College in 1958 and was named professor emerita at the college in 1983. She retired from her position in 1988, but remains active in prayer ministry and tutoring.

Commenting on her years as a Sister of St. Joseph, Sister Mary Lourdes said, "Religious life strengthened and enriched my faith, taught me how to live and teach others to live the truths of my faith, how to question my faith and how to search for answers. Religious life, by encouraging daily prayer, meditation, and the eucharistic celebration has enabled me to understand how Jesus' life becomes a pattern for my life work, and how Jesus' obedience to the Father is the blueprint for my life of obedience. Reflecting on my blessings, graces and opportunities during these 70 years, I cannot imagine a choice of vocation that would have brought me more peace; though its demands were great, its rewards outnumbered them."

Sister Marie Therese Warth, SSJ, a native of Rochester, taught at Nazareth Academy for 49 years and is gratified to hear about the successful lives of many of



her students.

Recalling her decision to enter religious life, Sister Marie Therese observed, "At the old St. Patrick's Cathedral, I remember Monsignor William Bergin remarking, 'Some day you may be a sister.' That inspired me, a sixth-grader, to pray more fervently to learn God's will and especially at daily Mass, to respond to His call."

Sister Marie Therese's great love for children inspired her to become a teacher as well. She is currently involved in prayer ministry at St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

60 years

Sister Joseph Edward Creary, SSJ, is a native of Penn Yan. She held a number of teaching positions in Rochester, Auburn, and Dansville, prior to becoming librarian at Nazareth Academy in 1966.



"As the Academy librarian," Sister Joseph Edward recalled, "I found it very satisfying to guide the students to the many sources available for their research and for their enjoyment."

Commenting on her vocation, Sister Joseph Edward explained, "Religious life has fulfilled my desire to help others and to live with others, wishing to educate the youth over this period of 50 years."

Sister Joseph Edward currently participates in prayer ministry at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

A native of Arnot, Pa., **Sister Teresa Laurene Creighton, SSJ**, enjoyed a teaching career which included positions in Rochester, Elmira, Canandaigua, Ithaca, Horseheads and Waverly.



"My years in the diocesan school system were both challenging and interesting," Sister Teresa Laurene said. "An event which I especially remember was the presentation of 'The Presentation of the Life of Christ Cantata' with tableaux by the school children of St. Anthony's parish in Elmira. In the Cantata there was a beautiful blending of music and drama which portrayed the outstanding moments in the life of Christ."

Sister Teresa Laurene, who now resides at the order's infirmary, participates in prayer ministry, remembering especially junior high school children in her prayers.

Sister Mary George Dash, SSJ, a native of Rochester, held teaching and administrative positions in Rochester, Canandaigua, Auburn, and Brockport.



"One of my fondest experiences was teaching kindergarten for 12 years at St. Monica's; it was excellent preparation for the years which followed," Sis-

ter Mary George said. "My classroom experience led to work in eight different Catholic schools; this was work that I loved."

In 1970, Sister Mary George became director of the congregation's retirement program. "In this rewarding endeavor," she said, "I visited with our senior sisters, helping them to face the problems of the aging process."

Sister Mary George now lives at the order's infirmary and participates in prayer ministry.

A native of Rochester, **Sister Mary Gerald Fischette, SSJ**, taught elementary grades in Rochester, Avon and Oswego, and seventh and eighth grades at St. Augustine's, Blessed Sacrament, St. Jerome's, and Holy Apostles. She especially loved teaching music. She now resides at the order's infirmary and participates in prayer ministry.



Sister Gervase Kamas, SSJ, is a native of Elmira.



"It has been quite a journey from blackboard and chalk to computers," Sister Gervase said. "I have enjoyed my teaching ministry for 54 years in the diocesan elementary and high schools where the science of education and the art of teaching challenged me. Most of all I appreciated opportunities for creative expression. I loved all my pupils, and now pray that God keeps them happy and well on the way to heaven."

Sister Gervase added, "My twin sister, Sister Protase, has helped me carry on these 60 years. It was her sincere devotion to her religious vocation, her great sense of humor, and her sound advice to me that kept me in action. I am truly grateful."

Sister Gervase made her decision to become a Sister of St. Joseph when she was a student at Elmira's Catholic High. "Prayer and counseling with my parents, my sister and my teachers led me to believe that religious life would offer me the climate for freedom to pursue knowing, loving, and serving God," she said.

Sister Gervase now participates in prayer ministry and lives in Elmira.

Elmira-native **Sister Protase Kamas, SSJ**, noted, "I have always loved the ministry of teaching, which began in 1938 at St. Augustine's School. Then my teaching assignments took me to (other) diocesan schools, where I saw God's glory manifested in the pupils I taught."



In recalling individuals who had special influence in her life, Sister Protase remembers her parents. "My parents helped me the most as they, too, loved God and the church," she said. "They

were proud of the choice of vocation that my twin sister and I made. They gave a generous 'yes' to our intent to become Sisters of St. Joseph."

Sister Protase added, "I think I truly realized I wanted to spend the rest of my life as a Sister of St. Joseph during my high-school years. Now, I know I have made the right choice. With God's help and Sister Gervase's, I have been blessed with happiness and satisfaction that life in religion has helped me to see and recognize God everywhere."

Like her twin, Sister Protase participates in prayer ministry and lives in Elmira.

Sister Rita Quigley, SSJ (Sister Anne Paula), is a native of Rochester. Her career included teaching positions in Rochester, Geneva, Wayland and Corning. She was also a pastoral assistant at St. Joseph's Church in Cayuga and receptionist for the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse.



"Many years ago an eighth-grade girl sat listening to Sister Laura in Immaculate Conception School in Rochester," Sister Rita said of her vocation. "And, as she listened, she said to herself, 'Someday, I'm going to be a teacher, and I'm always going to be with kids, and I'm always going to be young.'"

"For years I lived that dream in classrooms throughout the diocese — in city, village, suburb and inner-city," Sister Rita continued. "Summer ministries took me from as far away as Lowell, Mass., where I worked as counselor in a day camp, to Vredenburgh and Pine Apple in Alabama where I taught Bible lessons and math. And always I was with kids!"

Sister Rita concluded, "After retiring from teaching, I engaged in diverse ministries wherever there was a need."

Sister Eleanor Seidewand, SSJ (Sister Mary Leo), is a native of Rochester. After 36 years of teaching, Sister Eleanor holds special memories of the year she taught first grade at Auburn's St. Alphonsus School. "It was amazing to see the growth in ability of the little ones," she said.



Sister Eleanor has spent the past 20 years as a physical-therapy aide at the order's infirmary. "I find it very gratifying," she said, "especially when I see so many of the sisters making progress in mobility."

When asked about her decision to join the congregation, Sister Eleanor recalled, "From my earliest years at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, I admired the sisters who taught me and I hoped some day to devote my life to God in religious life. My life as a Sister of St. Joseph has been a very happy one."

A native of Webster, **Sister Rosina Smith, SSJ**, enjoyed a career devoted to education. "In

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