

# Milestones

## Sisters of St. Joseph to mark jubilees May 1

Twenty-four Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester have reached a milestone in their religious lives celebrating 75, 70, 60 or 50 years. The sisters will celebrate their jubilees with a Mass at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave., Rochester, on Thursday, May 1, at 7 p.m. A reception will follow.

### 75 years

Born in Long Island, N.Y., Sister **Immaculata Connelly, SSJ**, entered the SSJs of Rochester in 1921.

After receiving her teaching certification from Nazareth Normal School in 1922, Sister Immaculata devoted the next 60 years to education. She began her career at Holy Apostles School. She later taught English at the schools of St. Francis de Sales, Geneva, and Immaculate Conception, Rochester, and at DeSales High School in Geneva; St. Agnes High School, Rochester, St. Peter and Paul School, Elmira, and St. Patrick School, Corning, and Holy Trinity School, Webster.

During her school service, she earned a bachelor of arts degree in English from Nazareth College, then earned a master's degree from St. Bonaventure University. She also received a master's degree in library science from the State University of New York at Geneseo.

In 1956, she joined the staff of Nazareth Academy where she taught English and worked in the school library. She remained there for 12 years, leaving in 1968 to teach at St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads. One year later, she returned to Nazareth Academy in Rochester.

Sister Immaculata retired in 1991. She now lives at St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

### 70 years

Serving God these many years is quite an accomplishment, Sister **Mary Martha Reeder, SSJ**, said of her jubilee.

"God has been good to me,"



she said. "I've been able to serve fellow humans and God."

In 1928, Sister Mary Martha was assigned to teach at Sacred Heart School in Rochester. She remained there for 11 years, after which she went on to teach at the following schools: Immaculate Conception and St. Augustine, both in Rochester; St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, and Holy Apostles, Rochester. She eventually became a classroom assistant at St. John the Evangelist School, Greece, and at St. Stanislaus School, Rochester.

Sister Mary Martha retired in 1984. Since then, she has worked as an assistant at St. Stanislaus Convent. She also serves in prayer ministry.

"I marvel at the great and wonderful services that the sisters have given to God and his people," she said.

Sister **Marie Patricia Costello, SSJ**, has enjoyed a teaching career spanning 55 of her 70 years as a Sister of St. Joseph.



The Corning native began teaching at St. Francis de Sales School in Geneva. She went on to teach at Immaculate Conception School and St. Joseph's Villa, both in Rochester.

In 1951, Sister Marie Patricia accepted a position at St. Michael School in Penn Yan serving as both teacher and superior/principal, positions she held for six years before moving back to Rochester. During her career, she taught at the schools of St. Lucy, Rochester, Sacred Heart, Auburn, St. Pius X, Rochester, St. Aloysius, Auburn, and St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls.

"St. Pius X and Immaculate Conception convents stand out most in my memory," Sister Marie Patricia said. "Each had a very supportive and happy community life."

Before retiring in 1986, Sister Marie Patricia taught at at Holy

Rosary School, Rochester. She now lives at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary and engages in prayer ministry.

"Daily prayer and Eucharist (have) brought me ever closer to God," she added. "And it has enabled me to help others by bringing their needs to God."

A chemistry lab is where you would most likely have found Sister **Marie Augustine Smalt, SSJ**.

She taught chemistry for a number of years at Nazareth College, then served as the chemistry department

chair for 36 years. In 1977, she became an academic advisor in the department, and then went on to work as an assistant to the provost. She retired from the college in 1988.

Sister Marie Augustine, a Nazareth Academy graduate, earned numerous college degrees during her career including bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry; a doctorate in biochemistry; and a certificate in nuclear studies.

"In religious life, seemingly impossible things can be required," she said. "An example would be to meet degree requirements in a fixed/limited time. With God's help, one usually succeeds."

Sister Marie Augustine now concentrates on prayer ministry.

When asked what has been most rewarding about being a Sister of St. Joseph, Sister Marie Augustine simply responded: "Happiness."

Seventy years as a Sister of St. Joseph has given Sister **Angela Sutula, SSJ**, (formerly Sister Angela Therese) the inspiration to develop a personal prayer life with Christ.

"It has been a wonderful experience being a Sister of St. Joseph," she said. "I am so grateful to God."

Known to many as "Bouncy" or "Bubbles," Sister Angela taught elementary school children at St. Stanislaus, Rochester, St. Alphonsus, Auburn, St. Casimir, Elmira, St. Paul's, Oswego, and St. Patrick's in Mt. Morris.

The Nazareth College graduate also worked as a pastoral assistant in Mt. Morris.

From 1985 to 1994, Sister Angela worked in prayer ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Wayland. Three years ago, she returned to Rochester, and continued to focus on her work in prayer ministry.

Sister Angela currently resides at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

"I just marvel every day at the great and wonderful services that the sisters have given to God and his people," she said.

For 24 years, Sister **Madeleine Louise Healy, SSJ**, was a seamstress at the motherhouse.

Prior to this ministry, Sister Madeleine Louise

worked as a vocal teacher, elementary school teacher and principal. She taught at the following schools: St. Patrick's Cathedral, Rochester, St. Mary's, Auburn, St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls, and Blessed Sacrament and Immaculate Conception, both in Rochester.

In 1953, she wore several hats including teacher, principal and superior at St. Stephen in Geneva. Six years later, she resumed teaching at the schools of St. Mary's, Canandaigua, St. Ambrose, Irondequoit, and St. Jerome's, East Rochester.

"I learned patience — great patience," Sister Madeleine Louise said of teaching. "At the same time, I always expected the best from the pupils."

The Rochester native said she has no regrets for entering religious life, and feels blessed by the many ministries in which she has served.

"I knew since I was in grammar school that I wanted to be a sister," she recalled. "There's nothing that I would do differently. I went willingly to my various assignments. Some were hard. Some were easy. But the Lord took care of me."

### 60 years

Sister **Mary Paschal Rouss, SSJ**, had never seen the Sisters of

St. Joseph motherhouse prior to entering the order; however she had talked to members of the congregation.

"I just knew that's where I was going," Sister Mary Paschal said of religious life. "We had an extremely happy novitiate. There seemed to be such a variety of sisters. It was such a delightful time."

Sister Mary Paschal attended Nazareth Normal School, then pursued a career in education, serving both as a teacher and principal.

She began teaching at Sacred Heart School in Rochester. She served as principal at the schools of Holy Trinity, Webster, St. Francis de Sales, Geneva, and Corning Catholic School.

In addition to her ministry, Sister Mary Paschal also took time to earn two bachelor's degrees from Nazareth College — one in education and the other in history.

"I just think of the fulfillment of all the years I've served," Sister Mary Paschal said. "It's been wonderful."

She retired in 1995 and now lives at the motherhouse.

Sister **Francis Gerard Smalt, SSJ**, will never forget the look of her first kindergarten class.

"Eyes full of questions and a little bit of fright," she recalled.

Sister Francis Gerard became accustomed to that look. She taught kindergarten for 15 years at St. Patrick's School in Seneca Falls, and at schools at Rochester's Corpus Christi and St. Francis de Sales in

Geneva.

However, one of her most memorable experiences occurred in 1955, when she transferred to teaching seventh- and eighth-graders.

"They thought, 'Here comes the kindergarten teacher, and we will have fun!'" she said. "They learned otherwise, but I loved them all no matter what grade."

Sister Francis Gerard taught at schools at Sacred Heart, Rochester, Nativity, Brockport, St. Mary's, Canandaigua and St. Mary's, Auburn. She accepted a short-term assignment as a seamstress at the motherhouse in 1967, however she returned to teaching later that year.

In 1977, she became the assistant director for Cornerstone Crafts in the motherhouse. Today, she still works part-time at the craft shop, while serving in prayer ministry.

"Becoming a Sister of St. Joseph was the most important thing for me," the Nazareth College graduate said. "Since the fourth grade, I wanted to give myself to God. I know now that this was a gift of God to me too."

Sister **Bernadine Freidas, SSJ**, (formerly Sister Martoni) has been both a teacher and a health-care provider.

As a teacher, she taught at schools at St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, St. Francis Xavier, Rochester, Mother of Sorrows, Greece, St. Stanislaus, Rochester, Corpus Christi, Rochester and DeSales High School in Geneva.

In health care, Sister Bernadine worked as the executive director of the Red Cross Pioneer Unit — Clara Barton Chapter 1 in Dansville.

"I was given the opportunity to see the comprehensive service offered to citizens," Sister Bernadine said of her Red Cross experience. "This includes service to the families of service personnel, the needs at times of disaster and, more commonly, the needs of the poor in the chapter area."

Since 1989, she has served as a nursing aide at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary, Rochester.

Sister Bernadine received two bachelor's degrees from Nazareth College. She later earned a master's degree in chemistry and general science from Sacred Heart College.

"Religious life was the right choice for me because my goal in life was to help others," she said.

Sister **Helen Anne Barry, SSJ**, is affectionately known as "Sister Suzuki" in the music world, referring to the method she uses to teach children.

She said of the Suzuki philosophy: "You're not just teaching the violin. You're teaching children music, living soul to living soul. Music is one of the beauties of the world. And beauty is supplied by God himself."

Sister Helen Anne devoted 55 years to teaching instrumental

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Thursday, April 17, 1997

*Timothy W. Dwyer*  
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