

MILESTONES

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dy.' He beamed at me and understood, 'Oh, you work for God!' And that's what I've always tried to do."

Sister Karen eventually left nursing and served as pastoral assistant, administrator and parish visitor at St. Thomas More from 1986 to 1995. Retired in 1995, she works as part-time receptionist at the motherhouse.



Sister Helen Therese Koenen devotes her time to prayer ministry, specifically assigned to diocesan chaplains serving colleges, institutions, hospitals and prisons.

"My prayers are offered for the chaplains, who bring Christ to many," the Auburn native said. "It's so rewarding to me to pray for them."

Prior to prayer ministry, Sister Helen Therese served for 44 years in education. "Teaching brought me many challenges and much happiness," Sister Helen Therese said. "Children of all ages are good teachers. Their trusting ways, their innocence and caring, their honesty and love have left an indelible mark on my mind. These qualities in a person's life allow others to know Christ better and to grow closer to him."

Sister Helen Therese worked at St. Paul in Oswego; St. Anne, Our Lady of Good Counsel and Nazareth Hall in Rochester; St. Mary in Elmira; St. Patrick in Corning; Immaculate Conception in Ithaca; and Blessed Trinity in Auburn. She also was library coordinator at Blessed Trinity, retiring in 1998 to focus on prayer ministry.



Education and pastoral work provided **Sister Anne Helene Brien** with wonderful opportunities during her 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph.

"Each ministry had its own season in my life," Sister Anne Helene said. "Each had involved working with God's people. Each had its own special memories, but the opportunity to journey with people in pastoral work, the privilege to witness the growth of faith and liturgical appreciation and celebrate the Sacraments has been a special joy and reward."

Sister Anne Helene spent the first 30 years of religious life teaching at Corpus Christi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Theodore, Our Lady of Lourdes, Nazareth Academy, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Thomas More and St. Agnes High School in Rochester; St. John the Evangelist in Greece; and St. Michael in Penn Yan.

After Vatican II, Sister Anne Helene decided to change careers, working in pastoral ministry at St. John in Clyde (1974-75), the diocesan pastoral office (1975-79), St. Gregory in Marion (1980-86) and St. Patrick in Seneca Falls (1986-93).

Since 1994, Sister Anne Helene has worked for Sisters Care, a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph, which provides home

assistance to the elderly or homebound.

50 years



Sister Janet Mary Coseo (Sister Mary Dennis) grew up a block away from the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown, N.Y. Needless to say, the example of the sisters has been a significant part of her life as far back as she can remember.

"The mystery of vocation has continued to amaze me throughout my religious life," she said. "The daily surprises encountered in community and ministry have kept me eager to experience their challenges and blessings."

Sister Janet Mary entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Watertown in 1952 and worked as a teacher there for 26 years. In 1978, she transferred to the Rochester congregation and taught for four years at St. Monica's School. She then served as the day-care director for Ss. Peter and Paul in Rochester (1982-87). In 1994, Sister Janet Mary became a real estate broker and partner at Sheila Walsh Realty.

"It has been a privilege to have shared in the lives of those whom I have met because I am a Sister of St. Joseph — as a teacher, parish member and real estate broker," she said.



For the past 14 years, **Sister Maura Wilson** has served as the co-director of the Tanzanian Sisters Project — a joint program between the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of Mercy — where young Tanzanian sisters come to Nazareth College for higher education.

"This has been a memorable and moving part of my religious life," Sister Maura said. "I especially enjoy the moment when each sister, dressed in her cap and gown, proceeds down the aisle at graduation to receive her well-earned degree. Each sister is so proud, and so am I!"

Prior to this work, Sister Maura served in education and congregational services. She taught at St. Monica and worked in vocation ministry for the Sisters of St. Joseph from 1965 to 1979. She later conducted prayer retreats and served on the congregation's leadership team.

While she has been the co-director for the Tanzanian project, Sister Maura has also worked as a pastoral visitor at Most Precious Blood (1994-95, 1996-present) and St. Rita in Webster (1995-96).



"New hope, each new day," is a quote that **Sister Rosemary Mackie (Sister Columba)** lives by.

"This saying just grounds me," Sister Rosemary said. "And it applies to all aspects of my life."

She served in educa-

tion at St. Mary in Auburn; St. Monica, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Stanislaus, St. Agnes High School and St. Lucy in Rochester; St. Mary in Waterloo; St. Mary in Dansville; and St. Rose in Lima.

In 1979, she was assigned as maintenance assistant at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary, where she remained for eight years. She then went to the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation in 1987, where she serves as a rehab specialist.

"I love working with the dedicated staff and board to assist the rural poor," Sister Rosemary said. "During my years of teaching, I never encountered real poverty until I began working with Sheen Housing. I daily witness the real difference we can make in the quality of life for families and seniors."



"A call to be a Sister of St. Joseph challenges me," **Sister Concepta Vay** said, "to continually be a sign of Christ's hope, peace and healing presence among all God's people."

Presently, Sister Concepta lives out this call in education, serving 43 years at St. Ambrose, Holy Apostles, Sacred Heart, St. Lawrence and Nazareth Hall in Rochester; St. Jerome in East Rochester; and Sacred Heart in Auburn.

"The children are the joy of my life," she said. "It is a privilege to lead them to Jesus with gentleness and love."

During the summer months, Sister Concepta teaches children at the Fathers of St. Edmund mission in Pine Apple, Ala.

"The children's simplicity of life, love for Jesus and their happiness draws me to return each year for another summer of tremendous grace," Sister Concepta said. "I am deeply grateful to God for the many experiences and graces given to me."



Sister Shirley Pilot (Sister Mariana) remains committed to being a Sister of St. Joseph, because she believes God has called her to this life, and he sustains her with love, hope and faith through the good times

and bad.

"I am supported by my family, my colleagues and my many sisters and friends, who are always there for me," Sister Shirley said. "I receive strength and energy by working with people. I have learned that we need to work together, share our gifts and enable one another to reach his or her potential to spread God's word."

Sister Shirley has devoted most of her career to education and pastoral ministry. She spent more than 12 years at St. Anne, St. Monica, Most Precious Blood, Sacred Heart, Nazareth Academy and Nazareth College in Rochester and St. Rose in Lima.

In 1966, she opted for a career change, serving in pastoral care in Brazil for six years. She returned to work at St. Anthony of Padua and St. Patrick in Rochester. She then served as the diocesan director

of campus ministry at Rochester Institute of Technology (1972-87). From 1987 to 1992, she worked at Sheila Walsh Realty. Since 1994, she has served as a graduate adviser at Nazareth College.



If **Sister Virginia Schmitz (Sister Loyola)** were to write a book about being a Sister of St. Joseph, it would begin as so many books and stories do, with "Once upon a time," and after these 50

years, would end with "happily ever after." "I often become awe-struck as I peer into the kaleidoscope of my life and see and am so grateful for the many opportunities given me — opportunities for spiritual and cultural enrichment and add to them all the variety of ministries. I would have more than enough material to write a book!"

Her first 11 years of religious life were spent in education, teaching at St. Michael in Penn Yan and Sacred Heart and Mother of Sorrows in Rochester. She then went to Brazil as a missionary, working in health, education and pastoral ministries. She returned to Rochester in 1978 and began pastoral work as a pastoral assistant at St. Paul in Oswego for nine years. In 1990, she became chaplain at Strong Memorial Hospital. Three years later, she accepted a job as a case manager at School of the Holy Childhood. In 1996, she returned to her chaplain work as a substitute chaplain at Strong Memorial and St. Joseph Convent Infirmary.

Today she serves as an assistant coordinator at the infirmary and a part-time chaplain at Strong.



Her mother had considered religious life, but decided that marriage was her calling. She then had 12 children. Years later, **Sister Beverly Baker (Sister Aloysia)** felt the same call to religious life and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph.

"I think I felt God's call first as a child and then pretty consistently throughout my years in school," Sister Beverly said. "Prayer and God's grace and mercy has sustained me and carried me through these 50 years."

Sister Beverly began her religious life in education. She taught at Mother of Sorrows in Rochester, Mt. Carmel High School in Auburn and DeSales High School in Geneva. Since 1971, she has coordinated the migrant education program at SUNY Brockport, working with migrant farm workers and their families.

"I am enriched by the ethnic and linguistic diversity of people I have met through my work in this program," she said. "I thank God for the opportunities given to me to be in this ministry."

25 years



It may seem unusual for a Roman Catholic sister to be a leading authority on Jewish feminist theology, but that is the case with **Sister Susan Nowak**.

As a religious studies professor at Nazareth College, Sister Susan has studied extensively in the field of Judaism. While pursuing her doctorate degree at Syracuse University, Sister Susan focused her dissertation on Jewish feminist thought and how it related to Holocaust studies.

"I wanted to analyze the experience of women from the Holocaust, whether as a perpetrator, survivor, rescuer or scholar," she explained. "I also wanted to help in terms of studying a different area of the Holocaust."

Her work has propelled her to the forefront of this topic.

In addition to being a professor, she travels around the country speaking on the lethal connection between anti-Semitism, gender and genocide.

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