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Sisters' Stories

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Sister Rosaire Anne DeMare, CSJ

I have been a Sister of St. Joseph for 53 years, and it seems like only three years! Those years have gone by so quickly because everyday and in every way, I have been so happy living the life of a religious sister.

I attended Catholic Schools for Grades K-12, and I always admired the sisters who taught me. The Allegany Franciscan Sisters gave me my formation years from kindergarten through eighth grade. They were wonderful women, prayerful and creative. The sisters loved teaching, and they inspired me to want to be like them. I used to help them clean the altars and helped in other ways in the classroom. For some reason, I enjoyed being in their presence. When I was in high school, the Sisters of St. Joseph who taught me were also exciting and tremendous women in my eyes. They were so interested in our activities, games, dances and family events and concerns. They were happy and very dedicated to teaching. This, too, was an inspiration to me.

I knew God was calling me to be a sister, but I had a BIG decision to make. Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate were in my home parish, and they were involved in religious education and social work. The Sisters of St. Francis did missionary work and went to Brazil and Central America and were basically teachers. The Sisters of St. Joseph were involved in teaching, too, in many schools in the Albany and Syracuse Dioceses, and they seemed so happy and so committed to education.

So, I decided I wanted to be a Sister of St. Joseph because I wanted to be a teacher, and I wanted not to go too far from home. I loved the idea of living with a group of sisters and of praying and working together. I had always wanted a sister since I had three brothers. Also, I also wanted my own bed because I used to sleep with my grandmother! Then I wanted a big yard! When I entered the convent, I had all three many sisters, my own bed and a huge back yard!

When I left home at the age of eighteen, I knew God was calling me to follow Him. I did not know exactly what that call meant, but I understood that the most important thing was to learn how to find Jesus in all I did in His vineyard.



Prayer was a learning experience, and it was an essential part of our life together. Our studies included preparation for our profession of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

During these 50 years, I have been involved mostly in education at the elementary level in our Catholic schools. I have loved teaching school, especially knowing that, by June of each school year, the students were ten months richer and wiser because I had the opportunity to mold and guide them socially, physically, spiritually and academically.

For the last three years, I have been working as an administrative assistant, parish visitor and bookkeeper in a parish. I spend two days each week visiting the sick and elderly. This ministry is an extremely rewarding one. The elderly enjoy my visits, and we share their concerns and pray for their many little or big intentions.

Ministering in the Church as a Sister of St. Joseph is really right for me. I know that each day is an act of love for Jesus. I know that what little I do to spread His Kingdom will last in years to come in the lives of the persons with whom I come in contact. God has called me to community and invites me to generous service with courage and faithfulness to the Gospel message.

Besides my full-time employment as parish visitor, administrative assistant and bookkeeper, I have full responsibility for my handicapped brother. I take care of all his needs and our home. He has always lived at home under the care of my parents, and now I have assumed this care.

Being a sister today is a way of life that is so very rewarding. Prayer, community and ministry are our focal points. So, for a woman to join us today, she needs to know that religious life is influenced by God's call to live in a radical way. We are making efforts to be aware of the poor and to identify efforts for mission other than education and nursing. Our sisters are involved in nearly every ministry a woman is capable of doing, As our sisters serve God's people, they are being ever faithful to God's call to spread the kingdom.