Margaret Mary Strauch was born on August 23 in Newark, N.J., the older of two children to Regina Hennessey and George Strauch. She and her brother, George, were close and grew up in a “lower middle income family” on the ground level of a two-story home with her paternal grandparents. “By today’s standards we had very little in the way of material goods, but had plenty of love and support. We did lots of things as a family. For the most part life revolved around our family, neighborhood, school and church.” At age 19, Margaret entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She had her initial formation in Baltimore, Maryland.

Sister Margaret Mary began her ministry as a teacher and administrator in Catholic schools across N.J. before serving as associate superintendent of the Archdiocese of Newark from 1981 to 1984, where her chief responsibility was religious education for more 200 elementary schools. She wrote in a reflection a few years after her silver jubilee that her “teaching career began in 1959. For five years I taught all five subjects in grade five in Glen Cove, N.Y.” and then transferred to Fort Lee, N.J. where she taught seventh grade language arts for seven years. In 1986, Sister Margaret Mary earned her Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Seton Hall University and after 28 years, decided it was time to change her ministry. Following a sabbatical year at Weston university of Theology, “a time to be refreshed and renewed spiritually, physically and emotionally.”

From 1991 to present, in addition to serving as administrator of the motherhouse in Wilton for five years, Sister Margaret Mary has ministered in pastoral care at the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital, Marist Hill Care Center, Good Samaritan Hospital and Lourdes Health Care Center. She currently serves in volunteer ministry at Lourdes Health Care Center.

In her autobiography, Sister Margaret Mary reflects, “As an SSND, I have learned and continue to learn how to walk through life with my God. As I journey through life, I am also learning how to respond to God’s love for me, so that I am better able to respond to others. I have taken many theology and scripture courses through the years that have also helped me. Probably the greatest help has been my daily prayer, annual retreats and my years of spiritual direction... Daily prayer has been my ‘survival kit’ through the years.”