

Sister Betty Lackenbauer, SSND - 70 Year Jubilee!



*"My dance began with my baptismal call
to holiness.
A vocation story is a love story"*

What drew me to a Life of Consecration was a loving God. We are born of love; love is our birthright. "At Baptism we are introduced to life in the Trinity! This is a dance of love. Love is the first step in the dance, and God always takes the lead. We live in the Trinity and, Trinity is our home address." (Bernadette Gosslein Alberta, CA). My dance began with my baptismal call to holiness. A vocation story is a love story.

Growing up School Sisters of Notre Dame were part of our faith community in St. Louis Parish, Waterloo, ON. My aunt and older sister joined the order, and SSNDs taught all classes in St. Louis School and St. Mary's High. Sister Rita Kittel, in grade one, impressed me with stories about Jesus, a man for others, helping the sick and needy. I decided to become a doctor.

At St. Mary's High, when asked if I ever thought of becoming an SSND, I quickly put that thought on the back burner. My two left feet now interfered with the dance! Yet, God continued leading me.

Shortly after graduation, I gave my "Yes" which gave me freedom at last! Less than two years later, on August 2, 1951, I celebrated my First Profession and never looked back. Now, celebrating 70 years of consecrated life, I'm still dancing with the Trinity!

With my first teaching assignment, I relinquished my dream of becoming a doctor but gained much more. For eighteen years I taught, first in elementary schools; then as principal and teacher, then at

St. Mary's High. Mother Caroline brought sisters to Waterloo County in 1871. SSNDs, myself included, gradually helped establish the "Catholic School system" there.

Future ministries varied. In 1977, I was appointed editor of Soundings, the North American SSND publication. In 1986, I joined the SSND Renewal Centre staff at Chatawa, Mississippi. From 1990 - 2002, The Pas, Manitoba, north of the 53rd parallel, became my home where I was catechetical coordinator in the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le-Pas, and wore several other hats. In 2002, I became the Catechetical Correspondence Program for the Hamilton Diocese.

Now, I'm a computer tutor for our sisters. I especially admire those who overcome significant, physical odds to keep abreast of the many posts on our website. Computer literacy brings joy in keeping in touch with family, friends and community information.

Annually, since 2015, we've been invited into nine Hamilton Diocesan Catholic High Schools, each with well over a thousand students where we share vocation stories with Grades 9 - 12 students.

Rather than focus on diminishment, I try to enjoy my continuing dance. Pope Francis inspires me with his urgency about rebuilding the church with joy and love. He calls out, "Wake the World with Dawning Joy; Wake the World with Gladness!" We don't do this alone; our loving dance-partner still takes the lead.