

Sister Mary Bann, SSND - 60 Year Jubilee!



Our beloved Sister Mary Bann went home to God on Saturday, March 28, 2020. May Mary rest in peace and may we all pray for her welcome into God's loving arms.

The reflection below was written by Sister Mary as an autobiographical writing upon entering the congregation. She updated it in the early 2000s.

*I was not just part of God's vast creation, part of the crowd, a number.
God loved me. God called me by name.*

"Oh, no!" I'm told this was my mother's initial reaction when on June 21, 1940, she was told that she had a redheaded daughter. I was born in Belvidere, IL, a small town about 90 miles northwest of Chicago. I was the second child. My brother, Bob, had arrived three years earlier. My early years were very ordinary, very normal - two-parent stable home, friends, usual ups and downs.

I attended St. James School, which was staffed by SSND's. There were some great women there, and that's where the seed to enter Notre Dame was first planted. My best friend decided to enter the community and that seed, planted years ago, began to grow. After graduating from Belvidere High School in 1958, I entered SSND in Milwaukee. Our class was the last to enter at the old motherhouse. We

had an unique postulancy. Much of it was spent "dismantling the place." I'm glad I had the chance to spend some time in a place that held so many memories of our SSND early history. Our class was also the first to be received at Mequon.

I have been teaching for more years than I care to admit. All of my teaching experience has been in Chicago. My first mission was St. Alphonsus (north side, walking distance to Cubs' Park). My first class consisted of 56 darling first graders. Four years later, on Final Vow Day, I received an obedience to teach at Santa Lucia (south side, walking distance to White Sox Park). From there, I moved to St. John de LaSalle (farther south, no ball park). I returned to Santa Lucia for a few more years and then moved to Our Lady of the Westside - Presentation Campus.

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After nine years there, I spent one year in St. Louis in the IRF Program. This was in preparation for formation work. From St. Louis I moved to St. Procopius Parish and worked there for a year before returning to Our Lady of the Westside - St. Agatha Campus for 8 more years. For the last six years I have been at St. Stanislaus Kostka School. For the last three of those years, I have been working as the Title 1 teacher there. I work with small groups (largest - nine) of students from Kindergarten through seventh grade. Quite different from my first class of 56!

My years at Our Lady of the Westside were some of the most challenging as well as most rewarding of my teaching career. Westside is located in the North Lawndale area of Chicago. It is one of the poorest and most dangerous areas of the city. It is also home to many of the most hopeful and faith-filled people I know. It was while living and working there that I

came to fully appreciate my very normal, ordinary childhood!

One summer I participated in a House of Prayer. This six-week experience was held in Youngstown, Ohio, and is a very special moment in my life. It was during this time that God finally got through to me. I was not just part of God's vast creation, part of the crowd, a number. God loved me. God called me by name.

I have already experienced SSND in the old motherhouse in Milwaukee, the beauty of Mequon, the cornfields of DeKalb and the excitement of Chicago. I'm sure our dear God of surprises has much in store for Baltimore, Wilton, and Chicago! God bless!