

**Love Gives Everything
Be Jubilee!**

Reflections for Jubilee 2018

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Sound the trumpet throughout all the land!

Then you shall sound abroad the loud trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the 85, 80, 75, 70, 50 years, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, holy to you, a year of liberation, when each of you shall return to your home and each shall return to your family. (Lev. 25:8-18)

Sisters, sound the loud trumpet!
We have before us 3,175
cumulative years of service to
God! Sister jubilarians' years of
profession range from 1933 to
1968. What a witness to
commitment and fidelity!

Before I begin to address all of our
Jubilarians, I want to welcome all
those who are joining us this day
through live streaming, especially
those Jubilarians who cannot be

with us today. I also would like to remember those who are not here with us because they have gone home to our God. May they continue to rest in the arms of God. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Sister Barbara Bowers' welcome, the entrance hymn, our Jubilarians walking down the chapel aisle capture the spirit of the day - the joy rippling through the liturgy and drawing us across the threshold of ordinariness to this place of jubilee.

JUBILARIANS

Jubilarians, you are daughters of our foundress, Mother Theresa, who 85, 80, 75, 70, 60 and 50 years ago fell in love with a God who drew you into a relationship that was so strong that no



matter what God asked of you, you gave up all you had to deepening this love on a daily basis. God's Cause is the only concern of your hearts.

You are daughters of Mother Theresa and Mother Caroline who today walk up this aisle once again to publicly give witness to all of us that after all these years you are once again ready to proclaim your love for God and one another. God's Cause is the only concern of your hearts. Love Gives Everything.

You are the daughters of Mother Theresa and Mother Caroline who have come to answer once again the call of the Lord "to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, to announce the year of favor from the Lord," to make Christ visible by your very being. God's Cause is the only concern of your hearts. Love Gives Everything.

All of us gathered here are filled with gratitude for the gift of your entire lives. Your jubilee is a source of joy and an opportunity of renewal for all of us. You give us all an opportunity to profess our love for God, to shout our gratitude for all that has been given to us and to celebrate the faithfulness of a loving God.

No matter what the service, no matter how long or short the time in a ministry, each one of you women, in each of your service roles has used the gifts God gave you to express the Spirit's outpouring of love for the people you serve. Today we rejoice because, through your service, you give witness to justice, tender love, and humility. God's Cause is the only concern of your hearts.

THE CHURCH, THE WORLD AND SSND

When you entered, the world was in turmoil—not too dissimilar from the current state of affairs. Through the years, there have been depressions, recessions, violence, wars, assassinations, racism, and the threat of nuclear annihilation.

The church experienced its own kind of turmoil—Vatican Council had ended in 1965—but the change called for had just begun—sweeping liturgical reforms, ecumenical efforts towards dialogue with other religions, and the universal call to holiness that changed everything.

And within the congregation, the total renewal of consecrated life, of religious life as we had known it, was under way. At a time when people began wondering about the relevance of religious life, you continued to follow your call. You remained to give witness with your lives that there is meaning in serving God as a vowed religious.

Today as we age and our bodies grow frail, as our energy wains and we grow small in numbers, as we attract fewer vocations and struggle to know the future of religious life, we must not give up hope. In an article by Sister Deborah Borneman, she writes,

We need to refuse to define religious life solely through the lens of diminishment ... instead, keep focused on the relevance of the

diversity of charisms and the countless stories of women religious, like you, who lead fearlessly...who defy adversity, live with tension, and accomplish the impossible with very few resources ...

That is what we are celebrating today. Your lifelong personal fulfilment that has taken each of you from the comforts of your homes in Saskatchewan, Ontario, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island and flung you into classrooms, into parishes, onto college campuses, and into positions of leadership - made you librarians, musicians, artists, sacristans, volunteers, consultants, facilitators, psychotherapists, directors of justice and peace, General Superiors, provincials and treasurers and principals and directors - directors of religious education, of formation and vocations, of archives, of places where miracles happen. Each of you and all of you share a common journey to honor SSND, to be God's loving care through your works of love, mercy and justice through the eloquence of your lives.

BIBLICAL JUBILEE

These days you have been together, you have heard that Jubilee is all about you. This is partly true. In Leviticus 25, we learn that jubilee is one of the most revolutionary concepts in all of scripture. The Year of Jubilee was God's reset button—it was the “reboot” in the system—the “Ctrl-Alt-Del” in the universe.

Biblical Jubilee is a call to forgiveness, a call to renewal and a call to giving back. It is a call to wholeness. Poet John O'Donohue writes,

The human heart continues to dream of a state of wholeness, a place where everything comes together, where loss will be made good, where blindness will transform into vision, where damage will be made whole, where the clenched question will open in the house of surprise, where the travails of a life's journey will enjoy a homecoming.

JESUS IS JUBILEE

For Jesus, jubilee was not an occasion to be observed every fifty years, rather it is a way of life. Jesus was about living in the spirit of a permanent jubilee. When Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll in Luke 4:16-21, his simple message was, in effect, “I am jubilee.” I am the good news for the poor because I can meet their needs. I am good news for captives in chains because I can free them and good news for those in spiritual bondage because I can be their deliverer. I am good news for the physically blind because I can restore their sight and good news for the spiritually blind because I will open their eyes to the glory of God. I am the good news for the oppressed because I hear their cries for justice, and good news for the spiritually oppressed because I will conquer sin, self.

We, like Jesus are Jubilee to all we meet.

LOVE GIVES EVERYTHING

Our directional statement, “Love Gives Everything” is our chance to “be jubilee!” It calls us to holiness, to love one another, to global awareness, to embrace the call to communion, to once again give our entire lives to a God who loves us so deeply.

“Love Gives Everything” calls us to “be jubilee” to all we meet.

“Love Gives Everything” calls us to:

- **Probe the deeper meaning of Gospel poverty**

As “You Are Sent” (C15-16) spells out for us, let us stand before God in total emptiness—dare to follow him in unqualified reliance on a provident God—cling to nothing but the Lord—hoping against hope—welcoming insecurity. Be Jubilee!

- **Deepen our consciousness of who we are in relationship with the Triune God**

Jesus’ prayer, “In this you may all be one, as the Father is in me and I in him that you may be in us” (John 17:21) calls for the unity. John describes the communion of Jesus with the “Father” not merely as “with each other,” or “for each other,” but “in each other.” “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” Therefore, “whoever sees me, sees the Father,” for “I and the Father are one.” (John 14: 9-11, 10, 30) It is a unity based in mutual indwelling. Those who live in love, live in God and God in them.” (1 John 4:6) The Triune God allows us to become one. The Triune God moves us out of our comfortability and complacency into a deeper understanding of one another as the people of God.

- **Claim our authentic community life as a prophetic witness of unity in diversity and a service to God’s people**

We are called to be in communion with our God, with each other and with the universe. Our living together in faith is a prophetic sign of the church. We are called to deepen communion with God and among people wherever we are—in every place, every time in every situation. (YAS C7-9) The challenge and struggle of living together and forming community is our witness to the world. Now, more than ever, our broken, divided and violent world needs our compassion, mercy and inclusivity. Be Jubilee!

- **Find new and innovative ways to minister in our world today**

“You Are Sent” challenges us always to be “painfully aware” of the needs of the world, “work actively” to eliminate the root causes of injustice; “confront injustice credibly”; strive to “live simply;” “respect the dignity of every person”—Let us “be jubilee” to all we meet. (YAS C15-16) The call to religious life is to widen our circles and to invite others into meaningful conversation to affect systemic change. Be Jubilee!

- **Address global concerns, educate, advocate and act in collaboration with others for the dignity of life and the care of creation**

We are in a time of collaboration, networking and deepening our consciousness of who we are in relationship with God, others, and the universe. We are thrust into the world - not apart from the world - so collaborating with those in the world is an essential response for us in our times today. Let us work toward fostering the formation of our sisters, our associates and our colleagues in ministry so they will be prepared to respond to the complex situations of today's world in the spirit of our foundress - and with a love that gives everything. Be Jubilee!

- **Dare to respond boldly in unsuspected ways to the needs of the world**

To be jubilee is an act of resistance to the injustice in today's world. We are called to keep our mission in focus no matter how frenzied things become or how great the pressures to compromise. We are called to be jubilee to the underserved, the outcast, to stand with the laborers, immigrants, the neglected, the marginalized and the abandoned. We are called to be ready when our God comes; be ready when the surprises, the challenges invade our comfort zones; be fearless, trust and dare to walk to the edge and plunge into responding in unsuspected ways; put all fears aside and once again say yes. Let us not be afraid to step into the unknown.

IMPELLED INTO THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Jubilarians, God is not finished with you yet no matter how many years you have served. Our province, our congregation needs you to be a light to the world. In a polarized society, where different cultures experience difficulty in living alongside one another, where the powerless encounter oppression, where inequality abounds, we are called to offer a concrete model of community which, by acknowledging the dignity of each person and sharing our respective gifts, makes it possible to live as brothers and sisters.

Pope Francis asks religious of today to be a "credible sign of the presence of the Spirit who inspires in human hearts a passion for all to be one."

In this Jubilee year, let us together embrace this moment of hope and go forward with gratitude that we come as one, open to the challenges that lie ahead of us - embracing the the unknown future, willing to let go of what holds us back, eager to transform the world and always remembering that we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

Let us, School Sisters of Notre Dame of the Atlantic-Midwest Province, Daughters of Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger and Mother Mary Caroline, dare to love, dare to love with a love that gives everything. Be Jubilee!