

Sister Elizabeth Mary Foster, SSND – 70 Year Jubilee!



"It was truly a time of ministering with the heart."

Many special memories and a portion of my SSND story began was when I was 4 years old.

My mom, dad, and I had moved from Walbrook to a new home in the Pimlico section of Baltimore City. Our new address was 4856 Pimlico Road, across the street from a very large, K through 8th grade public school. I attended it through the early months of second grade, and had excellent Jewish teachers.

It was a long street with numerous friendly neighbors. We were the sole Catholic family in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, mostly comprised of recently retired and elderly persons. Diversity was accepted and everyone was welcomed.

Each Friday, as I grew older, I earned a shiny new nickel for turning lights on and off for our neighbors who were celebrating the Sabbath. I was also a babysitter when needed, and our neighbors would sometimes remind me when a Holy Day of Obligation would not permit me to work on a particular evening. There was always respect for our differences and concern for everyone in our community.



Elizabeth Marie & Charles Dexter



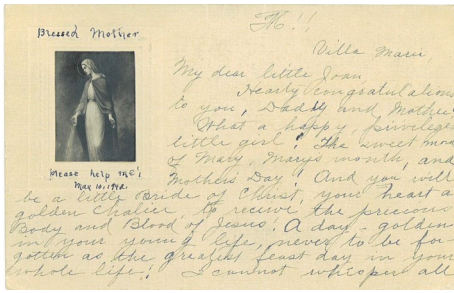
Sister Mary Anita Harps, SSND

My paternal grandparents often took me via the Ma and Pa Railroad (The Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad) to visit my great aunt, Sister Mary Anita Harps, SSND. She had grown up in the historic parish of Saint Ann's on East 22nd Street in Baltimore City.

Aunt Anita's final mission was as a sixth-grade teacher at Saint Ambrose School on Park Heights Avenue in Baltimore City. Due to serious health issues, she was transferred to Notch Cliff on Long Green Pike in Glen Arm, Maryland, three months before I began school at Saint Ambrose in second grade.

Visiting Aunt Anita at Notch was always delightful (cookies, rosaries, dolls, stories and conversation). *Cont'd...*

Sister Elizabeth Mary Foster, SSND – Cont'd



My final memory of Aunt Anita is a card she wrote to me (I still have it!) for my First Holy Communion. (Oh, the delight of the time spent with Sister Catherine Di Ricci in the second grade and preparing for my First Holy Communion!).

During the very late Depression years, and the beginning of World War II, I remember recycling as much as possible. This even included gum and candy aluminum foil wrappers. We peeled the foil from the paper wrappers and formed it into a silver ball, which we took to school, to donate to the war effort.

As I grew older, I started helping my much-loved paternal grandparents as they began to suffer from the physical diminishment of cancer and stroke. There was also my employment as a receptionist at Saint Ambrose Rectory. Both were very special callings.

After graduation from Saint Ambrose (I may be the last SSND "Saint Ambrose Girl"), I attended high school at the Institute of Notre Dame (IND). There remain very many precious memories of Sisters and dear friends.

One of the delightful annual occurrences at IND was the Saint Patrick's' Day Bazaar. Yes, and everything was green for the day.

I graduated in June, 1952.



**SSND's L-R:
Irmengard Melchnor
& Elizabeth Mary
at IND**

On a lovely summer day, August 28, 1952, excited and a bit apprehensive, I entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame. I received the Bonnet in the chapel at IND. My mom, sister and brother were very subdued that day. My dad, on the other hand, was not in the mood for discussion as he had preferred that I become a Sister of Mercy. "They were permitted home visits."

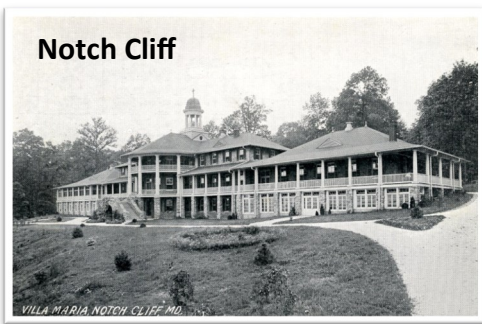
After one year of study and formation in the Candidature, I was assigned to teach a double grade at Saint John's Parish School in Hydes, MD, on Long Green Pike. As there was no convent at Saint John's at the time, the four professed Sisters and I lived at Notch Cliff.



**(L) Sr. Elizabeth Mary
with sister
Margaret Ann**

The pastor's brother picked us up at 5:30 A.M. each morning and drove us to the church in time for morning Mass. *Cont'd...*

Sister Elizabeth Mary Foster, SSND – Cont'd



Then we went over to the school and enjoyed breakfast (cooked by the Superior/Principal) in the teacher's break room. Because our assignment was considered a bit unusual, we were permitted to talk during breakfast and to enjoy bacon on occasion.

My students were delightful and very conscientious.

Most had daily chores on the family farm and as a result were obedient, respectful, reliable and eager to learn and please. Teaching that year was both a joy and an adventure. Challenges were few.

The pastor's brother drove us back to Notch Cliff in time for supper with the Notch Cliff Community of Sisters at 5:00 P.M. Living at Notch Cliff for a Candidate was a challenge as one was not permitted to eat with, pray with, speak with or recreate with the Professed Sisters.

Fortunately, I was assigned to eat in Sister Donata's bakery. She was a gem and treats were frequent, fresh and delicious. As a "weekender," I had to return to 901 Aisquith Street every Saturday morning and then go back to Notch every Sunday afternoon. This was challenging.

Toward the early spring of 1955, the pastor purchased a small house that bordered the church property, creating the Saint John Long Green SSND Convent. I was privileged and delighted to be able to stay in this convent with my Community of Sisters (with the exception of weekends) for two or three months as I prepared for my First Profession of Vows as an SSND (July 10, 1955).

Unfortunately, my ministry as an elementary and junior high school teacher was interrupted on numerous occasions by poor health. It eventually led to a life-threatening spinal condition and surgery. After an 80-day recuperation at Notch Cliff, both the orthopedic and neurosurgeons ordered that I was not to return to teaching.

After prayer and consultation, I asked to study occupational therapy. In 1975, I graduated from an OT program and earned Maryland State Certification. I also learned to drive that year. *Cont'd...*



Sr. Elizabeth Mary & Family
At St. John's

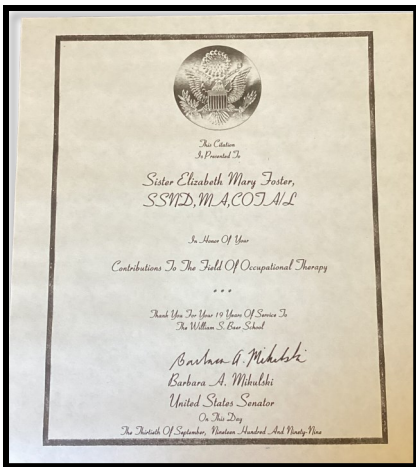
Sister Elizabeth Mary Foster, SSMD – Cont'd

The fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters Degree at Notre Dame of Maryland College (now University) were happily accomplished by the achievement of skills necessary for intervention with adults and the aging.

(Sister is pictured to the right at graduation and also with her Mother).

For 19 very happy and blessed years, I ministered to God's very special-needs children from birth to 21 years of age at the William S. Baer School.

(A citation for Sr. Elizabeth Mary's years of service, at the William S. Baer School, signed by Senator Barbara Mikulski, is pictured below):



Yes there were times of sorrow, but also times of success and great joy.

This ministry really strengthened my faith and hope. It was truly a time of ministering with the heart. I was also inspired by how the very challenged observed and responded to the needs of their companions.

During this time, I also provided quality occupational therapy fieldwork education for O.T. students who were

studying at Towson State University. State Certified Advanced Occupational Therapy was also achieved.

After these 19 years of ministry at Baer, I applied for and received permission for age-appropriate retirement.

A little over a month later, I secured a position with Measurement Incorporated (M.I.) as an employee in the field of educational testing, scoring, observation, research, development and evaluation.

Three years later, when M.I. returned to their home base in Durham, North, Carolina, I began 10 years of volunteer service as a councilor, receptionist, and "Jill of all trades" at the Pregnancy Center West in Catonsville. *Cont'd...*

Sister Elizabeth Mary Foster, SSND – Cont'd

Clients were provided with numerous services and support. Some of the opportunities available included counseling, education, pregnancy testing, sonograms, provision of clothing and numerous other supportive supplies.

On January 2, 2019, I moved from a treasured apartment in Catonsville to Villa Assumpta in Baltimore, missioned to engage in Prayer and Presence.

On March 19, 2019, four Vietnamese Sisters arrived at the Villa for studies, especially in the mysteries of the English Language.



I began to tutor Sister Hoa Le, FMSR, in English. She was an absolute delight. Together we spent close to five years of daily English Language study here at the Villa before she and her three companion Sisters moved to Cleveland, Ohio for further studies in Nursing. I cannot possibly explain how wonderful the time was with Sister Hoa.

She is a dedicated Religious, a stupendous student and a very loving friend. I miss her very much, but rejoice that we meet each day in prayer and in spirit.

Through these many years of community living and the varied ministries as a School Sister of Notre Dame, I have learned the blessed value of implicit trust in the sometime soul-searing, sometimes very quiet, often-silent, and always loving whisperings in my soul and heart.



Tomb of Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger