

Sister Katharine Lawless, SSND - 60 Year Jubilee!



*How much happiness
we've had in our life together.
It's been a joy!*

I was supposed to have entered the SSND candidature on September 8, exactly 62 years ago. But I received a letter saying, *Dear Daughter, The motherhouse is not ready just yet. The candidates will now enter September 15.* Since it is the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, I hoped that would not be indicative of how things were going to go.

My father was ecstatic I was joining SSND. My mother? Not so much.

It was a very religious family. My dad would have loved it if my two older brothers, Tom and Bob and my two younger sisters, Anne and Chris became religious and priests. I didn't need to learn my prayers in school. I learned them all at home.

My mother was supportive of my desire. But she knew of my plan to have 9 children, and wanted that for me if I wanted it.

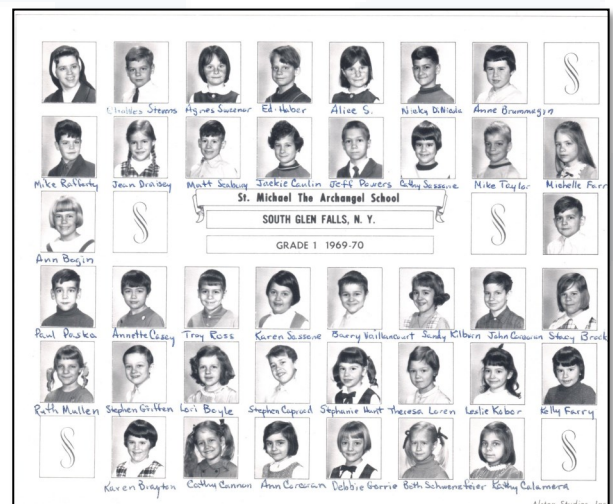
My first experience with religious didn't inspire me. I had the Sisters of Mercy in grade school. My mother's niece belonged to that group, and we visited her often. More than I wanted. All the Sisters of Mercy knew my cousin and were very willing to report anything less than my best behavior. I couldn't be myself.

My father was also the usher at the Children's Mass. I felt like I was under a magnifying glass. It was not a happy time for me.

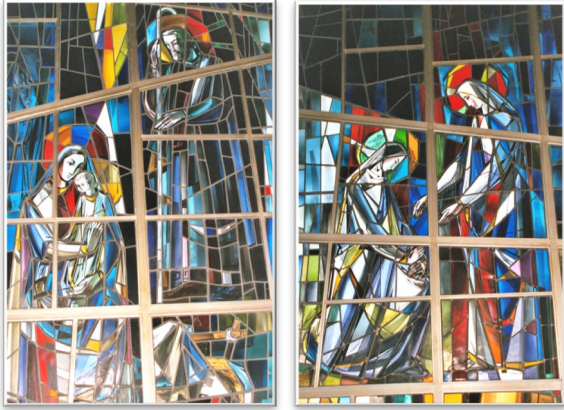
That changed when I went to **Saint Saviour High School**. The SSNDs did not know me, so I could be myself. They liked me or didn't like me because of who I was, not because of who I was related to.

Senior year came and I thought, What am I going to do with my life? I want to work in a service area and even considered applying to nursing school. Then the SSND drama coach asked if I had considered religious life. No! I answered. I'm going to be a mother of 9. She asked me again to just consider it. I said No again. But I thought and prayed a great deal about it. By March, I sent a letter asking to enter.

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Sister Katharine Lawless, SSND -Cont'd



When we first arrived in Wilton, it was still unfinished. During the months of September to December when the Motherhouse was dedicated we watched the Chapel take shape and the beautiful windows put in. During that time we knelt on the floor in a rec room for Mass. It was hard on our knees but we were very happy.

My sister, Anne, who had been educated by the Sisters of Mercy in St Jerome Grade School, attended the Mercy Juniorate for 3 years and went to Catherine McAuley for Senior year told me she planned to join SSND in September 1962. In 1968 she decided religious life was not for her.

I was professed in 1963 and have had a marvelous life. I taught for 52 years in 6 schools in Monroe and Danbury, Connecticut, South Glens Falls, New York, Narragansett, Rhode Island Westbury and Ridgewood, New York. My favorite grade was 1st grade. Every time I got assigned to a different grade, I tried to get back to 1st. I loved watching the spark of joy that happened when the children started being able to read.

I lived with the best women. They've been the delight of my life.

It was always hard to leave any place, especially South Glens Falls. The 6 years I spent there were the best years. I taught First Grade. I lived with wonderful Sisters and the families were so good to and for us. Leaving Narragansett, Rhode Island was easier.

I loved the Sisters and the children but I did NOT like the fog horns. Give me the mountains and the forest!

The most surprising thing to me in all my years as a School Sister of Notre Dame is how happy everybody could be. How much happiness we've had in our life together.

It's been a joy!

