

Sister Lucy Giacchetti, SSND - 70 Year Jubilee!



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Sister Lucy Looks Back on 70 Years

Ask Sister Lucy Giacchetti how she's doing, and she'll answer, "For a 91-year-old, I'm doing okay." To be clear, she's doing better than many nonagenarians, active with her Sisters, her friends, and in volunteer work. She took time out of her busy day to share her story of becoming - and serving as - an SSND.

Postulancy

Young Lucy Giachetti carried a handful of black stockings to the counter. She would need them in the convent, along with her new pair of sturdy black shoes. The salesclerk raised his eyebrows at her. She looked back at him. "Never mind," she said. "Just give them to me."

The salesclerk wasn't the only one who was puzzled by Lucy's decision to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Her family was downright surprised. "I wasn't a goodie-goodie, always going to Mass and praying all the time and stuff like that. But something in me had to try it."

Lucy began her postulancy a few months after the rest of her profession partners entered. She had been taking care of her dad and younger sister while her mother was away. It had meant she would have to defer entering until January, one of Milwaukee's bleakest months.

"I had been afraid I would lose interest in the convent if I had to wait a whole year to enter. I'd get involved in work and education. So Sister Jean Marie allowed me to enter late. All the postulants knew the ropes when I got there. I didn't know what to do and not to do. I didn't even know I couldn't roll up my sleeves when I got hot. They set me straight."

Lucy remembers her postulant and novice years fondly, surrounded by new friends and immersed in new customs. She was ready for life as a School Sister.

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Sister Lucy Giacchetti, SSMD - Cont'd

Most Memorable Ministry

Sr. Lucy arrived in Peru after living in Rome, and the contrast couldn't have been starker.

"Rome was all blue skies, lush grass and trees. Peru was all sand and not a blade of grass. We lived in the boonies. Food was scarce."

Competition for the available food was fierce among the women charged with acquiring and managing it for their neighborhoods.

"The parish was a very large area, with seven or eight neighborhoods. Each neighborhood had its own kitchen, which the women ran. We had to try to teach cooperation to make the food last longer. We taught the women to order in bulk to get better prices on food like flour for their neighborhoods. They learned to work together to save money and stretch their budgets. The bickering was over."

The success of the new cooperative approach fueled the women's desire to learn and do more.

"We taught them how to value themselves, and know their worth. We paid staff to provide childcare so they could focus. They even started getting jobs. It was wonderful."

Today

Looking back on her 70 years as a School Sister, Sr. Lucy credits the congregation with giving her a solid foundation and support to make a difference.

"During my time, most things I did you couldn't have done unless you were a Sister. It would have almost been impossible to go to Peru, for instance, without financial support, community support, church support."

While today's young women have more flexibility and freedom to go where they want to go, Sr. Lucy says living as a Catholic Sister also means being a part of a valued community.

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After 70 years of devoted ministry, Sr. Lucy has certainly earned the right to put up her feet and rest. But she doesn't quite see it that way. As long as she still can, she will continue to serve others as she does now, through prayer, presence, and teaching English as a Second Language to the Latino community at Corazón a Corazón in Chicago.