

Sister Marie Danielle Amspacher, SSND

60 Year Jubilee!

"God is Good."



During this Jubilee year my reflections have led me to times of great Thanksgiving to our Loving God for the gifts of life, faith, family, and my SSND community.

That life is a gift was brought home to me many times, in a story recounted every year on my birthday:

My mother was standing on a vanity stool to hang clean curtains for the Memorial Day holiday when the stool went one way, and she went the other. She was rushed to the hospital, where I was born two months early. I was under 5 pounds. Placed in an incubator, I did not come home until the 4th of July.

I was raised in Philadelphia, where a free Catholic education was a given. I attended the parish Catholic school and was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph from Chestnut Hill, PA.

When it was time for high school, I received a post card from our pastor, assigning me to the 9th grade at Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls. Since the pastor paid the high school tuition for the students from his parish, the students were told which high school to attend. Imagine what parents would say to that in this day and age!

Little Flower was staffed by eight different religious communities, a priest principal, and very few lay teachers. My graduating class was considered small, at 1,000 graduates.

(Later in my religious life I was sent to teach at St. Hubert High School, Philadelphia, which had a total enrollment of 3,300 girls.)

Meeting and coming to know so many different religious women during my young life led to many thoughts of becoming a religious teacher myself, *Cont'd...*

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but even though several communities encouraged me, I did not feel called to any of them. After graduation, I worked as a secretary at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia.

My call to SSND came on Easter Sunday in 1962. On that day I went with my mother and two baby brothers to visit her sister, Sister Denise Marie Callaghan, SSND. She was in the infirmary at Villa Assumpta following back surgery. During the visit I took the two little boys out to play in the sunshine, while my mother visited with her sister.

It was visiting day for the Junior Sisters and many of them came up to talk to me as I sat on a bench and watched my brothers play. That trip led me to write to my aunt and ask about her community, since I did not really know her and had never met any SSNDs before.

Since my aunt was in the infirmary, she showed the letter to Mother Vitalia, who invited me back to Baltimore a few weeks later. As a result of what became an interview, I entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame in September, 1962.

My parents, family, and friends were supportive, but many asked, “Why Baltimore? Don’t we have enough nuns in Philadelphia?”

My life as a School Sister of Notre Dame has been a blessing in so many ways.

I have been called to serve as an elementary and high school science teacher, a high school administrator, and the Superintendent for Schools in the Archdiocese of Miami. I served as administrator at Villa Assumpta for five years, worked in the education office at the College of Notre Dame (now Notre Dame of Maryland University), and as a receptionist for Bon Secours Maria Manor and Bon Secours Place in St. Petersburg, FL.

My ministry has taken me up and down the East Coast, from Maryland to Pennsylvania, North Jersey, and both coasts of Florida.

Now, as I celebrate my Diamond Jubilee, I give thanks for all: the gifts, the challenges, the people I’ve known and the places I’ve been. God is Good.



L-R: Sisters Gracia Kloch, Marie Danielle, Ruth Loretta McPherson, Cathy Bonfield and Josine Perez