



Sisters of  
St. Francis  
of Assisi

May 2007

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Dear Friend,

These days, as everyone is living longer, we hear less about simple retirement and more about second careers and hobbyists-turned-entrepreneurs after reaching retirement age. The latter is the category into which Sr. Evelyn Brokish falls.

Sister Evelyn, a native of Dodgeville, Wisconsin, had completed two years at Cardinal Stritch University when she entered our congregation on September 8, 1956. After she professed vows in 1959, Sr. Evelyn began her music ministry at St. Sebastian, Milwaukee. A year later, she was transferred to Middleton, Wisconsin, where she taught until 1967. She then moved to Savanna, Illinois.



Sr. Evelyn completed her bachelor's degree at Cardinal Stritch University in 1968. She continued at Savanna until February 1972, when she was transferred to Franklin Park, Illinois, where she taught music while attending DePaul University, earning a master's degree in 1974.

Her work in music then continued to the present time. Sr. Evelyn was the organist and taught voice and organ at SS. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish, Winnetka, Illinois, for approximately five years. She then became the liturgist at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1986, Sr. Evelyn went to Summerville, South Carolina, as director of music and liturgy at a parish there.

She returned to the midwest in 1993, becoming director of music and liturgy at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Highland, Indiana.



She has served as the director of local chapters for National Association of Pastoral Musicians in Charleston, South Carolina, and Gary, Indiana, as well as in leadership roles for diocesan music and liturgy commissions.

“Each [role] has enriched me and prepared me for the ecumenical interaction that currently impacts my life as both candy sales person and church musician,” she says.

Candy sales person? Yes, this is her new role at post-retirement age! But “sales person” is an understatement.

This second career for Sr. Evelyn evolved from the need for a new and different fund raiser for her parish. “I remember thinking, ‘All we need is a little imagination.’” From there the concept for her first candy, the ChocoNutty TRIO, which is currently in the final trademark process, was born.

The idea of creating candies came quite naturally. “I was raised with original recipes at home when I was growing up. I began cooking and baking when I was 6 years old, and have always been comfortable in the kitchen.”

She began by using her creations as the church fund raiser, selling them after Mass. But as her idea and her recipes grew, many parish members encouraged her to market the candy commercially. She wrote a business plan and an executive summary, and entered her proposal in a Purdue University Entrepreneur Contest for start-up businesses, hoping to win the cash prize offered for her start-up funds. Although that hope was not realized, she was named a semifinalist in a field of contestants that included many sophisticated technology entries. This inspired her to pursue her idea, and she received seed money from her family and our congregation.



By listening to her customers, she learned that sugar-free candy was in high demand, particularly in terms of variety and appearance. “Something elegant was needed; that is not readily available in sugar-free,” Sr. Evelyn says. “So first I asked myself, what will bring out the sweetness?” And then she would begin the trial-and-error process. “I would create and then ask myself, ‘What should I change, add? Nothing? Or I could add a little vanilla.’ A little vanilla is always good, my mother taught me. And then I need to let the recipe sit for awhile.” Moisture in some of the candies was a challenge, but “I could get that by chopping the fruits more finely.” She also makes sugar-free powder sugar, with a special ratio of Equal, corn starch and powdered milk.

Sr. Evelyn says that her ‘bible’ is *Candy-Making for Dummies*. In this book she says she has found a myriad of tips and tricks that help to achieve a better product, or ways to cut down on time or waste.

She began her wholesale business in March last year, and opened her retail store in Highland just before the 2006 Holidays. After her news release was picked up by one diocesan and two local papers, the customers poured in. Some were just looking for something unique, some wanted sugar-free, and many discuss religion, spirituality and Franciscan values with our sister candy-maker.

Despite her candy success, she has not deserted her original ministry – music. She continues to play organ for Highland area churches of various denominations, whose liturgists and music directors recognize her talents, not just for playing, but also for understanding their needs.

Like so many in today’s society who have reached retirement age, she is determined to

*continued on back*



From (above) the original recipes, to the creation of each piece of candy, to (below) the sealing and wrapping of the final product, Sr. Evelyn’s “Delights” are completely home-made and hand-made.



remain busy and productive – she does not anticipate that her time in ministry to others will end.

“Each day is filled with opportunity to reach out to others,” she says. “Both music and candy-making satisfy a longing and a need.”

You are an important part of each sister’s ability to achieve fulfillment in retirement. And, in situations like Sr. Evelyn’s, your generosity makes it possible for some of our elderly sisters to continue to feel productive as well – even to the extent of, potentially, providing a return on your investment!

In Saints Francis and Clare,

*Marita Maschmann of*

Marita Maschmann, OSF

P.S. ~ If you are able, please help us with a contribution once again. Just imagine how much your generosity and your gifts of prayer and support mean to our elderly sisters as they seek to remain active, contributing members of the congregation. God bless you for helping to provide them with the opportunities they so richly deserve. Thank you!



The candy shop at 2912 45th St. in Highland offers a wide variety of regular and sugar-free Poverello Delights, all hand-made. The shop has limited hours, but orders can be placed via fax (219-922-9733 + \*51), and the product line can be viewed on the website: [www.poverellodelights.com](http://www.poverellodelights.com).