



**Sisters of
St. Francis
of Assisi**

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Since 1849

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Dear Friend,

As sisters we share a bond in community. When sisters from the same family enter religious life, they bring a family bond to contribute to community life.

Sisters Janet and Rose Marie Dielen grew up in South Milwaukee and attended St. Mary's grade school. They lived at the bottom of the hill from the church and spent a lot of time helping the sisters in school and in church during their free time. Already at a young age, they were melding family and OSF community bonds.

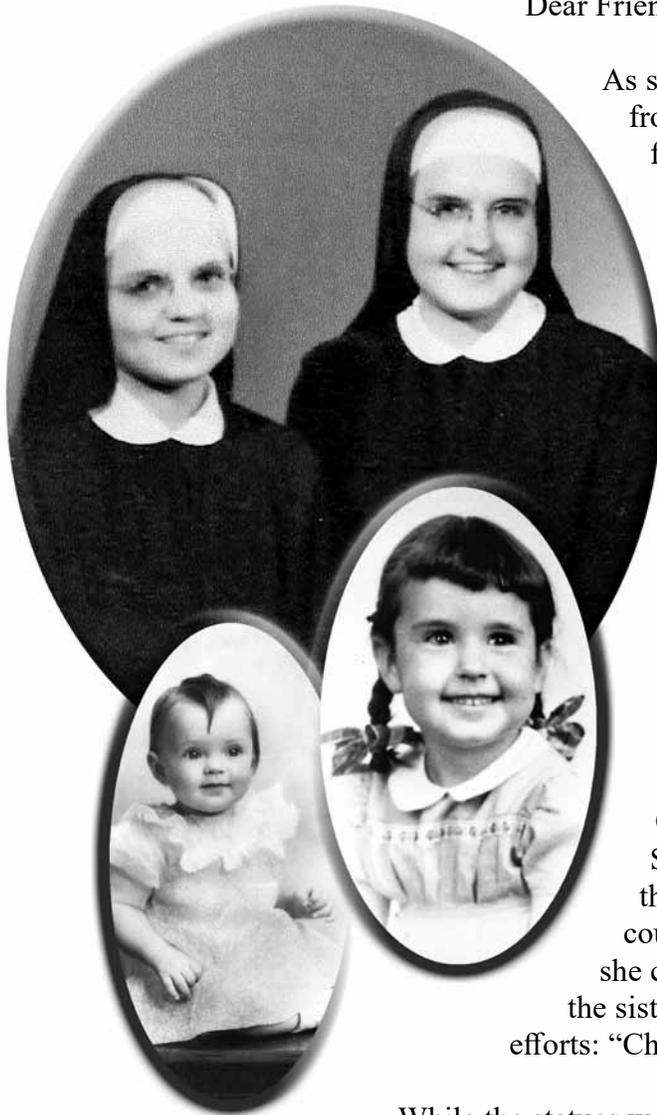
Nancy, the middle sister, was a part of their activities, as well. Janet and Rose Marie remember singing for the 6:30 Mass on weekday mornings and then sitting on the church steps after that Mass until the 8:00 Mass to help with the singing again. They remember cleaning the small glass vigil light holders in church.

One day Rose Marie noticed that the statue of the Sacred Heart looked dusty, so she climbed up on the pedestal with some Bon Ami and cleaned it. Of course, then by contrast, other statues looked bad, so she continued with her cleaning. She remembers one of the sisters calling out to her in the middle of her cleaning efforts: "Child of Grace, get down from there."

While the statues were being cleaned, Janet and some other recruited friends proceeded to clean the pews and organ bench in the choir loft with Bon Ami. It brought great visual results, but the residue left behind showed up when people sat down the next day at Mass and 'stuck' to the wood. Janet remembers they were "disinvited" from cleaning vigil lights the next summer.

Photo of Sisters Janet (LEFT) and Rose Marie (RIGHT) in habits was taken in 1963.

The photo of Janet as a child is from 1936, and the one of Rose Marie is from approximately 1942.





Parents Peter and Marie Dielen and (LEFT TO RIGHT) Janet, Nancy and Rose Marie in 1941.

The two sisters attended South Milwaukee High School for three years and did their senior years at St. Mary's Academy during their first year in the congregation. Both attribute the example of their parents, Peter and Marie, who nurtured a life of prayer in their home, and the example of the sisters at St. Mary's grade school to fostering their calls to religious life. Both were interested in being teachers, but chose very different tracks.

Janet was a music student of Sister Andrée Gaspard (+2018), and they talked about her being a music teacher. Once she began her ministry in a parish, she learned that it was a multifaceted position: Private music lessons in piano, strings and organ; organist for church Masses and devotions; director of the children's choir; and music specialist in the grade school. And then, because the music teacher's schedule was seen as more flexible, there was often the call to substitute in a classroom for a teacher who was absent unexpectedly.

Rose Marie taught grades 5 through 8 in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, beginning at age 19. With no teaching experience and only one year of college, she met the challenge of instructing 55 fifth graders. She was blessed with a great mentor that first year.



Sisters Janet (LEFT) and Rose Marie Dielen (RIGHT) with maternal grandmother (FAR LEFT) and paternal grandparents.

The ministry of teaching would expand for both sisters. Janet moved to Sterling, Col., followed by Sun Prairie, Wis, and then moved to the western slope in Colorado. She, Sister Clare Ahler and Fr. Robert Hehn worked as a team in three locations providing religious education, the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) formation, and liturgical and sacramental ministry from 1983 to 1990. From 1990 to 2000 the team moved further west to four different parish locations.

In 2001, Janet took a sabbatical year at the School of Applied Theology in Berkeley, Calif., and then, having dreamed about working in a

Sister Janet working with sixth grade students at St. Anthony School in Sterling, Colorado, in 1975.



retreat center, found herself in Columbia, Pa., doing liturgical and prayer ministry for the sisters called the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and for their Spiritual Center.

In 2006, Janet came to our Motherhouse and, until her retirement earlier this year, prepared prayer and liturgy and was the organist for St. Francis Chapel. As her volunteer ministry, she continues to prepare the Evening Liturgy of the Hours, which the sisters pray daily.

Rose Marie's classroom teaching took on a new focus after earning her master's degree in library science. She worked in the library at Cardinal Stritch University for two years, and then was invited to St. Clement School in Lancaster, Wis., to set up and run an Instructional Materials Center (IMC). A wish for a computer in the early 80s and the initiative on her part to learn about computers allowed students to broaden their knowledge and use of media in their learning. Rose Marie remained in Lancaster for 35 years – until her retirement and move to Clare Hall.

Her skills are currently put to use in a variety of volunteer ways, especially in assisting Sr. Joanne Schatzlein in the Office of Corporate Ministries and in working in the Clare Hall Post Office.

Janet and Rose Marie, in spite of the challenges that were always present for them, are quick

Sister Rose Marie with a student at Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Milwaukee.



to elaborate on how rewarding their ministries were. Beginning with the implementation of the Vatican II Council until today, the opportunity to help the praying community grow in participation and understanding of the liturgical and prayer life of the Church is very fulfilling for Janet. Her experience as a member of a pastoral team, accompanying RCIA candidates in their faith and soul journey, and the relationships established in the course of ministry are most rewarding.

Rose Marie cites the establishment of the IMC and the collaborative efforts of the parents and teachers who helped pave the way for accomplishing many 'firsts' in the school. An Accelerated Reader Program was started, along with computer and gifted-and-talented classes. The card catalogue and circulation were computerized, and she created and maintained the first school and parish websites. An introduction to Spanish was also offered. Sr. Rose Marie was nominated by the faculty to receive the Kohl Award in 1990. The award was given for skill as a leader, an agent for positive change and the ability to inspire love of learning. The school and community each received a check for \$1,000.

Both Janet and Rose Marie juggled varied and diverse tasks and responsibilities wherever

Rose Marie picking cherries in the family's back yard.



they worked. They both have a work ethic that is disciplined and thorough. From their youth, when personal initiative took them beyond cleaning vigil light holders to cleaning other parts of the church, their initiative never waned in the course of their years in ministry.

Except for one short period in the 80's, the three Dielen sisters have lived great distances from each other geographically. But connection has remained strong over the years through regular telephone calls, emails and visits when possible. In addition to the family sister bond, Janet and Rose Marie are bonded to the sisters in community. Life is doubly blessed for them when it comes to having sisters!

As regular readers of these letters, you know that sufficient funding to support our sisters' retirement needs is always a challenge. Neither Janet nor Rose Marie received adequate retirement compensation to carry them through their retirement years. The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi will be very grateful for any contribution you can make to ease the financial strain. Your gift will make a difference and you will be remembered in prayer each day.

Blessings of peace and joy.

Marcia Lunz, OSF

Sister Marcia Lunz, OSF

(AT RIGHT) Pink Jeep Tour in Sedona, Arizona, shows (LEFT TO RIGHT) Sisters Janet and Rose Marie with their sister, Nancy, and her husband, Chuck.



Sister Janet playing the organ, Rifle, Colo., in the 1990s.



Sister Rose Marie in the IMC at St. Clement School, Lancaster, Wis., with her nephew, Peter, and her brother-in-law, Chuck.



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