

# 2012 Jubilee



First Profession  
August 3, 1937

## JUBILEE WISDOM

*Even if I could do nothing,  
my very being is my doing.  
I give praise to God just by  
being who I am.*

**-Mary Louise  
Van Straten, SSND**

## Mary Louise Van Straten, SSND

75 Years

**Sister Mary Louise** taught elementary school for 40 years, coordinated religious education for four years and served as a school secretary for seven years. She ministered at parishes and school in Wisconsin cities of Appleton, Chippewa Falls, DePere, Glen Haven, Green Bay, Marshfield, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, and West Allis and in the Michigan cities of Escanaba and Gladstone. Sister Mary Louise is a member of the Notre Dame of Elm Grove community where she serves through prayer and presence.

### **A blessing of these years I want to share is**

when I was stationed in Glen Haven, Wisconsin, God showed me his beauty by the many shades of green on the bluffs in spring; the many colors of orange, red and yellow in autumn and with the sun shining on the trees and glistening with ice in the winter, but most of all by the generosity and love of the people.

### **There were challenges and joys with her work as an educator.**

She said, "My greatest challenge was working with 12 emotionally disturbed children in one classroom. On the other hand, one of my greatest joys was to know that students appreciated what I did." She discovered this when she transferred to teaching fourth grade. As she walked into the fourth grade room, all the students clapped. She had taught them the year before in third grade. On another occasion, when she moved from fifth to third grade, one of her former fifth graders was on patrol. As she walked her students to the corner, he jokingly said, "Sister, you flunked."

### **With her retirement in 1989, Sister Mary Louise continued**

to find ways to serve. As a member of the community's Global Peace and Justice Commission, she kept up with current issues, especially those affecting people who are poor and marginalized, as well as the environment. Through reading, research on the Web and attending educational programs, she shared what she learned on issues by emailing sisters and posting information on the convent bulletin board. Besides writing letters, concerns and needs are shared with God through ongoing individual and community prayer.

### **In 2001, Sister Mary Louise helped to implement the**

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* ministry at the Notre Dame of Elm Grove campus. The *For Whom the Bell Tolls* organization tracks the people scheduled for execution in the U.S. Each day that there is an execution, sisters gather in prayer at 3 p.m. to remember the person being executed, the victim(s) and their families. Also, prayers are offered for an end to the death penalty and the campus' Caroline Bell tolls.

### **The wisdom I would like to share is**

the best part of being a religious woman is being able to live with other women who share my values and help me to grow daily more and more into Christ-like living. Even if I could do nothing, my very being is my doing. I give praise to God just by being who I am.



School Sisters  
of Notre Dame  
Central Pacific Province