

# 2015 Jubilee



First Profession  
July 31, 1965

## JUBILEE WISDOM

*"It is a grace to be able to live with a grateful heart."*

- Virginia Klesner  
SSND

- formerly S. Martha Marie



School Sisters  
of Notre Dame  
Central Pacific Province

## Virginia Klesner, SSND

50 Years

*Sister Virginia's years in ministry began with teaching posts in Quincy, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri. From 1974-1979, she served in religious education at St. Joseph School in Farmington, Missouri, and the next six years in elementary school administration in Herrin, Illinois. In 1985, she returned to teaching in Fort Madison, Iowa. Beginning in 1994, she ministered there for a decade as director of religious education at four area schools. Following a sabbatical and short assignments in St. Louis and Burlington, Iowa, as a pastoral minister, she answered a call to serve on the congregational leadership team in the former St. Louis Province. Since 2012, she has served in parish ministry at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Lake Ozark, Missouri. She received a bachelor's in American studies from the former Notre Dame College in St. Louis and a master's of religious studies from Barry University in Miami, Florida.*

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

I must acknowledge that living in SSND community has been a special blessing for me. To be open to the many and varied surprises God has had in store for me has been a source of strength and courage, and has enabled me to minister in many ways and to live in different places. The support of my family and others I have ministered with have brought graces beyond measure.

### The words of wisdom I would like to share ...

It is a grace to be able to live with a grateful heart and attitude. Being grateful for the day-to-day gifts ... awakening to a new day, being open to the surprises God has in store for us, being able to recognize those gifts while reflecting on the day, all help me realize what a precious gift life is. Life can be fragile, so counting our blessings as well as seeing challenges as gifts for growth, helps us to live each day to its fullest.

### What was an especially meaningful time in your ministry?

Each call to ministry, whether teaching or administration, community service or parish ministry, has been a gift from God — opportunities to trust that God is still in charge, opportunities to grow in God's love and grace. Having served our SSNDs was a particularly graced time for me ... to be stretched, affirmed, challenged to become a better person. And now working with parishioners who share a commitment and a passion for enriching lives in a parish setting, is a fine gift and hopefully will keep me growing and sharing what I have received.

### What drew you to the School Sisters of Notre Dame?

Having been taught by SSND in Fort Madison, Iowa, I was impressed by their spirit, charism and commitment. I had three great aunts who were SSNDs and a great aunt and a cousin who were Franciscan sisters, so it was somewhat natural to consider religious life when I graduated from high school. God surprised me with a "Come and see for yourself!" invitation. I did come ... and I continue to see that this same generous spirit, charism and commitment keep me focused, grounded and connected even to this day.