

2015 Jubilee



First Profession
August 1, 1955

JUBILEE WISDOM

*"I shook my fist [at God]:
'Do something.'
Then I came to realize,
Jesus already had."*

- Cynthia Brinkman
SSND

- formerly S. Louis De Montfort



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Cynthia Brinkman, SSND

60 Years

Sister Cynthia ministered during her early years as a Catholic grade school teacher and administrator in the Illinois towns of Cairo and Belleville, and in the Missouri communities of Dardenne, House Springs and St. Louis. From 1972-1979, she served in formation and spiritual direction in the former St. Louis Province and in Honduras, after which she was elected a provincial councilor, a role she fulfilled through 1987. She served four years each in Malden and Ellington, Missouri, as a guidance counselor and domestic violence program director, respectively. Beginning in 1997, she served 17 years as part-time chaplain and staff member for Whole Health Outreach in Ellington. Today, she ministers there as a volunteer. She received a bachelor's in English from the former Notre Dame College in St. Louis and a master's in theology from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

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

There have been so many! My current ministry with Whole Health Outreach helps rural residents access health care where there's no public transportation. The mountains of southern Missouri (or the Bootheel, as it's called) is magnificent country. More and more I appreciate the splendor of nature — beauty that can be as simple as rain. I'm drawn to be quiet and more reflective, praising God for the reality of it all. Theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote about the mystery of the cosmos. What I see here is a tiny aspect of that cosmos. I am deeply grateful for celebrating Eucharist and sharing with friends.

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

All is one – the depth of the mystery of oneness with, in and of God. The grace of God is so awesome.

An especially meaningful time in my ministry ...

A time which stands out for me followed the two-and-one-half years I lived in Honduras. I witnessed unbelievable suffering there. When I returned to the U.S., I attended a retreat and experienced silence ... God was not there. I felt anger and asked why God didn't alleviate the suffering in the world. I shook my fist: "Do something." Then I came to realize: "Jesus already did it." It is the mystery of Jesus' presence, and I am part of that presence.

What drew you to the School Sisters of Notre Dame?

During my grade school years in Quincy, Illinois, I had SSND teachers who were loving, funny, full of life and generous. I wanted to be like them – to have a life like them. In 1947, some sisters who were on their way to a new mission in Japan spoke to the students of the school. I was deeply touched by what they shared and the ministry they were going to do. The sacrament of confirmation put a stamp on it for me.