

2016 Jubilee



First Profession
July 14, 1966

Karen Jeanne Walther, SSND

50 Years

Sister Karen taught elementary school after her first profession of vows in 1966. She taught for 10 years in Wisconsin before serving in pastoral ministry for eight years at St. George in Kenosha, Wisconsin and for 23 years at St. Peter and Paul in Merrillville, Indiana. Sister Karen currently ministers at a food pantry and homeless shelters, and teaches water color classes to our retired sisters in the Milwaukee area. She holds a bachelor's in education and English from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee and a certificate in theology from St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin.

An experience I would like to share...

Reflecting on my 50 years of life as an SSND, I see a rich garden filled with vegetables of many varieties and flowers brilliant in color. A little bit of this and a little bit of that is the kind of gardening I have done in the past 40 years. Gardening is a grand metaphor for the experience of living. As I gratefully walk through the garden of my life in all its seasons, I come upon a woman named Celia. I knew Celia for the 23 years I served as a pastoral associate in Merrillville, Indiana. For many years, I had encouraged Celia, who had a deep devotion to Jesus, to become a minister of communion at liturgy. Over and over, she turned me down because she said she was not worthy. After many years, she finally agreed to try. From then on, hers was the first call I would receive, "Can I give communion on Holy Thursday?" Celia also visited the homebound, bringing the comfort of the Eucharist. One day, years later, I overheard Celia talking with a friend and encouraging her to become a communion minister, too. She repeated the words that I had said so many times. Both women continue to be of service in many ways and to encourage others. For me, this simple story illustrates a key value in my life as an SSND, helping people unlock their potential, explore their giftedness and blossom in their own garden. Or, as *You Are Sent* says, "For us education means enabling persons to reach the fullness of their potential as individuals created in God's image, and assisting them to direct their gifts toward building the earth." (22)

-formerly S.Kara Lynn