



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Transforming the world through education

2017 Jubilee

Celebrating 50 years

First Profession—7/17/1967

Formerly Sister Mary John Anne

Sister Joanne Dehmer, SSND

Sister Joanne's first ministry with SSND began as a teacher at John Ireland Grade School in St. Peter, Minnesota. Two years later in 1970, she was called to teach at Lonsdale-New Market-Veseli Area School in Lonsdale, Minnesota, where she taught and served part-time as a pastoral minister until 1977. For over 15 years, Sister Joanne served as a full-time pastoral minister at Epiphany Parish in Coon Rapids, St. Joseph Parish in New Hope and St. Edward's Parish in Bloomington, all in Minnesota. She began a part-time spiritual direction and a retreat ministry in 1974, and since 1994, Sister Joanne has served as a full-time spiritual and retreat director at Loyola Spirituality Center in St. Paul. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education and a minor in theology from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. In 1987, she graduated with a master's in ministry from Seattle University.

Memories I have to share...

I am a native Minnesotan, having grown up in a small rural town, St. Michael. My twin brother and I are the youngest in a family of six children. Living a faithful and loving life was important in our family, and we all attended the parish Catholic school with School Sisters of Notre Dame as our teachers.

There are many vocations of priests and sisters from my home parish, and 51 are School Sisters of Notre Dame. I felt a call to enter the community without ever expecting the personal growth, deepening of my faith and wide ranging pastoral experiences in parishes and retreat settings that would be mine.

My community saw in me and called forth in me gifts that I had not known.

I was given an education and skills needed for each ministry to which I have been called, as teacher, pastoral care director and spiritual director. Being creative, imaginative and artistic are important to me as a part of all ministry. For over 40 years, I have been engaged in spiritual direction ministry, and am currently serving at Loyola Spirituality Center where I have been for over 20 years. I remain grateful for my experiences and relationships as I journey with individuals and families living with illness and facing end of life questions, struggling to find hope and meaning, discerning major life decisions, grieving the loss of a loved one or broken relationship, desiring to deepen their awareness of the Holy, of God in their lives. These profound encounters touch my life and have helped me to grow. Living a vowed life in a faith community has blessed me and deepened all that I am and all that I do. I have learned in community that God is the center of my life, that there is gift in diversity and the sharing of life and ministry. I have come to know that "community is a giving and a receiving of love and respect, a living together in trust, openness, sincerity, and forgiveness." (YAS C.7) "Our community, like every Christian community, is missionary. We are called and sent to deepen communion with God and among people wherever we are'in every place, in every time, in every situation." (YAS C.9) With all my heart I am forever grateful for my community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, for calling forth from me more than I could have ever asked or imagined.



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