

2025 Jubilee

SISTER MARILYN ORCHARD

First Profession



July 17, 1965

Celebrating 60 years



Sister Marilyn Orchard recalls, “I had School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) teachers through grade and high school. Excellent teachers. A neighborhood friend, a few years older than I was, entered SSND when I became a freshman at Good Counsel. On the occasions that we would meet in passing, I noted how much fun those in formation were having. That positive energy, along with hoping to do my part in contributing to making the world a better place drew me in the direction of SSND.” With this inspiration, Sister Marilyn has served as an educator, spiritual director and impactful supporter of women and refugees. Sister Marilyn

earned her bachelor’s degree from Mount Mary College (now University) in Milwaukee in 1968, and immediately began a ministry of education, teaching for middle and junior high schools throughout Minnesota in the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Wells. In 1980, she achieved a master’s degree in education from St. Mary’s College in Winona, Minnesota. From 1981 until 1986, she served as director of religious education for St. Joseph in Waite Park and then St. Joseph in Circle Pines, both in Minnesota. Starting in the late summer of 1986, she was co-director at Theresa Living Center, a homeless shelter for women in St. Paul, a role she continued until 1994. 1995 brought the opportunity to serve refugees as Catholic Charities’ director of refugee resettlement, a ministry she recalls fondly, “I enjoyed the richness of learning about different cultures, tasting their foods, getting to know their skills, getting to know them as a person and watching them learn, struggle and succeed in making a life for themselves and their families. I learned firsthand what a gift they are to our society.” Sister Marilyn served on the provincial council for Good Counsel Covent in Mankato, Minnesota from 2003-2009 and then shared her gifts as a spiritual director through several roles in St. Paul and West St. Paul up until 2022. Today, Sister Marilyn resides at Benedictine Living Community in Shakopee, Minnesota, in ongoing prayer and presence.

Is there a special memory you would like to share as you celebrate your Jubilee?

Part of my vocation story began at home. We as a family would add a Hail Mary to our meal prayer, "so one of you children will become a priest or sister." When I came home for my first home visit, I noticed it wasn't added any more. It was a done deal for them. And a beginning for me.

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