

## ***Diamond Jubilarian Celebrating 60 Years***

### ***Sister M. Alacoque Skoney, OSF***

Sister M. Alacoque Skoney, daughter of the late Stanley and Anna Skoney, came to Sylvania, Ohio from Queen of Apostles Parish in Hamtramck, Michigan on August 25, 1948, having completed high school at Girl's Catholic Central in Detroit. She made her First Profession of Vows on August 18, 1951 and her Final Vows on August 10, 1954. Her professional background includes a B.A. degree from Mary Manse College, Toledo, Ohio and a M.A. from the University of Detroit, Detroit, Mich. Sister Alacoque taught at elementary schools in Cincinnati, Rossford and Toledo, Ohio; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Detroit and Garden City, Mich. for a total of 23 years. She also spent many years doing catechetical work in parishes, working in the business office at the Motherhouse, assisting with duties in the pastoral care department at Holy Cross Hospital in Detroit. Sister also cared for her ailing Mother and brother at home and currently volunteers at Rosary Care Center where she resides. She assists with prayers with the more frail residents and engages in a ministry of prayer for others as part of her daily routine.



Becoming a Sister was an easy choice for Sister Alacoque as her parents and brother priest as well as her parish priest encouraged her to enter religious life and after meeting the Sisters at St. Lad's in Hamtramck, who also encouraged her to enter religious life, she joined the Sylvania Franciscans. Her life as a Sister has been a happy one for the past 60 years and she feels that the following quotation from Rev. Thaddeus Horgan sums it up beautifully, "Through prayer, life becomes God-centered and faith-filled with the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Sister Alacoque currently visits the sick and frail residents at Rosary Care Center. She loves to talk with the nurses and aides and encourage them to do the best they can as they minister to the sisters and priests in their care. She hopes to accomplish God's will for her and prays for the good health she needs to be able to continue her ministry at Rosary Care Center.

### ***Sister Dorothy Marie Balabuch, OSF***

Sister Dorothy Marie Balabuch, one of ten children of the late Francis and Victoria Balabuch, came to Sylvania, Ohio from St. Ladislaus Parish in Hamtramck, Michigan on January 26, 1947 to attend St. Clare Academy and to begin preparation to become a Sister of St. Francis. She made her First Profession of Vows on August 18, 1951 and her Final Vows on August 10, 1955. To say that Sister Dorothy Marie is a "Jill of all trades" is no exaggeration. In her 60 years in religious life with the Sylvania Franciscans she has served in a variety of ministries and in a variety of settings. Sister worked in housekeeping and dietary at the Motherhouse and in small convents and a few hospitals. She was a home health aide, a house parent at an orphanage, a school bus driver and a day care center teacher and second grade teacher. This variety of ministries took her to Sylvania, Toledo and Swanton, Ohio; St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota; Lake Providence, Louisiana and Brenham, Texas. Sister Dorothy currently works in food service at Southview High School in Sylvania.



In addition to her work in food service, Sister Dorothy spends her time visiting the residents at Rosary Care Center with her little dog, Oreo. They bring smiles to the residents and give them a chance to enjoy one of God's creatures in a special way. Sister Dorothy also spends time with her large extended family and enjoys celebrating various events and sometimes travels with them. Her goal in life is quite simple, "to get to heaven."

### ***Sister Jeanine Sokolowski, OSF***

Sister Jeanine Sokolowski, a daughter of John and Rose Sokolowski, came to Sylvania, OH from Holy Cross Parish in Minneapolis, MN on August 30, 1949, to attend St. Clare Academy. She made her First Profession of Vows on August 18, 1951 and her Final Vows on August 10, 1954. Her professional background includes B.A. and M.A. degrees from Mary Manse College, Toledo, OH. Sister Jeanine was a teacher for 38 years and she taught in schools in Detroit and Garden City, MI; Sandusky, Huron, Toledo, Cincinnati and Sylvania, OH; and St. Paul, Minneapolis and New Brighton, MN. She also did some tutoring, home health, driving and companionship the residents of Rosary Care Center to the doctor and hospital as well as acting as an assistant activity director in a nursing home. Sister Jeanine currently assists as a companion to the sisters who are taken to the hospital in an emergency situation. She finds this ministry very fulfilling as the sisters tell her how happy they are to have her as their companion at such a difficult time.



Because she wanted to serve the Lord in a special way, Sister Jeanine entered religious life. Sr. Remigia, OSF, was a special friend of the family so it only seemed natural for her to enter the Order in Sylvania. Sister Jeanine's life in community has been full and fulfilling. Her tall stature, her sense of humor, her lovely and strong soprano voice have been used in the service of others for the past 60 years. She has a special place in her heart for the people of Haiti and along with Sister Josephine Dybza, OSF, does fundraising for various projects being worked on in Haiti where two Sylvania Franciscans ( Sr. Jo and Sr. Fidelis) currently minister.

Reflecting on the past 60 years, Sister Jeanine sees herself as the eyes and ears of the Sisters she companions to the doctor and hospital. She finds enjoyment in doing needlework projects for the Gift Shop at Rosary Care Center so much so that she says, "They make my heart dance." She loves to be of service wherever she can. "God will always provide. Watch and see," has been her motto ever since Sr. Michaeline, OSF, gave it to her several years ago.

### ***Sister M. Madeleva Kraus, OSF***

Sister M. Madeleva Kraus, a daughter of Frederick and Lavina Kraus, came to Sylvania, Ohio from Immaculate Conception Parish in Columbia Heights, Minnesota June 16, 1947 to complete high school at St. Clare Academy and to begin preparation for becoming a Sister of St. Francis. She made her First Profession of Vows, August 18, 1951 and her Final Vows, August 10, 1954. Her professional background includes B.A. and B.S.E. degrees from Mary Manse College, Toledo, Ohio and an M.A. degree from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Sister taught for 22 years in elementary schools in Detroit, Michigan; Toledo, Port Clinton and Huron, Ohio; and Minneapolis, Minn. She was a school principal for 16 years at schools in Toledo and Ilchester, Maryland. Her ten years as Director of the RCIA Program at St. Wendelin's in Fostoria, Ohio are among the most treasured memories she has as she walked the faith journey with nearly 200 adults and witnessed their entry into the Catholic Church. Eight years in Congregational Leadership were followed by a new ministry as Director of Mission Integration at Madonna Manor, a retirement community, managed by Franciscan Living Communities and sponsored by the Sylvania Franciscans in Villa Hills, Kentucky.



Sister Madeleva attributes her religious vocation to her parents who showed their children the importance of love, prayer, the Mass and the sacraments. On snowbound Sundays her father led a prayer service in their home (domestic church) in rural Minnesota. She became a Sylvania Franciscan because she was inspired by them as they were her teachers and seemed to be women of prayer as well as people who enjoyed life and had fun with the students at recess.

When she became a teacher, Sister Madeleva felt humbled and privileged to prepare children for the sacraments always involving their parents in the process. As a junior high teacher and principal, she was passionate about helping children understand that they were responsible for their actions and encouraged them to see that this was a building block for adulthood. She continues to influence others in her ministry at Madonna Manor and is humbled by the elders who must give up their independence and personal possessions and yet are grateful for their care.

Upon reflection over the past 60 years, Sister Madeleva recalled some of the highlights of her life. She had the privilege of shaking the hand of Pope John Paul II on his first visit to the United States in Washington, DC. She sang with the choir in St. Peter's in Rome in 1996. She considered her work with the RCIA program a special opportunity that deepened her faith and enriched her life. Sister Madeleva has had a lifelong love for the arts as expressed in concerts, art exhibits as well as her own creative seasonal decorating projects. She continues to dabble in creative poetry and writing and loves to relax to beautiful music. A scripture passage that has become very meaningful to her is from the prophet, Micah—"Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God."

### ***Sister M. Thomas More Ruffing, OSF***

Sister M. Thomas More Ruffing, a daughter of Fred and Veronica Ruffing, came to Sylvania, Ohio from St. Casimir's Parish in Wells, Minnesota on June 22, 1949 to complete high school at St. Clare Academy and to begin preparation for becoming a Sister of St. Francis. She made her First Profession of Vows, August 18, 1951 and her Final Vows, August 10, 1954. Her professional background includes a B.A. degree from St. Teresa College, Winona, Minn. and M.S.L.S. from Catholic University, Washington, D.C. Sister taught for a total of 27 years in elementary schools in Detroit, Michigan; New Brighton, Minn. and Swanton, Ohio as well as in high schools in Sylvania and Toledo, Ohio and at the college level in Sylvania. She served as librarian for 34 years in high schools in Sylvania and Toledo, and at Lourdes College in Sylvania. Since her retirement from the college, Sister has served the residents at Rosary Care Center, worked in the Communication Office for the Sisters and is currently Archives Assistant for her Order.



Reflecting on the past 60 years in religious life, Sister Thomas More recalls that she was influenced in her choice of vocation by the Sylvania Franciscan Sister who were her teachers. They lived simply and had a "jest" for living. Her parents and family challenged her to persevere in her choice of vocation and she has certainly been up to the challenge. A few highlights of her years in religion have been the many opportunities for travel in the U.S. and abroad; playing the pipe organ in the Pantheon (now a Catholic church) in Rome while the tour group joined her in the Lourdes Hymn (Immaculate Mary); and last but not least, a celebration acknowledging the 50 years of faithful service as an organist in the Motherhouse Chapel.

Sister Thomas More feels that she really has accomplished all that she ever wanted to do and even more than she could ever have imagined. Besides continuing to serve in the congregation's archives, she likes to spend her free time travelling by car, baking bread and making scrumptious desserts, pursuing her lifelong hobbies of knitting, listening to classical music and volunteering wherever and whenever she can and hopes her health continues to allow her to live out the unknown number of years ahead.

