

Golden Jubilarian Celebrating 50 Years (1960-2010)

Sister Ann Marie Chmielewski, OSF

Sister Ann Marie Chmielewski, daughter of the late Anthony and Mary Chmielewski, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from Holy Cross Parish in Minneapolis, MN, on June 22, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania, a B.A. and B.S.E. from Mary Manse College in Toledo, a M.A.T. from Siena Heights College in Adrian, MI. After 39 years of teaching in elementary schools in Rossford, Steubenville and Toledo, OH; Detroit and Wyandotte, MI; Minneapolis, St. Paul and New Brighton, MN; and Corsicana, TX, she became an Activities Coordinator at Burlleson St. Joseph Manor in Caldwell, TX and has enjoyed her ministry with the elders there for the past ten years.



Sister Ann Marie felt that God was calling her to serve him as a Sylvania Franciscan Sister at an early age. Her aunt, Sister M. Claudia, a member of the Order, as well as her Sylvania Franciscan grade school teachers influenced her decision to become a Sister. She feels that working side by side with young students as a teacher and now as she ministers to the elderly, she has shared God's love and compassion with others as a Sylvania Franciscan. God's great love has placed her in the world and continues to empower and guide her in whatever she does. She feels that her accomplishments are God's accomplishments.

In her 50 years as a Sister of St. Francis, Sister Ann Marie feels that the many experiences she has had and the many people she has worked with in so many places have been a glorious adventure. She prays her favorite prayer before the crucifix each day and says, "Lord, God, enlighten the darkness of my mind. Give me true faith, certain hope, and unfailing love, that I may always do your holy and divine will."

Sister Cecile D. Glodek, OSF

Sister Cecile D. Glodek, daughter of the late Frank and Sophie Glodek, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from Holy Cross Parish in Minneapolis, MN, on August 5, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and received an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College. She made her first Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her ministries over the past 50 years consisted of teaching, dietary work, and working as a Nursing Assistant in a variety of settings.



Sister Cecile recalls that her aunt, Sister Emilia, a Sylvania Franciscan, was the biggest influence on her decision to become a Sister. Her aunt would stay with her family when she came to visit and she and her mother loved to have her there. As Sister Cecile reflects on all the people she has helped in her lifetime, she recalls her special love for the children she cared for as well as the elderly patients she tended in hospitals and in their own homes. She hopes they saw the love of God in her gentleness and kindness.

Reflecting on the highlights of her life, Sister Cecile recalled a Pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy; a ride on a parasail while on a recent cruise with her family, and a yet-to-be-attained goal: a ride in a hot air balloon. All in all, Sister is grateful for the 50 years she has been able to serve God as a Sylvania Franciscan.

Sister Gretchen Kunz, OSF

Sister Gretchen Kunz, daughter of the late Fredrick and Jessie Lee Kunz, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from St. James Parish in Toledo, OH, on June 17, 1957. She made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania, B.A. and B.S.N. degrees from Mary Manse College in Toledo, a M.Ed. from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, and a M.H.A. from Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH. After teaching elementary school for four years Sister Gretchen began to pursue a career in nursing and worked at hospitals sponsored by her Order in Sandusky, OH and Brenham, TX. She then began a new career as a Hospital Administrator and was the CEO and President of St. Joseph Regional Health Center in Bryan, TX for 24 years. Sister Gretchen is currently the Senior Development Officer for the Health Center which is part of Franciscan Services Corporation, the health and human services ministry sponsored by the Sylvania Franciscans.



Sister Gretchen wanted to be a Sister since the second grade and was influenced by the Sisters who taught her at Central Catholic High School to become a Sylvania Franciscan. She has enjoyed her ministry in health care and is credited with making a small hospital in Bryan, TX, the large, innovative and much admired Health Center it is today. She readily acknowledges the many people who helped St. Joseph Regional Health Center become what it is. Her philosophy of life has inspired others to join her in her work and she encouraged her partners in ministry with these favorite phrases: Keep a smile on your face all the time—greet everyone; Every day counts—every person counts; and, Life and change are constant. She feels that she has been able to influence others with her good and positive effort to do better.

As Sister Gretchen reflects on her current status in life, she is learning braille in order to deal with diminishing vision, she continues to learn Spanish which is something she has been doing for several years, and she loves to enrich people with the Mission of the Health Center by working with the Legacy Project. One could sum up the life of this Golden Jubilarian with her own favorite saying, "There's no end to getting better."

Sister M. Irenaeus Samsel, OSF

Sister M. Irenaeus Samsel, daughter of the late Francis and Sophia Samsel, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from St. Anthony's Parish, Temperance, MI, on June 20, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania, a B.A. degree from Mary Manse College in Toledo, and a M. Ed. from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, OH. Sister is also a Certified Teacher for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Sister Irenaeus has taught for 50 years in elementary schools in Bowling Green, Rossford, Sandusky and Toledo, OH; in Detroit and Hamtramck, MI; and in New Brighton and Minneapolis, MN. She currently is a Minister of Religious Formation at All Saints School in Rossford, OH.



When recently asked how she became a Sylvania Franciscan, Sister Irenaeus said that while visiting a family friend in the hospital, they met Sister M. Angelica, a Sylvania Franciscan who became a close friend of the Samsel family and invited them to visit the convent in Sylvania when Sister Irenaeus was 10 years old. Sister's happiness and joyful spirit attracted the little girl and she decided that she wanted to be a Sylvania Franciscan. Her parents were very supportive of the idea. As a Sylvania Franciscan, Sister Irenaeus says her greatest joy has been preparing children to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. She often wonders at the influence she has had on the lives of hundreds of children who have come to know Jesus in a personal way because she has had the privilege of introducing him to them at a very early age. Sister hopes to be remembered for living her life in a caring and loving way as she spreads a spirit of peace and respect with those with whom she lives and works.

Looking back on 50 years of a very active religious life, Sister Irenaeus now looks forward to developing a deeper relationship with Jesus and when she can no longer serve God's people in an active way, she intends to be a Pray-er for the Sisters and the world. She prays daily for the grace of perseverance and finds that the saying, "Let go, let God," has helped her through many moments in her life as a Sylvania Franciscan.

Sister M. Kateri Theriault, OSF

Sister Kateri Theriault, daughter of the late Ralph and Stella Theriault, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from Holy Trinity Parish in South St. Paul, MN, on June 14, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania, B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Detroit. Sister Kateri has ministered in a variety of settings over the past 50 years. She taught in elementary schools in Toledo, Sylvania and Bowling Green, OH and in Detroit, MI. She was involved in Vocation Ministry in Toledo and Cincinnati, OH, was Director of Ministry and served on the Leadership Team for the Sylvania Franciscans, worked with adoption agencies in Las Vegas, NV and is currently the Director of Mission Integration at St. Leonard, a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Centerville, OH.



Sister Kateri was not taught by the Sylvania Franciscans but got to know them while visiting a friend's two sisters who were Sylvania Franciscans. She found the Sisters to be friendly, engaging and happy. Her parents and grandparents had the greatest influence on her decision to become a Sister. They taught her that religion was not something you "put on" on Sunday. It was lived during the week. They encouraged her to be a normal teenager and were supportive of her decision to enter the convent emphasizing that happiness was what really mattered in any choice she may made. After 50 years in religious life, Sister Kateri has many happy memories of a variety of experiences which she feels exceeded anything she would have thought one could achieve in a lifetime.

She has gathered spiritual wisdom from a variety of sources, including the writings of Henri Nouwen, Julian of Norwich and Thomas Merton. Her favorite Scripture meditation is on Jesus' words to Peter: "Do you love me more than these others do?" Her frequent prayer these days is, "I will walk in Your Presence, O Lord, today and all the days of my life."

Sister Kathleen Skog, OSF

Sister Kathleen Skog, daughter of the late Glen and Charlotte Skog, entered the Sisters of St. Francis; Sylvania, OH from Immaculate Conception Parish in Columbia Heights, MN, on June 14, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania and a B.A. degree from Mary Manse College in Toledo, OH. She also has earned certification in a variety of disciplines most recently in Catechetical Leadership in Austin, TX. Sister Kathleen taught in elementary schools in Toledo, Sylvania, Sandusky, and Cincinnati, OH as well as in schools in Detroit, MI and Minneapolis, MN. She worked in the dietary department in Sylvania as well as at hospitals in North Platte, NE, Detroit, MI and Brenham, TX. Sister has been the Director of Religious Education at St. Mary's Parish in Brenham, TX for the past 10 years.



Reflecting recently on why she became a Sylvania Franciscan, Sister Kathleen says that the kindness of her teachers who were Sylvania Franciscans inspired her to join them. Her parents also influenced her decision to become a Sister because they spoke of different life styles besides marriage. As a Sister, she has had opportunities for spiritual renewal in the states as well as in Assisi, Italy and the Holy Land. She believes that she has influenced others in her life by showing that she loves and cares for people and that is what they really remember about anyone they meet. Among her favorite prayers is the poem, "Footprints in the Sand" and her favorite quotation from Scripture is "Arise my Love, my dove, my beautiful one and come." (Song of Songs 2:13)

Sister M. Samuel Lubeck, OSF

Sister M. Samuel Lubeck, daughter of the late Andrew and Anna Lubeck, entered the Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH from SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Detroit, MI, on June 22, 1954. She attended St. Clare Academy in Sylvania and made her First Profession of Vows on August 10, 1960. Her professional background includes an A.A. degree from Lourdes Junior College in Sylvania, B.A. and B.S.E. degrees from Mary Manse College in Toledo, OH and a M.A. degree from the University of Detroit in Detroit, MI. Over the past 50 years Sister Samuel has taught elementary and junior high classes in Minneapolis, MN and in Berkey, Toledo, Cincinnati, Port Clinton and Galion, OH. She is currently teaching at St. Joseph School in Galion, OH where she has also been involved in teaching religious education classes for almost 30 years.



Sister Samuel says she became a Sylvania Franciscan because of the example of her grade school teachers. There were 24 Sisters at SS. Peter and Paul School and she was impressed with their kindness, humanness, joyfulness and loyalty and wanted to follow in their footsteps. Her mother also influenced her decision to become a Sister because she had wanted to become one herself. Sister Samuel has seen how she has influenced her students over the years as she receives letters and visits from them where they tell her how much they remember what she has taught them in science and in religion classes. She is especially pleased when a former student wants to talk with her about religious life and is delighted when she learns that a former student has become a writer, a scientist and a good parent.

Friendships are important to Sister and her favorite quotation from Scripture reinforces this for her, "A faithful friend is a strong defense, and he that has found one has found a treasure". (Ecclesiasticus 6:14) For 50 years Sister Samuel has made many friends and has exemplified the Sylvania Franciscan spirit of joyfulness, kindness, humanness and loyalty that first attracted her to religious life.