

December 2017

Dear Friends,
Vocation. A word derived from the Latin *vocare*, it means “to call.” For many people, it also translates to a “calling” in a more specific, religious sense: a call that is actually rooted in the sacrament of Baptism.

Those who discern their vocation to be a call to religious life choose a path that invites them to dedicate their lives to following in the footsteps of Jesus through the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It is a call from God, a call to holiness lived in prayer and service.

Sister Rose Mack certainly exemplifies the meaning of “vocation,” serving wherever she was needed, always relying on God’s assistance during her 85 years of ministry, including the unexpected opportunity to serve as both a sister and a “mom”!

We thank you, Sister Rose, for your amazing life and the example you have given all of us through your many years of loving service. Happy 100th birthday!

Sister Beth Ann Baricevich, OSF
Vocation Minister

Women of Hope is the monthly electronic newsletter from the Membership and Relationship Team of the School Sisters of St. Francis for single Catholic women interested in exploring God’s call in their lives. To learn more, please contact Sister Beth Ann Baricevich: bbaricevich@sssf.org or 414-550-0321.

Celebrating a Century of Life and Service

By Sister Ruth Hoerig

They say it’s the hardships of life that form our true character. If that’s true, then those born in the early 1900s have certainly earned their character “badges.” These folks, dubbed the “greatest generation” by broadcast journalist Tom Brokaw, were thought by many to be “great” because of the strife and turmoil they endured.

Sister Rose Mack is one of them, born December 7, 1917, during the tumultuous years of World War I and raised during the Great Depression. The fourth child in a family of eight, Rose was only six years when her mother died. She was then raised by her uncle in Saskatchewan, Canada. “My uncle had two sisters who were religious,” she said. “He admired these sisters and often said to me, ‘You’re going to be a sister someday.’”



When she was ten years old, Rose moved to the United States to live with her aunt and attended a Catholic school in Dane, Wisconsin. This is where she first met the School Sisters of St. Francis. “I was very fond of Sister Zita, my fifth and sixth grade teacher. It was her kind, loving, and caring example that inspired me to enter the convent when I was 13.”

Two years after she was received, Sister Rose began her 30-year ministry as a homemaker. “Though that wasn’t my choice, and the work was very hard, we willingly agreed to serve wherever we were needed,” she said. In 1967, she attended nursing school and graduated with certificates as a nursing aide, home care and hospice care worker. She then gained employment at Thoreck Hospital where she worked for 19 years, working with geriatric patients and helping with pediatric care when needed. “I enjoyed ministering to the aged and the babies, but my favorite was caring for the ‘little ones,’” she said.

When Sister Rose retired in 1995, she noticed an ad in the church bulletin requesting a caretaker for a six-month-old baby whose mother had died of cancer. She applied and raised the girl until she graduated from college. “She is now 31 years old and married, but she still calls me every night,” she said.

“Looking back over the past 100 years of life, I have no regrets,” Sister Rose said. “I relied on God to get me through my 85 years of ministry. It never occurred to me to quit. Once you make a commitment, you stick with it.”

As Sister Rose walks the corridors of St. Joseph Center each day, without the help of a cane or walker, one must admire her stamina and commitment. She is a shining example of this generation of greatness.

You are welcome to join us for liturgies, concerts, workshops and other events at St. Joseph Center. For a complete listing, please visit our website: www.sssf.org or find us on Facebook.