

February 2018

Dear Friends,

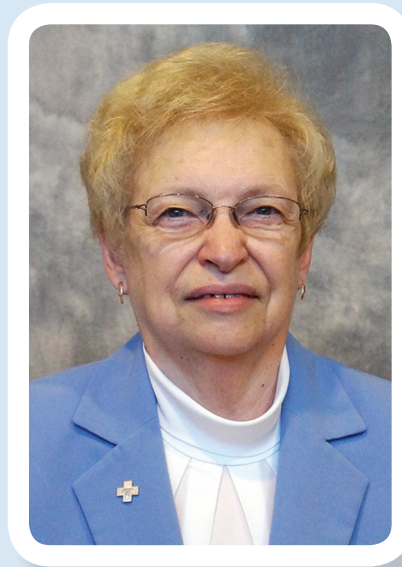
This year on February 14, we not only celebrated Valentine's Day with its accompanying cards and candy, but we also marked Ash Wednesday, the solemn beginning of the Lenten season. Lent reminds us of ashes on our foreheads, dreary days, and giving up candy. However, many people don't know that Lent is actually a very old word for "springtime," which elicits images of blossoming flowers and green grass.

Recent issues of *Women of Hope* have noted the call that is the heart of vocation. Could this Lenten season also provide a call to us as the weather warms and springtime gently invites us to listen with an open heart? Taking the time to attentively listen, especially during Lent, may help us experience the grace of God in a special way.

Sister Janet Neureuther, featured in this month's vocation story, experienced a number of challenges during her years of ministering as a School Sister of St. Francis. But as she says, she always felt confident that the grace of God would see her through the challenging times. Thank you, Sister Janet, for all you have done, and for all you continue to do to meet the needs of the times.

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: [babaricevich@sssf.org](mailto:babaricevich@sssf.org) or 414-550-0321.*



## Mission-Driven Ministry

By Sister Ruth Hoerig

Sister Janet Neureuther and her two younger brothers attended a two-room school in Hubertus, Wisconsin, where the School Sisters of St. Francis taught. "I enjoyed helping the sisters in various ways, even delivering phone messages from the sister homemaker who lived in the convent adjoining the school," she said. "I kept thinking that someday, I would join them to make a group of four."

When Janet got a little older, she was encouraged by her upper grade teacher to join the congregation. "This seemed like a good fit for me," she said. "My childhood was steeped in a strong faith tradition that included family prayer, Mass, and devotions.

My parents often helped the sisters when they needed a hand." So, in the fall of 1957, Janet entered the community.

After graduating from Alverno College, Sister Janet spent all her years of ministry in Milwaukee teaching in both large and small schools, with affluent and poorer families from various cultural backgrounds.

"My most interesting experience was ministering at St. Anthony of Padua School," she said. "I started out as a fourth-grade teacher and, after completing my Master's degree in administration, I served as principal of the school for 15 years." During that time, she helped to form the merger of a neighboring school and parish. "Those were challenging years, but I always felt that the grace of God would see me through," she said.

Today, Sister Janet continues to serve those who are poor in a new line of work at Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, where she serves as program assistant and executive assistant. "Many people rely on Catholic Charities for finding a home, family counseling, home care, or help with adopting a child," she said.

"As I look back over my life, I can say that all my ministries have contributed to the charism of our foundresses, which was to meet the needs of the times," she said. "I feel the impact of my current job has a special connection to carrying on the work of our congregation."

From her earliest years, it seems Sister Janet's life has been "mission-driven." Pope Francis could easily have been describing her when he wrote, in *Joy of the Gospel*, "Mission is not just a part of my life. It is the reason why I am here."

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