

THANKING GOD FOR OUR JUBILARIANS, 2001



Sister Catherine Braun - 50 Years

Whether she was responding to a local minister's call for a joke for his Sunday sermon, or was explaining to her Kindergarten Sunday school class how to use the telephone to talk to Jesus, Sister Catherine spent much of her 50 years of religious profession inviting people to 'keep their eyes on God' through entertainment. Doctors, ministers, audiences everywhere, and especially children remember Sr. Catherine for her blend of storytelling, jokes, puzzles, and finger plays. Her 50 years of dedication to religious life have been a calling to "minister to old people" - and to all others with simplicity and joy. "I remember when I was 6 and wanted to visit an elderly neighbor, I knocked on the door and explained to the startled lady that I was there to visit. After cookies and milk, she sent me home. I thought that was the greatest!"

The last of seven children born to John and Elizabeth Braun, Sister Catherine experienced the joys of childhood in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Surrounded by nieces and nephews nearly her same age, Sister Catherine speaks of the lovely Wisconsin winters sledding and ice skating, and the summers filled with childhood activities and play. This childhood joy has been a trademark with Sister Catherine throughout these years. After her profession of vows at St. Joseph's Convent in Chillicothe, Missouri, Sister Catherine's ministry was to seminarians and the Benedictine monks of Conception as a cook, often sneaking cookies to the seminarians who helped in the kitchen. She also ministered as a cook to patients and staff at St. Francis Hospital in Marceline, Missouri, and eventually served in the laundry for the Sisters and the residents of La Verna Heights Nursing Home here in Savannah.

Sister Catherine continued her ministry of bringing joy to people by singing and directing the "Jubileers" a local senior citizen group. Today handicapped by a stroke and diabetes, Sister Catherine maintains her ministry of joy through visiting nursing home residents and writing letters to adults and children alike. Throughout these 50 years she has brought joy to many and has helped them to "keep their eyes on God"!



Sister Bernadette Vierling - 65 Years

Sr. Bernadette's favorite verse from Scripture is: "The Lord is my light and my salvation." (Psalm 127:9). The Lord continues to be her light and salvation as she assists our Franciscan community in many tasks that contribute to the well-being of those she lives with. She still enjoys working in the garden and caring for house plants.

It is evident that the life of prayer is a priority for her, as well as life in community. Through her years of service to God and people, she has shared the light of the Lord and brightened her world. We are grateful for this commitment which has borne fruit for 65 years.

Sister Stilla Kronegger - 65 Years

Sr. Stilla's favorite verse from Scripture is John 6:45: "Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from Him, comes to me." As Sr. Stilla continues her journey to God through the ravages of Parkinson's disease, we trust that her listening and learning is bringing her every closer to God's comfort and peace.

Though she seldom speaks, she is still able to communicate a little.

Over 65 years, she has been faithful to prayer and accepting of God's will. Sometimes, we can catch a glimpse of this reflected in her smile.



Sister Frieda Nini - 65 Years

Sr. Frieda's favorite saying is: "Jesus, King of love, I trust in your merciful goodness." It is said that one comes to resemble the person one loves. This can be witnessed in the daily life of Sr. Frieda throughout the years and today.

She quietly performs many acts of love and goodness. Since she is happiest when she can be of service, Sr. Frieda shares her smile and her love with our residents in the nursing home, with her fellow Sisters in need of assistance, and with her Lord in the communion of prayer.

Sister Margaret Walker - 45 Years

Sr. Margaret's favorite verse from Scripture is Psalm 23:1-2: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. In green pastures He gives me repose." The Lord has shepherded Sr. Margaret through 45 years of religious life and service.

Her repose thus far has been the solace received in prayer and God's providence in her daily life, as she continues to serve the Lord's needy ones at the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center in St. Joseph. Both co-workers and residents of this facility have expressed their gratitude for her presence there.

May her gift of self in the Lord's green pastures continue to flourish for the good of her Franciscan community and all of God's people.



Sister Aurelia Gurtner - 40 Years

Sr. Aurelia Gurtner, a sister from our Austrian Province, is the newest member of our Savannah community. Arriving last February, she has committed herself to volunteering her services to the American Province for three years. She is celebrating her 40th jubilee as a Franziskanerin von Vöcklabruck.

Recently retiring from education ministry after 24 years as director of our congregation's Kindergarten Teachers' Training School in Salzburg, she brings a sunny smile and a generous spirit of willingness to assist us with our ministries. Spiritually and physically prepared by a three-month sabbatical, she says, "After my school time, it is now time for me to care for older people." Sr. Aurelia is very busy already. She assists in the Activity Department each day in LaVerna Heights Retirement Center and also manages to find time to help some of the older sisters with their needs and to work in the garden. Sister is

very committed to polishing up her English and studies each day. At the same time, she corrects our fractured German.

We are all amazed at how quickly Sr. Aurelia has adjusted to her new convent home, and we are grateful to be the beneficiaries of her generosity.

Thanking God for Sister Johanna



The American Province was graced by the presence of Sr. Johanna Pobitzer of the Austrian Province, who came from Salzburg to provide us with information on the spirituality of our founder. She is the author of the book, "The Founding Charism of Sebastian Schwarz," which was a product of her doctoral study just now completed.

Her excellent command of the English language enabled her to pass on to us the essential characteristics of the spirituality and values of Sebastian Schwarz. This was a necessity for us because our congregation at its last chapter chose the study, renewal and implementation of our charism as a major goal for the years 2001-2006. Now, due to the program presented by Sr. Johanna, we can truly feel united with the Sisters of the German and Austrian provinces in our striving to reach this common purpose.