



Sister Catherine Gibbons – 50 Years

“After receiving my Baccalaureate degree in History and Elementary Education with permanent certification (Grades Nursery through Grade 6) from Nazareth College of Rochester in May 1966, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester in May 1966. While most of those who entered were undergraduate students at Nazareth, I went out to teach grades 7 and 8 students at Our Lady of Lourdes School in near-by Brighton.

“My sister formation classes were held in the Novitiate during our Canonical Year. On August 2, 1967 I made my first vows. Shortly thereafter, I moved to Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Convent and went to summer school at SUNY Brockport. I began my ministry as an Elementary School teacher teaching science to students in grade 4 – 6. In 1971 I started classes in Summer School at Boston College preparing for a Master’s Degree in Special Education for children with Learning Disabilities. These studies continued during the summers of 1972, 1973 and 1974. I had to spend the fall semester of the 1974 School Year completing the requirements for the degree and so I was away for the fall semester at Fairfield University. I also had to write a thesis at that time. I returned to St. Mary’s, Elmira to complete the sixth grade year with the students there.

“In 1975, I was asked to consider serving as an Elementary School Principal at St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads, NY. I participated in Workshop Courses at the University of Rochester with other “new principal’s” and in August moved “up the road” from Elmira to Horseheads. The following summers I took part in some course work at the University of Rochester, Fordham University and Notre Dame College in Baltimore. In 1981 I concluded my ministry at St. Mary Our Mother and returned to Rochester where I taught grade 3 at St. Jerome School in East Rochester.

“In 1984, I was invited by our congregational leadership to go to St. Michael’s School in Penn Yan, NY. There I served as Principal from February 1984 through August of 1992. During the spring semester of the 1992 – 1993 School Year I served as a substitute principal for a lay principal who had a child and did not return to school until July 1, 1993.

“Between 1993 and 1998, I taught at St. Pius Tenth School. Mornings I worked with anywhere from 5 – 10 students who were in 1st and 2nd grade and were ‘non-readers.’ Afternoons were devoted to teaching Advanced Math – a combination of the 6th and 7th Grade curricula. The Reading classes were devoted to developing writing skills and vocabulary along with other projects in which the students developed critical thinking and writing skills. I also did work screening students entering Kindergarten and those transfers from other schools.

“After participating in a sabbatical at Berakah in Pittsfield, New Hampshire in the fall, 1998 and spring, 1999 I returned to Rochester looking to return to a ministry which used my various skills and abilities. In Schuyler and Wayne Counties there were no Sisters of Mercy or St. Joseph “in ministry.” I looked over openings in these areas. I applied for and was hired to serve as Faith Formation Coordinator for St. Michael Church, Lyons and St. John the Evangelist, Clyde along with its “mission” in Savannah. These three parishes formed the Cluster known as St. Joseph the Worker. I ministered there from 1999 until June, 2007.

“Again I returned to Rochester. After having lived alone in Lyons and Clyde, I looked for a position that utilized my numerous skills. In July of 1999, I began working in the congregationally sponsored ministry, Sisters Care. I continue to work in that area to this day.

“I view my various ministries in Education, Faith Formation and Sisters Care as service to those in need. My life has been enriched by all those with whom I have worked. I served in city, suburban and rural areas of the Church of Rochester. From each ministry and area I have learned much and always felt that my life was enhanced and my gifts used for the service of God and his people.”