



Sister Roberta Naegele, OSF:

50 Years, Golden Jubilee of Profession

Sister Roberta Naegele, a native of Columbus, Ohio, is the only daughter of Ruth (Harwick) and Edward Naegele. She, along with her brothers, Edward, Gerald, Stephen, Leo and Donald attended St. Mary Grade and High School in German Village. Sister's parents and her brother Edward are deceased. Sister Roberta received her bachelor's degree in English from the College of St. Francis (University of St. Francis) in Joliet.

When she entered the Congregation she envisioned teaching in schools, since that was the main ministry of the Joliet Franciscans. One of her favorite quotes, "I am a part of all that I have met," sums up her educational experiences over these 50 years. As a nurse, a family nurse practitioner, a midwife, a community nurse practitioner, a practitioner of holistic practices of healing touch, and a traditional Chinese practitioner of acupuncture and now, also, shiatsu – she acknowledges that she has been and remains, primarily a teacher, while also a learner. She claims that her education has been life changing. It has led her to her ministries. Both her education and her ministries have been transformative.

Her areas of ministry have been varied: middle school in Columbus, Ohio; psych nurse home visitor in Floyd County Eastern Kentucky; midwife practitioner at Kuhn Memorial Hospital in Vicksburg, Mississippi; a family nurse midwife working in 3 county area in Eastern Kentucky with hospital delivery privileges at Martin, Kentucky; a volunteer midwife for the Wheaton Franciscans at *Maternidade Sacrada in Santarem do Par*, Brazil; family nurse practitioner work at 4 shelters for homeless families, two of which were for victims of domestic violence; parish nursing at Queen of All Saints; 10 years of hospice nursing; 2 years in Joliet at USF Wellness Clinic with guest professor at USF included; Community home nursing in Chicago as well as in Joliet, Kankakee, and Rockford. Currently, independent practitioner at Wellness Center in Joliet.

When asked about her memories of ministry, Sister Roberta expressed it this way: "I have many memories. When you are in helping ministries that's bound to happen. Every emotion imaginable is tapped into when dealing with new life, health and illness and death. My mental health work had me embrace a population so overlooked. Hospice work taught me so many ways to love. The privilege of crossing so many thresholds and becoming privy to other realities was so humbling. Now, working at the Wellness Center, assisting others to feel better, move better and pursue wellness practices is such a privilege. I am so blessed and grateful for the call to serve in so many capacities."

Commenting on living the Franciscan life and what it means to her, Sister Roberta touched on how some of Sister Kay Francis Berger's drawings of St. Francis have impacted her life: "Francis standing in awe before the radiating sun – I resonate with this bright source that awakens and closes our days. Francis with a joyful countenance playing a twig as if it were a violin. This image reminds me of the importance of being playful and joyful and taking pleasure in what is. I am gifted with a nature that enjoys and laughs easily. Francis jumping up in the air and kicking his heels together with a saying: *Be glad in the Lord*. Francis was so glad in the Lord that he imagined his birth and death with the nativity and Stations of the Cross. He was absorbed by all aspects of Jesus' life. This mindfulness has been my invitation. I have sought the heart of Christ in the ministries of life, death and healing.

"The final image of Francis is Francis' description to Brother Leo on what Perfect Joy is. Francis described Perfect Joy as rejoicing on being robbed on the road, or thrown into a ditch, or beaten, or having a door closed in your face. Seemingly, bad events! So, I have sought an attitude of receiving hard moments as opportunities to embrace true joy. If I can handle hardships with a hopeful heart and not lose my spirit or soul, then I will understand that all that happens is to awaken my spirit and teach me understanding and compassion."