



**MISSION ADVANCEMENT  
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**Woman Answers God's Call by Professing Vows as a School Sister of Notre Dame**

**Milwaukee, Wis.** – Her life's path led Sister Kathryn (Katie) Frank on a journey as wife, mother, bank administrator, and since 2003, a temporary professed sister with the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND).

During a 2 p.m. Mass on June 14 at Mount Mary College, 2900 Menomonee River Pkwy., Milwaukee, Wis. Sister Katie, 60, will profess perpetual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience during a celebration of commitment as a School Sister of Notre Dame. A process that included steps of inquiry, affiliation, postulancy, novitiate and temporary profession brings her to this day of perpetual profession.

Growing up as a Lutheran in Cedarburg, Sister Katie remembers wishing that she could dedicate her life to serving God and helping people as a minister in the church but dismissed the thoughts because this was not a role open to a woman. Due to family circumstances, college was postponed and she took a job as a bank teller. She married a Catholic and because she felt it was important to share a faith tradition in their marriage and family, she converted to Catholicism. The thoughts about service to the church community resurfaced but her marriage had replaced the possibility of a religious vocation. Katie worked in an elementary school while her daughter was young and became active in the parish. Later, she returned to banking where she continued to work after her 20-year marriage ended.

At the age of 49, her thoughts of religious life persisted. She said, "For me, it was listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Deep in my heart, I felt called to religious life." Finally, during a

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retreat in Oconomowoc, she spoke about this with a spiritual director, “mostly to convince the Holy Spirit that I really wasn’t the right person to call.” However, to Sister Katie’s surprise, the director encouraged her to explore this vocation as a possibility.

She entered the community and embarked on the formation process that would encompass 10 years. After completing the novitiate, she began college at the age of 54 and graduated when she was 57. She thrived on learning and perceived that new worlds were opening up for her. After a number of experiences offered by the SSND community, she discovered that she “truly wanted to work with the poorest of the poor.”

Sister Katie currently works at St. Ann Place in West Palm Beach, Florida. It is a hygiene center for people who are homeless. It is a place to take a shower and get clean clothes. As an associate director, she helps clients work their way out of homelessness, by offering them the resources they need. About her role, she says: “People ask me what it is I do. My response is, ‘I’m there to listen and love them.’ This may seem simplistic, but it is true. I’m not here to save anyone or to make them change. Many people who are homeless are ignored, harassed and made to feel ‘less than.’ My hope is that after spending time with me, my client realizes that he or she is being listened to, valued and appreciated by me.”

As a religious sister, she believes it is possible to accomplish much more than she could on her own. As a member of this international community, she has found the emotional, spiritual and global experience to help her fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

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**About the Milwaukee Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame:**

The Milwaukee Province, with nearly 400 professed sisters and 50 associates, is part of the International Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, headquartered in Rome. The entire congregation is made up of about 3,600 sisters who live and minister in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Oceania — a total of 35 countries. Following much political and social strife, the congregation was founded in 1833 to address particular educational needs in Bavaria. Caroline Gerhardinger, whose religious name was Mary Theresa of Jesus, believed that the renewal of society depended on the Christian family and that the mother had a key role as the first educator. Thus, the Christian education of girls was chosen as the religious community’s focus. In 1847, Mother Theresa brought sisters to the United States to meet the educational needs of the children of German immigrants. Today, while many sisters serve as teachers, they do not necessarily work in the classroom. The SSND mission is to educate in the broadest sense, while spreading Jesus’ message of love and unity throughout the world. School Sisters of Notre Dame serve as facilitators of change and personal transformation, especially to those who are poor.