

Homily for the Jubilees of Five Sisters at Sansbury Care Center

April 12, 2024

Sr. Jeanne Moore, OP

Happy Jubilee to my Sister Dominicans of Peace. We share the joy of this day with Fr. Tom Clark and all our friends gathered for this special Friday morning Eucharist.

- Fifteen years ago on Easter Sunday we handed over our seven founding congregations, in a death, like Jesus', that we freely accepted.
- We were raised to become extensions of his peace-bestowing Risen Presence.

The Gospel we just heard proclaimed is John's version of a very familiar story. Like Mark and Luke, John only mentions the 5,000 men. Matthew, in a throw-away line, adds "not counting the women and children." However, John did enumerate the 5 loaves, 2 fish, and 12 wicker baskets filled with leftover fragments.

We're counting up the numbers of our five jubilarians:

- **Monica Myers** is celebrating 75 years of vowed Dominican life and ministry.
- **Nancy Rioux and Alverda Bonifas**, 70 years.
- **Terry Wasinger**, 65, and **Carole Rossi**, 60 years.

That's an impressive 340 years.

John's gospel features many strong women:

- Mary who told the steward at the wedding feast in Cana to "do whatever my son tells you."
- The woman at the well.
- Martha, the sister of Lazarus, who, prior to Peter's profession of faith, acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God.
- Mary, the other sister of Lazarus, who anointed the feet of Jesus.
- Mary, his mother . . . his aunt Mary, the wife of Clopas . . . and Mary Magdalene, who stood at the foot of the cross.
- Mary Magdalene who was the first to be encountered by the Risen Jesus and entrusted with the ministry of Easter Preaching.

We can add our five jubilarians to their number:

Nancy had 70 students in the first class she taught right after pronouncing her vows at St. Catharine, and countless hundreds of 1st, 5th and 6th graders she instructed in Brooklyn and elsewhere.

Monica catechized untold numbers of children and adults along the bayous of her native southern Louisiana. She offered Reiki to many who traveled from near and far to her trailer during her later ministerial years.

Carole taught in schools, served as the personnel director for the KY Dominicans, and on staff at their Earth Center in Plainville, MA. I loved the framed photo on her wall, a gift from the East Boston Ecumenical Community Council where she directed services for Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees for 16 years. There are images of Carole dancing, quote, “to the music of justice and human dignity.”

Alverda and Terry ministered in health care settings.

Alverda as a dietary supervisor and later as a certified chaplain in Chicago, IL and McCook, NE, before returning to St. Catharine.

Terry as a registered nurse and nurse midwife in Kansas and then 25 years in the Mission of Sokoto Diocese in Nigeria, before coming to serve as our Motherhouse nurse, and then choosing to move over to Sansbury when she saw she needed extra help daily.

These women truly continued the ministries of Isaiah and of Jesus in:

- Bringing good news to the afflicted . . . Binding the brokenhearted . . .
- Proclaiming liberty to captives . . . Comforting and anointing mourners, and
- Pouring out the oil of gladness

Nancy is now filled with gratitude for the kindness of the sisters & staff at Sansbury, frequent Masses (thank you, Fr. Clark), her nice room, and her older sister Barbara’s proximity.

Alverda cherishes her commitment as a Dominican woman religious that has kept her steadfast and grateful these 70 years, during the pleasant as well as challenging times.

Terry is thankful today for sharing the lives, ministries and stories of all our Sisters.

Carole is grateful for the ways her experience of Dominican religious life has expanded gradually these past 60 years.

Yesterday **Monica** told me she is blessed to be here [her first experience of dwelling outside Louisiana] where she feels strong, wanted, safe, and well cared for. “I think I’m okay.”

Monica, Carole, Nancy, Alverda and Terry, we think you’re more than okay. We love you. We thank you for sharing your lives and ministries with us and thousands of others. Sisters and Friends, please join Luisa in singing, the 1st time to God, the 2nd time to the jubilarians: “Love that’s freely given wants to freely be received.

All the love you’ve poured on us can hardly be believed.

And all that we can offer you is thanks”