

## CSA JUBILARIAN 2017

**Name of Jubilarian:** Jean Steffes

**Name of Birthplace/Hometown:** Ada, Oklahoma/Fond du Lac, WI

**Education: Schools/colleges/universities attended and degrees received:**

Marian College, Fond du Lac, WI – BA

DePaul University, Chicago, IL – MA English; MA Human Services & Counseling

University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA – MA Theology

**Please name the places where you have ministered; if possible, list years. If you were a teacher, please name the parish or school, location, dates, and grade levels taught:**

1966-69 St. Mary's Springs, Fond du Lac, WI – High School English

1969-77 Immaculate Conception High School, Elmhurst, IL – High School English

1977-82 St. Mary's Springs, Fond du Lac, WI – High School English

1977-82 Congregational Ministry, Novice Director, Fond du Lac, WI

1982-85 Congregational Ministry, Regional Coordinator

1985-93 Congregational Ministry, General Superior, Fond du Lac, WI

1993-2013 Diocese of Phoenix, Phoenix, AZ – Chancellor & Director of Religious

2013-present Congregational Ministry, General Superior, Fond du Lac, WI

*Share a story about a time, an event, or an experience in your vowed life that affirms or speaks to your lifelong commitment as a vowed woman religious.*

*Share what it means to you to be celebrating jubilee in CSA and in the global Church.*

*Share a poem, a prayer, a reflection that has captured for you, the story of your journey in religious life.*

In the summer of 1974, Sisters Barbara Ricklefs, Patricia Bogenschuetz, Deborah Walter and I volunteered to participate in the Southwest Volunteer Apostolate. We were assigned to Our Lady of Sorrows Mission in Seboyeta, New Mexico, for 6 weeks in order to assist with a variety of parish activities including catechesis for the children and youth, preparing the children for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and visiting the homes of parishioners in Seboyeta as well as the small villages of Bibo and Mokino.

We worked with Father Jerry Mesley, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows. As part of our commitment, we each had a desert day for prayer and reflection out in the actual desert behind the town. One of the places we liked to go was the shrine of Our Lady of Las Portales, a grotto built into the red rock hillside of the lumber road leading to Mt. Taylor.

During this time I learned a great deal about forming community, sharing faith, planning meals, making vestments and all things involved in evangelization and parish life. My prior experiences in ministry involved teaching high school English in the Midwest. Important to me was how much we all learned about forming community in an area where we were quite isolated not only from CSA but also others. The town was situated on a Spanish Land Grant designated as such in 1800. The people were most hospitable and shared cultural traditions with us that were not familiar. We had an excellent experience of interculturality and of expressing mutuality even though we did not use those terms.

The whole experience gave me great insight into how much we receive from those we serve. It was an early blessing and learning in my religious life. I am most grateful to the sisters with whom I shared this experience, to Fr. Jerry, and especially to the people of Seboyeta.