

## *Why I am CSA!*

### *Sister Kathleen Cook, CSA*

The idea of becoming a Sister surfaced several times during my grade school years, but it was not something I took seriously until my freshman year in 1961. I had attended Catholic grade school from grade one through eight. I am the oldest of five children. I have two brothers and two sisters. This is significant because when I entered freshman year and enrolled in the public high school, I experienced a whole new feeling of freedom. I had no sisters and brothers to look after. I had fun and made several new friends.



As it turned out, looking after my sister is what opened the door to understanding my *call*. My sister, who was one and a half years younger than me, wanted to go to an open house at the Sisters of St. Agnes motherhouse in Fond du Lac, WI. She had no one to go with her. My mother more or less insisted that I go along and that is when it all began. I did not see my sister the whole day. She went with her age group and I went with mine. The gals that were in charge of each group were aspirants, high school girls, who lived at the motherhouse and attended the Catholic high school near by. There were a lot of them. They were friendly, happy, from just about everywhere, and most important, interested in me. The whole day was mystical. The sisters at prayer and Mass seemed to be angels praying. The hallways seemed to be oozing with mystery. I could not get rid of the feeling of wanting to be a part of this way of life.

I told NO ONE about this feeling that would NOT go away for at least three months until one noon hour I found myself walking from the high school to the Catholic grade school. I went to the Convent door and asked to see my former seventh/eighth grade teacher. Sister was very surprised but pleased to see me. I told her what I was experiencing and she immediately sat down. Her words were, “Well, God does work in strange ways! Are you sure? Your grades were never the best.”

Sister helped me write the required letters and then we waited for a response. NO ONE had known what I was up to and when I showed the letter to Mom and Dad it was a shock. Mom and Dad were quiet until Mom said “It must be your grandmother at work in heaven. She wanted to enter the Convent when she was your age but wasn’t allowed. Your great grandpa was adamant. She often told me of her feelings of being misplaced.” These statements bowled me over. Could I truly be answering a call that was my grandma’s? I was mystified.

The awareness of my grandmother’s part in my adventure gave me the fortitude to overcome all the new things that began to happen. Four months later, I had transferred to a new school, gathered all the personal items required and walked through the front doors of St. Agnes Convent as an aspirant. There were many challenges. The biggest was to BECOME a student. I discovered that I had learned a lot from the good sisters in grade school. The lack of distractions, and a quiet study atmosphere and help from nearly one hundred other aspirants and the two Sisters responsible for all of us got me through and prepared me for college.

I taught in Catholic elementary grade schools from 1968 until 2000 when I moved to Bisbee, AZ. My ministry was with Catholic Community Services until 2007. My ministry at this time is as a Director of Religious Education for St. Patrick’s Parish Mission at St. Michael’s in Naco, AZ. Life is wonderful and Sister was right...God does work in strange ways.

