

## Sr. Ann Casserly • 65 years

Even after 65 years of loving service, Franciscan Sister Ann Casserly still works full-time and has no intention of truly retiring. "I hope God will continue to give me the health to be faithful to the Gospel in the Franciscan tradition by joyfully serving others," she said.

Born in New York City to the late Ann Madden Casserly and Martin Casserly, Ann was the third of four children. The Casserlys were devout Catholics who never missed Sunday Mass and made sure their children received a Catholic education. "The Catholic faith was an important part of my life growing up," Sister Ann said.

She credits the religious sisters who taught her throughout childhood with inspiring her attraction to the religious life from a young age. At St. Paul the Apostle Elementary School in Highland Park, she was taught only by religious sisters. And at St. Peter the Apostle High School in New Brunswick, she had two lay instructors who also influenced her positively, but again the majority of her teachers were religious sisters.

Sister Ann said her parents were "very supportive and had good relationships with all the priests and nuns" in their home parish, St. Paul the Apostle.

"My mother was the greatest influence on my life and strongly supported and

encouraged me," she added. Two of her teachers, Franciscan Sister Francis Joseph and Charity Sister Grace Alma, along with Father William Campbell of St. Paul's were also very influential in her vocation.

In 1951, while still in her teens, Sister Ann joined the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, N.Y., a teaching community founded in 1859 by Father Pamfilo da Magliano. As a postulant, Sister Ann's first assignment was teaching fourth grade at Christ the King School, Haddonfield.

She received the Franciscan habit Aug. 15, 1952, made her first vows at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse in Allegany, Aug. 16, 1953, and professed final vows Aug. 16, 1959.

Sister Ann earned a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in education, and a certification in educational administration at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, N.Y.

She taught in many Catholic schools during the formation period and after taking vows, including St. Mary School, Port Jervis, N.Y.; St. Bonaventure School, Allegany; Christ the King School and St. Mary of the Angels Academy, Haddonfield; St. Mary School, Pompton Lakes; Our Lady of Fatima School, Piscataway; and St. Cecilia School, in Pennsauken. Sister Ann was a teacher and principal of St. John School, Olean, N.Y., and St. Paul the

Apostle School, Highland Park.

Sister Ann describes "her relationship with God and with others" facilitated by her vocation as the chief blessing of the past 65 years.

Her sister and late brothers, along with their families, have provided her with support and many wonderful memories over the years. She keeps in touch with many former students, some of whom invite her to celebrate momentous occasions with them and their families.

Sister Ann's relationship with the other Franciscan sisters remains strong, particularly with those sisters who, like Sister Ann, joined the community in 1951 and went through formation with her. Their group traveled to Rome and Assisi to explore their Franciscan roots when they celebrated their 40th anniversary together – one of Sister Ann's favorite memories. She also enjoyed traveling to Ireland three times with her mother, and loved traveling to World Youth Day in Denver in 1993 as a chaperone for the diocesan trip. Seeing Pope John Paul II there and on other trips were memorable, "once-in-a-lifetime" experiences.

In 1977, Sister Ann celebrated her silver jubilee in religious life at the same time as her parents celebrated their golden jubilee as a married couple.

Sister Ann served as a pastoral asso-



ciate at St. Paul's, and is currently a pastoral associate at Parker in Piscataway and New Brunswick, a position she has held since 1997. She described her work at Parker's assisted-living and long-term care homes for the elderly as "a unique and rewarding ministry," adding that she "never dreamed" she'd find herself working at the facility fulltime, although as principal of St. Paul's she organized monthly trips by different classes to visit residents. She also assisted St. Paul's clergy at Communion services at Parker.

Sister Ann said her life over the past decades and currently has been very rewarding and added that she hopes many "young people will answer God's call to serve in the priesthood and religious life."

— Teresa Murphy