

## **Profile in Mercy: Sister Mary Corkery**

Sister Mary Corkery remembers vividly being nervous as she entered the convent at Sacred Heart in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, nearly 80 years ago. However, it wasn't because Mary was having second thoughts about becoming a sister. Instead, she said, "I was worried I wouldn't be able to pray 'The Office' because I wasn't fluent in Latin."

Needless to say, Mary overcame her fear. She entered the convent and stayed.

For nearly 45 years, Mary taught primary grades and served as principal at least 10 of those years in Catholic schools throughout the Dioceses of Dubuque in Iowa and in Kalispell, Montana. She says the high point in her ministry was being able to prepare children for the sacraments, especially First Communion. "I like helping others grow in their connection with God," she says.

Mary retired from teaching in 1991 but that did not stop her from helping others grow stronger in their faith. While serving as the liturgist at Sacred Heart Convent, Mary was also chauffeur for other sisters and then she served as the switchboard receptionist. For more than a decade, Mary was a companion to a sister at Hallmar Care Center. Since 2002, she has been volunteering as receptionist at Sacred Heart.

"A surprise to me," Mary says, "is the number of people who have mentioned that I helped them in their relationship with God." This surprises her because she benefits from others just as much as others do from her.

Her friend, Sister Kathy Thornton explains, "Mary's spirituality centers around her awareness of God's presence working within her and seeing God in other people."

Mary agrees by saying, "I do find relationships with other people to be God-filled. I am grateful to God for putting people in my life who help me continue to pursue the presence of God."

On September 12, Mary will be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. She says, "When I think about being 100 years old, I laugh... and I cry... It's daunting! It is amazing to me that I find myself 100 years old. It sounds older than I feel!"

Mary sums things up best by saying, "All in all, to be in Mercy has allowed me to experience God's presence in everyday life. I continue to open my heart to live life to the fullest – to be a whole, integrated and happy person living in the presence of God."



Sister Mary Corkery



Left to Right: Associate Jane Dorman, Sister Marilyn Ward, Sister Mary Corkery, and Bonnie Lentz



Sister Mary Corkery greets all she meets with a smile.