

# Sr. Mary Daniel, OP

## Interviewed by Shakita Kabicek

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### **Talk about ‘your call’ and/or ‘your discernment’.**

Sr. Mary is the youngest of four children. She went to school taught by Sisters, and she “loved the Sisters because they were so joyful.” The Sisters lived at the convent next to the school, so they were a huge part of their lives. They went to their ball games, and even played ball with them. Her older brother and sister each got married 6 months apart from each other, and both her sister and sister-in-law were pregnant around the same time. At 11 years old, Sr. Mary became an Aunt, and she thought that spending time with her new nephew would make her want to get married. With this she said that she actually always wanted to be a Sister... it was a strong feeling... an attraction. Her brother closest in age to her responded to Sr. Mary’s want to become a nun with, “Why don’t you go to college, and then become a nun if you still want to?” Sr. Mary responded with, “Why don’t I become a Sister and then go to college?” After becoming a Sister right out of high school she became a teacher. She taught elementary school for about 7 years, and then became a principle. She wanted to make children happy, spread joy, and discipline them in ways that helped her get to know her students and best meet their needs. She never yelled at her students!

### **Do Sisters ever think about leaving?**

“Oh, sure. Especially in the 70s and 80s when we lost a lot of Sisters to congregations across America.” Two Sisters that Sr. Mary was very close to when she worked at the elementary left during this time. They had become two of her closest friends, so it was a difficult time for Sr. Mary. She had other Sisters around her, and they were each other’s support system. They would ask each other every couple of months, “Are you going to leave?” with the reply of “No.”

Followed by, "Why?" and answered with, "I don't know." But then the answer became more known. Becoming a Sister is more than just making a commitment to God and yourself, but to the other Sisters of your congregation. "You make friends for life," and that bond is enough to keep someone from leaving. I asked Sr. Mary if she has recently thought about leaving, and she answered, without hesitation, "No. I never thought about leaving after Vatican II and all the changes."

**Name some of your ministries you were involved in - tell about one in detail.**

- Elementary school teacher (7 years)
- Principal in 1969
- Catholic school administrator
- Studied theology at Berkley, received masters in 1981
- Parish work at favorite elementary school (Our Lady of Perpetual Health (OLPH)) in 1983. Almost became full preacher.

Preaching is Sr. Mary's favorite thing to do because, "the scripture feeds my soul." And she gets to meet others who are interested in scripture. She actually preaches sometimes at the Motherhouse!

**It seems religious life is 'dying' - What do you think? Why do you stay?**

"Brothers and Sisters across the country have lost numbers." Just because there are fewer numbers, doesn't mean that these congregations aren't going to exist. Sr. Mary said that she is scared for the future though because it is frightening to think of such a beautiful way of life being gone. There is a realization that majority of Sisters are getting older and slowing down a bit. I could see the sadness in Sr. Mary's eyes when discussing this question. I can't imagine putting my whole self into something, and then thinking about how it might not be there in the near future. However, Sr. Mary was very positive with her overall view, "We can worry about it and drive ourselves crazy, or we can keep on doing what we're doing and turn it over to God. And invite people [to join in on the journey]."