

Sisters Celebrate 150th Anniversary with Special Mass at Cathedral



It was truly a beautiful August day. With clergy, family members, friends and Associates, the Joliet Franciscan Sisters celebrated a day that was 150 years in the making. Gathering at the Cathedral of St. Raymond in Joliet, 120 Sisters processed down the aisle to the hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” and took their places. This marked the beginning of their 150th anniversary celebration.

The celebrant of the Eucharistic Liturgy, Bishop R. Daniel Conlon who said to all gathered, “These are women who get up every day and recognize that their life is for Christ, that they live for the Kingdom of God. They faithfully responded to God’s calling.” Bishop Conlon then invited all to stand and applaud the Sisters. It was a heart-felt moment with many smiles, along with a few happy tears.

In her welcoming remarks, Sr. Dolores Zemont, Congregation President, shared that the Sisters are currently involved in more than 60 ministries in both the U.S. and Brazil. She said, “Our spirit is strong. We get up each morning trying to live our vocation with hope, hope in the Lord, hope for religious life, and hope for the people of God, trying to faithfully answer the call of Jesus.”

The first reading was presented by Sr. Nadine Koza. Speaking in Portuguese, Sr. Teresinha Mendonca Del’Acqua, Councilor for the Mission, presented the second reading. Following Bishop Conlon’s homily, Sr. Margaret Noser presented the Prayers of the Faithful.

The Brazilian Sisters sang “A Ti, Meu Deus” (“To You, My God”) during the Presentation of the Gifts. Nine Sisters ministering in Brazil, eight of them native Brazilians, were in attendance for the celebration. The offertory gifts were presented by Srs. Paula Bingert, Karen Berry, Margaret Kacvinsky, Jacqueline Hirsch, Debora de Castro Alves, and Maria Aparecida Teles Proto.

The choir, which was comprised of Sisters and Associates, and under the direction of Sr. Rene Simonelic, led the singing throughout the Mass. After Communion, they sang “Magnificabitur” as all those gathered in the Cathedral took a few silent moments to reflect. Mass concluded with the singing of “Alleluia, Raise the Gospel”.

Ask any Joliet Franciscan Sister who was present, and she will surely tell you that it was a day she will remember and one that celebrated the work of 900+ Sisters working as a community for over 150 years!



Captions:

Top: Sister Deborah Gaughan, carrying the statue of Mother Alfred Moes, Foundress of the Congregation, led the procession. Bottom Right: Six Congregation Presidents attended. They are (from the right) Sisters Maria Pesavento, Mary Rose Lieb, Rosemary Fonck, Mary Jean Morris, Vivian Whitehead and Dolores Zemont.