

FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL MINISTER

Are you passionate about being a Franciscan Sister of Chicago? What inspires that passion? This is the Jubilee edition of our Echo and as I looked at the lives and faces of this year's jubilarians and realized how many years of service are contained in the lives of these five women, it occurred to me that if I added up all the years of religious life and ministry that exist in the lives of all of our members, past and present, the number is almost unbelievable! What a great gift God has given to us and what a blessing for the Church. We are all part of something much greater than ourselves. We share in a heritage that finds its roots, yes, in God, however it also goes all the way back to Francis and Clare of Assisi and in the nineteenth century is made manifest in the life of Josephine Dudzik and continues to this very day.

Francis, Clare and Mother Theresa lived lives that were filled with passion. It was contagious and drew others to them. It is better to look at some synonyms for passion given by Merriam Webster than the actual definition of the word. The words "enthusiasm" and "fervor" seem to capture the idea of

being passionate. It seems to mean "something one can put one's heart into." So-o-o do you have fervor enriched by the wisdom of years and the joy of service to God and his people? If so, how does that fervor express itself? Jubilee is a time that for reflection on our initial and current response to being "called."

Do you remember that first fervor and the deep desire to do whatever it took to follow in the footprints of Jesus?

We were all so eager and enthusiastic and aglow. Are those embers still glowing in our lives today in the way we live our religious lives? The sands of time continue to flow through the hourglass of our lives and that of our congregation. The passing of time has led each of us down many paths and we have had many experiences from which to gain wisdom and insight. Sometimes we look at ourselves and think "After all these years in religious life I expected to be holier." Sometimes we think "What is happening to religious life? It has changed so much." We have seen success and failure, joy and sorrow, confidence and uncer-

tainty. We look at our community and are tempted to only see the physical reality of diminishment and age. However, there is something more that I see. We are women who choose each day to continue our personal and communal search for God, to remain faithful and to seek ways to enrich the lives of all who cross our path. Yes, I believe we are passionate about being Franciscan Sisters of Chicago and when we join our jubilarians this year in renewing their vows we as a congregation will be fanning the embers in our hearts into flame and saying to all the world that the fire of God's love is alive in our hearts. Our lives continue to express a passionate living out of the Gospel life and God is glorified in us.

