

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of the Youngstown Diocese

Personal Experience

O.H. 1564

SISTER MARY ANN COZ (O.S.U.)

Interviewed

by

Stephanie Fisher

on

October 15, 1992

STISTER MARY ANN COZ

Sister Mary Ann was born in Hermanie, Pennsylvania in 1920. In 1926, her parents, Frank and Frances, moved the family to Ohio. She grew up on a farm in Windham Township and attended school in Paris Township. Upon high school graduation, she entered the Warren Business School and graduated a year later, 1939.

After several years in the work force, Sister Mary Ann struggled about her decision to become a nun. She stated "I prayed a lot, looked at life, and gradually, I knew that God was calling me to work for the church." Her father had a strong role in terms of faith. He celebrated religious events, such as the Easter Vigil. Prior to entering the convent, Sister Mary Ann had few experiences with nuns. Her first and only experience had been in 1944 when the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland came to Garrettsville to prepare children for the sacraments.

Sister Mary Ann chose to enter the order of the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown. Her mother was very opposed to her decision especially because the Sisters were not allowed to go home. While teaching in the Parochial Schools, she attended Y.S.U. and received a B.A. in Education, and later, a M.A. in Education from the University of Notre Dame (1961).

Her first parochial school assignment was at St. Columba in 1952 followed by St. Charles in Boardman the next four years. Other than parochial school assignments were: teaching Methods Courses at Y.S.U., setting up the C.C.D. [Confraternity of Christian Doctrine] Teacher Training Program within the Youngstown Diocese, and establishing the Media Resource Center in

the Diocese. From 1966 to 1976, Sister Mary Ann directed the elementary religious education programs for Catholic students attending public schools [C.C.D.] throughout the Youngstown Diocese. From 1976 to 1990, she directed the operation of the Diocesan Media Library.

In 1970, the Resource Center of the Department of Religious Education was established to fill the need for a centralized audio visual library as the parishes could not afford to have their own resource centers. The Resource Center started with ten films and was funded by the Knights of Columbus and the Youngstown Diocese. Presently, Sister Mary Ann works two days a week at the Resource Center as a resource consultant.

-Stephanie Fisher

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of the Youngstown Diocese

INTERVIEWEE: SISTER MARY ANN COZ (O.S.U.)

INTERVIEWER: Stephanie Fisher

SUBJECT: Paris Township, Y.S.U., St. Charles, CCD

DATE: October 15, 1992

F: This is an interview with Sister Mary Ann Coz for Youngstown State University, on the History of the Youngstown Diocese project, by Stephanie Fisher, on October 15, 1992.

Okay, Sister Mary Ann, could you tell me when you were born and where?

C: The year I was born?

F: The year and where.

C: I was born in 1920, September. I was born in Her-
manie, Pennsylvania.

F: Could you tell me about the environment you grew up in?

C: We lived in Pennsylvania until I was six years old. My father and my mother came from Slovenia. My background is Slovenian. We lived in a Slovenian ghetto at that time. The immigrants clustered together in small groups. So, until I was six, we lived in this little town--a coal mining town. Then, in 1926, we moved to Ohio. We moved to the area that is presently the Ravenna Arsenal in Portage County. I went through school at Paris Township School from grades one through twelve. My father had a farm in Paris Township, so I

grew up in that area. After graduation, I went to Warren Business School and worked in Warren for a while. After the work experience, I entered the religious community--Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown.

F: What do you feel made you enter the religious community?

C: I think that everybody struggles and wonders what they are called to be or to do. I struggled with that for a while. I think everybody prays a lot and tries to look at life. These were war years, and everybody was in the service. I was working at the Warren Telephone Company in accounting after the war. I knew that I was called to be a person who would be working for the church in some capacity. I felt that God was calling me to that. Not that I got a tap on my shoulder or anything like that, or heard a voice. There always is a struggle for a person, I think, to determine what you are called to do or to be. I've never regretted my choice. It seemed to be the right thing for me.

F: Did you have a very religious background--your family?

C: My father, I would say, was probably the stronger faith person. My father went to school through fourth grade in Slovenia, but I think in those days, family life was very strong. The family passed on a lot of the religious traditions. I think I grew up with that experience. My father was very aware of the liturgical year, so we always celebrated all of the seasons because he would tell us what they did when he was a little boy.

So, when I was a child, I grew up with these celebrations. Now, I realize that many of those things that the church has called us to celebrate liturgically, like the Easter Vigil, were important in the church. But, when I was a child, the church wasn't celebrating the Easter Vigil as it was today. I have in my memory, however, my father telling us what he did at the Easter Vigil, which would be in the 1800's in his little village in Slovenia.

So, he was a person who was very faithful, a person his children saw pray, a person who saw that we got to church and that we got to religious education programs. We didn't have any Catholic schools in our area, so I had no experience with the sisters in any way. My mother was a good person, an only child. There were eight of us, so she was always very busy. I think that my father really had a stronger role in my faith formation. This is not always the case in families. I felt that it was so.

F: You mentioned business school. Was that Youngstown State?

C: No. Warren Business School. It would have been 1939. It was a one year program. I got a job right away in accounting at Warren Telephone Company.

F: Before you joined the convent, did you speak to any nuns?

C: As I was thinking of entering a community, I did make some contacts with people. At this time, we lived in Garrettsville, because we had to leave our farm in what is now the Ravenna Arsenal. We lived in Paris Township in the Ravenna Arsenal area. That's a large area of about 35,000 acres that was taken over by the government. All those people had to move out. We were part of that group. We relocated in Garrettsville. When we got to Garrettsville, there was no church there. We were going to St. Joseph's where we were worshipping and receiving the sacraments in Newton Falls. Which is, I suppose, about twenty miles. But, then in about 1944, St. Ambrose was the parish established in Garrettsville. This was a small town too. It's near Hiram. We had a closer relationship with the church in Garrettsville. We were very much involved, as young adults. We were very much involved with the beginning of the parish. My brothers were good at electrical work and things like that.

So, they did a lot of work around the church. We were all involved. I taught CCD, and we were all in the choir and all that. We had some very fine pastors who were very interested in the people who were there. The religious education program--particularly for the reception of the sacraments for the little children, took place in the summertime. That's when I first met the sisters. Father Glenna Holbrook was our first pastor; and his sister, and a friend of her's from the Sisters of Humility of Mary, came out to teach the children. I had a little sister at that time who was in that class. The sisters would come to our home for dinner. So, I got to know them.

Then, when Father Holbrook was moved, Father John Lavelle came, and he had a sister who was an Ursuline Sister in Cleveland. She and a friend came in the summertime preparing children for the sacraments. So, that was my closest contact with the sisters and probably my only contact. Although, when I was a child and we were going to St. Joseph's, Newton Falls, I vaguely remember sisters there preparing us for the sacraments. But, I couldn't tell you which community was there. I just remember that there were sisters. I'm not sure if it was just when I was a small child, or if it was for

first communion, or what it was. That did not make an impression on me because I was too young. Then when I was a young adult, I got to know the sisters well--those two communities: the Ursuline community in Cleveland and the Sisters of Humility of Mary in Pennsylvania. But, I think the help I received in discerning, in addition to prayer, came from the priests who were in Garrettsville. I could talk things over, because they were all very close to us -to all of us. Then the big question was, "If I'm going to go to a religious community, where will I go?" So, that was another big decision to make. I struggled with that for a long time, because I knew no Ursuline sisters from Youngstown. Ursuline sisters are independent groups. The Cleveland group is not tied in with the Youngstown group. In the state of Ohio, there are five different groups. There are two groups in Cincinnati, a group in Toledo, one in Youngstown, and one in Cleveland.

So, I was struggling with that question. My mother was very opposed to my entering the religious community. I think what she was opposed to was the fact that, at that time, the sisters did not go home. We entered the religious life, but we did not go home the way we do now. My mother just could not understand that, so we talked about it a little bit; but ultimately, I had to make up my mind pretty much myself. One of the priests, I think it was Father Lavelle, said, "Well, the Ursuline Sisters stay within the diocese of Youngstown." Somehow, that seemed very important to me at that time. The sisters of Humility of Mary are not only in the Diocese of Youngstown. Some of their sisters work here, but their motherhouse and their group is in Pennsylvania. Staying in the diocese just made a lot of sense to me. I thought if I'm going to be giving my life to the church, I might as well give it to the Diocese of Youngstown. After I made that decision, then it was okay. I felt very much at peace about that. Then, I did enter the community of Ursuline Sisters in Youngstown.

F: How was your religious training once you entered? How did they prepare you?

C: The sisters go through what is called a novitiate. It's a time when a person is called a novice. That time is called novitiate training. We get formation in spirituality courses, scripture courses, some theology, but not college courses at that stage. After a year, I started going to Y.S.U. to become prepared to be a teacher. At that time the Ursuline community was made up of only teaching sisters. We were not in other works.

So, I graduated from Y.S.U. in 1956. I was also teaching very shortly after. I began teaching at St. Columba. My first full year was at St. Charles when St. Charles school opened in Boardman. I taught there for four years. In the meantime, I was working on my degree. At that time, we didn't have the State requirement that teachers had to have a degree to teach in the parochial school. We do now, but at that time, we didn't. So, I could be going to school and teaching at the same time.

But, anyway, after I finished at Y.S.U., I started my masters in education at the University of Notre Dame. At that time, the sisters did their masters work in the summertime, so it took four summers to complete the masters work. I enjoyed the Notre Dame experience immensely. I had marvelous professors there. The spirit at Notre Dame was very uplifting. Plus, there were about three thousand sisters on campus. So, it was a very broadening experience, as far as being a part of a religious community, and seeing how many other religious communities there were in other states. So, all that was very positive. I was at Notre Dame in 1961.

The diocese was conducting some special programs for teachers in Catholic Schools in the 1960's. Bishop Malone asked that everybody become certified and follow State regulations. There already were some teachers in the Catholic school system who did not have a degree. They were working toward the degree. So, I was teaching at Y.S.U. in the summertime in the 1960's. The students who were enrolled were Catholic School teachers. Most of them needed methods courses. It was on that level--teaching reading, teaching phonics, teaching social studies, teaching math, that I was teaching in the summers of the 1960's. That was from 1961-1966, I believe.

In 1966, I started to work at the [Youngstown Catholic] Diocese in religious education. My first job was to direct the religion programs in the diocese for the students who attend public schools. Bishop Malone was the superintendent of Catholic schools at that time. This other program was called CCD [Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.] which was already in operation before my time. Sister Marie Hughes, O.S.A., was the one who started it with Bishop Malone. I believe the first record of the teacher training program for CCD was in 1957. Sister Marie was directing the CCD programs until 1962. Sister Catherine Butler replaced Sister Marie in 1962. I was the one who replaced Sister Ann Catherine Butler in 1966 in organizing CCD programs.

I don't know if you're familiar with CCD. It's a program that's designed to train teachers to teach religion to Catholic children who go to public school. They usually meet on a Saturday or a Sunday after Mass, or sometimes in the evening. The CCD is where the students get their religious education. In the 1960's, we had mostly all sisters teaching religion, because there were a lot of sisters around. There were also many priests involved in teaching high school kids. The CCD office set up the training programs. I said I came to the diocese in 1966 during the Vatican II renewal.

F: In 1963, Vatican II.

C: Vatican II sessions ended in 1966.

F: Did it start in 1963?

C: Yes, I'll have to check that. It lasted four years. I started to work in August of 1966 directing the CCD program. The following January, Father Philip Conley came to the same office. He became Associate Superintendent of CCD, working under the direction of the Superintendent of the Catholic schools, Bishop Hughes. He was really responsible for directing the youth programs, as well as the children's programs, but because of the call from our bishop and other bishops all over the country, everybody needed to understand what Vatican II documents were calling people to do. That really changed a lot of our thinking.

One of the big things that I see that occurred was the shift from an emphasis on children to emphasis on adults; that Christian formation was ongoing. Formation begins with a small child, which means that parents must have an understanding of how they can help in the faith growth of a child. It goes on until one dies. It's just an ongoing experience. At this time, the CCD office designed what we called adult education classes. They were not only for teachers--we had already been having the teacher education programs. These classes were a shift to an understanding of what Vatican II was calling us to. We had enormous turnout all over the diocese, the six counties of Northeast Ohio. We would set up centers in each of the counties and have somebody teach on how we interpret scripture today, how we interpret morality, how we interpret the sacramental life, et cetera; because renewal was called for in all aspects of the Catholic life. These classes turned out to be very heart-warming experience, because there were so many people interested. It also became quite a task to organize all of the centers.

Father Conley had come to the diocese from a parish

experience in Conneaut. One of the things that he realized from his experience in the parish, was that there was a real need on the diocesan level to have a resource center so that people could get resources that were not available at the parishes. We began with a small library with \$3000 which bought ten films in 1970. I was also in CCD or religious education at this time; still directing teacher training programs, visiting parishes, and seeing how I could help the teachers. In the mean time, we were trying to build up a library. We began searching for funds.

Father Philip Conley and Father James Kolp worked particularly hard with the Knights of Columbus, and were able to begin a process whereby the Knights of Columbus contributed a significant grant each year for the specific purpose of purchasing media--audio-visual media. The diocese funded the library books. The Knights of Columbus funded the audio-visuals. I'm sure somebody else is filling you in about the superintendent position being changed to Bishop Hughes.

Here, I'm giving you my own experience in religious education. I worked in the CCD capacity for ten years, until 1976. Our library officially started in 1970. That's when funding began. It soon became apparent that I was not able to handle the library and CCD. So, we hired a librarian, Sister Mary Catherine Blooming, H.M., who was there I believe, two years, directing the library. We also had a marvelous lay woman, Clara Ross, who began very soon after the library was set up. She was responsible for circulation, packaging, sending things by UPS, cataloging, and that sort of thing. After a few years, in 1976, Sister Mary Catherine Blooming, H.M., left. By that time, we had already hired other persons to help us with the religious education in the diocese: Father Bob Bonnot was directing adult education. Sister Mary Ellen Paulys was assisting with Youth Ministry, and Sister Lin Howley directed religious education in the Catholic schools.

Let me back up a little. In 1972, there was a major change in the structure of the education department of the diocese. Up until 1972, religious education, CCD and adult education, was under the direction of the superintendent of schools. In 1972, the education department was broken into two departments: a Department of Religious Education with Father Philip Conley as the Director; and the Department of Education, with Mr Jack Augenstein as the Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Both of these departments were under the jurisdiction of Bishop William Hughes, Vicar for Education.

When Sister Mary Catherine left for another ministry, I

had already been in CCD work for ten years. I had visited every parish at least once, many of them three or four times. I thought it was time for me to change, so I applied for the position of Director of the Library. I was the Director of the Library from 1976 until 1990, when I retired from that position. Since 1990, the new Director is Sister Madeline Muller, H.M. I still am on the staff as a consultant working the two days a week. I assist people who need help in determining what media they would like to use.

F: I need to know what year you attended Youngstown State University.

C: I graduated in 1956.

F: Was there scholarship money available?

C: I wouldn't know that, because at that time, the community took care of all the bills. I know that I took some of the courses at St. John's College in Cleveland--St. John's College is no longer in existence--but we had some marvelous methods courses there in the summertime. I couldn't tell you when I started, but I graduated in 1956. I went to Notre Dame the following year.

F: Okay, your first assignment. What was your reaction? How did you feel?

C: In teaching?

F: Were you pleased?

C: I said my first assignment was St. Charles.

F: Were you pleased?

C: Let me take that back. I forgot that I had been at St. Columba for a few months. I started in January at St. Columba in 1952. A sister who was there who became ill. I replaced her. We were all sisters in the school. At that time it was the old school building located on the corner of Elm and Rayen where the diocesan parking lot is now. That's where I started. That was in 1952. That year, St. Columba built the new school where the library is now. Twenty years later, there was no St. Columba school. Instead, the Department of Religious Education moved into the same building where I had started out. I was at St. Columba there only from January until the end of the year. St. Charles opened in 1953, and I was there for four years. I've been a primary teacher all my teaching life.

F: Is this the age group that you would have liked to have

taught?

C: I really didn't know what I would like to teach. I really loved teaching. I loved every minute of it. In those days, we had huge classes. There were so many children and not enough space, so we were always crowded. Yet, it's amazing when I see the graduates of some of these schools . . . how well they've done. I was always a firm believer that a child needed to get a good foundation--a good beginning. I felt very strongly that every child should learn to read. It wasn't until quite a bit later that I heard people talking about, "Well, this child is a non-reader." I never had an experience of a child being a non-reader. Never. We taught phonics from the time I started to teach. I don't know whether that was a help or not. We had the children grouped. We had three levels, because not everybody was reading on the same level. But, every child in first grade could read. I enjoyed the experience.

F: Did you ever teach high school?

C: No. I started out second grade, then I turned to first grade. From St. Charles, I went to St. Patrick's, I think, for one year; to Immaculate Conception--I was there for two years; St. Rose in Girard for four years; and at St. Luke's in Boardman for one year.

F: No administrative work?

C: No. None. My education prepared me to be an administrator, but I did not have an administrative role in the schools. I was put into administration when I went to work for the diocese.

F: Throughout, you were appointed? You could not choose?

C: At that time--in 1966, the sisters were appointed. I suppose, if somebody had a problem with their assignment, they could talk about it; but it was a day when we thought we did God's will if somebody else told us, "This is where you are going." Now, that's somewhat archaic. That's where we were in 1956. Now everybody makes decisions in consultation.

F: Did Vatican II change this? That you had a say in it?

C: Oh, very much so. Yes. All the documents speak of individuality of the person. I don't want to say that we were called to individualism, because there is always the concern of what is for the good of the community. What's good for the community and what's good for me has to be balanced. Maybe I don't see something important and perhaps someone someplace else

has a greater vision of the ministry. Today there's a lot of such exchange. Plus, I think we can become blinded ourselves. We might get too engrossed in one ministry. I might love to teach first grade and not want to give it up ever. I left the grade school to go into administration at the diocese, but I loved teaching. But then, I love doing what I'm doing now. Somehow, I think God works in all that, and that I'm doing what I should be. Administration was really a challenge. It seemed like a challenge at that time.

F: Do you feel that, due to Vatican II, you lost a lot of sisters?

C: I'm not sure that we lost the sisters because of Vatican II. I think there's been such a cultural change in our country. Our culture has become so much a culture of individualism. Instant gratification. There's a lot of that. So, I think that the lack of vocations can be more cultural than the change from Vatican II. I'm a firm believer that Vatican II is the best thing that happened.

F: You do?

C: Oh, very much so. We needed the change. We needed to go back to the early church, to see how the early church was begun and what the thinking was at that time. So many aberrations occurred over the centuries which needed to be cleaned out. These certainly weren't of the spirit. I believe the Spirit is very active in our lives even today as the Spirit was active in the early church. I think we were all called to look at whatever we were doing . . . study it and see which way we should be going.

F: You don't feel that the lack of structure of telling you when to pray and when to do something else. . . ?

C: No, because prayer is building a relationship with God. That has to be individual. It cannot be imposed by someone else. We may all have been gathering together and saying prayers, but that does not mean that we were praying. Because praying is a relationship which you build, which you develop; you communicate with God. It has to come from within you, from within each one of us. Ultimately, if you want to build a relationship, you have to set time aside every day for God to build with communication, just as, in order to maintain a friendship on a human level, you have to communicate. We have to make the time. I think it is very individual.

So, I can't say that I pray less than I did before. I feel as though my relationship with God has grown since

I am responsible for my actions. I think we have an obligation to each other in religious life. We celebrate Mass every day here at this convent and at Catholic churches throughout the city and the diocese. It is supportive to be with others at some time to pray as a group. That is more to fulfill that call when Christ said, "When two or three are gathered, I am in the midst." That does not mean that Christ is not in each one of us, but I think when two or three are gathered, we become a community. We share our hopes and dreams and our relationship with God together. I think a renewal was very much needed. I think we have a greater opportunity to grow spiritually, because now we are responsible for ourselves. I have to continue to build my relationship with God. Somebody else can't build it for me.

F: Since you feel that Vatican II was so positive, what was daily life like before Vatican II?

C: Well, there are some bizarre things that I think of. Not going home. That was something that our founder St. Angela Merici never intended. She lived in the homes with the mothers she taught. Ironically, most of the aberrations [were those] imposed by men on religious women's communities. When I first entered the religious community, my relationship was with God. The strange things I overlooked. I really didn't think too much about it, because so many other people were doing the same thing.

F: You didn't question it.

C: You didn't question it. Everybody was doing the same thing.

F: What about the habit you wore?

C: I didn't like it.

F: It was blue, right?

C: Ours was black. But again, it was one of those things you tolerated it. The first time that I came here with my earrings and my rhinestone pins on my shoes, and things like that, people wondered where I came from; because that was not the way people dressed around here. But that was my experience. So, again I looked upon it as, "This is what you have to do if you want to work for the church."

So, I put up with it, but I can't say that it was a necessary part of it. I did not come to the convent with a preconceived notion of a sister. There were no sisters that I had really close contact with until I

was a young adult. I think so much of "what a sister is," is cultural rather than religious. I know the sisters who were very opposed to habit change usually had parents and brothers or sisters who were opposed. They had one image of a sister, and that's what they wanted to hold onto. They didn't want to change.

But, my mother made an observation that I'll never forget. My mother is gone now, but when we were thinking of changing, I said, "Mom, what would you think if we stopped wearing our veils?" She said, "Well, I don't know. I don't care what you do. That's not for me to say." It was just a non-issue, and yet it was a volatile issue here in the city of Youngstown. This city is very ethnic. People had very strong feelings about dress. People who always had sisters when they went to school and sisters who wore the habit, valued the habit. So, in my judgment, the feelings about habits are conditioned by cultural experiences. Our founder did not wear a habit. She thought we should dress like everybody else. Simple clothing, but the clothing of the woman of the day.

F: Now, what about the blue habit sister style?

C: The Humility of Mary Sisters. It's just a different community.

F: They were French.

C: That's right. Our origin is French, too. Angela Merici, our foundress, is from Italy. But, the foundation spread all through Europe. The foundation that came to this country was French, so we have that much of a French background. When Vatican II called us to go back to our foundress, to Angela Merici in 1535 for us Ursulines, we had to ask, "What did Angela do?" Angela left very good counsels or directives for the religious women who followed her.

F: So in 1535, she did not wear a habit?

C: That's right. She wore the garb of the woman of the day . . . the clothing of the peasant woman of the day.

F: Why would . . . ?

C: It was imposed by men later on men who thought that sisters should be in a cloister--that meant not going home and staying within a convent--and wearing a habit. I was very happy when we changed to regular clothing.

F: Did you go into suits after that?

C: Yes, suits. Well, first it was a modified habit--short, but still a veil. Eventually, we changed to contemporary clothing. But, we always had the option of changing, because there were some sisters who would have been devastated with a change. That habit is very important to them.

F: Some still wear the habit?

C. Oh, yes.

F. I have seen some.

C. There are sisters right here in our house. There are mostly retired sisters. So, we have some sisters who are up in years and would never think of not wearing a habit; but that is alright if they find it to be important.

F: Do you feel any differently towards the others--the other nuns that don't choose to?

C: No. I don't feel anything differently.

F: Do they feel differently towards you?

C: I don't think so. If they do, they never express it. They treat me very nicely. I was a little concerned about that, because when I lived in smaller house at the Ursuline High School convent, nobody there was in a habit. So I was concerned about whether they'd feel that I was a radical or something. I decided that I shouldn't be making it a problem. So, I dress professionally when I'm at work, but when I'm working here on my flowers, I wear casual clothes. Dress was a problem in the early days of change, but it's a non-issue today. We're doing what Angela did.

F: What were your living quarters like in the Youngstown Diocese?

C: Living quarters?

F: Just daily life, because you said it was 1967?

C: [It was] 1966, but I didn't live at the Youngstown Diocese. We have convents at different places. I lived at 745 Bryson, the convent right next to Ursuline High School. At that time, we had a lot of sisters. There were twenty-two of us in that convent. Everybody except myself taught at the high school. Now, there are two sisters at the high school.

But, I also lived in other convents. I lived at St. Rose, Girard, and I lived at St. Patrick's. Those were

the only other convents, because I commuted to St. Luke's and St. Charles from the mother house. Living there was just like this, except that there weren't as many people. There were many more younger people, because in the 1960's we had large numbers--like twenty or thirty people entering the convent in one year. When I entered in 1949, there were only two who entered, but these large groups came in later in the 1960's. Many of those people did not stay. They were caught in the transition. Transition times are always difficult for young people. Maybe they were too young. The fact that I was older . . . I already thought things through pretty much before I made the decision to enter the religious life. People talk about having their crisis. Crisis of faith, crisis of, "Should I do this? Should I do that?" I never went through that. I think I already went through it earlier.

F: So as far as the assignments in the Youngstown Diocese, it was educational, and then later, it was administrative work?

C: Yes, in religious education. It's still education, but religious education. I always felt that my experience in teaching in a Catholic school was very positive. I liked it. I thought the schools were run marvelously well. [They were] good schools. Everything was positive about the schools. That experience of working with children was very helpful when I started to work in the administration of CCD. I visited parishes with CCD programs, and I visited classrooms. I had the previous experience to be able to help the teachers in their teaching techniques.

F: You said the school system was very organized, and it really did flourish . . .

C: The Catholic school.

F: . . . was that because the Youngstown Diocese was very structured and had a good foundation?

C: I would attribute that to Bishop Malone. Bishop Malone is a very organized person, and he's very much concerned about individuals. He knows people very well, speaks to everyone, and when he was Superintendent of Schools, he designed a very structured and centralized system. The centralization came from the diocesan office. Everyone in the diocese followed the directives from the diocese. The directives required a lot of record keeping and a lot of data gathering from way back in the 1950's.

Therefore, you could see the trends. You could see what was happening. I would attribute that vision to

Bishop Malone.

F: Who do you believe was the central figure in the Youngstown Diocese . . . in it's formation?

C: In it's early formation, it certainly would be Bishop McFadden who came from Cleveland. [He would be] the very earliest one, but Bishop Malone has been here for a long time. He was bishop at the time when we had this influx of population and had the need for many parishes. That's when many new parishes were established, as well as the schools.

Plus, Bishop Malone was an educator. He has a Ph.D. in Education. He had the ability to communicate. He knew what he was talking about when he was giving directives. He always had other people to help him. Sister Mary Hughes was one of them. Sister Jerome Corcoran was another sister who worked with him very closely. I never worked directly with Bishop Malone. Bishop William Hughes followed him. Bishop Hughes followed Bishop Malone as Superintendent of Schools, and he was a marvelous person. He was the one who became the first principal at Cardinal Mooney High School and later became superintendent of schools. He was a very hard worker. He was organized. He very much followed the footsteps of Bishop Malone. Both are very fine men. So, as far the greatest influence on the diocese, I would say Bishop Malone. That's in regard to Catholic schools.

There is another program for students in public schools who are getting their religious education just as I did. I never went to Catholic school other than the University of Notre Dame. We always had religious instruction in the parish where I lived. I'm sure every parish had a program, but Bishop Malone was the one who set it up as a formal program that was to be held in every parish. I know in 1957, we had records in the CCD office of parish CCD programs. The CCD was for children in grades K through twelve. It wasn't until later, until after Vatican II that we provided adult education.

Today, religious education is much more adult education rather than child-centered. We're still working with children, but we're very much concerned about the teachable moments for adults. When a child was to be baptized, for example, it used to be that you just came in and gave your name. There was no instruction. Now there is a process that people go through. The parents and the sponsors of the child meet several times usually to discuss how you pass on the faith to your child. The same thing is true when a child is receiving the sacraments of reconciliation or the sacrament of Eucha

rist. The parents meet, as well as the children. The idea behind that is that the parents need to know what they are called to pass on to the child as Catholics.

There's a whole other thing that's going on in parishes. People say we have a catechumenate process or we have an advent program, or they might say they have an ongoing scripture study program. They're practicing Catholics, but they just want to know more about the Bible and what the Bible is saying for them today. There are all kinds of Bible study groups that are just ongoing. The diocese has media in their library that helps people to do the programming. There are videos which provide input from biblical experts who give a commentary on scriptural passages. The group discusses and asks, "What is that saying to me today." That's the type of adult education that's going on in parishes, sometimes started by the administrative team, other times by interested individuals.

I said earlier that in 1972 the diocese began to have directors of religious education on a parish level. In 1972, we started by having seven parishes with a professionally prepared religious education director. Today we have fifty-six.

F: Do you believe that that's the greatest changes you've seen in the diocese?

C: It's a major one.

F: A major change.

C: I would say the major change which occurred was Vatican II, in my experience with the diocese. That event colored everything else we did. That would be the major change. But, the outgrowth of Vatican II was greater lay involvement and professional religious educators.

These are people with a masters degree in religious studies or theology. In our diocese, some people come into the diocese with that background, but our department of religious education provides extension courses so people can receive a masters degree in religious studies or pastoral ministry. We have an undergraduate system with Ursuline College in Cleveland. We run the extension in our diocese. Different places. Our Ursuline Motherhouse is used a great deal for the courses, but centers are also established in other cities

Once a person has an undergraduate degree, a masters program is available through Loyola University in New Orleans. Loyola provides extension programs all

through the United States. That's another opportunity for people, as I said earlier. . . . I think we have something like fifty-eight people who have graduated through the program. This is another form of adult education . . . these people become leaders of the parish. I said earlier that there has been a major change in the role of the laity. It used to be that the priests would hold the leadership positions. They ran the parish. The sisters were next in leadership roles, and now it's the laity. I'd say that more than half of the people taking college classes in religion are lay people. These people earn a masters degree in religious studies. At the very end of their course work, they can branch off into pastoral ministry. By pastoral ministry, we mean people who do minister in other ways than religious education in the parish, e.g., visiting the sick

A major change, as I see it, is the professionally prepared director of religious education or the pastoral minister, who is a member of the parish team in administering the parish. The parish team administers elementary and high school age formation programs, all sorts of adult programs: R.C.I.A., liturgical ministries, and visits to the sick, homebound and bereaved. The pastor no longer is the sole minister; rather, he is called to enable other members of the team to minister in their specific role.

The R.C.I.A. is a process established in all parishes of the diocese, whereby non-Catholics are introduced to the faith of life of Catholics. The interested person walks with a sponsor, usually about a year, in discovering Jesus in their life through the Church. I think R.C.I.A.

F: You do?

C: Yes.

F: What do you believe aided the diocese in it's growth?

C: In it's growth in which way?

F: Expanding or. . . .

C: Our numbers have actually dropped, because so many people have moved out. I don't have the demographics of this area at my fingertips, but we've lost thousands of people.

F: In the 1980's?

C: After the steel mills closed, we had young people move out of this area seeking employment, plus the birth

rate dropped. So, everybody, Catholic schools, public schools, or CCD . . . everybody has less children in their enrollments.

F: When was there a growth?

C: In the 1950's and 1960's.

F: Do you believe the Catholic school system in the Youngstown Diocese aided its growth, that it really pushed it -the formation of schools and keeping the buildings, more schools?

C: It aided the growth during the peak time of the Catholic school population.

F: Which was the 1960's . . . the peak time for the diocese?

C: Yes. I'm sure Dr. Wolsonovich could tell you that better. I don't have any statistics on the Catholic school. I just know that there are less children all over. Just like public schools--there just aren't children. So, the schools are going down. We used to have sixty students in a class when the ideal is no more than twenty to thirty.

F: Well, probably the steel mills . . . do you believe? The steel mills in Youngstown are what gave the Youngstown Diocese a surge?

C: Oh, yes, but it was a one industry city. So, everything relied on the steel mills. When the steel mills closed, people moved away.

Have you seen the video entitled "Shout Youngstown"?

F: No.

C: That might be something they would like to view, because it's a good history of what happened at the time of the steel mills closing. The closing had a great affect on our city. There seems to be growth in Boardman, as you can see much housing going up in that direction. I believe the parish schools in Boardman and Poland have a healthy enrollment, but the inner city schools do not.

F: What do you believe has hindered the Youngstown Diocese and does hinder the diocese?

C: I would say unemployment would be a major factor. I think among the young people would be what you had expressed earlier, a woman's position in the church. I think that's a hindrance until the woman's role is

clarified a little bit. Among some people--half the population actually--among that half population, there are many people who are in great pain, because they do not feel that the church recognizes the woman's rightful role. There are more and more ministerial roles for women in the church, but they are always subordinate roles.

But, I can't see that that is going to change at this time. Our present Holy Father has taken a strong stand against ordination of women. The Church is a part of our culture. I think it is afflicted by our culture's individualism: "I want what I want now." So often, people are not concerned about the common good. I think that doesn't benefit the church. That's a basic value being concerned about, you and everybody else being willing to sacrifice for the good of another person. I think that affects all of us, the community of the church, but also the general community.

F: What was the best part of working in the diocese of Youngstown? Maybe your best assignment.

C: I can't say what was my best assignment, because I loved them all. I loved doing what I was doing.

F: What was the best part of the Youngstown Diocese?

C: I would say my experience with the diocese was working with so many good people. There are so many people--I'm talking about the six counties of Northeast Ohio who volunteer their time to teach religious education to children, who they did not know, when they began to teach. You know, they're not their own kids; they are somebody else's kids. To me that was always a boost to see that faith in people. I think that this dedication outweighs the negative things that we were talking about. I also see faith in young people. Our department designs youth conventions each year since 1972.

I was recently looking at a video where some kids were expressing their experience. I heard this young man, who is going to be graduating, say that his experience in working on this team really made him so much more aware of how much bigger the world is than himself and say how he wants to continue to grow in his knowledge of God and his faith life and continue to do something for the church as he goes to college and whatever he gets involved in. Those kind of statements keep coming up from young people over and over again. So, you see there is so much of that kind of goodness.

I was very pleased that we did have the Resource Center, because it ministers to so many people. Our

resource center is located at 225 Elm on the first floor of what used to be St. Columba school. It's half of the first floor. We have all kinds of audio visuals and books. So many people come in looking for resources. It's affirming to see that they find the library of value. A lot of people come to pick up books for their own enrichment. They read profound materials. I'm thinking of four couples in Canton who once a month meet in one or the other's home. They take a video out, and they discuss it. It could be something on one of the Gospels, it might be a church history, or it might be "What is our belief?" I find that to be very affirming in knowing that there are lots of people out there who are very interested in their faith life. There is a young man who comes to the library who is always looking for something on spirituality, deep spirituality. I know there are many people like that. We have all these people taking college courses, and they're looking for materials all of the time. I also see all the other kinds of people who come in. They want to grow in their faith experience and grow closer to God. This I find very affirming. I like working with people. Since I'm retired and working only two days, I spend most of my time assisting people. It's very rewarding.

When I was working in CCD, I found it very rewarding to go to the parishes. I always visited the classrooms, and then, met with the faculty afterwards. That was a good experience. I loved doing that, because I saw all the good; and I also felt that I was able to help the people who had questions. Because the parish people can't come to Youngstown, I went to their place, like Ashtabula, Canton, or East Liverpool, or wherever. I was able to see what their needs were. It's been our philosophy in the department of religious education to be a service department. The idea is that we provide services to the people--whatever their needs are. So, I went with the notion of listening to see what their needs were. I'd bring that back and try to fill those needs.

F: Have you had any bad experiences with the diocese? Is there a worst part of working at the diocese?

C: A worst part?

F: Yes.

C: We never have enough money. That's always a problem. I would say that that's the only negative thing. Some times, when you want something very badly, particularly in regard to salaries for the lay people who work there, you feel frustrated. That's painful. We have a good relationship with our support staff--our secre-

laries. In our department, presently we have a director who is Barb Walks. She's the Director for the Department; the Resource Center is part of the Department of Religious Education. We have Sister Zoe Ann Reiter, H.M., who is a consultant to parishes in three counties. We have Tom Sauline, who is a consultant for the other three counties.

Then, we have Eileen Bodendorfer, who plans all the adult education courses. We're having a large gathering, what we call Catechetical-Liturgical day at Kent on this coming weekend at Kent State University. We are going to have about a thousand people there. It will attract people who are involved as Catechists and any other adults who are interested in a variety of topics. We'll probably have forty or fifty workshops. Father Tom Brezhnev is coming from Chicago to give the keynote address. This day takes a lot of work to pull it off. Eileen sets up the Christian Formation series, and she also coordinates the college programs which provide credits to earn a degree.

Then, there is the library. Sister Madeline Muller who is the director now and myself, who works as part time. We also have a support staff.

F: Are there any changes that you would have liked to have seen and did not? Or hope to see?

C: I would hope to see . . . when you say diocese, I think of the people of the parish, because I think diocese is more of a structure where we are the administrative centralized staff. But, the church and the diocese is out there. Each one of these parishes--in Geneva, in Garrettsville--that's where the church is, and that's where the diocese is. I would like to see the diocese . . . all of those people . . . be aware of the fact that there are so many opportunities for growth in their relationship with God. Everybody should have an opportunity to grow closer to God and not get discouraged with the conditions of the world or their kids. There are so many good kids out there. We hear about the small percentage who get in trouble, but there are so many other kids who don't get in trouble.

So, I'd like to see the strengthening of families. Some of them do need help to know how to do that. I guess that's what I'd like to see. I can't think of what I'd like to see changed in the diocesan structure. I certainly wouldn't want it to grow anymore. I think that we have enough offices as it is. It would be nice to have more money to operate. We're in economic hard times. People are doing with less, and the church should be doing with less. So, I think that's okay.

Maybe that's all we're called to do. Do what you can with what you have.

We have a beautiful facility. It's been renovated, and they've planted beautiful flowers all around. If you haven't seen it, you should see before the frost hits it. They built the boxes up where it used to be all concrete. It's just a beautiful environment all around. Our place was renovated in 1989. The library used to be scattered down the first floor, but now it's all in one place. You should stop and see us on a Monday or Tuesday. That's when I work.

F: Okay.

C: I think that religious education is healthy. You often read about how illiterate kids are. . . I'm not sure if you have to be able to answer all of the questions when it comes to faith life, because frequently the questions are misleading. As long as we work to help children and adults develop a relationship with God, understand that they are very important in the eyes of God, and they are very precious creatures, we have ministries. The doctrine can come later. We have a whole life time to learn. I think there are a lot of positive things in the church. It would be helpful, but I'm not sure if the Holy Spirit is leading us in this way. It would be nice if we had more vocations to religious life and to the priesthood, but maybe God is calling lay people to be involved more in the church. We know the early church was made up mostly of lay people.

Somehow lay people got pushed out. The religious and the ordained seemed to have had all of the roles. I think God is in the midst of all of us and is working through all of us. Maybe his spirit is saying that we don't need so many priests and religious. There are other people out there who are also growing in faith, e.g., see our directors of religious education who are competent in all fields--theology, scripture, and everything--I can see tremendous growth.

I'd be happy if our economy would be better so we wouldn't have so much poverty. We're more concerned about the global world and poverty, like in Somalia, and all of the suffering that goes on in the world. What can we do about it? I know there's a trend not to be involved in social issues today, but I think there is need to read those Gospels again and see how those Gospels do call us to care for each other and care for everybody. It just breaks my heart to see the starving that goes on. Then, we have these poverty packets in our neighborhood. I'm sure the same thing is true in other cities. If you talk to Sister Jerome,

she works with inner-city children and mothers who are so often single mothers. Her project is not affiliated with the church, but she's doing the work of God. Very much so.

So, you know, I wish we didn't have poverty, and I wish we didn't have alienation among our Catholics as well as the general community. I guess what I'm saying is that I wish we could all live the Gospel a little closer. But, we have to start with ourselves.

F: Is there anything else that you think we should talk about that we haven't touched upon?

C: What I'm trying to think about are the major trends. Vatican II, I think was a tremendous asset to the church. I have a very positive feeling about it, and so do all our directors of religious education. Some of our directors of religious education run into problems if they are in a situation where the rest of the team is not renewed. So, the major trends are: Vatican II, the professionalization of leaders, and the shift to adult education. I imagine with the shift caused by Vatican II, we have much greater emphasis now on psychology and the interaction of all the disciplines in developing our faith life. We are whole beings who can't separate the spiritual from the emotional and the psychological. Vatican II is calling us to integrate the sciences and all the disciplines to help us understand our relationship with God.

I'd like to invite anybody who would like to come down to see the library and see the resources that we have.

F: Where is this? Elm Street?

C: On Elm Street, 225 Elm. Do you know where the bishop's office is?

F: No.

C: It's the main entrance for the diocese at 225 Elm. Our parking lot is across the street.

F: Oh, this is for the diocese?

C: Yes. That's where the Resource Center is.

F: What floor did you say?

C: First. When you go in the main entrance . . . we have a receptionist who is legally blind, but she's very sensitive to sound. I don't think you could get past her, but if you should, you will see a door marked that's marked "library." You go through that door, and

that's the Religious Education Department. I'd like to show you around.

F: You're there Monday and Tuesday?

C: I'm there Monday and Tuesday normally.

F: Do you work a full day?

C: The two days that I work, I work a full day from 8:30 to 4:30. When I reached seventy, I decided it was time to. . . .

F: How old are you?

C: I'm in my seventy-third . . . is this still on?

F: Thank you very much, Sister Mary Ann.

C: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW