Religion is a scary thing to some people,” states Pat Boyle, CSJ. In her current position as Associate Director of the Office of Pastoral Planning, she works with the leadership teams and parishioners in parishes of the Archdiocese as they implement Disciples in Mission.

“It is a privilege for me to be a Sister of St. Joseph and to be in a diocesan position where I can invite people into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. My work is about helping people become convinced that Christ is present in their lives and that this is a blessing and nothing to be afraid of. Once they are aware of this grace, I encourage them to speak about the difference Christ makes in their lives. That is what the work of the New Evangelization is all about—sharing the ‘Good News!’”

Pat was born in Jamaica Plain, the second youngest of five children. Her father died when she was five years old, so she grew up primarily in a single-parent household. Pat’s mother, Frances, a woman of great faith, found that the values in the Catholic schools were similar to the values she wanted instilled in her children. So, Pat attended St. Andrew School in Forest Hills, then St. Mary of the Assumption High School in Brookline. Having been taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph at both of those schools, Pat reflects, “It was the joy and happiness they showed that attracted me and I knew from an early age that I wanted to be a Sister of St. Joseph.”

“I feel privileged to be part of it as a Sister of St. Joseph, because of who we are - ‘women of the Church, rooted in the Gospel, and impelled by the active, inclusive love of God.’”

All of the ministries that Pat has been involved in have brought her incredible joys, challenges, and a wonderful breadth of experiences as a Sister of St. Joseph of Boston, beginning with her first ministry as an elementary school teacher. Over a period of thirteen years, from 1968 to 1981, she taught at St. John School in Canton, St. Raphael School in Medford, and St. Catherine School in Charlestown. The children inspired her with their sense of wonder and delight in learning.

Pat said, “While teaching school, I also worked on some committees in the Congregation. The committee work led to my transition from school to vocation work. Meeting with women who were discerning whether God was calling them to religious life was both humbling and inspiring. It was during those eight years that I worked with extraordinary people in the Congregation, with the Vocation Director of the Archdiocese, and on a national board of vocation directors. These experiences gave me a broader appreciation of religious life and priesthood as I witnessed it across the country.”
After vocation ministry, Pat pursued further studies at Boston College and graduated in 1990 with a Master of Arts Degree in Pastoral Ministry. During this time, the death of Pat’s mother put a pause in her ministry. She describes that time as a period of discernment as she looked for her next ministry. “I received a call from the Archdiocesan Office of Spiritual Development and was offered a position as a liaison to parishes in their renewal work. I went to parishes, worked with people, and helped them develop spiritual life commissions in their parishes. I served as a guide for those lay committees and met some incredible leadership teams.”

After eleven years in the Spiritual Development Office, Pat transitioned to parish ministry as a Pastoral Associate. She wanted to work more directly with parishioners. In 2002, she was hired as the first Pastoral Associate at St. Anne Parish in Quincy. Pat said, “Working with the parishioners and helping them recognize who God is in their life was such a powerful experience. Being present to people at times of great joy and terrible loss was an amazing privilege. I can honestly say that I received much more than I gave! The relationships that developed during that time continue to be a tremendous blessing and joy.”

During the last two years at St. Anne’s, she was asked to serve on a commission for the Archdiocese. The commission was developing a pastoral plan for the Archdiocese. When Cardinal Seán O’Malley was about to implement the plan, Disciples in Mission, Pat received a call and was offered the position as Associate Director of the Office of Pastoral Planning, where she currently ministers.

In this year of Consecrated Life, Pat feels that through her work in the Archdiocese and the witness of her life as a Sister of St. Joseph, she is giving credence to the importance and value of religious life. “The work we are doing is God’s work,” Pat says, “I feel privileged to be part of it as a Sister of St. Joseph, because of who we are - ‘women of the Church, rooted in the Gospel, and impelled by the active, inclusive love of God’.”

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Pictured above: 1984-84 Vocation/Formation Team. CSJs Roberta Ristuccia, Pat Boyle, Mary Black, Kathy Green, Pat Keefe, Denise Kelly, and Mary Murphy.

Pictured: Pat at a recent seminar for the co-workers in the Vineyard Conference speaking on pastoral planning.