

Living the *MORE...* as a CSJ Associate

By Mickie Urban, CSJA

Growing up, my dear mother was an inspiration and an example of how a true Christian should live. Her love and example inspired me to answer God's call to religious life. However, after several years I realized that religious life was not meant for me. I moved to Albuquerque, was hired by the Albuquerque Public Schools, and worked in a low-income area with a Black, White, and Hispanic population. There were always problems between the groups even with the little first graders. It was challenging. After teaching in various schools for 36 years, I retired in 1996. For two years, I volunteered in four third-grade classes and produced musicals. The parents enjoyed watching their children perform.

As I settled into my new life, I stayed in touch with the sisters in Albuquerque. Mary Cuning, also a former CSJ, spoke with Sister Joachim about starting a New Mexico Associate group. I became interested in joining this group. In 2003, with Sister Joachim's guidance, Mary Cuning, Tina Marquez, Rose Sena, Pita Sanchez and I, made our commitment as Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

My ministry is focused on branching out to the community. I have worked with the elderly, visiting, doing errands, and taking them to church. I worked with

an elderly couple. So the husband could have time for himself, I spent time with the wife who was bi-polar and schizophrenic. She loved music and remembered lyrics to songs from the past. We would sing together. If I forgot some words, she would chime in. These were happy moments for her. I also visited a widow several times a week. If she needed anything I would pick it up for her. Both the couple and this woman have passed away.

A ministry that has brought much joy to my life is caring for two precious children. When I moved to my condo, I met a newlywed couple who lived next door. Two years later they had a baby boy named Nathaniel. He was a beautiful child and easy to care for. I baby sat two days a week while they were at work which saved them money. Before long they realized the condo was not big enough for their family and they bought a home with a big yard where Nathaniel could play. Three years later Georgiana, a baby girl, came along. Nathaniel is now in second grade. The reading and math skills he learned while in my care made him more than ready when he started Kindergarten. I continue to care for Georgiana who will start Kindergarten next year. She is also very bright. It has been a great experience helping raise these children. I'm "Grandma" to them!

Last but not least is the care Sister Rose and I give to our 90-year-old sister, Katie. She cannot thank us enough for all we do for her. Katie is our SISTER. We love her and are there for her. 🍁

