

**Kathleen Laetsch**  
Associate since 2014



I fell in love with the School Sisters of St. Francis on the first day I walked into second grade. I had been in public school prior to that day. All the love and nurturing I felt during those years in grade school inwardly steered me toward a vocation to religious life.

My piano teacher, Sister Orlandine, and our school principal, Sister Cyrius, accompanied me and my parents to Milwaukee, where I joined the Aspirancy of the School Sisters of St. Francis for my freshman year of high school. Unfortunately, the community decided to close the Aspirancy after my sophomore year.

I ended up graduating from Pius XI High School and then the University of Wisconsin. I went on to specialize in Radiologic Technology at St. Joseph Hospital, where I worked in various modalities of radiology until I retired 41 years later. During this time, I got married and had three wonderful children. They are all married now and have blessed me with six fantastic grandchildren.

In retirement, I found I needed something more in my life. My children were grown, and my husband had died of lung cancer. I love doing crafts, reading, babysitting, being with family, volunteering, and working at my church, but it just wasn't enough.

A friend introduced me to Sister Margaret Sibbel in 2013, and my journey as an associate began. It was like coming home! Sister Margaret became my mentor and, I'm happy to say, my friend. When she died in 2022, it left a big hole in my heart.

It brings me joy to work alongside the sisters and associates at social and fundraising events. Some of my favorites include the Joseph Bowls Supper, the Valentine's Day celebration at Sacred Heart, and helping associates without internet stay connected to the community by sending them written letters. I have loved all the activities I've been part of with the associates and sisters, especially with the sisters at Sacred Heart.

I'm lucky to live within a half hour of St. Joseph Center and Sacred Heart, which has allowed me to make wonderful friends among the sisters, associates, and staff. I am grateful!