

Sister Teresa A. Bruno



When Sister Teresa Bruno recalls her early encounters with the Sisters of Charity, she remembers thinking that “they were the nicest people I had ever met!” The more that she came to know the Sisters of Charity, the more she was drawn to the community she saw as dedicated both to serving the poor and to spirituality. Her calling to join the community has been affirmed for more than 40 years, as Sister Teresa continues to live and to love the shared mission of the Sisters of Charity.

Teresa Bruno was born and raised in Camden, New Jersey. The deep faith instilled through her family life was also nurtured by the Dominican Sisters who taught her in school. Sister Teresa says, “I knew from a very young age that I wanted to be a sister.” She and her best friend, Rosemarie, made a pact at the end of eighth grade that they would be Dominican Sisters together.

Although Teresa’s friend went on to join the Dominicans directly out of high school, Teresa took a job after graduation while seeking to discern God’s plan for her life. She laughs, “I took a really roundabout way to get to the Charities,” a journey in which she entered and left both the Sisters of Mercy and the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell before enrolling in the College of Saint Elizabeth as a lay student to complete the requirements for a degree in Education.

Following graduation from college, Teresa went to teach at Mother Seton Regional High School in Clark, New Jersey. Here, she came to know the 24 Sisters of Charity who lived together at the adjacent convent and who carried out their educational ministry with such joy and dedication. “I saw that they had a great life together, blending love of the world and love of the Holy Spirit. Once I found the Sisters of Charity, I knew that I also had to have this love of the Spirit.”

At Easter of her first year teaching at Mother Seton, Teresa entered the Sisters of Charity, knowing that she had found her permanent vocation. She loved living in community with the sisters at Mother Seton, where she returned after her novitiate. “We would pray together, have dinner together, and do things together.” As an example of the shared camaraderie, she says, “Whenever I went to visit my parents in Camden, I would always offer to take anyone along who wanted to come with me. I’d call my mother and say, ‘I’m bringing home a bunch of nuns!’ And she would have a big pot of spaghetti gravy for us when we got there.”

Sister Teresa furthered her qualifications for her educational ministry by earning a Masters Degree and later a Doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision. She went on from Mother Seton to serve as principal and teacher in several different schools both in New Jersey and in Florida. In this ministry, she always found that being with students was energizing and rewarding. “As a principal, if I ever felt tired or discouraged, all I had to do was go into a classroom. I loved the students and I loved every day of my ministry.” She adds, “I think you have to love what you do or you can’t do it well.”

In 2010, Sister Teresa joined the faculty of the College of Saint Elizabeth, where she served as Chair of the Education Department and currently teaches sociology and other courses. Along with her continuing duties at CSE, she also recently took on new responsibilities as the Academic Dean of Assumption College for Sisters in Denville, New Jersey.

Sister Teresa believes that it is important for her college students to understand how the mission of the college relates to the mission and the sponsorship of the Sisters of Charity. She is happy to answer any questions that students may have about what it means to be a Sister of Charity or about her journey to her religious vocation.

When her students ask about her calling to religious life, she tells them, "I just knew, there was something inside pulling me to this life and this mission."

Sister Teresa says that a well known poem best expresses what she feels as she goes out each day to serve God and continue the mission.

Fall in Love

Attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

*Nothing is more practical than
finding God, that is, than
falling in Love
in a quite absolute, final way.*

*What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.*

*It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read,
whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.*

*Fall in love,
stay in love,
and it will decide everything.*