

Celebrating the Heritage of the SSND's at St. Mary's

With the opening of *A Place To Be* Spirituality Center, we will no longer be using the Parish Center at St. Mary's. This seems like an appropriate time to remember the history of that facility.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame came to Port Washington in 1870, and have maintained a constant presence here until a few years ago. When in 1870 Mother Caroline Friess came to look over the accommodations for the sisters she wrote: "The view is magnificent. As far as the eye can reach one sees only the waters of the lake, beautiful rays of the sun or the soft mellow light of the moon, kind to the dwellers at Port, since bright nights predominate here." The original convent was replaced and a new one built where it now exists on Johnson Street. In 1949 improvements were made and a third floor added to accommodate the 17 sisters then serving the parish. Mother Superior, on visiting the convent with its improvements said it was one of the finest homes our Sisters have anywhere. During the summer the convent had always been visited by many sisters. The exciting and beautiful view of Lake Michigan from the east porch made it a pleasant vacation for them.

Over the more than 125 years during which the School Sisters of Notre Dame served our community, hundreds of sisters taught in our elementary school and, for a while, taught students in grades 9 and 10 as well. Although they were a semi cloistered congregation, their influence reached many directly and indirectly. In more recent years some of the sisters served by visiting parishioners in the hospital and those confined to their homes. The importance of their faithful service to this community is immeasurable. Some of us may never have known the sisters, but many of us have.

And so we pray:

Loving God, we thank you for the lives of all the School Sisters of Notre Dame who lived in the Johnson Street Convent and ministered to the people of Port Washington for over 125 years. May their dedication be rewarded, and may it be a source of inspiration to each of us. Amen.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Jo Federspiel



William Niederkorn, founder of Simplicity Manufacturing, was a great supporter of Catholic education. In 1958 he received this photo and a note from Sister Mary Ruthia thanking him for a summer outing. "The rides and steering on the 'Wonder Boy' was the outstanding enjoyment."



School Sisters of Notre Dame, seated from left, Sister Anselmine and Sister Mary Faith, Principal. Standing, Sister Mary Quentin, Sister Linda Marie and Sister Francisca.