



St. Mary Catholic Church



Jane Jurca: 40 Years Ministering to Our Parish

A Profile of Faith

Penny Haney

At a Sunday Mass in 1979 Jane Jurca found a flyer in the pew seeking volunteers to help with typing at our parish. While reading the flyer, she thought, *I can certainly do a little bit of typing for my parish*. Reminiscing in her second floor parish office, Jane recalls the day she followed God's lead.

"I wasn't looking for a job when I started here," she says with a smile, sounding amazed by it even to this day.

Jane had spoken about volunteering with two of the parish nuns. A few days later, one telephoned her and mentioned paying her.

"And I thought, *Wait. What? Whoa*. I had no idea I would be paid. And that was the beginning." This September, Jane celebrated 40 years at our parish.

She tells how she began her work at St. Mary's as secretary to Christian Formation (at one point more than five hundred students were in formation) and secretary to six nuns.

The biggest change during her years at St. Mary, Jane says, is technology.

In the early days, she operated a stencil duplicator. She chuckles and rolls her eyes while recalling the physical effects caused by the duplicator's fumes (sulfated castor oil). No Xerox copiers yet. No QuickBooks. No smart phones in sight.

Jane also answered incoming calls. "The nuns had the neatest phone system. I had a push button and each nun had a code. For instance, one nun's code was one long [button push] and two shorts." That's how the nuns knew they had a phone call. Today we might call those Morse-like codes *ring tones*.

Jane believes that the Lord led her to St. Mary's forty years ago. "There's no doubt in my mind that He led me to this job. No doubt in my mind. And I really love what I'm doing." Today Jane handles Contributions using software that was still in beta when she mastered it.

She views her work as a ministry, but she didn't always.

"Years ago," Jane says, "to my mind, ministries were only for people who were ordained." That is, until she spoke about ministry with a nun who pointed out, "Jane, you have a ministry. You deal with people every day. You are a good listener. You are compassionate. That's ministering."

At the memory of that, Jane smiles, squares her shoulders, and continues, "From then on I thought, *I'm a minister!* In my mind, that's cool!"

With no plans for retirement, Jane says, "As long as I can do my job, I'll just see where the Lord needs me. I hope that during the whole time I've been here that I've made a difference. Forty years later, I'm still cookin'."

"Jane continues to be a wonderful asset to our parish. We're all grateful for her forty years of service and may she be with us at St. Mary as long as she can."

- Fr. Roman