

Interviewer Narrator: Sister Marianne Keena, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Interviewed by: Raven McFadden

Location of Interview: Fontbonne University

Date of Interview:

**00:03 Sister Marianne-** What fun. Did you ever think we would be doing this?

**00:06 Interviewer-** No, I did not. Not at all. Okay, Sister Marianne, I have a few questions for you, and you just let me know which ones you want to answer. What name do you go by?

**00: 19 Sister Marianne-** I go by Sister Marianne.

**00:23 Interviewer-** Do you have a nickname that you go by outside of that, or is it just...?

**00: 28 Sister Marianne-** People in my community, um, that know me pretty well, they call me Keena because I had Keena growing up as a kid.

**00:38 Interviewer-** What is your baptismal name?

**00:40 Sister Marianne-** My baptismal name is one word: Marianne, because my mother never did want me to just be Mary, so I had to be Marianne.

**00:51 Interviewer-** Why did your mother never want you to be just Mary?

**00:55 Sister Marianne-** Because all of her family, they have three girls in her family, Mary Elizabeth, Eleanor, and Florence. And because she had three girls, she wanted them Marianne, Eleanor, and Florence.

**01:13 Interviewer-** So it was kind of a variation on all those names?

**01:14 Sister Marianne-** Right, right.

**01:19 Interviewer-** That's funny. When were you born?

**01:22 Sister Marianne-** Really?! You're going to ask that? I was born October 10, 1940.

**01:28 Interviewer-** You've seen a lot.

**01:30 Sister Marianne-** I've been around.

**01:35 Interviewer-** So based on... What were some of the different things that you have seen while you were growing up? Do you remember any historical events?

**01:46 Sister Marianne-** Um, well... I think one of the big events in my life, 'cus I was in second grade, and it was when Cardinal Ritter, the Catholic head of St. Louis Archdiocese, integrated the Catholic schools. And it was the most meaningful thing for me as a seven year old, my dad took us to school that day, and he made us go down to the African American family that lived down the street, and take their children by the hand and bring them to school. It was very life-changing for me.

**02:28 Interviewer-** So you got to experience racial integration first-hand?

**02:33 Sister Marianne-** Right.

**02:36 Interviewer-** So how was that for you growing up? Did you have friends of all different faiths and races?

**02:42 Sister Marianne-** Faiths, but African American mainly in the neighborhood where we lived. I don't remember any other group.

**02:52 Interviewer-** So you didn't diverge outside of the kids in your neighborhood.

**02:56 Sister Marianne-** No.

**03:00 Interviewer-** Where were you born?

**03:02 Sister Marianne-** I was born here in St. Louis, in North City.

**03:04 Interviewer-** What part of North City?

**03:08 Sister Marianne-** I was born at Natural Bridge and Claire Avenue. It's a really great, great growing up area.

**03:21 Interviewer-** Was your street or neighborhood growing up family-friendly?

**03:28 Sister Marianne-** Awesomely family-friended. Everybody knew everybody, and doors open all the time. We didn't have playgrounds or places like parks to go to, so the street, a cobblestone street, that became our playground. That was, really it was... That was where we played kick the can most summer nights.

**04:00 Interviewer-** It's interesting that you say that because in today's world, kids can't really play in the street because it's dangerous. Was it a lot more cautious and safe then to play in the street and after dark?

**04:15 Sister Marianne-** First of all, if you think about the 40s or 50s and the area where we grew up. It was economically poor to middle class and most people didn't have a car. So you didn't have that, that kind of street traffic. Um, we didn't have a car until I was like 13 years old. That's what I mean, many of the families were just like me.

**04:43 Interviewer-** So you guys walked to school? How did you get to church?

**04:49 Sister Marianne-** Oh, walk to school. Everything was walking-distance, the grocery store, everything. Even the movie theater, we walked to Union and St. Louis Ave, we walked to the movie theater.

**05:14 Interviewer-** Were you raised in a Catholic family?

**05:17 Sister Marianne-** Very Catholic. Mom and Dad and the three girls. Daily church.

**05:25 Interviewer-** Were there any other Catholic Sisters or clergy in your family?

**05:31 Sister Marianne-** No, not directly in my family, but in my uncle's, by marriage, there were two Sisters we kind of looked up to that and knew about and talked to, but didn't have real close contact with them.

**05:47 Interviewer-** So they were kind of just acquaintances?

**05:50 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, acquaintances.

**05:52 Interviewer-** Would you mind telling me about some of the traditions that you and your family did regarding your faith growing up?

**06:02 Sister Marianne-** Sure. One of the things that we did every night was pray as a family. Our prayer was the Rosary, and we would get down on our knees in the living room, and we would pray the Rosary every night. I can remember that from when I was very small. The other traditions really grew out of what was happenings in our parish at the church that we all participated in, like the Holy Thursday, the Christmas celebrations. We were regular parish people, the best I can say.

**06:44 Interviewer-** Did you guys continue that ritual of prayer all throughout your life at home?

**06:54 Sister Marianne-** All throughout our life.

**06:56 Interviewer-** So it was like a requirement?

**06:58 Sister Marianne-** You're right, that's a good thing.

**07:03 Interviewer-** When you moved out of your parents' house, did you continue to do that?

**07:10 Sister Marianne-** Well, when I moved out of my parents' house, I moved from my house to the convent.

**07:15 Interviewer-** Okay, so it's kind of like you were used to that already?

**07:18 Sister Marianne-** Right, you kind of had rituals that were different now, that were easy to flow into, for me.

**07:27 Interviewer-** Because you had already been doing it as a child?

**07:29 Sister Marianne-** Absolutely.

**07:37 Interviewer-** Please tell me who is in your family or origin?

**07:40 Sister Marianne-** My mom, who was a nurse, my dad, who was a policeman in the city and later became an electrician, and I have two sisters, one who is married now and has six children, and the other sister is a nun.

**08:00 Interviewer-** What department did your father work for?

**08:05 Sister Marianne-** St. Louis.

**08:07 Interviewer-** St. Louis Metropolitan?

**08:09 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, right. I can't remember exactly, but I know where he was stationed on Page and Kingshighway Boulevard, which was called District 12 is what I remember.

**08:24 Interviewer-** How long was your father in the police force?

**08:37 Sister Marianne-** I really don't think I know how long. It must have been until I was twelve, anyway. When he was on the night shift, I remember my mother always sitting at the window, just praying that he would come home safely.

**08:50 Interviewer-** What made him want to leave the force?

**08:54 Sister Marianne-** I think there were more opportunities being an electrician.

**08:59 Interviewer-** Do you have a sense of what job he enjoyed more?

**09:05 Sister Marianne-** Um, well, I just know as a kid, we enjoyed that he was an electrician because part of his duty was – now this would have been when I was about twelve – part of his duty at that time as an electrician, on Sunday nights, he had to go around the city that certain signs that were made by the company that he worked for, certain signs had to be tested to be sure that all the neon because that was what flew through all those pipes was lit, and we would be sitting in the backseat of the car riding down the A, and Anheuser Busch was out. And over on Highway 40, about 40 and Forest Parkway, there was a big Anheuser Busch sign that has an eagle flying, and that Anheuser Busch sign was one that my dad was very instrumental in putting together. So we always liked to look at the signs, and that gave us an opportunity to ride in a car.

**10:09 Interviewer-** Okay. Um, and you said that your mom was a nurse, what type of nurse was your mom?

**10:12 Sister Marianne-** She was a, I guess you would call her a staff nurse. She worked at St. John's Hospital, which is now Mercy. And later on in life, um, I guess it was after my dad passed away, she went to work in a doctor's office. But she worked at, there was a team of doctors that took care of all the bus drivers in the St. Louis area, so that team of doctors, mom worked as a nurse for them. So that was.

**10:45 Interviewer-** That's interesting. So what is your place in your family's birth order?

**10:52 Sister Marianne-** Oh, I'm number one.

**10:55 Interviewer-** So you were, you were first born?

**10:56 Sister Marianne-** I'm first born.

**10:59 Interviewer-** How is that being first born in your household?

**11:02 Sister Marianne-** Well, um, you know I don't remember growing up, you know how you hear about the first borns, the middle kids, and the baby, I don't remember a whole bunch of how that affected us. Because we were all treated the same, pretty equally?

**11:19 Interviewer-** But as you guys got older, were you seen as the authority figure or were you?

**11:25 Sister Marianne-** No, I wouldn't have been seen as the authority figure, that would have been the middle one.

**11:30 Interviewer-** So you weren't responsible for like making sure the younger kids were like safe and did their homework?

**11:36 Sister Marianne-** No, no, that was just accepted. When you came home from school you just sat at the kitchen table and did it.

**11:49 Interviewer-** Right, so it wasn't like your mom left you a list and said Okay Marianne make sure this is done.

**11:55 Sister Marianne-** No, they wouldn't let me do it.

**12:07 Interviewer-** What is the name of the community you belong to?

**12:10 Sister Marianne-** I belong to the Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelet.

**12:15 Interviewer-** Do you want to just give me a little bit of background on the Sisters of St. Joseph?

**12:19 Sister Marianne-** Well, we are the founding community of Fontbonne University, and we

have been in St. Louis, well in North America since 1836. Um, we have done everything as far as the mission of the Church in education, in nursing, in social work, in working with the marginalized and the poor, our history goes back to France, and we are located all across the United States. St. Paul, Minnesota, Provenance House, Albany, NY, Los Angeles, and here.

**13:05 Interviewer-** Okay, um, where is your Motherhouse located?

**13:06 Sister Marianne-** Oh, it's 6400 Minnesota. Holly Hills and Minnesota, South City.

**13:13 Interviewer-** Okay, so you're like right in the heart of the city.

**13:14 Sister Marianne-** Right, it's great.

**13:18 Interviewer-** Um, how does a Motherhouse operate like what goes on there?

**13:23 Sister Marianne-** In the Motherhouse currently, now, currently is different when I entered in 1959. Currently, we have what I would call one half one floor is admin, office for our superiors, other business things. Another section for the finance department. One half of the house is residents for Sisters, and that's broken up into five, small communities. And the other part of the house we call hospitality, where church groups, other kinds of group come there and have conferences, day of prayer, day of retreat, um, so it's open to anybody who wants to come.

**14:14 Interviewer-** Okay, um, what changes have you noticed in your Motherhouse since you've entered in the 50s?

**14:22 Sister Marianne-** Well, uh, okay, when I entered in the 50s, now think about yourself when you came here to the university when you were a freshman. There were a 150 freshmen in that house, and so everything now is in private rooms, maybe about the size of this, and every Sister has a private room. We had dormitories: bed, nightstand, bed, nightstand, bed.

**14:54 Interviewer-** So it was like no privacy?

**14:57 Sister Marianne-** Oh, yeah, you just put like a curtain around you. Like if you went to the hospital, that's the kind of. But it was great, you know, we were 18.

**15:08 Interviewer-** Okay, so would you say you needed privacy back then? Would you say you grew accustomed to it as the years went on?

**15:16 Sister Marianne-** I think, I don't know if I needed any more privacy than that, at the time because that's where we were. If you asked me that today, I would say, oh no I'm not going to live like that now. I want my own room now.

**15:32 Interviewer-** So do you live in the Motherhouse? Or do you live separate?

**15:35 Sister Marianne-** No, no, I live separate.

**15:45 Interviewer-** Uh, what information would like to share about your race or ethnicity?

**15:50 Sister Marianne-** Well, it's probably more my ethnicity of being good ole Irish Catholic, because that's how I grew up. But it wasn't until I guess it would have been 1999, I had the opportunity to go to Ireland.

**16:07 Interviewer-** Oh, tell me about that a little bit.

**16:10 Sister Marianne-** Well, it was so great because we were always told that our grandfather was from this little town called Mullingar. And so my Sister and I decided that we really wanted to find that gravesite, and so we flew to Dublin and went directly to Mullingar, and believe it or not, when we went to the library, the library couldn't help us at all. And the librarian said go down and ask the butcher, the butcher knows everything. And we went down to ask the butcher of this little town, where we might find the tombstone of the Keena. Because it's K-e-e-n-a,

which is different than most people think. He directed us like almost directly to the spot, and we just had and that was just a really awesome thing, and another thing he told us and I thought it was really beautiful, he said um because your roots are here from this little town, start looking around at the little kids, and look for your dad's face.

**17:25 Interviewer-** Oh, that's interesting, so you can see a little bit of yourself.

**17:27 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, that's exactly right! Oh! It was such, it was pure delight to look at all these little round faces, that look like our dad, really.

**17:43 Interviewer-** So what was your biggest take away from your trip in Dublin?

**17:48 Sister Marianne-** Oh, we had a flat tire! We had, no the biggest take away I guess because on that trip, we did what I would call from hearing other people, like the tourist loops so we saw a lot of places but not very many because we had been bumped from our plane and TWA was the plane at the time, they gave us a free round trip ticket to any place TWA went to be used up in a year. So, my sister that's a nun, we decided we were gonna go back to Ireland, but we knew exactly where we were going to and we went to this little town of Doolin it's just right on, it's just right at the foot at the Cliffs of Moher and then, we wanted to go and spend time on the Aran Isles so we could get on a ferry and go because, well first of all, their language is Gaelic and that's what they speak all the time still, and it was just wonderful to be enveloped that culture and those people a whole lot, so I would say that was a big take away.

**19:00 Interviewer-** Okay, did you guys take another trip to Ireland the next year or did you?  
Um..

**19:04 Sister Marianne-** No, the next year in 2000 we had to use that free ticket see within a year. So, just two of us went the next year.

**19:12 Interviewer-** Okay, so the next time you guys went would you say you were more prepared too?

**19:18 Sister Marianne-** Oh sure yeah, because we knew like what would make any difference if we saw it or not.

**19:24 Interviewer-** Okay.

**19:25 Sister Marianne-** And the other part was that when we went to this little town in Doolin we stayed at this bed and breakfast that was run by a family and um, and the interesting, we slept in a bedroom that had like, the little, the girl's name on the door that now she was grown up, but her name was still on the door where we were sleeping and every morning when we would go to breakfast the lady who was running this um this bed and breakfast well she would say to us "Well now where do you girls want to go today?" and she, we said "Well, we just want to hike you know up in the hills." And she says "I'll tell you exactly where to go and I'll call Miss Murphy up the hill and she'll have some tea for ya.". So, we put our backpacks on and we would get hiking up this road where she was going where she had directed us and Miss Murphy would have tea for two strangers.

**20:20 Interviewer-** Mmhmm.

**20:20 Sister Marianne-** And we would just talk about her stories and you know raising her children here and it was great! Great! (laughs)

**20:30 Interviewer-** What type of lessons did you learn from the women that you encountered on that trip?

**20:38 Sister Marianne-** The gift of hospitality.

**20:40 Interviewer-** Okay.

**20:41 Sister Marianne-** How to really be welcoming genuinely.

**20:44 Interviewer-** Okay. Is there a specific way that that lesson was taught? Did they do anything specific?

**20:52 Sister Marianne-** I think it was just genuinely welcoming us. We were strangers.

**20:55 Interviewer-** Mmhmm.

**20:55 Sister Marianne-** You know? They didn't have to.

**21:00 Interviewer-** Right.

**21:00 Sister Marianne-** And uh, yeah no, I just think it was genuine.

**21:06 Interviewer-** Yeah that is definitely the way I like to do things.

**21:08 Sister Marianne-** The other fun thing I'll tell you about that retreat, I mean trip was on a particular day in Ireland all the children in the Catholic Church make their first communion on the same day. So, we went to church on five o' clock on a Saturday, and this little girl all dressed beautifully in white, just gorgeous. She made her first communion all right, now, the church is on top of a hill and the pub is down here in this little town.

**21:40 Interviewer-** Mmhmm.

**21:42 Sister Marianne-** Okay, Now the church when the, when the church service was over, the whole entire church...

**21:48 Interviewer-** Went to the pub?

**21:50 Sister Marianne-** Went to the pub! And here was this little young lady, about seven or eight years old, ya know dancing around in her white dress and everybody was just dancing and it was just I don't know, the connection between everybody. There was nobody that was left out of the..

**22:07 Interviewer-** So..

**22:07 Sister Marianne-** You're not invited to the party Your.. No! They all went to the pub

**22:10 Interviewer-** So it seems like everybody was connected to each other and knew how to have a good time together?

**22:16 Sister Marianne-** Very much. Very much.

**22:20 Interviewer-** Okay. Um Could you tell me about some of the different ministries you've been involved in?

**22:28 Sister Marianne-** Ooh Yeah, that's a lot. Um. I graduated from here, Fontbonne in Speech Pathology. I left Fontbonne in 1963 and started teaching first grade. Now just remember in that time in our history, in Sisters' history you were assigned by your superior where you would go to work, so I was assigned to Ferguson, Saints John and James, and taught first grade for three years and then you get another little envelope and it says you will now teach third grade at Saint Elizabeth's in Kansas City, so then I go to Kansas City and teach first grade. After those six years in first grade, I was sent to Colorado. Now when I was sent to Colorado, I wasn't real excited about that. You know, you went. But it was a great gift and great grace in my life, um from there I started as the Assistant Principal of a school and taught. I then became the religious director, got my master's, then in Theology. On these journey days, I never did use my Speech Pathology degree of which I did get my master's also. From um being the religious director, and

during that time, I was there with one of our other Sisters doing this work, and we were um asked to write a book and so we did write activity books for a Catholic religious education program. And then at the same time, because we were dealing with the religious education and the parents would have to bring their children to class after class being in like public school all day, they would have to come here to get their Catholicity, it was like these kids didn't want to be here. So um we had worked with the pastor at that time, we presented the idea of: what if we just don't do class during the year? And just do it for a crash course during the summer. So we started a summer school of religion. It was profound. It took a lot of work, and a lot of preparation. We had 100 percent attendance. The kids loved to come! We'd go from 9 to 12 for three weeks, and we'd move them around. It was just organized quite well. I then worked as a pastoral assistant, and my last position in Colorado, I worked as a pastoral minister in mission integration person in six low income high rises, and that was a great journey.

**25:31 Interviewer-** Okay. I'm sorry go ahead.

**25:32 Sister Marianne-** No, no. see I've just had so many things I've been doing. I was novice director for our community and also worked in vocation work.

**25:42 Interviewer-** In what ways you would say your work within the Church has shaped, not only as a Sister, but as a woman in general?

**25:52 Sister Marianne-** My work in the Church has um opened my eyes to um some of the injustices that have been done in the Church. And I think the other part it has, I love the rituals of our faith. I love the sacramentality of our faith. And so um it's like you have both/and, you know, there's this on one hand and this on the other. And it's trying to balance both of those kinds of things.

**26:30 Interviewer-** How would you say that working throughout the Church and teaching children, how has that strengthened your relationship with God?

**26:40 Sister Marianne-** Well I would say that once a first grade teacher, always a first grade teacher. And the reason I say that is, a first grade child is so clear. They're not bombarded, they haven't taken into themselves, all the stuff the world. They're very open, so I think teaching for sure has treated me that way. And I think teaching small children helped me be awakened to the mystery of children's books. Children's books to me are pure delight, so that if the scriptures aren't speaking to me today and I'm praying, or my spiritual reading isn't speaking to me, I'll pick up a children's book.

**27:30 Interviewer-** And it speaks to you there? Okay, I get it.

**27:35 Sister Marianne-** Exactly! I love it! I love it!

**27:38 Interviewer-** That's a really cool way of thinking about it, I've never thought about it that way.

**27:44 Sister Marianne-** There's one little book I used the other day, and it's *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* Oh, it's powerful! It's written for kindergarten, first grade. It's written for me. Do I fill people's bucket with love? That's the basic message

**27:59 Interviewer-** Okay.

**28:00 Sister Marianne-** Or do I dump all of it? Do I dump all of your love? It helps me.

**28:12 Interviewer-** Um okay, when did you consider a religious vocation for yourself?

**28:19 Sister Marianne-** Okay, well, okay, you won't believe this: when I was in fourth grade. 9 years old.

**28:22 Interviewer-** So you knew that early?

**28:25 Sister Marianne-** I don't know if I knew it in its totality, but that's what I know was the spark.

**28:34 Interviewer-** Okay, can you tell me like what in your experience like what caused that seed to be planted in your spirit?

**28:42 Sister Marianne-** Well at that time, you know how you have to in elementary school, I was in fourth grade, I remember exactly my teacher and everything. We had to write a paragraph on what we wanted to be when we grew up. Well we had just studied religious um, contemplative religious. Religious women who are cloistered, who aren't teaching or anything of that. So I wanted to be one of those kind, that's what I put down, that's what I wrote down. So I always remember that paragraph, I believe that was a spark of grace.

**29:22 Interviewer-** Okay, so did you do things in your childhood to kind of prepare you for where you are now, or did you kind of go off your own path and do something different?

**29:34 Sister Marianne-** No, I think my childhood really did point me in this direction.

**29:44 Interviewer-** Okay. Were there certain organizations you were involved in as a teenager or different activities that you did to kind of really prep you for this stage in your life, looking back?

**29:55 Sister Marianne-** Well I think the rituals, because in the Roman Catholic Church when I was in elementary school we always had big May crownings, you know and all the girls wanted to be in the big May crowning, it's a parade for the Blessed Mother basically, and then when I went to high school we had clubs that were religious oriented and one of the big clubs at that

time was called the Sodality of Our Lady and it was again the kind of what I would call today maybe a prayer group.

**30:31 Interviewer-** Like a small prayer group?

**30:32 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, we would come together and pray and you know as teenagers, and so I think some of that was and also the Sisters that were around in my elementary school days and my high school days I think really nurtured me.

**30:50 Interviewer-** Okay, would you during this fellowship time, would you guys also kinda fellowship and get together with one another do like food and or did you guys just hang out within the Church like did you guys foster relationships with each other outside of church?

**31:08 Sister Marianne-** Oh yes, we did foster, but I don't remember much food and except pizza I mean that would be the biggest thing..

**31:15 Interviewer-** Okay so you guys had pizza a lot? Okay cool, cool..

**31:20 Sister Marianne-** It wasn't bad, but I don't remember other kinds of food.

**31:28 Interviewer-** Umm, when and how did you know that you wanted to become a Sister or was it right away?

**31:37 Sister Marianne-** Well, I think I basically it was in my senior year of high school and the reason I say that for a woman in that time in history it was not something, not very many women were able to get an education. In other words, from high school, they couldn't financially go to Fontbonne.

**32:05 Interviewer-** Mhmm.

**32:05 Sister Marianne-** It would have been impossible for my family. Now I don't think that was in my head at the time. I really just always wanted to be a Sister. My dad thought I would be home in two weeks, and at that time we were in a traditional habit, and we had certain clothes to take with us and my dad even said to my mother, "Don't be buyin' all those things for her cuz she's gonna be home in two weeks." I just said well, I had to be home in two weeks, I mean I'd been home.

**32:34 Interviewer-** So how did your parents, you know adjust to you wanting to do this were they supportive or..?

**32:44 Sister Marianne-** Very supportive and very proud. Yeah.

**32:47 Interviewer-** Okay.

**32:50 Sister Marianne-** No, they really were.

**32:55 Interviewer-** What's the – when you finally got into the convent, when you were 18, what surprised you most about religious life there?

**33:05 Sister Marianne-** Um, well I, I think the first six months was almost like a daily surprise. I mean, there was so much of the unknown. You know, I guess one of the surprises was you couldn't talk.

**33:22 Interviewer-** Really?

**33:22 Sister Marianne-** When you're 18 years old, you got a lot to say to everyone.

**33:26 Interviewer-** And you couldn't talk to anybody?

**33:27 Sister Marianne-** Well, not until certain parts of the day.

**33:30 Interviewer-** Okay

**33:36 Sister Marianne-** Like maybe an hour after lunch and an hour after dinner, and that was it. But you know, the biggest surprise, you know, I think all of that is and I know part of it is the number of the young women that were with me at the time, um, the bonds of friendship that have been created and the bonds of community that have been created, and you want to say out of like nothing. How did we become friends when we couldn't even talk to each other? Well there was something that was stirring in there, I guess. And um,

**34:09 Interviewer-** And would you say that those bonds are still strong today?

**34:11 Sister Marianne-** Oh, Yeah, oh probably stronger. Yeah, for sure.

**34:19 Interviewer-** So how long were you in the convent with all the other Sisters?

**34:23 Sister Marianne-** Oh, this is my 57<sup>th</sup> year!

**34:25 Interviewer-** Okay,

**34:28 Sister Marianne-** Oh, you mean in that particular place?

**34:30 Interviewer-** Mhm. In that particular place.

**34:41 Sister Marianne-** Okay, we lived, we were there for two and a half years at Carondelet. And then we moved out here and we lived in Southwest Hall.

**34:39 Interviewer-** Oh, wow. That's cool!

**34:43 Sister Marianne-** It's cool now, see when it was like little room, little room, little room, and again we came to school here when we were called junior Sisters and when we came to school here, we could not talk to you. We could not talk to the girls. And all the girls knew it, the young women, but now this is an interesting part of my life. In the Speech Pathology Department, I was the only nun in the speech pathology department.

**35:17 Interviewer-** So how was it that you couldn't speak to anybody?

**35:17 Sister Marianne-** Well, this is fun. Here, you know how you get group projects, and your teacher says I want you to get with four other people, and I want you to do this, this, this, this. Well, I didn't have four other people to do it with! These two wonderful women, wonderful! I don't know what her married name is, but Judy Harris and Mary Ellen, oh I can't think of her last name – they would sneak me down to the basement of Medaille Hall,

**35:44 Interviewer-** (laughing)

**35:46 Sister Marianne-** And we would do our small group down there! Because, because! Anyway, that's what I did to get in our small group stuff in. It was quite fun but whoa! And the other fun part was um, Concordia seminary was up behind us and we weren't supposed to go up to Concordia. But they had this wonderful, nice field, these woods that didn't make sense to us. So there was a little more rule-breaking I would say when we were junior Sisters on campus.

**36:20 Interviewer-** How does it feel, cuz you said you lived in Southwest when you became a Sister here... How does it feel to know that you were a part of some sense of history for Fontbonne's campus?

**36:32 Sister Marianne-** Oh, it was great, oh I love it.

**36:33 Interviewer-** When you look at it now?

**36:36 Sister Marianne-** In fact, maybe it was about three or four years ago, I knew one the students living in Southwest. And all I knew I wanted to see upstairs, I mean I had been down on the first level for a play and things like that. But I had never been upstairs, and I wanted to see

what we knew was a chapel. The stained glass windows, and that was great fun. To go up and see how the pods were and it was just great.

**37:10 Interviewer-** Okay, that was a really cool, I've never seen that.

**37:15 Interviewer-** Growing up, in what way were you connected to other different religious women in your community?

**37:20 Sister Marianne-** Growing up? Well um in elementary school, I was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph, so they were a very active part of my life. And remember that at that time in our Church, they had different kind of rules, even though they were teachers. And as a kid, when we would play basketball, at other schools, after we won a game or lost a game, we would always go to the convent where the nuns lived and rang the doorbell, rang the doorbell until we got someone to answer us. And just to tell them that we won. They were really women who allowed us to have a relationship with them. And one of the funniest things, when I was either a junior or no, maybe seventh or eighth grade, we were all at the Church, there was the six girls at church, for some kind of prayer. And after church, we took the Sister moderator back to the convent, and it was snowy night. And we knew what the ritual, the Sisters always said their night prayers in the chapel, and then would go to their own bedrooms on the second floor. Well the convent second floor windows are like right here, and the school grounds were there. We stood and as the Sister's light went on in one room, we would throw a snowball. The light went on in another Sister's room, we'd throw a snowball.

**38:48 Interviewer-** (Laughing)

**38:50 Sister Marianne-**We got in so much trouble! So much trouble, we were actually kicked out of school. And we could not come back to school until our mothers came. Now you tell your

mother that. My mother looked to me and said, you got yourself into this, you get yourself out of it. I am not going up to school and bailing you out! To me, that was a great gift. So we...

**39:21 Interviewer-** So how did you end up getting yourself out?

**39:23 Sister Marianne-** So there were about three of us whose parents wouldn't come up, so we had to empty out of desks, hold our books, and sit on the school steps for a week and do all our lessons. You know, it might be child abuse today, but it was certainly, it was great fun.

**39:47 Interviewer-** How did you manage a social life in your early college days? And were you allowed to go out in the community and be social once you became a Sister?

**40:00 Sister Marianne-** No, not during those beginning days. Not at all, not at all. No.

**40:02 Interviewer-** Okay.

**40:07 Interviewer-** When did that kind of change for you?

**40:10 Sister Marianne-** Probably not until Vatican II. Because not even when I started teaching in 62, 63 after you taught all day, then you came back to the house, you know I lived with 16 other women, and you would have prayers and you would have dinner, and you would have time to talk with each other, and you would do your school preparations for the next day. It was that kind of routine, so you didn't do a whole lot of, I want to say, extracurricular-

**40:44 Interviewer-** Going out? Yeah.

**40:46 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, but after Vatican II there were all kinds of doorways opened.

**40:50 Interviewer-** Do you feel like, do you look back on your life, do you feel like you've made any, do all your sacrifices to be a Sister, been worth it?

**40:59 Sister Marianne-** Oh, by all means. You know, the reason I say that so fast is I know this

is where I supposed to be. So that's the confirmation, it's like any vocation, any you know whether you're you know, whether you're a teacher or nurse, when you have that inside of you, and you know that's where you're supposed to be, the sacrifices are there.

**41:29 Interviewer-** Yeah, they kind of don't matter. Did you just ever get restless? You know, thinking about all those sacrifices?

**41:32 Sister Marianne-** Oh, oh yeah.

**41:33 Interviewer-** Did you ever just ever have a moment where you're like I wanna have a normal life, I want to have a family. Or were you always good with

**41:40 Sister Marianne-** No, no. I think that's part of growing up. Just as you grew up here in college, we grew up here in a nunnery, if you want to say.

**41:55 Interviewer-** Yeah.

**41:57 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, I can remember going to one of my friend's, who was the mother of a student that I was teaching first grade in Kansas City, and I said Mary, I just want you to know that I'll be leaving the convent. I'm not going to be a Sister anymore. She said, "what? What is this all about?" Anyway, she told her husband that night when she got home, and I knew him from the parish. And they had five children at the time. And so, I just always think his words were so wise. He said, "Well tell Sister that we will stick with her and we'll be her friend. But before she leaves the convent, ask her if she'll just give us a weekend away. So ask her if she'll come and babysit our five. So we can have a weekend away, and she'll see if she likes it on this side of the grass. And I just thought that such a wisdom response from a great guy and his wife. Just great.

**43:00 Interviewer-** So when did you know, like at what age in your life did you reach that level of peace, where you were just like, okay, I'm okay with where I'm at in life, I don't need any of that extra stuff.

**43:14 Sister Marianne-** Oh, I probably was close to 35, 30.

**43:19 Interviewer-** That's really young.

**43:20 Sister Marianne-** Yeah.

**43:25 Interviewer-** Did you have to go through a process to get to that point?

**43:31 Sister Marianne-** No, I think it's just the daily-ness of that. No, I don't think I didn't stress very much about it.

**43:40 Interviewer-** Okay.

**43:41 Sister Marianne-** Maybe jealous, you know. And the other part that I spiritually went through, if God created me to give birth to a child, I was going, everything I was doing was going, was against that. So I was going through that spiritually. That was a great experience for me.

**44:08 Interviewer-** How did you deal with that?

**44:10 Sister Marianne-** Mostly to begin to examine how it's not just physical birth, but how are you birthing new life? You know, that I'm called to birth new life, 57 years into religious life.

**44:25 Interviewer-** So when you say you're called to birthing new life, do you mean like you know your career as a teacher teaching children, or being involved in different ministries within your Motherhouse and your Church.

**44:40 Sister Marianne-** It could be that, yeah.

**44:44 Interviewer-** In what other ways did that manifest for you?

**44:48 Sister Marianne-** Um, I think one of things of birthing new life that helps me is questioning things. I think when you ask the right question, often you're birthing new life because you're making people think a little bit differently. Maybe that's not, but in my mind, it works!

**45:10 Interviewer-** So are you saying that you specifically, your version of birthing new life is causing people to rethink the way they make choices in the way they go down paths.

**45:24 Sister Marianne-** Could be.

**45:28 Interviewer-** Okay. What are some of the different challenges of religious life that you, that you faced?

**45:33 Sister Marianne-** I think that um, being a woman religious in the Church today is quite challenging. In two ways, for a number of years, in anytime you were in church work, there was absolutely no income, you didn't receive an income from anyway. Now we have quite a few, quite a few at which I'm at the bottom of the next group, older people that need care. So the challenge for me now is how do I provide care for my older Sisters? And I think the other challenges is from people who don't understand movements in the Church happen, we evolve into something different. What happened when I entered in 1959, and there were a 159 girls in the Motherhouse at the time – that was an anomaly in religious life. And so we don't have as many young women, but and so I think that is a challenge for people to see that that is a part of the Church's history and to go with God's spirit, it's not about numbers.

**47:00 Interviewer-** It's about going with God's voice and what you choose to do.

**47:02 Sister Marianne-** Correct, yeah.

**47:05 Interviewer-** Okay, okay, um how many different communities did you look at before you chose your specific community?

**47:15 Sister Marianne-** Really only one other, um and I don't know if I looked at it so closely, it was I like, being in high school with a different religious community who were the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I was definitely influenced by them, but I think some of my Irish background and maybe it was called bullheadedness. At that time, there were Sisters at school who would say, 'Oh you'd look like you'd be a nice nun, you look like you'd be a nice Sister.' And I thought, 'Mm mm, they're not getting me!' So I think part of it was that. Because I could've gone either way, with the Sisters of St. Joseph. And my blood sister, she became a Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so she's in that community.

**48:14 Interviewer-** So how is her life different as a Sister, or different from your life?

**48:18 Sister Marianne-** How is it different?

**48:20 Interviewer-** Do you guys talk at all?

**48:22 Sister Marianne-** Oh, all the time. She is stationed at a rural community, south of St. Louis, south of St. Genevieve, Missouri. In a small rural parish. She loves it. She looks out and she has cows there, so she loves it. But, her ministry has always definitely ever been in elementary education.

**48:49 Interviewer-** Okay, so she's more connected to teaching children?

**48:53 Sister Marianne-** Oh yeah.

**49:01 Interviewer-** Okay, okay. What drew you to your congregation?

**49:05 Sister Marianne-** Pardon me?

**49:06 Interviewer-** What drew you to your congregation?

**49:07 Sister Marianne-** Um, I think really the hospitality, um, I always think of it as three things growing up there was great hospitality, particularly when my dad was quite ill and my mother was trying to take care of him at the hospital and we didn't have any family near us, and so at school, after school every day, the three of us would go to the convent and do our homework in the front parlor of the house now that was in you know the early '53 '52 well that was like unheard of at the time. Their hospitality and welcoming and I also saw such great humor. They had fun together! I mean I'm sure there's sure struggles, there can't be any life without struggles, but they had fun together which gave a whole different sense of holiness. And then the, the other 'h' word that I always held on to is these were really holy women and I didn't even know it. You know when I look back there is one woman who is still alive who taught us, didn't teach me, but my Sisters in elementary school and you know we've had conversations about it and they were really holy women.

**50:35 Interviewer-** Okay, um, what is your congregation's mission?

**50:38 Sister Marianne-** Um, our mission is oh I loooove it! It's so fun! Officially, it's unifying love. Now that sounds really... In some of our founding documents, um, the documents says "It is the congregation of the great love of God". Well, see I always liked that play on words. The GREAT love of God, not the wimpy love of God. So, how do I become a great lover? To me that gives me so much energy, just to even invite myself to say "well how am I going to be a lover today?" So that's the mission, to be God's great love, and when you take unifying love there's

another part of our document that says to be one with people and to be reconciled. You can't be one if we're fighting.

**51:42 Interviewer-** Right.

**51:43 Sister Marianne-** We can argue big time, but you gotta sometime unify our life together.

**52:00 Interviewer-** Okay, at what age did you become a novice?

**52:05 Sister Marianne-** A novice.

**52:07 Interviewer-** Novice.

**52:08 Sister Marianne-** That's like a baby nun.

**52:11 Interviewer-** So you were eight-

**52:11 Sister Marianne-** I was eighteen, yeah. Well I might have, no I was eighteen because we were six months we enter, we walked through the doors of Carondelet in September and the following March, we were um, became novices. And that's when we weren't wearing what I have on today. We were in the traditional black habit.

**52:38 Interviewer-** mhmm

**52:40 Sister Marianne-** I had a different name then.

**52:42 Interviewer-** What was your name then?

**52:43 Sister Marianne-** Sister Agnes Patrick.

**52:46 Interviewer-** Oooh! Why did they give you a different name?

**52:51 Sister Marianne-** The idea was that, you were no longer, you were kind of dead to the world. So you got a new identity. So again, after Vatican two you had the choice of going back to your baptismal name or keeping your religious name. mmmm.

**53:10 Interviewer-** Keeping your religious name. So what made you go back to Marianne?

**53:15 Sister Marianne-** Cuz that's what I was baptized. And when I first did go back to be honest and my dad had passed away. My dad was Richard Patrick, so I was Agnes Patrick. My other sister was Richard Agnes. So we both had our mom and dad's name as religious. So when I first went back my mother said she was a little disappointed. I said "But, mom you and dad named me this! I want to be baptized as Marianne, I don't just want to be Agnes Patrick." So anyway, we had a couple conversations about why I changed my name and we were fine. I like my name.

**54:04 Interviewer-** Umm. What would like to share about your process of discerning?

**54:08 Sister Marianne-** Oh! Umm. Probably our biggest process of discernment was when we were novices. Umm. When we were novices those were the times, because of the rules and the structure of the time, we had a lot of, I shouldn't say a lot. A number of women who walked through the doors with me were now walking out and making other choices, and that was hard because you know you got to be friends or two of 'em were high school classmates and I, and then all of a sudden they're not there. But again, that was their life choice. And what's really kind of fun now, umm you know you do grow in wisdom, grace, and age, and we stayed connected with all the women who, I would say went to college with us and as nuns that are no longer in the community which is a great networking we have in our class. (55:15)

**55:16 Interviewer-** What type of reactions did you get from family and friends when you told them you were going to become a Sister?

**55:24 Sister Marianne-** Um, very positive. Everything was very positive for me um, in the neighborhood, in my aunts and uncles it was tremendous. The one part that was a little difficult for me was that when I made vows, We made vows at the Saint Louis Cathedral and um, because the classes were so big they couldn't hold the Motherhouse couldn't hold any guests and my dad was in the hospital and my dad was a twin, an identical twin and so my uncle George who was his twin, was at my ceremony. You know it's one of those um, I don't know if you'd say bittersweet I mean I just sobbed when I saw my uncle George. Only because it was like having your dad there when you knew your dad wasn't.

**56:30 Interviewer-** Um, when did you take your final vows?

**56:32 Sister Marianne-** In 1966.

**56:36 Interviewer-** And what vows did you choose to take?

**56:39 Sister Marianne-** We take poverty, chastity, and obedience. Those three.

**56:45 Interviewer-** Okay. Were those kind of hard to as a Sister throughout the years once you took them? Or was it was it always easy for you to just kind of keep them?

**56:55 Sister Marianne-** I think the hardest one was obedience. For me.

**57:00 Interviewer-** How so?

**57:03 Sister Marianne-** Because there was never any dialogue about well, I just used things like going to, being sent to Colorado. I felt like I was Saint Paul being sent into exile. I'm from, I'm from the Midwest, this is where I'm gonna be. No, you got the paper that says..

**57:22 Interviewer-** This is where you're gonna go.

**57:23 Sister Marianne-** This is where you're gonna go. When, Oh! I mean it wasn't just like let's all just talk about it now that it's all different now. The vow is still there and will still have our authority people, our leadership people, but we can talk about it. You know I think I could be of best service, da-duh, da-duh, da-duh and I may be, I mean that's what happened in 2005 when I came back to Saint Louis. I didn't come back of my own free will. I came back because leadership invited me to take a position in the community and I said Oh no! What am I gonna do all day? And so there were six of us who went for a weekend discernment and we decided when the six of us went in for the discernment, whoever was discerned for the position was, that was it. Well, I was the discerned person! So I had to move back to Saint Louis which you know, was all God. It's all God also, but it wouldn't have been a choice, I wouldn't have choice to do it. Get what I'm saying?

**58:37 Interviewer-** mmmm. Did you find it hard at some points to listen to God's voice and just obey?

**58:47 Sister Marianne-** Well, I believe that, like in that discernment group of Sisters, the outcome of that discernment is the voice of God, so no I didn't.

**59:04 Interviewer-** Mmmm let's see.. Tell me about your community?

**59:04 Sister Marianne-** My community.

**59:07 Interviewer-** Like how it's structured.

**59:12 Sister Marianne-** Okay. Our community is organized to two levels, but I'm only going to tell you about one.

**59:20 Interviewer-** Okay

**Sister Marianne-** And that's what we call a province level, which would be Sisters that are already in the Midwest and we have five Sisters in leadership positions and other Sisters in the finance office, and then that would be what I call the administration team of the province and from there the structure is such that we meet twice a year in small clusters of maybe fifteen Sisters to discern together you know, what's the next movement? So when we come to a meeting every next August for a weekend we get our direction more or less for the next year.

**01:00:12 Interviewer-** Do you live with other Sisters? If so what is your household like?

**01:00:18 Sister Marianne-** Okay, our household is a little South County house. We live in a three bedroom, um one floor home, in a subdivision. I live with another Sister and she is a, she is a coordinator of Nazareth living center and we just have a great life together and not together. We pray every day about um quarter to seven, six-thirty, quarter to seven, every day for a half hour and then each of us prior to that usually, we have our own period of private, about our of prayer before we pray together.

**01:01:06 Interviewer-** Like quiet time and prayer before you guys pray together?

**01:01:07 Sister Marianne-** Right. Exactly.

**01:01:10 Sister Marianne-** We have dinner together every night. Yeah.

**01:01:15 Interviewer-** Most Nights?

**01:01:16 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, we do that most nights.

**01:01:19 Interviewer-** Would you, tell me about the friendships and the bonds that have come from you guys living together?

**01:01:26 Sister Marianne-** Oh well, um, we have a tradition in our community where we have all been invited to be a part of small community prayer groups. What we call “State of the Heart” groups where you really are to come with, how’s your heart being these days. When you live with somebody, and I have lived with Sister Pat for a number of years, um, they know your heart, they know when, I mean she knows when it’s gonna be a bad day for me. I know when it’s gonna be a bad day for her. And then it’s how do you not take away the badness for the other person, cuz you can’t, but how do you be present in that badness?

**01:02:14 Interviewer-** Right.

**01:02:15 Sister Marianne-** And then to be able to tune into the same thing, it’s any relationship, how do you tune into to any the likes and dislikes of people. For instance, Sister Pat does not like chicken. Oooh! It’s like, I just love when I have the opportunity to eat chicken, because I’m not gonna prepare chicken if she’s not gonna eat it cuz I’m sitting there eating it!

**01:02:43 Interviewer-** How does dinner work out if she doesn’t like chicken?

**01:02:47 Sister Marianne-** We don’t buy it.

**01:02:50 Interviewer-** Oh wow! So you guys don’t even buy it?

**01:02:52 Sister Marianne-** Nooo. No. No. Nooo. Uh-uh.

**01:02:54 Interviewer-** That’s hard.

**01:02:55 Sister Marianne-** But, I mean, but that’s the give and take. That’s what I believe.

**01:03:02 Interviewer-** So you like, in order to keep like, in order to keep strengthening the friendship there are certain sacrifices you have to make?

**01:03:06 Sister Marianne-** Sure.

**01:03:07 Interviewer-** Okay.

**01:03:09 Sister Marianne-** I guess I don't ever think about it as sacrifice. I just think of it as oh my! You mean you just don't like it?

**01:03:16 Interviewer-** I mean not really as just a sacrifice, but you want to keep the person not pleased, but in your good graces the whole time so..

**01:03:23 Sister Marianne-** Hahahaha. That's good.

**01:03:27 Interviewer-** That's a choice you have to make. Um, what is your current role in your community now?

**01:03:35 Sister Marianne-** Mostly um, my current role is I am a spiritual director, and I direct people and listening to the movements of God in their life. And I do days of prayer and retreats for churches in the Saint Louis area.

**01:03:59 Interviewer-** mmmm. What does your, what does being a member of a community mean to you?

**01:04:10 Sister Marianne-** - Oh it means everything. I don't know how, I can't even imagine, not, I always say that because of our numbers dwindling, we are getting older in this area and we have less..

**01:04:25 Interviewer-** So you guys are kind of a more of a unique group because you don't have any

**01:04:27 Sister Marianne-** Well, I think yes, the other part of it is I always say to myself I do not know where religious life is going. I don't know where it's going, but I know who I am

going with. I am going with this band of crazy women who have come together and dedicated themselves to the Church, and to the world, and to God. Period.

**01:04:48 Interviewer-** Do you feel like religious life is going in a positive direction? Or what's your take on that ?

**01:04:57 Sister Marianne-** Umm. I don't know if I'd say positive I'd be it's different and that's where I think we have to be in tune with the spirit of God. It's not about us. It's about what God is..

**01:05:08 Interviewer-** It's about what God wants.

**01:05:09 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

**01:05:16 Interviewer-** What are the challenges that you find from living in the community and what are the joys?

**01:05:22 Sister Marianne-** Mm. Well the joys for me is all the time we can do fun things together. Like, go hiking, uh that's one of my favorite things to do. Something outside. That I love and there are a lot of different Sisters that love to do those kinds of different things and you know, you just call. Like, Hello do you want to take a hike today? You know that kind of thing. So I like, I love to that. Um, the challenges to me is um, ooh, our community meetings sometimes, because as we are sitting in this room and we have three different diverse opinions, get a room with a hundred of us in it. Hello.

**01:06:09 Interviewer-** I can imagine that's a loud and long meeting.

**01:06:11 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, so that's a challenge to um, to be able to take what really is the direction that we're supposed to go and know it. And one of the challenges for us at Sisters of

Saint Joseph, today just for today, not just for today, but it's happening now in our life is that we're four different groups under one umbrella called Sisters of Saint Joseph. Do we come together as one? And that's what we're discerning now? Do we come together as one? Or do we stay as four? So there's a lot of, a lot of discussion around that.

**01:06:55 Interviewer-** Okay, um. Did you go to Catholic schools growing up?

**01:07:00 Sister Marianne-** All, All the way. Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade.

**01:07:07 Interviewer-** Okay, um, what is your highest level of education?

**01:07:10 Sister Marianne-** I have a master's degree in Theology and Speech Pathology.

**01:07:15 Interviewer-** Have you gotten a chance to use any of your speech paths skills at all?

**01:07:21 Sister Marianne-** Oh, yeah teachin' first grade you know how you have red rabbit's friends is what I call it. You know all their six year old friends who haven't gotten there 'wed wabbits'? I could get those kids on the straight and narrow real quickly, and it was always such a great time to help those kinds of problems if you want to say in a normal first grade.

**01:07:50 Interviewer-** Okay, This is a lot of questions.

**01:08:02 Sister Marianne-** Haha. Lots more Raven?

**01:08:08 Interviewer-** Down to the wire.

**01:08:15 Interviewer-** Have there been any disappointments within the ministry that you would like to share?

**01:08:23 Sister Marianne-** Um, probably one of the biggest disappointments was when I was in low income housing. We had a great staff throughout the entire operation, and um, for whatever

reason and I don't, I was never part of the reason so I don't know the reason, but the executive director was let go by the Bishop and that was, that was probably one of the most disturbing moments for me, because it changed the whole tenor. And the whole of, the direction of low income housing was going at the time.

**01:09:12 Interviewer-** Do you feel like that decision made low income housing better or worse?

**01:09:17 Sister Marianne-** Well it depends I guess, you know, how you look at it. I think it became more of an operation. Where before, it became more business where before it was more heart centered. The people were first.

**01:09:37 Interviewer-** So, the people mattered before this decision and then after it kind of just was just like a factory, in a type of sense?

**01:09:40 Sister Marianne-** Maybe, however I have to say that I am still connected with it because during those days, those initial turnover days, they didn't have any income, income was not given to them. Like to do parties for these people, or to go on a little trip up to the mountains for gas. I mean, just little things... So I started a Jesus fund. And so I got all my friends to add to the Jesus fund, so I still have people who give to the Jesus fund. And I have a wonderful woman who is still working in housing, and I send her the money, so she can give it to the people that need it. It's great. Love it. (laughing)

**01:10:30 Interviewer-** Tell me about your community's prayer life and spirituality.

**01:10:35 Sister Marianne-** Well, our spirituality really is based on being this great lover, this unifying lover. Our prayer life is basically from the old days, around the State of the Heart. Now Sister Pat and I when we pray every single day, we use the scriptures to pray out of and usually some other kind of a reading book and then we sit in silence for about fifteen minutes, and then

after that fifteen minutes, um, we bring to consciousness anyone that we may be like today I prayed for you because,

**01:11:21 Interviewer-** Thank you.

**01:11:23 Sister Marianne-** You're welcome, because I knew I was gonna see you, and Pat prayed for people she knew she was gonna be meeting. So we do bring that to consciousness. Or there might be a family need or one of our Sisters may have emailed, pray for my nephew, and then me and Pat have this ongoing list of people who are quite very, very, ill so we present all these people to God. We pray for our Sisters who have birthdays and for Sisters who have death days. We have a list of their names. So we do a lot of individual prayers and then Pat and I have our individual prayers we close our pray with each and every day. But, there's nothing like that every group of Sisters can choose what they wanna do. All they have to do it.

**01:12:23 Interviewer-** That's, that's an interesting take on it. I've never seen or heard prayer taken from that point of view.

**01:12:30 Sister Marianne-** Yeah, it's um, when we, when we, before Vatican two, we always prayed what I would call the monastic way of praying. Where they prayed out of a book and some of our Sisters still do, which is perfectly fine, but we were allowed to broaden out and we find it very helpful.

**01:12:53 Interviewer-** Okay, So do you guys have three different sessions where you pray throughout the day?

**01:13:02 Sister Marianne-** No. No.

**01:13:04 Interviewer-** Or is it just one?

**01:13:06 Sister Marianne-** Just one mostly. Cuz, like I won't get home today until like five o'clock today or close today and then you start supper and then Pat won't get home before that either so, there's not that kind of time. And of course you know we have to watch the Cardinals play the ballgame. I mean you know, first things first!

**01:13:30 Interviewer-** Um.

**01:13:31 Sister Marianne -** We should watch the Blues I guess but..

**01:13:33 Interviewer-** Yeah, they just advanced to the second round right? Yeah.

**01:13:36 Interviewer-** Um, in your view how did Vatican two change things for women, religious women doing this?

**01:13:43 Sister Marianne -** Unf! It was freeing! That's the best, I mean that's the best word.

**01:13:48 Interviewer-** In what way was it freeing?

**01:13:51 Sister Marianne -** Well, first of all I don't wear six yards of wool anymore. I mean six yards of wool with your face covered and your head covered?

**01:14:02 Interviewer-** Yeah I can imagine it was pretty hot.

**01:14:03 Sister Marianne -** When people say to me "well, don't you miss it?" I think at the time it was great. I mean it was fine, but do I miss it? No, and then I want to say "well, do you want to wear six yards, six yards of wool in the heat of summer?" No. Not fun.

**01:14:30 Interviewer-** I can imagine. Um, what do you see as the role of women, of religious women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**01:14:41 Sister Marianne** - Well, I think it's Thomas Merton who says it too you know be who you are and do what you are capable of doing. Whatever you're capable and where are your talents. I think the 21<sup>st</sup> century is showing us that most of our Sisters are truly working on the margins. There are three Sisters who opened up a huge house in Kansas City, Missouri. The people in the house, the Sisters, the youngest one is 70 years old. The three of them have opened up a house for ex-felons. They have fifteen ex-felons living with them and these women, they have classes, they don't do it, but the social workers do it, that'll help them with classes, they have a whole wardrobe, a whole closet filled with different kinds of clothing so that these young women have to go for an interview for a job, they have something presentable to wear..

**01:15:53 Interviewer**- To wear..

**01:15:54 Sister Marianne** - To wear, but you know we wouldn't have been doing that 50 years ago.

**01:15:57 Interviewer**- So, I guess you're saying that now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women in the faith are kind of focused more on, a lot more on service than they used to be and helping others?

**01:16:15 Sister Marianne** - Well, I think it's more injustice issues. We just had two Sisters who just moved into Ferguson community.

**01:16:19 Interviewer**- Oh wow.

**01:16:20 Sister Marianne** - And one Sister said to me " I had never been in so politically involved." Now she just came from working at a college on the east coast. She is quite capable and quite articulate to be able to help and to be able to help politically. So, there's those kind of roles I think 50 years ago again that wouldn't be happening. But that's again the evolution.

That's where the need is right now. We have a Sister who has been down at Saint Teresa's on

Grand Avenue. Now she's been there for maybe 30 years um, and they have what they call Angel Baked Cookies. She started in the church basement baking cookies in that area so that would give them some life skills to be able to go and get you know just even a teenage job some place. You know lots of women organizations, I know women's organizations from Fontbonne that you know that if they're having cookies at their organization meeting, they order them from Angel Baked. I mean they're great cookies, but you're also doing something for people that need to be uplifted.

**01:17:42 Interviewer-** mmhmm.

**01:17:44 Sister Marianne-** So those are the opportunities those are the way, and you say well nobody's telling you to do that. No, you see something to be done and if you have the skills to do it, today our leadership will never tell you no unless there was a huge hole in your reasoning.

**01:18:05 Interviewer-** Okay, does your religious institute have a communal symbol to recognize your profession?

**01:18:13 Sister Marianne-** Heh, No we don't, and the reason don't is because we have never been able to agree on one. You know what you like and what I like, and what Sister this one likes na ah! No. So we don't. Never have.

**01:18:29 Interviewer-** Is it important for you to have a visual community symbol?

**01:18:34 Sister Marianne-** mmm.. No. Personally it's not, but sometimes I think I'd like to have one. I could go both ways.

**01:18:45 Interviewer-** Okay. Umm, and finally is there anything else you would like to share?

**01:18:50 Sister Marianne-** Well, I just loved being a part of this with you that's for sure.

**01:18:55 Interviewer-** I had so much fun!

**01:18:57 Sister Marianne-** It's been a great experience.

**01:18:59 Interviewer-** and learned a lot

**01:19:01 Sister Marianne-** It's been a good experience

**01:19:03 Interviewer-** - It has.

**01:19:05 Sister Marianne-** And I think the other thing is to think this is happening, I mean my life story is not dramatically different from most Sisters across the United States or across religious communities, and I just think it's a great opportunity then to be able to um, I'm thrilled! I mean to be joyful about your chosen way of life. And I am. So I don't think I have any, I don't know if I do.

**01:19:47 Interviewer-** Alrighty, We're, We are good.

**01:19:55 Sister Marianne-** Okay. (end)



