

Interview Narrator: Sister Kathleen Regan
Interviewed By: June Roach
Location of Interview: Fontbonne University
Date of interview: March 4, 2016

00:00 **Interviewer**-Good morning, good morning Sister Kate.

00:00 **Sister** – Good morning.

00:00 **Interviewer**- I am very happy you're here, I would like to start with the background questions first, so we'll just ask what's the name you'd like to go by?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, Sister Kate Regan.

00:00 **Interviewer**- Sister Kate Regan

00:00 **Sister** –That's my informal

00:00 **Interviewer**-What about your baptismal name?

00:00 **Sister** – it's Kathleen Regan

00:00 **Interviewer**- What is your religious name?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, when I received the habit, in '60 it was Sis. Charles Maureen. I was named after, I took the name of my father and mother (grandparents?). And then what we had the chance to change back to baptismal, I did.

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

00:00 **Sister** – Parsons, Kansas. It's in southeast Kansas.

00:00 **Interviewer**- When were you born?

00:00 **Sister** – 1940

00:00 **Interviewer**- is that where you grew up? If no, where?

00:00 **Sister** – I finished high school there, I think I grew up after.

00:00 **Interviewer**- grew up after high school, I agree. Were you raised in a Catholic family?

00:00 **Sister** –Yes, Very Catholic. My family I was the youngest of six (6), my father and mother, we were Irish, and we lived in the parish, that really, our lives center around parish life.

00:00 **Interviewer**- if yes, or are there other Catholic sisters are clergy in your family? If no, when did you become a Catholic?

00:00 **Sister** –My oldest brother was a priest.

00:00 **Interviewer**- What was your place in the birth order?

00:00 **Sister** – I am the youngest, Not the baby, but the youngest.

00:00 **Interviewer**- (laughter) what's the difference there?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, you're a baby, but you grew up, so you're the youngest.

00:00 **Interviewer**-What is the name of the community you belong to? Where is your mother house located?

00:00 **Sister** – I'm a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and our mother house is in St Louis, Missouri.

00:00 **Interviewer**-How long have you been a Sister?

00:00 **Sister** –55 years.

00:00 **Interviewer**- What information would you like to share about your ethnicity or race?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, as I said before, I thought I belonged to the privileged class because I was Irish. Both my mother and father's parents came from Ireland. So we were what I thought was pure-blooded Irish. I mean what more could you ask for (lightly chuckled). So that was very much my part, being Irish, very significant in our lives.

00:00 **Interviewer**- Briefly describe the type of ministries you've been involved in?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, I began in elementary education, and then, I went from elementary education to religious education, and then to Pastoral Ministry.

VOCATION

00:00 **Interviewer**-When did you first consider a religious vocation for yourself?

00:00 **Sister** – I was in my first year of college in Kansas City, and I wanted to do something of service, to do something that I would be working with people, and I thought of being a nurse. I was a nurse's aide in high school; and my other little jobs, but I knew that I was attracted to that. I lived in the hospital, St. Joseph's Hospital, that's where the nursing students lived. I went to school at St. Teresa's College, which is now Avila University. I was living in there in hospital, that's where all the nursing students lived. We were very involved with and saw the Sisters first hand. They seem normal and fun. I thought this is it! So that's when I first thought of that.

00:00 **Interviewer**- and that's when you first knew you wanted to become a Sister.

00:00 **Sister** –Yes

00:00 **Interviewer**-What has surprised you most about religious life?

00:00 **Sister** –What surprised me the most don't know, There was so many surprises, you know, going through life. I think what surprised me, and energize me, was to be able, to keep being able to responding to the needs of the times. You didn't just have one thing for life, and that was a wonderful surprise.

00:00 **Interviewer**-Growing up, in what ways were you connected to women's religious?

00:00 **Sister** –Do you mean as going through grade school and high school? Well I was in Catholic school from 1st grade thru high school in Parson, we had a small Catholic School that was a part of that. They were a part of my life.

00:00 **Interviewer**- In what ways does your vocation shape your ways of being in the world?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, I think belonging to a community, and it provides the opportunity to keep responding to the needs of the time; and I think that the opportunities that the community provided really shaped the way and the shaped the decisions you can make.

00:00 **Interviewer**-How have the expressions of your vocation changed over time?
For instance how has being a Sister changed your interests and activities?

00:00 **Sister** –Very much, when I enter the '59, it was very normal to become an elementary school teacher, or a professor or maybe a nurse, I can't don't know of what else. We were assigned different places or parishes where to go. During the_____many of the Sisters of my class wanted to be nurses so my course change my decision or path change to go into education that was a big change in my life. What's the second part?

00:00 **Interviewer**-How has been a sister changed your interests and activities?

00:00 **Sister** – activities, well you are so involved in your mission and your ministry, as you continue your life, you're so involved with people so that is no one way you keep responding and during those times they were It was a change in time so there were many things to keep my interest 1959 was pretty straight but, In the sixties There was a lot going on.

00:00 **Interviewer**-What are the greatest blessings of religious life?

00:00 **Sister** – well what I just said, There was so much opportunity for your life to be enriched. The support from the community, the people That you live with, and the community at large and opportunities for education, to be able to go, to be able to covered for our providence we had over nine (9) States! So to travel, to be available in the different areas was very enriching.

00:00 **Interviewer**-What are the greatest challenges of religious life?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, the challenges were, As I said in the sixties There was just so much going on, And so many changes. And we have in our group, in our sisters, Have reception, what we called it, our class, We have 76, which was a large number; and during that time many people started to leave religious life to go to other forms of ministry. Because things were opening up, during the sixties that won't open during the fifties. Women could being involved and so many more professions than they were allowed in the fifties. So that was a challenge. To see my friends make other choices, and for me to keep asking myself “Is this where God is calling me” so that was so deep, deep challenge.

00:00 **Interviewer**-What have you been able to do as a professed sister that you wouldn't have been able to do as a lay woman?

00:00 **Sister** –Well as I said, I started out at as an elementary educator, and then I went into religious education, and as Catholic schools, many of them were closing, which caused us to have a greater number of children in our parish program. So there was such a need to train teachers, and to train parents. And continue on with religious education if we couldn't go to a Catholic School. And so I got my first Masters religious education. But at that time many lay women were become educated in religious education. So it wasn't

long in my life, that as the opportunities opened up to women, we were together. It was not this is only for religious women or this is only for lay women. The world was open its doors to women, and that was very exciting! And wonderful!

DISCERNMENT

00:00 **Interviewer**-Did you look at many communities before choosing one?

00:00 **Sister** – I did not. I did not, because it just seems so clear to me, where I was living I thought this was it, and then when I came to St. Louis, and I thought... this is it!

00:00 **Interviewer**- what drew you to your congregation? What is it charisma/ mission?

00:00 **Sister** –No it wasn't. I wish there wasn't a bolt of lightning saying you are to go here (laughter) this is it. It's a constant discernment. I think it's an inner sense that you were at home, this is right.

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

00:00 **Sister** –at age 19

00:00 **Interviewer**-What would you like to share about your process of discernment?

00:00 **Sister** – Well, It's ongoing. As I said in college I lived with, in mist, young women and sisters in college, at St. Theresa with had opportunities and retreat opportunities, there was other religious clubs and we had time to ask these kind of questions consider this; 'Is God calling me, to be?' What are we called to be? So I remember at the retreat, that's when I thought I'm going to follow this through to become a sister. So as you enter community it's an ongoing discernment and I took final vows in 1964. As I said during that time it was a lot of time for discernment, because there were so many changes. I saw so many of my friends leave and make other choices, and to constantly say, why me and

why am I staying? Is this really where God is calling me? It was just on going and for your prayer life is a constantly praying asking if this is where God is calling me to be.

00:00 **Interviewer**-What kind of reaction did you give from friends and relatives when you tell them you were going to become a sister?

00:00 **Sister** – I think because of the family I grew up in they were happy. But the funny thing is when I went back to Parsons, and the pastor , you know I have been around him since before I went to college, Well I told him that I wanted to become a sister he said ‘ I think I’m having a heart attack!’(Laughter) So that was the most dramatic. He was just kidding. He was a good friend of our families, but that was the most, he said it was like a bolt! He said “hadn't ever thought of you”, but that was the most dramatic reaction, most were supportive and he was supportive too, that was just his reaction. (More laughter)

00:00 **Interviewer**-When did you take your final vows?

00:00 **Sister** – 1969

00:00 **Interviewer**- which vows did you take (poverty, celibacy, obedience, others)?

00:00 **Sister** – All of them.