

9-9-2015

Sr. Jean Marie Cleveland

Mary Ellen Lennon Ph.D.

Marian University - Indianapolis, melennon@marian.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mushare.marian.edu/wrp>

 Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lennon, Mary Ellen Ph.D., "Sr. Jean Marie Cleveland" (2015). *Women Religious: Oral Histories of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg*. 6.
<https://mushare.marian.edu/wrp/6>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives at MUShare. It has been accepted for inclusion in Women Religious: Oral Histories of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg by an authorized administrator of MUShare. For more information, please contact emandity@marian.edu.

September 9th, 2015 – Sister Jean Marie Cleveland speaking with Professor Mary Ellen Lennon at Marian University, Indianapolis.

Abbreviations

SJM: Sister Jean Marie Cleveland

MEL: Mary Ellen Lennon

MEL: This is Mary Ellen Lennon at Marian University sitting here with Sister Jean Marie Cleveland on September ninth, 2015. Thank you, Sister. Would you like to begin by introducing yourself?

SJM: Hi. I'm Sister Jean Marie Cleveland, I'm an Oldenburg Franciscan. I grew up in Indianapolis, went to Little Flower School and Scecina High School. I have one brother Charles, and parents Rosemary and Phil. When I was a child we moved in with my grandmother and grandfather, and lived with them. So I grew up with older people in the house. My—somewhere in grade school we were taught that when we went to Mass which we did every day, we should pray for our vocation, so I always prayed for my vocation. And I would pray, Lord, tell me what you want me to be. I want to be a nurse, a teacher, or a Sister, and I would always kind of whisper that 'or Sister' part because I didn't think I wanted to do that. When I got to be a senior in high school, somewhere in the middle of fresh or middle senior year, when I was working in the journalism room, and the Sister came in, Sister Laurentia came in, and it's a Sunday afternoon and said to us, "two of our Sisters just were killed in a car crash. And two of you need to replace them." And she looked at us, there were five of us, and Diane was getting married, and Lee was getting married, and Carl didn't fit the description, and Nancy and I didn't think wouldn't work and I certainly wasn't going to do it, so I thought that's not going to work. But somewhere for the rest of that year I began to think maybe this is what I should do. And so I talked to Sister Laurentia and eventually went to Oldenburg and visited to see what it was like, and wrote a letter. And I remember getting a response back on yellow paper, now I know it's good paper, but to me it was just old and ugly and I just did one, oh I didn't think I opened it for a while. But finally I did and so I went to Oldenburg, got there September eight, 1959.

And I remember leaving home and we went with another girl and her parents, my brother and my mother and I. And I'm looking, getting in the car I'm looking back and thinking I'll never be in this house again, because that's the way it was at that point in time. We went to a convent you left the world so to speak, was kind of following the monastic tradition from the older times. But that's what I knew I needed to do, so we went. And we got to Oldenburg and we didn't know where to go, because nobody told us there were lots of buildings and we didn't know which one to go to, so we went to the big one. And Mr. Schein who was driving got out went up, knocked on the door and said that he had two girls they're, coming, gonna enter. And the kind of gruff gal who

answered the door said well you don't come here, you go around the back, the building in the back. So he comes down out down, looked up at the windows and said "Cephas, there's always Terre Haute," because our Reverend Mother's name was Mother Cephas, and Terre Haute was what providence the Sisters were. Well he took us around back and so we both entered.

It was a little different because we'd been independent, I mean I was as independent as an eighteen year old was, I was just barely eighteen. I had gone to high school, I had taken music lessons, I had—my job was to go home and cook every night because my mom worked.

And so I'd done that and but I hadn't, I didn't really know anything about the world. I've been in high school, and back in those days you didn't know near as much as high school kids know today, at least I didn't. Some of them did, I didn't. So it was a little different to be there, and the traditions were different and some of the customs were different in, seemed a little immature to me in some ways, but probably weren't. Sister Stella was our novice director, was really smart because every time we—people would want company she'd have us do some big thing, like plan a plan a show or musical or we would we did all kinds of creative things it's good to keep us busy. Plus, it was creative. We went to school and we didn't—school was good, I loved school, but it wasn't nearly like what we would have gotten if we would have actually been in college.

But I was lucky, two semesters I got to come to Marian College. There's two second semesters, because the the first year was when I was a second year novice and I was supposed to go out go to school that whole year but one of the older Sisters got sick and so I went to school, I taught the first half of the year, and Sister Geralda went to school. And second half the year I went to school and she taught. Which was kind of hard on those poor kids because they had two brand-new teachers who didn't really know a lot about what they were doing. So I came to school and studied to major in math. The next year I was supposed to go to school all year and somebody got sick. So I got to go second semester. And then the next year I had to take [unintelligible] because I had been to to school to actually being on campus at Marian and so because of that they made me take [unintelligible]. It was just I didn't have to because I hadn't been on campus.

But I survived that, and first things I taught, I taught that first half-year was teaching third and fourth graders at St. Monica's here in Indianapolis. And the next year I taught was teaching fourth grade at Holy Trinity. One of the big things I remember about that year was I had to come to school Friday afternoon as soon as classes were out I went down the steps. One of the mothers brought me to Marian, Friday afternoon and I had to study. I took advanced math and physics all weekend. All day Saturday, most of Sunday. I went back to Holy Trinity to prepare lessons, some one of the other Sisters helped me prepare lessons. But that was a remarkable year, there was no time to do anything but teach and go to school.

MEL: May I ask who taught you over the weekend? Where did you get these classes?

SJM: I guess, classes here at Marian.

MEL: On the weekends?

SJM: On the weekends. Sister Florence Murray was a math teacher, Sister Marina was a physics teacher. So, for I think the math class I might have had a few classmates. Physics class was Sister Marina and me. And so it's like, it was it was hard. Physics was not exactly my thing but we needed a math teacher, because at that point in time we had kind of agreements with dioceses that we would teach certain things in certain places, and so Cardinal Ritter High School was going to begin in the fall of 1964, and we were supposed to provide a math teacher. A couple English teachers and a home-ec teacher and a math teacher. And so I knew that I was being prepared to be a math teacher, I didn't know if I'd be at Cardinal Ritter or if they'd put me somewhere else and move some of the Sisters to Cardinal Ritter. As it ended up I went to Cardinal Ritter, I never did have to teach physics which was wonderful for me and students because they never—it's like, physics was like Greek I passed it I do okay but I'd never want to teach it.

So I taught the first four years of Ritter's existence, I taught math. And the first year I had every kid in school, because there's only one class so only freshman. So I had one, I basic one basic math class and then four algebra classes and I was told that summer to find books, you know what books did I want to use. I had no idea what books I wanted to use. So I talked to every math teacher in the community that summer saying what books should I use, and ended up with a book that most people were using in the algebra book that I got.

By the fourth year we got a new math teacher who was had taught math for quite a while and so I told her I said you've got to have these these seniors because I've had in three years so you say need somebody different.

Then I went to Our Lady of Angels in Cincinnati and taught math, and I had a religion class which was in the days after Vatican II when you're supposed to teach religion, nobody had any textbooks very much textbooks, nobody really knew exactly what to teach, and if you didn't teach exactly what everybody wanted to teach you were in trouble. And it was a terrible time for religion teachers and students, because there was nothing definite at that point. Eventually it came but at that point that really wasn't. But I was there for a couple years and one year we got the Sister who had been the Superior at Ritter moved to Our Lady of Angels in Cincinnati, and she became assistant principal. Well in the spring she had a brain aneurysm or stroke or something, and died. And so that spring we had a father-daughter dance, and I was in charge of senior class and student council so I needed to be at these dances. So I was sitting with the principal and she said to me, "you know the council would like you to be assistant principal." So that next year, I was assistant principal, and meantime for five years before that I had gone to Purdue to study math, and it was difficult. I passed, I did okay, I did fairly well, but it

was just way more math. Now I was a really good high school math teacher, wasn't the world's greatest college math student.

But so that year that I knew I was going to be assistant principal was my last year there, and I had taken all the math I had to take, so I was able to take counseling and administration courses, which I really understood. It was the nicest summer because I knew what I was doing. It was really nice. So I came back, was assistant principal for a year and then the principal and I traded places, and I became principal so that was the beginning of my administration back in '71. I became principal in '72 and I really enjoyed that because I thought my role was to teach teachers and work with teachers so they could become the best they could become. So I thought if I worked with the teachers and got them what they needed and support they needed then they would do that for the students. I was there for doing that for seven years, and then I thought this is I need to do something else. So I ended up going to our school at Oldenburg, at that point in time it was called Immaculate Conception, or Academy of the Immaculate Conception, now it's called Oldenburg Academy.

But I was principal there for eight years, and the same thought you know, to do what I needed to do to help the teachers to become the best they could become. And I remember and that's I don't think the first school, but in that school I gave out every report card. That was kind of fun and they come all come down to my office and get report cards, and so it was really great if they did really well and not too good for the them if they didn't do pretty well. But I enjoyed that. And at the end of eight years I need to do something different, so I was given a sabbatical, went to Loyola University in Chicago and I was there for eight months and was, got a degree in pastoral studies. It was wonderful, I studied the scripture, I got to study liturgy, I got to study sacraments, I got to read all these books that I never read when I was a math teacher, or studying math. So it was really a really neat experience to me, I was by myself for the first time ever, in graduate housing. A little bitsy room. I, I loved Loyola because it's on Lake Michigan, and I can't see across Lake Michigan so that's the lake, I miss an ocean to me. So that was really great.

When I got finished with that I wanted to do parish work, I thought I want to do parish work. So I had taken up, taking a class in RCIA, and that was good. And I went to a workshop that Cardinal Bernardin put on, called The Consistent Ethic of Life, which was wonderful because it taught me so much about life from birth to death, and everything in between. So to me, when we talk about "right to life" it's right to life it's all that, it's not just abortion, it's not just euthanasia. It's starvation, it's poverty, it's everything in between.

When I finished with that I for the first time in my life had to go out and find a job, I've never had to do that before because I just kind of always got one. So I went and applied to several different places. I could have taught at one place in southern Indiana, I mean I could have been a D.R.E. at one place in southern Indiana, but the gal who preceded me was one of our Sisters who was a well known, really well respected D.R.E., and I'd

never done that. And I thought there's no way on earth I can follow her and begin to know what she did.

So I went to these two little bitty parishes that had never had a D.R.E., and so I could do what I thought was good but they didn't know the difference, they were happy to have anybody do anything. So I was there for five years really liked parish work.

MEL: D.R.E is Director of Religious Education?

SJM: Yeah. And then I went to after those five years I went to the whole St. Patrick's and Holy Rosary here in the city and was a parish life coordinator. Parish life coordinator in Indianapolis is like a lady pastor, but you can't really be a lady pastor in the church, but I was in charge of the parishes. I did everything for the parishes except say Mass, hear confessions, do sacrament of the sick. I ran the parish and the student, parish council. I was in charge of the finance committee. I did all those things. I prepared people for baptism, I got weddings ready, I got funerals ready. I loved it, it's one of my very favorite ministries, because it's like being with people from birth to death, and on every place in between it. You could sit there on Sunday morning and look out and see all these people who know something about their stories. Meantime, St. Patrick's was about to close because it was in bad shape, but there's a priest Father Tom Fox, who came, and he wanted to do some work with Hispanics. And there were in the school at St. Patrick's before I got there, there were two Sisters of Providence who had formed a place, I can't remember exactly what its name was right now, but they taught Hispanic people, they got them ready for citizenship. They did anything they could to help Hispanics, and at this point in time, Hispanics and Indianapolis were there but not really as well-known as now. And so Father Tom wanted to know if he could have a space in that building and I let him do that. And then he wanted to know if he could have Mass, and I'm thinking okay, how are we gonna do this of this Irish community, older Irish community.

So we worked really hard to get them to understand that this was something that we really needed to do. We only had one Mass on Saturday and one Mass on Sunday, there weren't really that many people at St. Patrick's, and why would it hurt if they had Mass? So they had Mass Sunday evening. Eventually they had Mass Sunday morning and Sunday evening. And in the meantime Father Tom not only worked at Saint Patrick's but he went to Seymour, more and he went to Greensburg and he went to St. Monica's, and he went all over the place. Having Spanish Masses maybe once a month in all these places.

So he had the vision of ministration of Hispanics way before most people did. And before he came Sr. Norma and I had worked together and brought the Mexican-American Cultural Center up to Indianapolis for a week, we brought them the two main people from that group, it's in San Antonio. We brought them up and I got to chauffeur them around the diocese, but this was probably maybe '95, '96 somewhere in there. And the diocese didn't really know that it needed this, so nobody really prompted people

to go to these workshops so they weren't nearly well attended as they probably would be today. But it was a beginning. So Father Tom got Hispanic ministry going, and it was kind of challenge to to work with people to get them to understand they really needed to share their facilities. And Hispanic people didn't always do things the way the Irish people and the Anglo people did. And we would have parish council meetings and I I didn't want to leave them out, so I would, I tried to have a bilingual parish council. Bilingual parish councils take twice as long because they take twice as long, you have two languages.

Plus the if meeting was at seven, my Anglo people would be there at ten 'til, and the Hispanics wouldn't come until twenty after. That was not good, but we made it, somehow we made it work. And we'd have I want to have parish get-togethers, so I remember one older lady, Angie, who every time we have a parish pitch-in would make taco salad, because that was something for them. She was trying to make something that the Hispanics would like. So we worked together and when I left when I came there were like three Spanish-speaking families and I left there were like three thousand Spanish-speaking people. So and that wasn't my mine, my doing, accepting that I worked to make it happen.

But the meantime I had gone to San Antonio for six weeks and to Mexico for eight weeks trying to learn Spanish. I had nothing else to do those 14 weeks but learn Spanish and I don't understand it, I don't hear it. So when people say today you know like I heard on television though they well if they're in this country they should be speaking English, well I had nothing else to do. Immigrants have families, work sometimes work two jobs trying to learn English. I can understand how they don't learn it the first month, because I had all those weeks to learn it.

MEL: Sister, I'm very interested in this period in your life when you were working at this parish and doing so much in ministry. Do you, do you have more memories of this time? You described looking out at the sea of people and knowing and working so closely with the Hispanic population. Just any stories that you remember of that time or people that you remember from that time.

SJM: I remember one, one man who—short guy, he was Italian. And he was in the army I'm not sure which war that would have been, maybe Korea, maybe Vietnam. Because he was short he had to go first to the enemy lines because he had to lay the line the communication lines. And he had some awful stories about how people react during wartime and do things they wouldn't ordinarily do. And so that's that's a memory but you know, good people that were there in the meantime I'm working on Archdiocesan committees which was really interesting and got to go, the parish life coordinators got to go to meeting with the priests a couple times a year, it was Archdiocesan business. And that was pretty interesting, because by that time I knew practically all the priests in the diocese. But since 2000 I wasn't doing that anymore that a lot of new priests, and so I don't know nearly as many of them, like it was greater percent, as I used to.

But when I was working at St. Patrick's I lived with another Sister, we had an apartment down on the south side because there was nowhere around St. Patrick's or Holy Rosary, to live. So that's kind of fun, to be away from the parish I got to get in my car and drive fifteen minutes at night, and drive fifteen minutes in the morning. And that fifteen minutes was really special just to be, and kind of go over the day, you know. That was a good time. A lot of community activities going on at that time with chapters and we had community meetings and I when I started living with her I was asked to join a sharing group that had been meeting for maybe three years at that point in time. And we this group I'm still in it this group just met this past Sunday, and we celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary. Even me, and what we're doing is taking our constitutions, which has nine chapters, and when we meet we take chapter one next time we take chapter two next time we take chapter three. They've been doing that for twenty-five years, the same book over and over and over. So we meet once a month which boils down to nine or ten times a year. But I don't know how many times I've been through that book, and every time you read it it's new, which is kind of amazing. So that's been a good support.

MEL: Do you mind explaining that? Again, about the sharing group and this book. Could you explain it?

SJM: The book is called *Vision and Journey*, and it is our spiritual document. And it has two parts, each chapter has two parts. Now one part is the rule of the Third Order Saint Francis, and then the second part is our living of that rule, and it corresponds paragraph to paragraph, to paragraph from St. Francis and paragraph from us. And we got that with a group of Sisters working together, who were trying to write something from us and they would write and then they would send it to us and we would all critique it, and then we'd send we get together we talk about it, and then we send it back to them and they try something else and then we critique it and send it back to them. So took a while for that to happen but it's a very special book to us and some people thought, Oh, a book like that might last ten years. Well we got it in 1990, so this is twenty-five years this lasted, but what is when the book came out there was a small group the Sisters decided they really wanted to start sharing something special. So they got together and they decided they would do this once a month. And the gal that I lived with on the south side was one of those first members, and so one of the things they had said was if you live with somebody you can invite that person to join the group. And so when I we got to live together then I was invited to join that group. So that would have been in '93. So I've been in the group since '93, and we and sometimes we do something different like this past Sunday we were talking, trying to figure out how long they've been in existence. And so we were at a house where they had a dog so we played with the dog, we talked about the history, we really never got to the book. But it was fun, it was really a great afternoon, so we we have a meal and we shared a book usually like from 1:30 to 4:00 or 4:30. Nine or ten times a year, we'll do that.

So then in 2000, I was asked to be in leadership for our community. And I was elected Congregational Minister which is old Reverend Mother, and I had a wonderful group of five of us there on my team. And we worked together to be leaders for the community for six years. That was a wonderful experience because I got to travel, we part of what our job was was to visit the Sisters. And so I got to visit the Sisters in Tohatchi, our Navajo reservation. I got to go to a couple meetings in Montana where the Crow and Cheyenne are. I am, met our Sister in Mississippi, met her a couple times because she was ill and went down a couple extra times. Hotter than Hades down there in the summertime, was really hot. But one interesting thing at the I think the Blessed Sacrament Sisters who had a mission closer to our mission in Tohatchi, New Mexico. And their Reverend Mother founded a mission in Mississippi where I went to visit our Sisters, our sister, and there was a plaque up there about that that community that started that in the admissions in America—sorry, African American mission. Then when I went to Montana, when I went and saw the place where we had taught was another plaque, that same Sister had her Sisters had been there. So our Sisters went to places where this I think was Mother Katharine Drexel, I'm not positive about that, but she started missions for African Americans and Indian Americans. And that was wonderful, but in 2000, 2001 I got to go to Italy because there was the International Franciscan conference was held every four years, and it was in Assisi and the International Union Superiors General was held every three years and it was in Rome. So every twelve years those things were the same time, one after the other.

So lucky for me, 2001 was one of those twelve years. So I got to go to Assisi for the one in, for Franciscans, and to Rome for the one with all the communities. And the meetings were held in five languages so you picked up your headphones and you dialed your language and when you got the papers at the end you had to make sure you have the right color because it was in the right language so I think it was pink, I'm not sure. You know so you had to have that paper and the interesting thing to me was the president of the Franciscan group would listen to the questions and answer them in five languages, whatever language they asked she could answer the question. I'm thinking, holy cow I don't know to answer to the first question, that the first one she could answer any of the languages, it was amazing. But she lived in Rome, much of her life, and in Rome you just know obviously these languages. She was European, I think she was German. Went to the one in Rome following that, I think we had a day or so in between and one of the Sisters here had a priest friend in Rome, and he drove us around for a day, and when you've driven around the car in Rome it's really scary because they go everywhere, in and out, in and out. But that meeting in Rome was again it was about nine hundred women religious from all over the world. The Franciscan one I think was ended at four hundred, but the one in Rome was nine hundred.

And we would be put in groups with people from all over the world so I was in the English speaking group, but some of them didn't speak English really well in the English speaking group, but that was when I first heard the word trafficking. Because they had a lot about trafficking, and they had a lot about the plight of the women especially the

women in Africa, and how they were treated. And it was like very eye-opening for me, and the trafficking thing just blew my mind, I'd never heard that before. And now today when you see how much it's happening and how much more well known it is, and we're really grateful for that and I know the Sisters have been really instrumental in trying to work with hotels to realize when we have Super Bowls and major league whatever's that they really need to be aware. And I think that that people are becoming more and more aware of that, but when I came back from Rome I remember sending out something to all the Sisters about this and just how important that was that we be aware.

Then in 2005 I got to go to Papua, New Guinea, to visit our Sisters and they were having a fiftieth anniversary of the diocese and so we were there. I took one of the Sisters with me who had been there before which was kinda nice because she knew the ropes of getting from here to there, which just takes a long time a long time to go across the ocean. But that was interesting because we have different ceremonies during the time. But one day it was Tuesday, was the day that the people from the diocese brought gifts to the bishop. And so it was raining. So the bishop's out in the field with his umbrella in his jeans, in his plaid shirt, plaid shirt, jeans—not any bishop I'd ever seen you know, and the people brought him cabbages and potatoes and pigs on ropes, and I think it might have been a cow, and some envelopes and he put the envelopes in a string bag around his neck. And it was just really interesting the way they would do this.

People would come from all over the diocese, some of them would walk for days to get there. One day we had a Mass in the cathedral, now the cathedral is a big, pretty big building with seats I could find in a bleachers kind of seats, just no backs.

And people were sitting all over the place, they were in the aisles they were sitting outside they were looking in the windows, they were crowded, they were everywhere. And these men came up the aisle in procession with big long lances, and so they take two steps up and they thrust their lance up and they take a step backwards, two steps up, took a long time to get to the front of the place. And I looked at them and I thought oh, they have on white pants. I looked again I thought, they have on white paint, which is pretty interesting, oh, okay. That was one day. Another day we had a Mass outside, the main day we had Mass outside and people came a couple hours before and sat on the ground. Those of us were not not Papua New Guineans had chairs, so a few chairs set up, and they sat on the ground. At community time it rained, they left, came back and sat down on the ground. The Mass must last a couple hours, because of all these ceremonies and that were important to them and when our Sisters had gone to Papua, New Guinea in 1960 they were told, you know, find out what the customs of people, find out what their beliefs are, and use some of those things. Don't take it all away from them and give them something new, but but adapt.

So at this liturgy, at one point this guy crawled up this great big pole and was shouting out in four different directions. Well that's what they used to do, they would call people together. So that was part of that liturgy. The people from the southern part of the

diocese came up with this big boat, a big long boat that had the gospel book in it. And that's how they brought that up, and they they carried it, they waved it back and forth like it was on, like it was on the sea. So it was those kinds of things that were really special. I have a picture of that and they're like were thousands of people, at this liturgy that would come all this distance.

One of my favorite pictures is of a man in all the attire or the feathers and the paint, with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, and I'm thinking, this is really strange. That was a wonderful experience, and when that was over the sister that I was with knew people in in Australia and so we went to their house on the ocean for a couple days and I got to hold a koala, and I got to pet a kangaroo. So that was pretty exciting.

Then in 2006 when that was when I was finished in leadership, the President here had said at one point that you want some pastoral presence. I thought, I could do that. So that's how I got here to Marian. And that's been interesting, to be able to work with people and work with them and then Franciscan things, and I love doing this orientation, just to talk to people when they first come.

MEL: Thank you, Sister. If you still have a little bit of time I would, I really was interested in the your whole story. But I was wondering if you could talk again about you were a math teacher, but you're talking a lot about your pastoral work in both churches and here at Marian. Would you like to talk more about your pastoral work?

SJM: Yeah. I was a math teacher because we needed a math teacher. I was a good math teacher, but I'm glad I'm not a math teacher today. So pastoral work to me is is working with people, and kind of finding where they are and taking them where they are. And it's really interesting for me when I go somewhere and someone comes up and says, remember me, you baptized my, you got me ready for baptism.

And there's a young guy I think he's principal of St. Roch I think it is, and I was getting him and his wife—I got him ready for marriage and I got him ready for baptism but we were getting ready for baptism the baby had already come, and I went to their house and he cooked dinner. And the baby spit up all over me, so that's my remembrance of him, not a baby now he's pretty well grown up. And other people I meet them one man I see fairly regularly at meeting this one I work with him and his wife. A week ago I had to go to the St. Mark's for, do a mission appeal for our community, and there were people that came up and said they knew me from a different place and one gal had been an RCIA, this parish leader for me when she was at Holy Rosary. And it was so good to see her so it's it's knowing something about people, that you can do in parish. Same thing can happen here. Yesterday we had the services to Joel, and to be able to to help put that together and give the people at Marian a chance to remember somebody that was special to them. That's the pastoral part that I like it's it's finding where people are, being able just to take time to listen to them.

MEL: With your pastoral work in the parish you described putting together these bilingual meetings. Do you mind describing that again?

SJM: Well, I had somebody who could who could translate which was needed because that was, I just felt that if they were going be in the parish they really need to be part of the parish. And so we needed to somehow find a way to get that to happen and you know, the the other people had been there all their life and built the parish, had worked really hard for it and all of a sudden they see these other people coming in, we don't have anything. They couldn't contribute a lot, they did things in a different way. One little thing is in Mexico, plumbing is really bad so you don't put toilet paper in the toilets, you put it in the waste basket. So they did that at St. Patrick's. Well the St. Patrick's people who cleaned thought that was a very bad, very unsanitary, very awful, very inconsiderate. That's what they were used to. So it was that kind of trying to navigate that whole system.

And in January '94, I came in '93, I think it was '94, I got called to Archbishop Daniels's office and he told me at that point in time that he thought they were going to close that we were considering closing three parishes and St. Patrick's was one of them. And we could, the man who or the priest who was a sacramental minister for me and priest moderator, he said that the two of us and the people from the other parishes could come present the cause of why that parish should be kept open. Father Pat was pretty passionate about that, he'd lived there and he'd worked there, and we'd present that one of our biggest arguments was we're just getting this Hispanic group started, and it's gonna grow, I'm—just going to grow. But the roof leaked, it was terrible you know, roof leaked, the the walls need to be tuck-pointed, it was not in the world's greatest shape. So the Archbishop finally, it came down to the priest, it was the Priests Council, and they agreed to let it stay open. The other two had to close but they agreed to let them stay open. And eventually the Archbishop had gotten a sum of money and he agreed to pay for the what he could they called the envelope, repair the envelope of the building, so the roof, the tuckpointing, that kind of thing and the parish had to take care of decorating it. So it must not have been 2004 because it was later than that because was just getting finished being decorated when I left and in 2000.

But that was a really big thing for him to offer that, because he believed that that like we did that this parish was here to stay and it was home at that point time it was St. Mary's was the Spanish parish but it was more non-Mexican, like Ecuador, Puerto Rico, — whereas when Father Tom came to work more with the Mexican people, so St. Patrick's is more Mexican. Neither was entirely Mexican or not Mexican, but that was kind of the emphasis.

But that point in time the other parishes that are doing so much Hispanic ministry now weren't really doing all that much. So St. Patrick's was like the place for feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December, December 12th, we're going—they were standing everywhere I mean they were packed in the aisles, they were everyplace. And there were enough roses in there for a whole city, hundreds of roses because everybody got a rose at the end. And the Mexican people would bring flowers for the Blessed Mother all the time, and never think to take them away they just bring them and leave them,

which meant somebody else had to take them away. That was another bone of contention, it's like they've taken it away.

So you know they brought some of their traditions like we would talk we would celebrate the Day of the Dead, November 2nd. And Las Posadas, the time before Christmas and the Novena day for the feast of Guadalupe so practically all December is either the Novena, before the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, or Las Posadas. By the time you get to Christmas they're kind of worn out, but they have been celebrating and they've been doing the religious thing was the whole month, so it's just a different way of looking at that. So we had I had to try to be able to see both ways of that and trying to help the English-speaking people. Sometimes we'd have bilingual Masses and or feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe I thought that we could have really done a better job of explaining things to the Anglo community but, at the time people in charge of Spanish wanted to do it in Spanish. So I think we lost a chance to to teach. I don't know how they're doing that now but I think now a lot of cases would I know beginning here this year we're gonna try to do more and more in Spanish. I think I read the other day that Wednesday Masses would be bilingual. And sing a bilingual hymn every Sunday, which is good because I think our our students need to know that when they go to other parishes. When I went to St. Mark's last weekend there were a lot of different nationalities there, I don't know what they all were but I could tell they were different. So I think the multicultural is just a really important.

MEL: Sister, I know that trafficking is very important and as a big part of your of your ministry in your life. Would you like to talk a little bit more about it? You described learning about it and that was a very poignant story of learning about it in Rome. And then you came home and worked with it as well.

SJM: Trying to get the Sisters to understand it, I haven't worked with it as much as some people have, but I've tried to promote it and to to keep it in people's minds. Sr. Norma's really done a little bit more working with it. But I know that the Sisters were very involved when the Super Bowl was here a couple years ago. We're very involved in taking packages to different hotels, I think she had got more volunteers before I got to volunteer. But that was really important because a lot of hotel managers had no idea. And I recently saw something on television about someone who had been found by pictures, and I know that there's a gal who works for [Nix] Associates and [Nix] Associates does coordinating for conferences for the annual Franciscan Conference, and it was held here in the city in June. And it's going to St. Louis next year, but that gal, can't think of her first name but she has been working on this and she's got the [Nix] work on this. [Nix] is a woman's organization, group and she's been working on that and she will study each hotel that they're thinking about having a conference in, so I know when they were gonna have the conference here she went and she studies the JP [JW] Marriott, other hotels and she goes around talks to people, talks to guests, talks to staff, trying to assure that they are aware and she won't schedule something in a hotel that isn't willing to work with that.

And so I think that they are making a big difference and I think the you know the Sisters made a big difference in the city and other cities where Super Bowl especially Super Bowls are. You know when you read stuff in the paper and it seems like there's been more and more lately, and now these little kids a little bitty kids and there's just, breaks your heart. And then you read about celebrities who have child porn, and want virgins, little kids with virgins— but this doesn't make any sense to me.

MEL: My last question, Sister. Would you, I would appreciate if you reflected on your prayer life. It can be at a different point in your life or more of an overview.

SJM: Um—I love outside, there's something about outside that's Franciscan, but there's something about being outside to me that mountains or walks or things could be really special. Office is special, praying office morning and night, hopefully most days—liturgy can be special. Just sitting and reflecting can be special. Church— I'd like to go in our Chapel and look at the the crosses, the San Damiano Cross, mainly because I've seen the real one. You know, it's just it's a relationship I think, it's kind of hard to describe. But it's something that's important.

MEL: Well thank you very much, Sister. Thank you so much for your time.