

July 27th, 2016 – Sister Rose Marie McCann speaking with Professor Mary Ellen Lennon at the Convent of the Sisters of St. Francis, in Oldenburg, Indiana.

Abbreviations

SRM: Sister Rose Marie McCann

MEL: Mary Ellen Lennon

MEL: This is Mary Ellen Lennon in Oldenburg Indiana at the convent of the Sisters of St. Francis. It is July 27th, 2016, and I am so pleased to be with Sister Rose Marie McCann. Thank you, Sister Rosemarie. Would you like to introduce yourself?

SRM: My name is Sister Rosemarie McCann, I am originally from Dover, Indiana and went to a two-room school St. John's which was the second church from the beginning of the diocese. I am very proud of our church and we just had not long ago our one hundred and seventy fifth anniversary.

MEL: Oh, Sister. Anything, would you like to talk about your beginnings or family?

SRM: Mary Ellen said I could just start at the beginning of my life. I always thought I had such a boring life but I when I sat down and thought about it and people asked me questions I found out it was anything but. Okay, I was born in town, in a house across from the rectory and the church. So of course as time went on of course, we all we had to do is walk across the street to go to school in the church which was really nice and spoiled us I think. But I was always amazed by the Sisters, they were so special and my mom used to talk about them, and she said that she always wanted to be a Sister but then when she met my dad that was kind of forgotten. But she always hoped that one of her children would be a Sister. So, I was really ingrained in them, and so I think even before the second grade I think I made up my mind I was gonna be a Sister too. And I was the third of nine children and so I got a lot of training right in my own home. So I wanted to be a teacher which was our primary goal at that time, and so I just went along with my mom and helped her until I was going to high school.

Well the high school that everybody else is going to was in Guildford, Indiana, public school. And it was a very very small school, all the way from kindergarten to senior high school. And I never gave that a thought because I had made up my mind I was going to Oldenburg Academy. Well, when it got near the time a lot of things interfered, especially my dad became ill and he was our only income and so forth, so Mom told me one day in the summertime that she couldn't we just could not get enough money together for tuition. And well I was very very upset but I didn't cry in front of Mom because it would have just killed her. So, I had to go to Guildford and it ended up that I had to go to Guildford for my freshman and sophomore year. And but by the time my sophomore year was over and my mother told me on my birthday that she and Daddy talked about

it, and they talked to the Sisters again and found that the Sisters said that they would be more than willing to take her from my junior year at one hundred dollars at just one hundred dollars that year if I stayed on the weekends and cleaned. And then I also helped Sister Maria in the dining room and we collected dishes, you know after meals and put food on their tables and all that kind of things. So I was amazed and I'm more amazed now that they would let me come for one hundred a year. But but they knew that I wanted to enter too, so they were helping me along the way.

So for those two years of high school I attended Immaculate Conception Academy here at Oldenburg, and graduated here and everybody was so proud of me. My pastor came for graduation and of course my mom and dad and it was really exciting. And we had a prom, and the only person I would want to be my escort was in the Air Force and he couldn't get home. So we had known them from the time we were in first grade and so I said I didn't have anybody to bring me so I couldn't go. Well one of the other girls said, oh I know somebody I'll tell my get my brother to come and be your escort. So she did and we had a glorious time. But I knew that was the last time I would probably go to anything like that. Well it turned out to be better as the years went on it became better than I thought it would ever be. So we entered on the year of the hundredth anniversary of the convent and of course there was big celebrations and so forth, and the Academy girls had a, seniors, had to take part in a big play, and that was graces and I had glorious time. And so, anyhow then my postulant year started and I was the first one that came at nine o'clock in the morning because I had a retarded, handicapped brother. He's not retarded, but he's handicapped and he had to have a wisdom tooth pulled and no dentists would do it. They finally found one in Cincinnati, an old man and he said he would do it but they had to sign papers that if he would pass away during the surgery that they would not be liable. Well they that and Mom prayed like crazy, well they he was in there but it came out fine. But so they had to bring me at nine o'clock in the morning because surgery was set for the day that I entered. So they let me out and they couldn't even stay long enough for me to get my postulant veil because they had to be in Cincinnati at twelve o'clock, ready to go.

So I was there by myself the only—. And besides that that Reverend Mother was not home, and so her Assistant Mother and with the one who had to put on my veil. And she spoiled me ever after because she considered me her postulant. If I'm getting too detailed let me know.

MEL: Oh no, the details are wonderful, Sister. So you were this young woman who came and you were greeted by the Assistant Mother and she gave you your veil.

SRM: So ever after that whenever we were on our way to Chapel for organ practice when I passed the room she would motion me in and give me a Hershey bar. Well the girls all caught on to that so they, I found out, I only got one square out of it because I had to give them. But so I was special and that was really neat to me, nobody else knew it but us. And Sister Maria who I knew from the Academy she was my special, what would you call it that brought me into the convent?

MEL: Mentor?

SRM: Yeah. And she was in charge of the academy kitchen, etc., and to make worse for the other girls on Saturdays we always could count on apple pie and Sister Maria after well at suppertime I'd always find a piece of apple pie under my, under my plate or in the drawer.

MEL: The drawer where?

SRM: So that was you know, they were mad at me and said you have to share that. But I didn't because I was a lady and I ate my food at the table. Then as time went on I was after that made, we were postulants and then we became first-year novices and that's when we had a big ceremony and it was always on all of them were on August twelfth. And the day before the Feast of St. Clare. And that's when we got our white veil and what we called a gimp and it was the gimp was attached to another part that stayed underneath your veil, and it went under your chin. And the part under your chin that that was down that hung down was starched to the breaking point. And we always held our breath because it used to hurt under, we had to hook that on to our chin and it always hurts so much if you didn't and she Sister Estelle who was my Novice Mistress told us, turned our finger and then put it under there and do that a couple of times until it softened up and then but to be careful because it could break you know before it got damp. And that happened to me my first year teaching and split all the way down the front on Sunday morning.

Anyhow, back to that, on that day that we became first-year novices and got our white veil, we entered chapel with the knowledge that we were leaving the world and we were going in to another part of our life where we were going to be just, give our whole selves to God. And that meant no marriage, no money for ourselves, and since we were giving ourselves to God we would be giving up all men, and we would never be a mother. Except I had over a million of them when I was finished teaching. But anyhow, they made we had to, we wore bridal gowns and veils and we carried the book explaining our community and so forth as what we were going into. Well, our class was so big there were twenty-four of us, and there had not been a class that big for I don't know maybe ten, twelve years. So that we couldn't wear the bridal gowns that they had, but those bridal gowns before us were so old by time. Then Sister, in the sewing department realized that she had to start from scratch. Oh we were excited, and as smart as she was but as old as she was we were so glad to find that she went to a fabric shop and asked for the patterns of the latest fashion. They were very very modest, and but they were gorgeous and she made lace juliet caps, for us with the long veil on it. So we really look modern, and one of our last, oh what should I say, pushes in fashion that's for sure, but we really were happy. So all twenty-four of us we walked from the building where we had been and down the steps along steps in a long sidewalk to the chapel. And luckily it didn't rain and it was a gorgeous day, so we were able to go outside and we walked to the front of chapel and waited there a little bit. And then we went in to give ourselves to God. I'll just tell you one thing about the ceremony. Because we were giving ourselves to the to God and leaving the world, when it was at the beginning of Mass after a certain

part with the Archbishop, we marched up to the steps and luckily we had three big marble steps up to the altar because there were twenty-four of us, and when we got up there we had to kneel on the step and prostrate, all the way to the floor. And when everybody was in place they covered us with big sheets. And we've had left the world.

Because I was the first one that entered I was the first one to do everything. Every time we went someplace of course we marched two and two and so forth and all that, and I always had to be first. And the kids nicknamed me father of the class. That meant that I had to be the first one to go up to the Archbishop and make my vows for the first time. I had memorized that until I was saying it in my sleep, every time I was on my feet I was saying it continuously so I wouldn't forget it. So when I felt them take the sheet away, I knew it was my turn and I froze. And I thought huh, and the Archbishop looked at me and smiled so sweetly to let me know he was ready. So Sr. Mell was the mother of the class, she was next to me and she nudged me with her elbow. And so I realized I had to go regardless. So I went up and knelt without any drama or anything and knelt in front of the Archbishop and couldn't think, I couldn't remember the vow I couldn't, and I just looked at him like, oh please, I don't know my. And he just grinned and he had a copy in his hand and, and I so I could read it. I was so embarrassed but they said that happens frequently, but I didn't know that.

So then he helped me up and left the sanctuary. And from the sanctuary we went to a room in the main building where we were to change clothes. And that's when we change to our postulant dress which was solid black and lightweight thank God. And a little cape to go over it, and a short cape to our elbows and and a lace veil, black veil. So after we were all dressed and all ready to go we marched back into chapel and went through the rest of the Mass and after Mass we went to the novitiate which was a good ways to walk, and so we I think I don't remember exactly after all I am eighty-two years old I don't expect that I hope to remember everything right away. But we ate lunch together, we must have because after lunch we had to wash the dishes at the end of the row that we sat in. There was a metal dishpan there so everybody somebody, they took turns of course, had to wash the dishes at their table.

After that we went over to the novitiate again and what would you believe we had to do next? We had to take our turn for Sister Estelle to cut off our hair. Now my hair it's only not quite to my shoulder, I had the pageboy I think. That was what you call it. And so she didn't have to cut as much off of mine and it, I knew I had to but I thought oh this is good then it won't be so hot under my big veil when I had it put it on. So that's what I did but some of the others cried and sniffled and everything else because they were getting all their beautiful hair cut off. And one girl that came in the afternoon, but I'll tell you about that in a minute. Anyhow she had natural curly hair and it wasn't long but she wore a big wave right in front of her head. And it was gorgeous and it made her gorgeous. She was beautiful, she was built like a model and looked like a model. Well the rest of them some of them didn't mind or acted like they didn't mind but she had to cut quite a bit off. And we ended up with a what I would call maybe a low hop, but that was bad because we found out the hard way, because then the top of your head stuck up straight. But there was only about two inches up there, and we found out that when

we got our new veil it was stiff on top and that pressed down on that short hair. Well, we all had sore heads until our hair grew out enough to that it would start lying down, and it wasn't long after that it was time to cut it again, back then.

But I started to tell you about Janet, and Janet came the day we entered in the afternoon at one o'clock. And to keep my mind off of home, Sister Estelle still had me answer the doorbell when they all came, they came close together relatively. And welcomed them in. And that way they looked at me and saw what they were going to dress like in a few minutes and say goodbye to their parents. But she was she was at the door, and she was wearing a white suit that was form-fitting and she had on a red blouse under it. And that black, pulled black hair with that big wave. At that moment I hated every gut in her body. I was so jealous I couldn't believe it. And she saw that look in my eyes and afterwards she told me she recognized that I hated her, so she hated me back and she wouldn't have anything to do with me. And I didn't want to be near her or anything. Later I thought about that, it was really when I think of it now all those things are funny but they weren't funny then, you know. Then of course that night when I said my night prayers I thought of that and I knew I was being bad but I couldn't stop hating her. So I said, Lord I'll work on it tomorrow and I fell into bed because I was exhausted, we all were.

Well the next morning when I woke up I couldn't tell where I was, and but I soon found out. And I thought, oh I'm so homesick. I wanted to go back home. And I thought well, I'll tell Sister Estelle after I finished my job that I was going to go home. So we all had jobs, they were smart, they kept us so busy we couldn't think. Nothing hard I mean, you know, but it's women things. We had to clean, and my job was to work with Sister Estelle in her office and I had to cut paper for her, dress the little infant Jesus out in the hall every time the seasons of the church changed. Well, they had put weight on her, on him for our big celebration, but then I had to change it I think to green to be back into the normal time of the year. So I did that and I dusted and sifted through her trash can and all those things and then it was time to go to lunch and we did that. And then, but it was funny at lunch. Maybe I shouldn't tell secrets but we had a Sister there who I think at the time was twenty-four, she had been a secretary after she graduated, for a lawyer and her until she was twenty-four. She also played the piano for her brother's band and if you ever heard a country band you'd know all the ones we heard when we went to dances. Well, when we stood up to pray after after lunch when we were finished we all turned Sister Estelle and waiting for her to leave, once we went she left then we left with her but we all had to stack our dishes first for the people who had to wash the dishes. And somebody that sat next to Helen said Sr. Estelle, Helen's crying. And so she went over to find out what was the matter and she cried and she cried on her shoulder. And inside we were thinking that we were feeling like that, so it wasn't that she was homesick. We wore half-slips under our postulant dress and when she went to put it on she noticed that she had lost some weight. No, no that was the other way around she had gained a little weight, and when she put it on at home she realized it and couldn't button it so she used a big diaper pin to hold it shut and when she stood up the pin and gave out her slip slipped down on the floor and she was petrified, she didn't know what to do. So Sister Estelle laughed and when she laughed Helen kind of stopped crying

and she just told her to step out of it and give it to Sister Estelle. So she did, so we marched back over to the postulancy or novitiate with her slip over Sister Estelle's arm. Helen would kill me if she knew, but she died and she's in heaven so she's laughing too.

Well that year was spent as our first year postulancy and we took classes because we were going to be teachers the next year. So we we took classes of learning how to teach, how to plan our plan our classes and all that kind of things so we know what to do. That we could teach the kids. Well, I felt inside like I was going to have primary grades and if I wasn't I was going to tell him I can't teach then, I don't want to teach big kids. I'd promptly tell them to go home or something because I don't have patience with big kids who act up. So but I didn't think any more about that, and so when the year was over

MEL: Sister would you mind talking more—you took classes with the other, the other postulants, and you took classes here and the Sisters of Oldenburg taught you in those classes. Did you, you took classes to become a teacher. Did you take religion classes and history classes and all sorts of things? And then you also had jobs.

SRM: Yeah. So we were all going to have a teaching job and it depended on who you were and what you passed on to the teacher of what you could do and what you preferred. And the older ones of course, I was only eighteen at the time, the same age I was when I graduated from high school because I graduated in '51 on May 25th and I entered the convent I was still eighteen, and I was still eighteen so we weren't told where we were going to go and I don't remember exactly how we got our appointment because over the years we were given our appointments different ways and I don't remember how I got the first one but different we got them in different ways. Anyhow as time, and I imagine Sister Estelle gave it to us, I would think. She was letting us go out we were her children, you know. And we were going to, I think we must have gotten ours from her. Before time we had to pack all our clothes, which only involved you know maybe five pair of panties and what do you call those sleeveless—

MEL: Camisole?

SRM: No, sleeveless t-shirts. We wore t-shirts under our habit, and panties and bras. And some, couple pairs of stockings, black stockings a couple of pairs, two pair I think of black shoes, and our black habit for the first time and we had to make our own black habit. Now when I went to high school my first two years I took sewing and I took homemaking which is cooking. Well I learned two things there, I learned to make a pillowcase which I had already done so many times at home it wasn't funny. And for cooking we learned to make creamed, dried beef on toast and that was it that was public school. But some of those kids didn't even know how to boil water, the ones in the city, you know. So I'd come home with it and just throw it down and Mom would say, maybe she ought to sit in your chair and you teach them a few things. Because Mom taught me all those things like embroidery and and knitting and stuff like that. But anyhow, I knew how to sew, so Sister didn't pay too much attention to me because she knew how, well the skirt on that black habit was big enough for three people. I'm not

serious, I am serious. And we had to make it into great big pleats and they were big the pleats were about three inches and we had to make those all around that, and until it fit me. Then of course you had to pin them down to make sure they didn't go anywhere, and then put the band on and of course it opened in the front. And so I just took for granted that the top part is a top blouse part that just gonna be sewed on it so I told, asked Sr. Estelle can I go ahead and sew mine? And she said, you know how, and I said, yes. And the girl she was helping her eyeballs almost flew out of her head because none of them had, the city girls had learned us sew one stitch. Well I did that and it had to be done by hand, the pleats, because if you gain weight you had to let a pleat out and then do it over you know and what. But anyhow and then I had to sew the snaps on this blouse part and we had long sleeves and I pinned the sleeves in and I called Sister Estelle, and I said yes, well that I could use the sewing machine on, you know. And so I did and before the afternoon was finished I had mine all finished and wondered what to do next and like so I did the best thing, I watched the others and almost died laughing at the city girls. And Janet was a city girl.

Well before we went out on mission I got the idea that I could not go out on mission to teach little kids if I still hated someone. So the next day after one of our classes, anybody who wanted to talk to Sister Estelle had to line up outside her door. Well, I got finished with my stuff first so I went out there and stood there outside her door until she came and at one point I just turned for she hadn't come yet and it was a line of twelve people behind me. I thought, thank God I'm first, I don't want to stand there. Well, Sister Estelle came in then and I went in and she says, what can I help you with child? That's the kind of things that even though we by this time I was nineteen that made us I never felt anything except the little child when she would say things to me, and that's why I realized that we really didn't grow up until we got out on mission in a couple of years, you know and it's all new stuff and whatnot. And you didn't feel like an adult because we were being treated like children because we were going to have to teach and go out in the world, you know. And they also had to keep us under their thumb. Can you take that off?

So, I said I just have one thing and I told her about Janet and she stayed real serious but I could see by her lips and her throat I think it was that she was gonna choke but she couldn't laugh. but she stayed real serious and I told her why I did it, and what happened why I looked at her and saw, I was never like that, you know. and I was at a halfway decent size and weight at that time but it didn't stay that way. I go up and down, sometimes they were too busy to eat you know. So she said alright, so she said, I'm gonna give you a little penance so you don't have to go to confession and you don't have to tell that. She said, first of all it's not a sin for you because it was everything so new to you and you really didn't want to do it and you didn't plan it and so forth. So she said, but what I want you to do is some time during today or the next day or if you can stay awake long enough, say a rosary for Janet and pray that she has a wonderful—time in her new job that she loves it.

MEL The mission?

SRM: And then she stopped, and she said, now you may go. And she gave me a blessing and I left and I floated six inches off the floor all the way back to my desk. Later on, oh and one other thing she said, I had to do. We kept sacred silence except in class and when we were talking to Sister Estelle and so forth. Unless but if you were outside you weren't supposed to stand around and talk you know and we definitely were not allowed to talk to the professed Sisters. So she said, the other thing I want you to do is whenever you meet Janet, outside, over in your work or over here in the novitiate, she said any time you meet her and your eyes meet you should smile, real big smile. And I said oh, that's the only hard thing it's gonna be, she said. But the next time you come back to me I want to hear you say you did that. She said, now you may go, but I was so happy that I didn't have that heaviness in my heart at that time because I've got that taken away. Later on, I think it was the second time that same day that I came across Janet and I smiled real big, to her and she did the same thing. Then she said, after the second time, then that evening up in the bedroom where we weren't supposed to talk I met her in the washroom and she said, she told us the same thing didn't she? And I look like I had her like I didn't know what she was talking about but I did, and I said, did you tell her you hated me too? She said, yes she said I saw it in your eyes when I came. And I said but you were so beautiful and she said but you are too. And she said she said isn't that a joke. Well we became very what they called BFs, best friends. And in our spiritual classes we were warned about that. So that we would treat everyone alike and so that we would not have a tendency toward

MEL: Toward—oh, do you want me to shut it off, Sister? Sure.

Part II

MEL: this is part two with Sister Rose Marie McCann.

SRM: What I was trying to think of, we found out later that one of the things that they taught us, and some women do that, in order to keep it, we, us from becoming lesbians. And it's a good thing that they taught us that because at the time I couldn't believe it, that could happen. But later on in our lives, a couple people in our class had become lesbians and then they asked to be released of their vows and so forth. Well and I felt sorry for them, but it sure hadn't done them any harm, what they learned, you know. So, they learned a lot of good spiritual things during that time.

MEL: So the Sisters were afraid that that two Sisters being too much best friends, so there, did they warn you and Janet that you were too—

SRM: Yeah, well we used to, Janet wanted to show me one day and we got caught that way. Janet wanted me to see the things that the gifts that she received at investiture. She said, I got some gorgeous stuff, oh like statues and anything spiritual, you know, that we could put in our rooms and teach from and things like that that are families gave us. And so I said okay, she said, I'm going down through my trunk after class, you come

down, okay. So when I went down and she was down and had opened her trunk and had laid out all her pretty things, and we were down there laughing and talking and getting to know each other. And and I learned about her family and she learned about my family, and she almost slipped my said we were nine and lived on a farm. She said, I haven't even seen a farm. But anyhow, from then on we did become best friends but we did not we were not lesbians. But would you believe in the middle of our fun down there who walks in Sister Estelle our Novice Mistress and she said, Sisters, I think we better go back to your classroom. Oh, and we both I know we did, I could feel it. And she turned fire red, and banished to tears, you know. So we went back to our rooms and so forth. And Sister Estelle never said anything to us until we had the next time that we went into see her, you know. And that's when I remember I told her Sr. Estelle, Janet and I are not lesbians, were just good friends and we learned all about each other and stuff. I don't wanna marry her, and she had told the same thing. So she never bothered us after that and she even put us together to work sometimes when we had to. Because there were some things that Janet couldn't do and there was some things I didn't know how to do, so. But anyhow, where are we?

MEL: Sister, may I—

SRM: Then we're getting our mission name. And the way they did it, when I think that now that is awful. I think Sister Estelle gave us all our mission on a piece of paper with the name of the Superior that we should find—that day. And this is right after lunch, and I looked at mine and it said Holy Trinity, Indianapolis. And my Superior was Sister Mary Carl. And I just shook all over. And I was standing there in front of Sister Estelle because she had just given it to me, and she said, looks to me like she's parked right out by the the driveway going back to the milk room. I just looked at her, and I wanted to give her a hug so badly but and she didn't make a move on purpose you know, and so forth. But when we got home she almost strangled us. But anyhow I went out the front door and I wanted to cry so badly that I was stiff as a board, and I was holding my breath and went down the steps and I could see Sister Mary Carl standing by this big black car. Because, the Sisters, there were fourteen of us that year, and she had as many as she could drive in that car but we couldn't drive at that time so one of the men, I forget who it was, took us. She probably had somebody from Indianapolis and it would be a parish car that the priest had or something like that. But when I got down there there was one place left in the car and the rest of it was filled up nuns. With grins as big as their face, one ear to the other. Because I was ready to break into tears, and they said, "Hi Rose". And that was almost too much and I began to cry. So then they said, "it's going to be fun. Come on, when we get home we'll have a lot of fun." So then I stopped crying I'm so glad we didn't have to pass my home, because I lived at Dover which was the opposite way to go to Indianapolis.

So they laughed and cut up, and was talking about about the last few days when we had all done, it all had been celebration time you know for everybody because when we were invested the first people that made first vows made theirs, and the people who made final vows after seven years as for five years, and some of them asked for two extra years before they made their final vows. So all these people made their vows that

day, so it was a big day. I don't even remember but what day of the week it was when I went out on a mission. I don't remember getting there, I made that run to Indianapolis many times later so I thought this I could do it in my sleep. But all I can remember is Sarah and I, she was my classmate and she was in another car which I didn't know she was coming. I was so glad to see her. We were in the same class, and she was had come to Holy Trinity also. Plus, two girls who had, well they were Sisters by that time, they were had just made, were ready to make final vows. They were going to make final vows about the same time we made first vows. And they were coming, so that was good we knew them from a distance. But anyhow, the first thing I can remember though is that following Sunday. I don't remember what how, when I got there during the week but anyhow. And we all had a dress up in our Sunday habits. We had two, one for Sundays and one for work. And we had on clean veils with the gimp. Well the gimp was alright that day because I didn't even notice it. I just noticed and worried about everything around me because we had to go to church. So Sister Mary Carl, said Sister Celina, well so there we go fourteen others two by two, all the way from the convent across the parking lot and playground, to the side door of the church.

Now I'll never know why because I forgot to ask it since then, it's already been sixty-five years—. Anyhow now when we got to the door at church, which was a very big church because it was a very big parish and that's why there were fourteen Sisters. Anyhow I, we marched in and thank God, Sister had told us. She came up to the door, and opened the door and she said, march all the way across. I almost died, we had walk all the way across instead of the pews right here. We had to walk all the way across and go in the pews over there. I don't remember that Mass at all but we came out the same way and the whole parish waited until the good Sisters that church. But that night we had prayer service and prayer service was at seven o'clock I think. Yeah, and on Sunday and Thursday nights. Well, I almost died when that last song we sang was good night sweet Jesus. I thought I'd die because we learned that in grade school. And I couldn't finish it, I move my lips but I couldn't stop laughing. But to them it was the song, they sang it for everything they could decide to sing it for. But I don't wanna make fun of it. Then we went home and, when we went home we watched TV. Well, the TV was monitored totally by Sister Mary Carl. She turned it on and put it on the station that they always watched, and sometimes when she couldn't remember during the week she'd have to ask the next Sister in charge. And she'd remember and tell her. I don't remember what what it was, but anyhow she turned it on and it was all grainy, and she said I don't know anything about this TV. So the went next person in charge, went up and tried to fix it.

So the next person was me, because I was the youngest, actually, but I was oldest. So as she said, Sister Rose Marie, it was yeah, she said Sister Rose Marie, see if you can do anything about it. And we can have one at home, they got one the year after I left. And so I went up to it, and just as I was reaching from one of the what do you call them, knobs, to see if I could adjust it, since I got close enough to do that it cleared up to a the clearest and the most beautiful picture you ever saw. And everybody went, oh, good. And I turned to go back to my chair, and it went...again. So they decided right that moment that every time we watch TV I had to stand by it. Now the TV was up on a little stone thing in the corner, there was a little shelf light that went all the way to the floor,

make it harder heavy enough that would hold the TV which was a pretty good size for that time. And so I had to go up there and try it again, make sure I got it straightened out. So, Sister said, well Sister Rose Marie I'm afraid you're gonna have to sit by it all the time. Instead of asking for somebody to come and fix it for that whole year, I had to sit next to it and try to watch it when it got real funny like that or something. Then they'd laugh and carry on I had [unintelligible]. Well, that's one of those little things that happened to new novices. But another thing it might come in sometime when I'm talking, in the rectory there were two newly ordained priests, and we were cautioned not to speak to them. We weren't supposed to speak to them, even if we met them out in the schoolyard or anywhere. I don't know where they worked besides being assistant pastors. But they had big jobs, you know, and so forth. Well, that's Sunday, to make us feel at home I think, and they knew that I worked in the kitchen a lot and stuff like that because that's where they put me because they came from a big family. Well anyhow Sister Estelle said, we're going to have a picnic tonight, and they said, outdoors? And she said, yes, we'll have one outdoors. And oh, we were so excited, because that was a rare thing. And she said, and but you don't have to do anything, because Sister Rose Marie and Sr. Vera are going to show us what cooks, what good cooks we are. Immediately Vera's head went down, and I laughed. I said, are we making what we want to make or are you gonna tell me what to make? And she said, no, regular picnic things, you did that at home. And I said yes, of course, and so forth. And when they had did the wheat, and when they baled that and these men from the neighboring farms all came over and helped. And then there was always at least five of them and then my big brother, my dad. So we had a big table set up in the yard, and I had helped Mom cook for them, you know. And I made them pie that day, but that's another story. In August, so anyhow, I said, okay we can make whatever we want, and she said yes. Well, I went inside, the rest of them went to do their thing and I said, maybe we better start on a couple of things, you know. So I said let's go in and make a list so we have to know what were' doing.

MEL: We'll pause it.