

Sister Valeria Belanger, SSND - 70 Year Jubilee!



*"I was a wandering soul
for a while."*

Sister Valeria Belanger, SSND, Looks Back on 70 years

As told to Sister Theresa Lamy, who shares much history with her, including their first religious community! Sister Valeria now lives in assisted living at The Watermark.

I spent summers in Nova Scotia, at my grandparents' house. My mother was born there. I have many good memories of those times.

My dad stayed back in Connecticut to work.

I went to high school at the Academy of the Holy Family, which was run by the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, in Baltic, Connecticut. I was 14 years old when I became a postulant there. It was 1950. Times were different then.

I taught at the Academy, and got my BA at Albertus Magnus and my MA at Fordham. We were supposed to get educated but not to change our views on religious life.

I was a wandering soul for a while.

I transferred to the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1977, and made final profession there in 1979. It was where I was supposed to be.

I remember climbing a hill. It was hot. I ran into Mother Georgianne. She said, "Hurry up and pack. You're going to Rome with this year's Jubilarians." And did I do it? I sure did!

I didn't have to repeat the Novitiate or start over. Mother Georgianne considered me to have been a religious for the same amount of time as I would have been if I had entered the SSNDs originally.

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Sister Valeria Belanger, SSND -Cont'd

I served at two SSND schools in New York before moving to St. Savior High School in Brooklyn, as principal. It was a difficult beginning, with the former principal and pastor both dying during my first week there. Neither had supported hiring me. I told the people they had to trust me, because God had put me there, and I would do my best. I ended up serving as principal for 19 years, until 2015 when I retired.

We won awards, including an outstanding high school award from U.S. News and World Report. They all confirmed what I knew from my first day there: That St. Savior is a very special place to be, a place where each girl is enabled to reach her full potential. I was grateful to serve there.

(Remembering) Sister Valeria's Retirement Party!



After 19 years at Saint Saviour and over 50 years as an educator, Sister Valeria Belanger, SSND will retire. When Sister came to SSHS in 1995, she helped turn our school from great to *Amazing*.