

# Catholic Faith Corner

Understanding, Teaching, and Living the Faith

Sea of Galilee at Sunrise



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## What's a Sister or Nun Today?

by KATHLEEN GLAVICH, SND on [AUGUST 9, 2017](#)  
in [BLOGS](#)



*Sister Mary Kelley Rush*

Yesterday about four hundred people gathered in our provincial house chapel to witness the final, perpetual vows of Sister Mary Kelley Rush. It was a glorious (and long) celebration of Mass. Today when religious Sisters are few and far between some people, even Catholics, don't know one. Neither do they know about Sisters. Several times I've heard the comment, "When the church allows women to be priests, you sisters will be able to be priests." Wrong! A consecrated religious woman and an ordained priest are two different species. (I have no desire to be a priest.) A Sister is called by God to offer her whole life to him. She follows Jesus and imitates him usually

by making the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. She belongs to a particular congregation founded for a certain purpose and marked by a charism, that is, a special gift for the benefit of the whole Church. Congregations can be devoted to social action, promoting life, giving retreats, missionary work, or publishing. Others focus on the traditional ministries of teaching and nursing. We Sisters of Notre Dame,



**Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND**

I'm a Sister of Notre Dame, of Chardon, Ohio, the author of seventy-plus books on religious education and spirituality, including a novel, *The Fisherman's Wife: The Gospel According to St. Peter's Spouse*. I enjoy giving talks and am a pastoral associate at St. Dominic Church.

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who trace our roots back to the French revolution when the Church was being snuffed out, were founded to catechize, especially poor children.

The life of a Sister is rather unique, because she belongs to a large family of like-minded women, who support one another financially, emotionally, and spiritually. Usually a Sister lives in a community of two or more, although she may live alone for the sake of her ministry or health. In the latter case, she still is in contact with her Sisters by belonging to a group of them who pray and celebrate feasts together regularly.

A Sister prays a lot– for the world, her family and friends, and the Church. As a Sister of Notre Dame, every day I go to Mass; pray the Rosary; meditate; pray Morning, Midday, Evening, and Night Prayer from the Prayer of Christians; make an examination of conscience, and read from a spiritual book.

Mary, the Mother of God, is the patroness of our congregation, and inside the silver band of our “wedding” ring are the words “All for Jesus through Mary” engraved in French.

An advantage of working for the Church and the world as a member of a congregation is that you have much more power. Synergy is at work (when 2 + 2 is greater than 5). For one thing, we SNDs have taken corporate stands for pure, accessible water and against human trafficking.

We Sisters are sometimes referred to as nuns. Strictly speaking, we are not. Nuns are consecrated women who live in a cloister apart from “the world.” Sisters, on the other hand, are activity engaged with the outside world. In our case, we strive to proclaim to others God’s goodness and provident care.

Sisters wear something distinctive to indicate they are a member of their community. SNDs all over the world wear the same crucifix. As for the habit, there are good reasons to wear it or not. We are free to decide what we will do.

Before a Sister makes final vows, she goes through a formation process that is much longer than the typical engagement period of a married couple. After entering the convent, she may be a candidate and spend time discerning her vocation. She may become a postulant (someone who “asks” to join). Then usually two years as a novice follows, culminating in the profession of temporary vows. The period living under temporary vows lasts at least five years. Then the Sister makes perpetual vows.



### About Sister Kathleen Glavich, SND

Jesus ordered us to make disciples of all nations and teach them. Mary Kathleen, a Sister of Notre Dame from Chardon, Ohio, responds to this call through writing, speaking, giving retreats, and teaching. Her motto, adopted from Eddie Doherty’s gravesite, is “All my words for the Word!”

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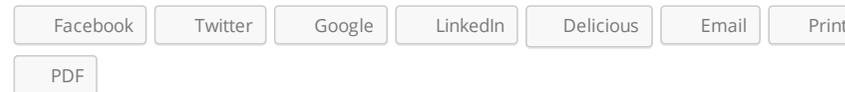
The male counterpart of a Sister is a Brother. He too makes vows and belongs to a congregation but is not an ordained priest. Some communities comprise both priests and brothers.

Sisters are not saints, but saints in the making. We have our faults and fight temptations like anyone else. We try to be true to the vocation God has called us to, aware that it is not a better lifestyle than others, but different. All of us children of God are on our journey back to him and depend on grace to see us safely home. We are just in separate lanes.



What Sister has had a positive impact on your life?

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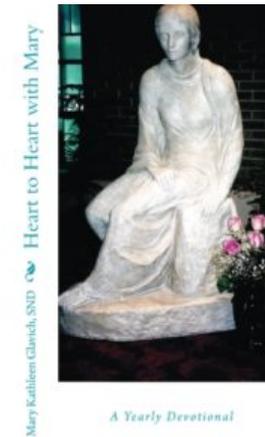
**Sister Anne Glaser** August 9, 2017 at 9:22 am



Thanks, Kathleen, for this beautiful piece. Perhaps it may get young women considering . . .

REPLY

**Manny** August 9, 2017 at 10:39 am



### Newest Book

In "Heart to Heart with Mary: A Yearly Devotional" Our Blessed Mother speaks to us every day of the year and a suggestion is provided for a response. It is similar to the popular book "Jesus Calling" and can be found on Amazon or purchased from me.

### Featured Book

Totally Catholic! A Catechism for Kids and Their Parents and Teachers

Do you wish you had a simple, child-friendly summary of what Catholics believe? This book took first place in the Association of Catholic Publishers awards 2014 in the category of Children's Books. It can be purchased from Pauline Books and Media or from me. (\$14.95)

### A Heavenly Book

Do you believe in angels? Most people do. The Catholic Companion to Angels offers heavenly facts about these majestic creatures, confirming that you can turn to them for help. Uniquely, The Angels comes with three covers (statue, stained-glass, or painting). Choose the one you like best.

God bless you sisters and nuns. I don't recall any particular sister who had a direct influence on my life, but they have been around me throughout. The ones that gave me catachesis as a boy, the ones that help out our parish, and the ones that just pray for me. You reminded me of one of my favorite songs, "Sister Clarissa" by Michael Smith. Have you heard it? You can listen on youtube, here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNibly\\_qCSE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNibly_qCSE).

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** August 9, 2017 at 10:55 am



Thanks, Manny, for posting the "Sister Clarissa" song. I had never heard it before. Lovely, poignant lyrics. My favorite line is that "she's eleven feet tall!"

REPLY

**Manny** August 10, 2017 at 9:50 pm



My seven year old son loves the line about giving a star on the forehead for spelling Connecticut right. 😊 I just adore the entire song, but the chorus to me is special.

REPLY

**Sandra Prebil** August 9, 2017 at 8:10 pm



What you didn't say is that the nuns in America, helped build it, mold it, create it, guide it...all in the name of God. I am saddened that so many young Catholic children will never know the magic and the power of the "nuns" who were so much a part of who we are today. And so much a part of our success and our creation. God Bless so many that linger always in my life.

REPLY

**Kathleen Glavich, SND** August 10, 2017 at 9:04 am



An excellent point, Sandy. I just learned that during the Civil War many Sisters were nurses (for both sides).

REPLY

Available from ACTA Publications and me.  
(\$10.00)

### My First Novel!

The Fisherman's Wife is the story of St. Peter's spouse, the long-suffering but delightful woman who puts up with Peter and his obsession with the itinerant preacher named Jesus. Through her we meet Peter, Jesus, and other biblical characters. In Capernaum she witnesses Jesus' healings and hears his words. The book is based on the Gospels, legends, and what is known about first-century Jewish women. The rest is sheer imagination. Order directly from me FOR AN AUTOGRAPHED COPY at [kglavich@ndec.org](mailto:kglavich@ndec.org).

### A Bit of Humor

A Slow Student During indoor recess, the third and fourth graders were playing school. Taking part in the game, the teacher, Sister Janet, sat at a child's desk. Adam, who was playing the teacher, came up to her and asked, "And just how many years have you been kept back?" (from "Why Is Jesus in the Microwave?")

### Of Interest

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## About the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio

The Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, belong to an international congregation of more than two thousand apostolic women religious. We are one in mind and one in heart for the transformation of the world in Christ.



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