



A Woman of Providence...

...believes all things are possible.

A persistent call and the draw of many and varied works drew this SP to religious life

If there is any one Sister in the entire Sisters of Providence Community best known for her hearty laughter and general department of merriment, it is Sister Mary Martin de Porres. While, for some, the Mary Martin of her name conjures up a well-known theatrical performer, her name in religion actually honors Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Saint Martin de Porres, a saint known for his love of the poor.

Known affectionately as “Marty,” she grew up on a New England farm where she knew the love of devoted, hard-working, faith-centered parents and close-knit siblings. No one’s life is idyllic and hers was no exception. She suffered many losses including the untimely death of one sister, just three months after her sister Rose, entered the convent. Six months later her mother died at 52.



**Mary Martin de Porres
Grisé, SP**

For a period of time, she would not allow herself to consider life as a Catholic Sister. She wanted “to be normal, have fun, and do fun things,” so “put the idea” out of her head as much as she could,” she says.

Considering different options

Following high school and two years of business school, Marty decided to move away from her rural hometown to the City of Springfield. “I decided I’d get away from everyone who knew me and thought I should be a Sister,” she recalls.

Needing a place to live, she chose the SP-sponsored St. Luke’s Home, then a residence for young working women. “Within a week,” she remembers with good-natured resignation, “someone felt compelled to say to me, ‘You have a religious vocation.’”

continues...

“By that time,” said Sister Marty of her protracted denial and avoidance, “I was pretty convinced that this was what God wanted of me so I decided why not just run with it?”

Then came the question of which Congregation to join? She received her education from a teaching Order of Sisters she greatly admired but did not see herself as a teacher. She considered life as a missionary, but concluded she was “too chicken.”

“I didn’t like bugs or alligators,” she explains in her usual candor.

Being drawn to ministry

In the end she was drawn to the SPs because of their ministries. “I didn’t like the habit the Sisters were wearing then but I did like their work, particularly in the hospitals and medical field.” Their care of children held a strong pull for her, too. “The Sisters of Providence had so many different kinds of work, I figured if I wasn’t good at one job they would put me somewhere else.”

Too, the SPs were the choice of Rose, her older sister. “I didn’t choose this Community because of my sister,” she acknowledges, “but I knew a little about life in this Community simply because she was here, and what I knew, I liked.”

“Both of us left a big family to come into another big family,” she says of their decisions so many years ago to live out their lives as SPs.

“Everyone has a vocation whether it’s to religious, married or single life. I don’t see any one vocation as possessing more value than the other two... Every vocation, no matter the state of life, is a call from God.”

—Sister Marty

According to Marty, the interpersonal relationship challenges religious face are the same challenges experienced in any family. “If you marry you learn to deal with all sorts of personalities—those in the family you grew up in and those in the family you enter,” she explained. “I don’t see much difference between the types of issues you face in either. Whatever your choice, you adjust to whatever happens,” she said.

“Everyone has a vocation whether to religious, married or single life. I don’t see any one vocation as possessing more value than the other two. Just because someone is a religious does not make that person any better, or more special, than anyone else. Every vocation, no matter the state of life, is a call from God.”

Finding a place to grow

As for the Sisters of Providence, “Sometimes there have been a few of us, sometimes hundreds of us. No matter our number, though, each of us does what we can to extend our mission and then leaves the rest to God.”