

Sisters of St. Francis return to Assumption BVM Parish in Chicago

Four members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate in Joliet returned to Assumption of the Blessed

Virgin Mary Parish on the Southwest side of Chicago after a 24-year absence. On Sunday August 9, 2009 during a bilingual Mass, the Assumption B.V.M. pastor, Fr. Arturo Perez-Rodriguez enthusiastically welcomed Sisters Mary Ann Hamer, Sister Patricia Skowronski, Sister Mary Agnes Cross and Sister Jennifer Byrnes to the parish community.

Sister Mary Rose Lieb, president of the congregation, accompanied by nearly thirty Franciscan sisters from the Joliet area and elsewhere, were present to share in the excitement. "This is the beginning of hopefully another 65 years of ministry here at Assumption B.V.M. Parish," stated Sr. Mary Rose. "We are looking forward to once again sharing our Franciscan way of life with our neighbors." The

new group of sisters will form a "community of presence" in a neighborhood where women religious are nearly nonexistent. Sr. Jennifer Byrnes, the youngest member and novice of the community, plans to begin her ministry

at the Cook County Jail, one of the ministries of Kolbe House, which is located within the parish.

Also in attendance were Sister Martin Hornak, age 92 and Sister Nicholas Tosseng, age 81, who were teachers at Assumption School and the last two sisters to leave the parish in 1985. Also present was Sister Anne Flaska who taught at the school.

The morning celebration ended with a reception held by the parish's Mothers Club in the Church basement where Mexican pastries and refreshments were served. Several Former students were excited to be able to reminisce with Sisters Martin, Nicholas, and Anne, while the parishioners were grateful for the opportunity to welcome all the sisters to their parish.



Sr. Mary Rose Lieb, President of the Congregation and Fr. Arturo Perez-Rodriguez, Pastor, welcome Sisters, (top) Jennifer Byrnes, Mary Agnes Cross, Patricia Skowronski and Mary Ann Hamer to Assumption Parish in Chicago.



Sr. Martin Hornak (seated) and Sr. Nicholas Tosseng, the last two sisters to leave Assumption BVM Parish in 1985, are pictured above with former students of Assumption School.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate were founded in Joliet, IL in 1865 and minister today in 14 states and Brazil.