

Sister Kathleen Hagerty, CSJ

*“The role of the CSJ is to be present to people where they are, to meet them where they are, to be with them where they are. That contemplative way of being allows people to come to know God in ways they may not otherwise.”*



Sister Kathleen Hagerty has been deeply and quietly present with many different kinds of people in her various ministries and travels. Born in Somerville, MA, Sister attended St. Theresa's Elementary School and then Matignon High School in Cambridge. Around 6th grade, the thought of becoming a Sister first passed through her mind but was dismissed. She knew she wanted to be either a Social Worker or a Teacher and began applying to colleges. However, the thought of becoming a Sister, which she believes was a strong calling, a vocation, kept recurring. Sister Kathleen felt this call was made manifest in the lives of the Sisters of St. Joseph, whom she knew. She had resisted this call throughout her senior year, but it grew stronger and at last, upon graduation, she entered the novitiate of the CSJ's of Boston.

Her first ministry was as a first-grade teacher at St. Mary's in Winchester. During the busing crisis, Sister Kathleen felt called to work with poor children. She came to Cathedral Grammar School to teach third grade, all the while continuing her studies, and completing her Master's Degree in Religious Education at Emmanuel College. After graduating, she and Sister Jean Mulloy started the Religious Education & Pastoral Ministry Program at St. Mary's in Waltham. Sister was then asked to come to St. Ann's in Wollaston to instruct lay teachers in how to teach religion, an assignment she enjoyed for three years. She was then asked by Father James Hawker to come to the Diocesan School Office to oversee Religious Education in the elementary schools throughout the Archdiocese.

Sister longed to see how the Church of the people was alive and thriving in South America. She took a sabbatical to visit Peru and then went on to Bolivia and spent time with the Maryknoll Sisters of Cochabamba. She considers this one of the most significant events of her life. It was a life-changing event as she lived among and witnessed profound faith amidst great poverty. After a sabbatical and a retreat in Rome and Assisi, Sister Kathleen was asked to be Director of Campus Ministry as well as a teacher of theology at Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, where she ministered for six years. During that time, she also received an M.A. in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Her aging mother's frail health led Sister Kathleen to feel called to work in health care and addiction. At the Watertown Multi-Service Center, an addiction and counseling center, she worked as a liaison for the Center in the Watertown Public Schools, teaching the kids about drug and alcohol addiction.

Along with this ministry, she came to the Motherhouse to work with Sister Anna Mary Kelley to begin the Development Office (currently the Office of Mission Advancement). Meanwhile, with her mother's health failing, Sister Kathleen felt called to Chaplaincy work. She received her CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) accreditation in Rhode Island and began working at the Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center part-time. At this time, she was also Novice Director and Associate Director for the CSJ's. She remained 14 years at the mental hospital as an Interfaith Chaplain. This work had a profound effect on Sister Kathleen. She saw people who were vulnerable, experienced her own vulnerability, and her ability to meet the patients in their illness and deep faith.



Sister Kathleen now works with the St. Joseph Spiritual Ministries doing retreat work and spiritual direction and with The Women's Table, where she leads aging and spirituality programs. She also enjoys movies, meeting people, traveling, experiencing, and exploring new cultures.