

## **MINISTERS: *Receiving As They Give***

### **A personal reflection**

By Sr. Jane Eschweiler, SDS

There are times in the course of my years of ministry when I become especially aware of how the people I serve *inspire* me. Lately there has been an abundance of such occasions.

Recently Fr. Don and I offered a two-day retreat for the men at the GEO prison in Florence. We took full advantage of the two feasts those days: All Saints and All Souls. All of our input and process work with the inmates was on related themes: what goodness and *holiness* look like for the incarcerated person; the support we have within the *communion of saints*; the Christian Catholic view of *death and eternal life* and our feelings about death; and *purgatory*. We interfaced Scripture, the lives of particular saints, and our experience of becoming saints for some wonderful discussion. The inmates were so happy to have three special sacramental experiences in the course of two days: Reconciliation, Eucharist, and the Sacrament of the Sick. They openly shared their faith and conversion process with each other in humility and candor. I felt inspired and blessed to be among them.

Each Thursday noon, Peggy and I facilitate a Bible study at St. Cyril's for anyone who wishes to attend. The eagerness of Catholics to understand and further appreciate the Word of God is wonderful. Several who come have read and studied the Scriptures in other classes and settings, but feel there are always "more dimensions to a gem"

One recent Saturday, our entire Team led a liturgy workshop at St. Joseph Parish. The reverence liturgical ministers expressed for their ministries and the people they serve was evident as we discussed the spirituality that grounds them. I came away happy.

This month, Reggie Sasseen and I will initiate the Theology of Ministry course for those candidates preparing to be lay ecclesial ministers and permanent deacons. We will begin by sharing our convictions about ministry, gleaned from a combined total of 90 years! I realize more and more that ministry is a network of sacred relationships directed toward furthering the reign of God. As we sing in "The Prayer of St. Francis," it is in giving that we receive.