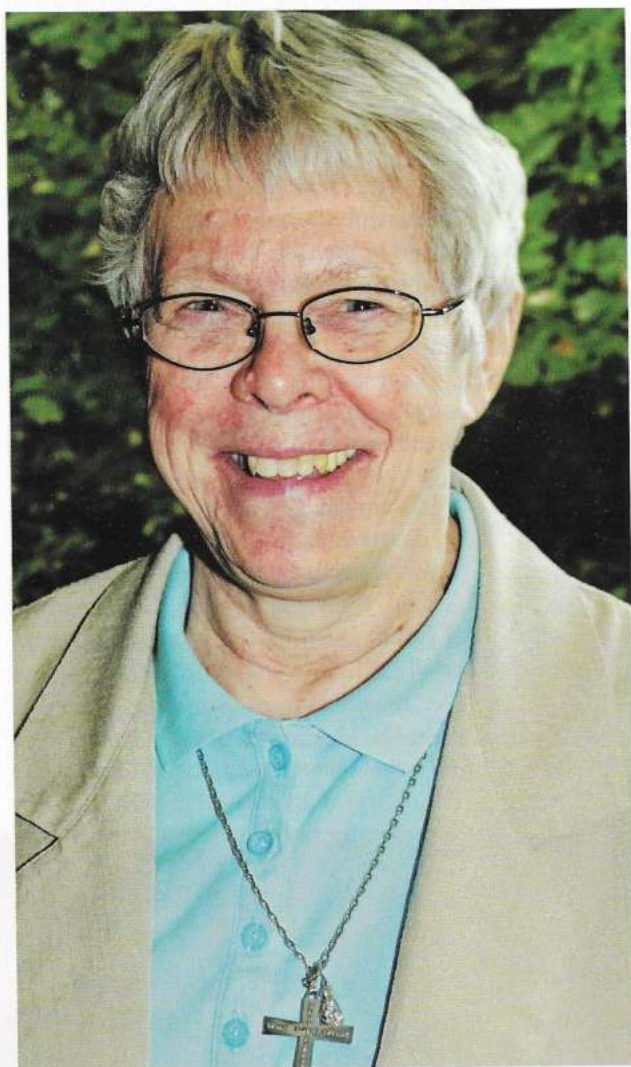


Sr. Bridget Haase, OSU

*Do not fear: I am with you;
do not be anxious: I am your God.
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*

ISAIAH 41:10



In the abundance of messaging I've put into the world, I've realized that words are cheap. It costs to put them into practice.

Sr. Bridget Haase, OSU

Q. *Sister, how did you discover your vocation?*

A. In 1959, in order to graduate from my beloved Ursuline Academy in New Orleans, we high school seniors had to attend a weekend retreat. I groused about it, and Mama told me to decide what or who came first, graduation or God. So off I went. My friends and I had so much fun playing apparitions and pretending to be angels at night. When we heard the rattle of the rosary of the Cenacle sister who was "on patrol," we jumped into bed and acted as though sleep had overcome us.

On the last day, we "Skips"—our class name— assembled for our final retreat talk. The priest asked three questions that I now know are from St. Ignatius.

"Look at this man," Father seemed to shout. "What have you done for him?" I thought, *Absolutely nothing*. Then, Father asked, "What *are* you doing for him?" Same response. Finally, he asked, "What *will* you do for him?" I decided then and there I would become a nun and serve Jesus until death.

I entered the novitiate in July 1959, two weeks after my seventeenth birthday. Even though life has not always been easy, and doubts have strongly surfaced over the years, I have never looked back!

Q. *How have you experienced God's goodness in your ministry?*

A. God's goodness has flooded my ministry. In 1974, I realized at the end of my annual retreat that I was to trust in divine care, seek God everywhere, and be a living act of thanksgiving. I refer to every July 21 as my Eucharist, my "ThanksLiving Day." My ministry has led me to Sudan, the Bush of Senegal, the hills of Mexico and Appalachia, and classrooms throughout the US. In each place, I discovered that, no matter what we do for others, we remain our own person. God alone gives the gifts in our life and creates our days. We are only instruments.

Q. How has your ministry to the poor and abandoned affected you in a personal way?

A. I have cleaned at McDonald's and met incredibly kind crews and customers who struggle to make a better life for themselves, their children, or aging parents. I have written books, cohosted a weekly radio show for five years, and I'm on a monthly radio program. But in the abundance of messaging I've put into the world, I've realized that words are cheap. It costs to put them into practice.

Several years ago, a man asked me if I would thank people on the street who make the world a better place by doing faithfully what others may overlook.

He asked that I give a \$5 bill and a small card he provided that reads, "Thank you for making the world a better place." I told him I was not sure I could do it, but I have done just as he asked for people like: Nora, a gracious airport waitress of seventy-four who blessed me as she handed me a check and then whispered that I looked just like her older sister; Maria, who I met in the restroom of the bus station while she proudly cleaned the mirror. She hugged me when I gave her a card and the \$5 bill. "Nobody ever talks to me," she said in labored English; Duncan,

who is now with God after living at a residence for adults dealing with degenerative neurological diseases. He could only move his head. He said we are all equal because we only have the present moment, and he believed that attitude in life is everything.

Q. When did the compassion of Christ become real to you?

A. I learned God's compassion and mercy in the years after my father's suicide. Daddy taught me in death what he never could have taught me in life. On October 22, 1968, in the place where he and Mama would watch the sunset, he shot himself. This desperate act never destroyed the goodness of the life of my shoe-salesman daddy. For two years, the

lights in my life went out and then came on again. I realized Daddy had made a choice that I never could have stopped or understood. Besides the present moment, all we have is God's mercy. Years later, I felt peace and felt Daddy had it as well.

We all learn compassion in the dynamics of family life, from caring for children, to caring for parents, to unexpected funerals. Compassion is our call, our witness, our vocation as we journey toward God. #

Name: Sr. Bridget Haase, OSU

Hometown: New Orleans

Age: Seventy-eight

Year of profession: 1962

Interests/hobbies: Reading, walking, enjoying the seasons and vistas of nature

Various ministries: Educator, cross-cultural service, spiritual coordinator. Today, children call her "Sister Storyteller."

Fun fact quote: "When I was stationed in the Ursuline community in Greenwich, UK, the sisters said my American and Southern accents corrupted the English language and made it hard to understand me!"

Website: Wisdomwonder.com



1986: Sr. Bridget Haase and friends at a Sudanese feeding center