



## All of Which Woman Is Capable

### Sister Diane Smith

**A**s regional for Northern California, Diane Smith, CSJ travels miles of hills, bridges and counties to visit the CSJs living in Northern California. A return home in any hour is not lonely or disheartening because Rambo, her cat, is always there to purr a warm welcome.

"The opportunity to serve the sisters as a regional has been a gift and a grace. Not always an easy task, it is bolstered by my caring for each sister and trying to respond to her needs with my own gifts and limitations," said Sister Diane, whose six year term ends this year.

She makes a daily visit to a hospitalized sister without fail; she has been to 20 different hospitals, or accompanied sisters to emergency rooms for outpatient procedures. She drives sisters to doctor appointments, to church, or encourages them to make life-changing or agonizing decisions to move to assisted living facilities. "My most difficult and heartbreaking task was to journey

with Sister Josephine Martin Young as she was dying. It also presented a steep learning curve about hospitals, care homes and dealing with doctors and medications.

Besides medical decisions and tasks, she has dealt with a major apartment fire after which sisters needed housing. She has driven sisters to LA or helped them move to Carondelet Center or to other ministries. Through it all, she has a comfortable 'old shoe' manner of responding although she warns she first needs her 'second cup of coffee' in the morning before her day begins.

This is just the tip of doing *all of which woman is capable*. She excelled in leadership in catechesis and lay formation, community projects and with a heart-to-heart service of the poor and needy.

Accomplishments and awards include Pius X Award in San Jose Diocese, and Franciscan Communications Catechetical Ministry Award; she helped found Making the Right Connections, an LA gang prevention program which she also brought to Stockton. She has worked with Southeast Asian refugees, African-Americans, Filipinos, Korean and Native Americans by encouraging their own ethnic leadership. She chaired the National Advisory Council of

Adult Religious Education for US Conference of Catholic Bishops. She is recognized in the catechetical field as an organizer, writer, and director.

Her history as a young transplanted San Francisco native to then agricultural Santa Clara Valley continues to show the mysterious workings of grace. Coming from a "prejudiced, and non-religious household," Sister Diane attended non-denominational religion classes on her own as a youngster, strengthened by her awareness of a "comforting presence." Alone, she resolved to catch a bus to Sunday school, which culminated in her receiving a Bible for perfect attendance. She was influenced by friends to become a practicing Catholic and eventually a Sister of St. Joseph.

As she finishes her time as regional, she has asked herself the following questions: "Am I ready for a new adventure? Do I have the energy for a new ministry? Am I willing to give up the friendships and support I have experienced in Northern California? I guess my answer is 'Yes.' If that is where you call me." ❧

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Written by Teresa Ann Coronas, CSJ