

2019

Sr. Sage: Teaching the Word

Rebekah Wilken

Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/relgsister>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Augustana Digital Commons Citation

Wilken, Rebekah. "Sr. Sage: Teaching the Word" (2019). *Ask a Sister: Interview Wisdom from Catholic Women Religious*.
<https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/relgsister/47>

This Student Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ask a Sister: Interview Wisdom from Catholic Women Religious by an authorized administrator of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

Rebekah Wilken

Sr. Sage: Teaching the Word

Abstract: This paper highlights an interview with Sister Sage and the experiences she has had as an educator in the Catholic school system. After 52 years of service, the retired sister reflects on her career's successes and what it meant to her.

From the time she was a little girl, Sister Sage knew that she wanted to devote her life to God. Her family raised her a devout Catholic, and she prayed the rosary regularly. Her close family unit gave her comfort, but she found an even greater comfort in God. Even as young as elementary school, she felt as if God was calling her to do something bigger, to lead a life of teaching and spreading the word of God. She knew this was something that she was very passionate about and wanted to devote her life to, but she wasn't sure if she could join an order and leave her family behind. This was something that worried her, as she was afraid that it would impede the calling that she felt God had for her. Before she made the ultimate decision to join an order, she decided to leave her family and go to at least a year of college to be sure that she could be on her own away from her close family, and because she felt that she was still too young to make such a life altering decision.

Sister Sage has now spent 52 years as a woman religious with her primary vocation being teaching, which she always felt was her calling and a way to spread God's word. She has held many different positions and taught in many different schools, from being a principle in Chicago, a director of education, and an assistant superintendent in Florida. Her most cherished experience that she feels had the biggest impact on her career came about while she was the assistant superintendent in Orlando. She helped the school receive a grant that allowed 40 of the teachers

at the school to further their career and receive their master's degree. This allowed them to better spread the word of God, and receiving this grant for her fellow teachers had a large impact on her time as a woman religious. Though she has spent many years in the teaching profession, she feels as if she has been very fortunate in her career and has experienced very few setbacks. When asked how her schools were affected as more lay people filtered into teaching positions at the Catholic schools, she simply replied that they kept the focus on the mission of teaching the ministry of God, and the transition went without a hitch. One or two lay people joined at first, and then more slowly began coming in to the Catholic schools to teach. She felt as if they were very prepared for the transition, and everyone was well informed. By keeping their main priority the ministry and the education of the students, they were able to smoothly make the transition. The lay people that began teaching caught on to the ministry, and everyone felt comfortable with the newness at hand, and no real problems occurred in the transition. The school also experienced the same easy transition regarding the CCD classes that were run through the school. She was the director of the religious education class, so she was very involved in the transition process. Again, she felt as if everyone involved was well prepared for the transition, and it went over without any problems. What Sister Sage most wants both her time as a woman religious and women religious in general to be remembered for is their leadership and the difference that they made in the community. They tried to bring about new things (as she put it, "almost like Columbus"), and their education through their congregation and their community helped further their teaching of God's word. While some communities do not have the ability to properly educate their sisters as much as is wanted, Sister Rosemary is very grateful that her community was able to further education and kept the development of the education a priority.

Her time as a sister has brought her much happiness, and she has felt that she was able to fulfill her calling to God through her time as a woman religious.

Work Cited

“Sr. Sage.” Telephone interview by author. January 16, 2019.