



## Anytime. Any Time?

It has been nearly two and a half years since I've submitted an "A" article. That could indicate that "Anytime" is not necessarily a good time to write. I have some time now, and this time I can write about anything.

There is a poem that comes to mind and I wish for every growing individual, baby, and beyond to know its meaning:

### 'Tis the Set of the Sail'

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox 1916

*"One ship sails East  
and another West  
By the self same winds that blow.  
'Tis the set of the sails  
And not the gales,  
That determines the way we go."*

Amazing. An accomplished sailor can go West with an East wind or North with a South wind, etc. It's the set of the sail.

Setting sail is what we all do actually as soon as we are conscious. Little feet propel us where we aim (*with practice*). We may even aspire to be such as the "most popular," or the best student, singer, dancer, friend, child.

When I was a youngster in elementary grade four, I set my life sail. I set my sail on service after a [Maryknoll Sister](#) from New York visited our school. What a rare gift. My

classroom in Wisconsin consisted of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th (*four grades all in one room*), total student count, 22 children, one teacher. There was also a "big room", grades 5 - 8.

The visiting Sister was wearing what is called a [habit](#), a floor length black dress, long sleeves, a short cape over the shoulders, and a veil. The cape and veil had an eye-catching touch of red trim.

This lovely woman was on a mission. Her story began in New York, which to me, was some emerald city on a far away ocean shore that had a huge statue which welcomed my grandparents to America in the 1800's. She told stories about God and Mary and Jesus and rickshaws and rice and fish boats,,and children who needed teachers, homes, clothing, food, and help.

When she was done telling stories she asked us all in the "little room" if we thought we might like to come and help someday. We too, could be Sisters and join forces and help needy children. I raised my hand with earnest intent and set my sail for service at the tender age of 10.

*(It must have been the enticing red trim on her cape and veil.)*

To this day I am, not a Maryknoll Sister, but a [Servant of Mary Sister](#), Ladysmith, Wisconsin,

where we have been a congregation of women dedicated to compassionate service since 1912. The Sisters had a good head start by the time I arrived on the scene: an elementary school, a hospital, a nursing school, a nursing home, (*later adding a high school, a college, and many locations for teacher and nurses across the U.S.*)

I had time from grade four through high school to maintain and trim my sales and my resolve to help, before joining the Servite Sisters. Our dedication goes on still, as together, we Sisters and associates maintain the vision and mission of outreach to the civic community at large through the [Servite Center for Life](#). Check out our [programs](#).

Invitations to serve come and go and a person has to learn when and how to pick up the winds. The winds may not always make it easy to get to where we think we've set sail. If you have a mind to, set your sail to join forces with us, anytime. Perhaps you have time to share some of your stories, ideas, missions, visits, dreams, visions, resources.

Love to hear from you. Is this a good time?

A.

