

leadership candidate



Mary Drexler, SSJ

Sister Mary Drexler has served in education for most of her ministry career.

Past ministries:

Our Lady's Christian School
Principal

Erie Catholic Preparatory
School/Villa Maria Academy
Principal

Penn State-Behrend
Campus Minister

Sisters of St. Joseph
Maryvale-House of Welcome,
Vocation/Formation Ministry,
Vocation Director

Villa Maria Academy
Assistant Administrator,
Teacher

St. John School

Notre Dame School

Assistant Principal/Teacher

Villa Maria Elementary

St. Bernard School

Our Lady Christian School

Our Lady of Peace School

What personal challenges would elective office present to you?

Many sisters ask me about my health. After two heart attacks in 2014 and an episode in 2016, I am doing well. I do cardiac rehab and I am on medication. My physician told me that I am healthy enough to serve in leadership. It would be important that I find time for exercise each week. Boundaries and availability can also be a challenge. That means sometimes saying "no." I can't always be available and I can't let myself feel guilty if I am not. Part of the challenge of serving in leadership is knowing oneself. That includes setting priorities, establishing professional boundaries, keeping things in perspective, not taking on others' expectations, making time for family and friends, making time for personal prayer and spiritual direction, making time for relaxation and fun, keeping a sense of humor, and surrounding myself with strong, supportive people.

How do you balance the personal, ministerial, and spiritual components of life?

Balance is knowing when to hold on and when to let go, when to say yes and when to say no. A favorite quote by Fr. Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B states, "Until you are convinced that prayer is the best use of your time, you will not find time for prayer." Since I am a morning person, that's when I pray and journal. As often as possible, I attend daily Eucharist as a source of nourishment. Spiritual direction has helped me gain new insights and to let go of things. I have hobbies that help me to relax and keep me from taking life too seriously. While I am not currently in full-time ministry, this time has allowed my body to heal and has given me renewed energy for ministry. I have volunteered and offered retreats for Villa students, faculty and parish staff. This has given me the chance to balance my spiritual, personal and ministerial life. My friends help by pointing out what I may be missing so I can reflect and address it.

Sister Mary earned a BS in Elementary Education from Villa Maria College and a MS in Administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH. She also received a certificate of advanced educational specialization in administration from Boston College. Sister Mary was recognized by the Mercy Center for Women as one of the Women Making History in 2013. She was inducted into the Villa Maria Academy President's Hall of Fame in 2014 and she received the Monsignor Wilfrid Nash Principles of Christian Conduct Award from Gannon University in 2017. She is a member of the Board of Trustees for Gannon University, the Board of Directors for Erie Catholic School System and she currently serves on the SSJ Board of Directors.

three words someone would use to describe you:

dependable, resilient, cooperative