

Faith lift keeps Lonaconing sisters attending weekly Mass

LONACONING – St. Mary of the Annunciation in Lonaconing just wouldn't be the same without Mary and Catherine Meyers. The two sisters have been lifelong parishioners of this tiny faith community in Western Maryland – amassing a combined 181 years at the parish.

Now that the Myers sisters live at an assisted living facility in nearby Frostburg, they rely on Sid and Wanda Hanna, fellow parishioners, to bring them to the 6 p.m. Mass every Saturday.

"I don't know what we'd do without them," said Mary, 96, a former elementary school teacher who once taught several grades in a one-room schoolhouse in the Lonaconing area. "They are always there for us whenever we need anything."

Catherine, 85, said it's important for the sisters to remain an active part of the parish because it's always been their home. St. Mary is a deeply committed faith community made up of the "friendliest people around," she said.

"I sang in the choir and when I was young I remember how you could always talk to the nuns," she said.

Catherine said she remembers when many of the men living in Lonaconing worked as coalminers.

"The coal mines are gone now," she said. "It's gone down in the last 20 years."

The sisters said they learned a lot from their father, himself a coalminer who owned a small grocery store in town.

"We learned to do things for ourselves," said Mary.

Mr. Hanna said it's a joy for his wife and him to be able to help the Meyers be a part of the congregation each week.

"If I make it as long as they have, I'd want someone to do it for me," he said with a

laugh.

Asked what the secret is to their longevity, the white-haired sisters looked at each other and laughed.

“Good living,” Mary said sweetly with a smile.