

Mission

Volume 21 Number 1

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A Publication of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield

Mission to continue in new format

Ann Lynch, ssj

There is a time for everything...

For the past 20 years *Mission* has been printed, first monthly and since July of 2006, quarterly. *Mission-on-line* has been sent by e-mail as information is available, sometimes weekly. This will be the last printed issue of *Mission*.

We have not come to this decision lightly. It is partially a result of the present financial situation. It is also an idea whose time has come. More and more Sisters and Associates say they

have learned to enjoy the immediacy of *Mission-on-line* as well as being able to see the pictures in color.

Several years ago each community was given a computer. The leadership letter and community announcements are sent out only the computer. It is time for *Mission* to do the same as it begins its 21st year.

Sisters and Associates will continue to receive *Mission* on First Class. Friends who have been receiving *Mission* and wish to continue are asked to send their e-mail address to ACL@ssjspringfield.com.

We will continue to send a new and more timely *Mission* to you at your e-mail address.

Special gratitude to Sisters Angela Deady, Mary Lou Lacey, Paula Misitano, and Patricia James Sweeney who continue to write for *Mission*. As always, contact any member of the Editorial Board if you would like to write for *Mission* or have a suggestion for future articles.



In honor of our 125th Anniversary, Sisters, Associates and friends marched and rode on a Peter Pan bus as part of Holyoke's St. Patrick's Parade. (Above)

Photo by Patty Murphy, ssj

Friends gather with Bishop Timothy McDonnell, Sisters, Associates and Partners in Mission for the celebration of Mass, March 29. (Right)

Photo By Wendy Hammerle



Letters -- Letters -- Letters -- Letters -- Letters --

Dear Sisters and Associates,

Thank you so much for your loving support during Helen's (Shine) illness and since her death.

I am very grateful to each of you, for your words, cards, enrollments, donations to community and for all the wonderful ways we have, as a community, of being present to one another in sorrow and in joy. You have, indeed, been a great comfort to me.

With love and prayers for each of you,

Nancy Welsh, ssj

The Cawley family thanks you all for your prayers, donations, care, concern and support throughout this very difficult time.

Tommy's sudden death, having to place our Dad in a nursing home's Alzheimer's Unit due to aggressive changes in behavior and need for profes-

In Memoriam

Please remember the following in prayer:

- Sr. Helen Vivian Baillargeon
- Sr. Gertrude Brown
- Stacia Mucha, mother of Sr. Marlene Mucha
- John Mucha, father of Sr. Marlene Mucha
- Thomas Cawley, brother of Sr. Connie Cawley
- Phoebe Charest, mother of Sr. Maureen Charest
- Ofla Vice, mother of Sr. Regina Vice
- Robert Livingstone, father of Sr. Kathleen Livingstone
- Roberta Gasteyer, sister of Sr. Julia
- Frances Killelea
- Ralph Cawley, brother of Sr. Connie Cawley

sional help, as well as, having to close our family home of over 70 years all happening at the same time is overwhelming.

Please continue your prayers for our family especially for Dad and for Joe who is still a patient in Rhode Island Hospital struggling with lung problems.

Gratefully,
Connie Cawley, ssj

Where two or more (Phoebe, Ed, Maureen) were gathered ...

There were SSJs to stand beside all the days/years of our mother Phoebe's journey as a resident of Mont Marie Health Care Center.

We thank you for your presence by prayer, kind words, calling her by name or in a shared moment along the way up to the last days of her life where your good deeds were compassionately imparted as blessing.

Sisters dear, your many forms of support, comfort and caring, in person or from near and far, were so deeply appreciated by my mother and me.

May our gracious God smile upon you all and bless you in return. Our mother presents you each by name with her family's gratitude.

Ed and Sr. Maureen Charest

Mission is published monthly by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield as a source of communication within the Congregation. Readers are encouraged to submit articles which should be typed and sent to Mont Marie, Holyoke, MA 01040. E-mail acl@ssjspringfield.com

Ann Lynch, SSJ, editor

Communications Committee: Sisters Angela Deady, Mary E. Harvey, Mary Lou Lacey, Ann Lynch, Elizabeth Matuszek, Paula Misitano, Patricia James Sweeney and Jeanne O'Shea.

Qualified writers schedule local book sales

Ann Lynch, ssj

Newly published authors, Sisters Kathleen Keating and Lorry Villemaire, will be having book signings in various areas.

Lorry's book, *The Labyrinth Experience; An Educator's Resource*, which is available at the Mont, is one of the featured books in the Spring 2009 *Ministry of the Arts* catalogue. She also signed books at the Women's Spirituality Day at the Mont and the Springfield Diocesan Women's Conference.

Kathleen's book, *Uncommon Trust in God. The Recent History of the Sisters*

Sophia

God sings wisdom through all creation,
borne on winter winds,
in soft spring rains.

Wisdom ripples over wheatfields,
tosses autumn leaves about,
rides on sultry summer air.

Waves and waves burst forth forever,
deep calls unto deep: living water
penetrates the very roots of human
nature, calling out: "Rise, stand tall
and live."

Wisdom, ageless, yet ever new,
"ripe-appled" goodness, bearing a woman's
name, guiding all who turn to her,
feminine face of the great "I am."

Sophia, holy Wisdom, Spirit, resplendent,
shining, blowing wildly, flowing gently,
breathing god-air everywhere.

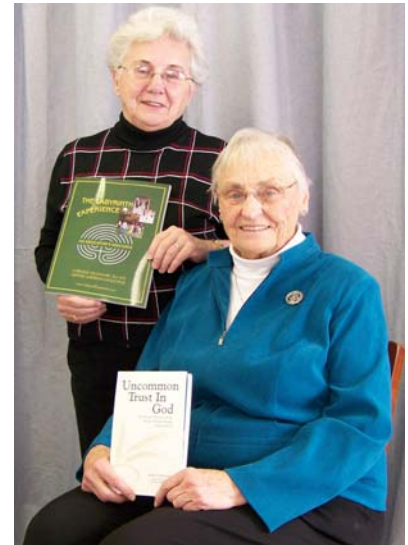
Nancy Welsh, ssj

'published in Feb./March '09 issue of
Sacred Journey (Interfaith Journal)

of *St. Joseph of Springfield*, is also available at the Mont. Kathleen signed books at the Women's Spirituality Day and the Diocesan Women's Conference. Her book was also featured at the Ingleside Mall as part of the Holyoke Parade Committee's booth.

Lorry and Kathleen will also be signing books at the Pasta dinner, April 26.

Kathleen said, "The four essays in the book emphasize the last 25 years of our history set in the context of the Post Vatican II renewal. Having been a participant in many of the events described, I combined my own experience with research so it is often my voice that speaks. In a way the book is part memoir and part history."



To order *Uncommon Trust in God* contact Kathleen at
KKeating@ssjspringfield.com.

To order *The Labyrinth Experience* visit the website at
www.LabyrinthExperience.com.

Each book is \$20 plus \$4 shipping and handling for those not picking up the book at Mont Marie.

Creative mentors unlock artistic talents

Sr. Patricia James Sweeney

Working with the retired Sisters at Mont Marie has become a decade-long habit for Sr. Winifred Roulier and though a shorter number of years for Sr. Imelda Maria Fallon, equally satisfying for both.

Actually, teaching teachers may not always be either successful nor particularly pleasant given the human factors involved, but in this instance the two Sister-instructors claim that their time with these Sisters has been enjoyable and inspiring.

They are both involved in craft work – Winnie with “sculpting with clay” and



Imelda with several different types of skills. Although at the beginning of their lessons, the classes of 6-12 women may have seemed to on-lookers rather “reluctant scholars,” their attitudes changed completely after the first few seconds.

The goods they have produced have reached across the Atlantic to Europe and across the continent to California. Sr. Winnie has an enormous inventory of the pins they have made. The Sisters have become very inventive and creative as they have decorated so many small objects with such tiny flowers. One won-

ders how they could fashion such perfect items in clay.

After their classes, the clay sculptures are oven-baked for 20 minutes or so; then the pin or magnetic backing is applied.

Many other Sisters of St. Joseph have seen these masterpieces and then have ordered them for their own Congregations to be given out at “themed” parties and/or to sell them in their Gift Shops as well.

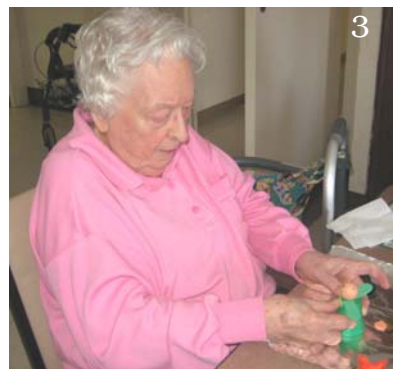


So the fame of our Retirees spreads far and wide and with good reason!

Sr. Imelda’s group is of newer origin and tries a new project each month. However, the attention to detail and the ingenuity are equally apparent with her contingent as well.

Among their several crafts, they have made Spring Flowers to decorate the walls, Pin Wheels for the youngsters in the Child Care Classes, Notecards decorated with their original designs,

Wreaths for the Sisters’ doors, monogrammed and painted Tote Bags for employees and perhaps most spectacular of all - Watercolor



Creative mentors: Continued from page four

Paintings which were then matted and given out to Staff members.

Beginning with Sr. Patricia Murphy, many of the recipients have framed these gifts. Their latest endeavor was painting tiny wooden figurines which were Hearts, Flowers and Butterflies on stands to be used as place names for dining tables. Sr. Imelda said that the fact that her "pupils" had all taught school made them easily adaptable to instructions so that they moved right along without any waiting or any constant questioning.

So, to you readers who are creative and skillful, don't worry about having to give up that talent when you come to Mont Marie. I know two Sisters at least who will cheer your arrival. (Don't forget to bring the tools of your craft with you.)



1. Sisters Patricia Thomas and Maria Edward make pins out of clay.

2. Sister Louise Marie displays the final project.

3. Sister Ann Mungovan concentrates on her painting.

4. Sister Imelda Maria works with Sisters Gertrude Brown and Louise Thomas.

We are called again to be Easter people

Mary E. Harvey, ssj

A speaker (Sister Ann Marshall, SP February 8, talking to Sisters and Associates in Rutland) said, "Do you remember where you were on January 20?"

No doubt remembrance turns to



being in person or via television to the inauguration of the President of the United States, Barack Obama. One million joined him, his family, others in Washington, D.C. –persons of many nations, of every race, color, creed placing hope in a new president, a new belief and faith in a time of discord, war, and a difficult economy.

January 20 in Washington seemed something like an Easter. It cannot compare with the Liturgical Season and the Paschal Mystery. However, parts of the latter mirror that miraculous event.

"We are Easter People and Alleluia is our song." Let us in steady and strong ways bring Easter light and hope to a world in need.

Dorothy Pilkington shares her ministry with children

Dorothy Pilkington, ssj

In the foothills of the Ruvuma Mountains, South Tanzania, there is a quiet little village called Uwemba. Its people are basically farmers or peasants who tend their animals daily and raise crops for selling and survival. For those who know or hear of Uwemba, their first thoughts may be of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters who arrived in 1932 to care for the sick and dying.

Years later, St. Anna's Orphanage was officially opened and blessed on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 1999. Four little ones were warmly welcomed to their new home.



Little ones from a few days old and up to two years of age are embraced with love and a caring presence as they enter St. Anna's.

embraced with love and a caring presence as they enter St. Anna's.

St. Anna's has been a home to more than 600 little ones since its founding. We, the staff, recognize that the children are a gift from God who are entrusted to our care at this time in their fragile lives. All the children are to receive the loving presence of staff who are to be more than workers but mothers in their eyes. They look to us for their daily needs. These daily needs are to be given to them from our hearts.

The children come from different villages in Tanzania. All children are referred to us by the Tanzanian Government. Early in life, they have experienced the death of their mothers and for many, their fathers, too. Their parent(s) die from secondary causes, like pneumonia, TB, malaria, as their immune system is broken by the deadly disease of AIDS. US AID 2007 reports for Tanzania that there are 2.5 million children who are orphaned and the number increases yearly by at least 50,000 children.

A few of our children have been abandoned by family, having been left in a woodpile or a gully. One mentally ill mother left her child in the hospital. The mother's whereabouts is unknown. Usually strangers have found these children and they brought them to the Government who sent them to St. Anna's.

The staff of nine young school "leavers" and Sr. Dorothy may look after 25 to 30 children at one time. There are two daily schedules to be followed for the children – infants from a few weeks old to one year are separated from the children of one year to two years plus months. We begin the day by embracing them with love – then comes the bathing and dressing, health care, nourishment for the body, play time outdoors depending upon the weather, naps, etc. The children show their love and appreciation through smiles, cooing, hugging our legs or putting their heads on our laps, or other friendly gestures. All have a need for bonding and attention in his/her life due to the absence of their birth family.

at St. Anna's Orphanage, Uwemba, Tanzania

Most of the little ones arrive with an illness and immediate health care is provided through the warm and caring presence of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters. Sr. Dorothy works closely with them as she reports any signs of ill-



nesses, health care needs or requests the possibility of hospitalization for observation. Some of the children are strong and others are weak as their lives immediately carry

the deadly disease that can bring a secondary illness at any time. Some of the children have a 7 – 24 schedule of being fed ugi and/or drinking milk every two hours. Also, staff is present around the clock to look after the children's needs.

Many of the little ones come to us before they are baptized. Whoever brings the child to St. Anna's is asked if they wish to have the child baptized. Happily, all respond positively. Sr. Dorothy arranges with the parish priest the date and time for this sacrament to be received. If the child has a family, they are invited for this special occasion.

My greatest challenge is facing the deaths of these little precious gifts from God who are so innocent. The deadly scourge weakens their small bodies to secondary illnesses and finally they can no longer struggle for the breath of life.

How my heart aches for them in the painful dying process – then the “letting go” of a beautiful innocent victim causes me to question God – WHY such pain for a little one; yet beyond all the emotions, I am aware that each little one is with God and loved ones. Through prayer, I am able to accept and realize that “all is in God's hands.”

The supportive presence of the Missionary Benedictine Sisters is truly a gift as I share the pain and tears, and the memories, especially of my last visit with each infant. This is God's blessing to me.

How blest I am to be here at this time of my life! Truly I believe that God has called me here, and God is also providing me with what I need for the journey. The caring, supportive and encouraging presence of my Sisters of St. Joseph in Springfield, MA and the Missionary Benedictine Sisters' community life offer me food for the daily challenges. I am certainly out of my comfort zone as I struggle with language, medical care that is 75 years behind the US standards and learning the cultural ways of Tanzanian life. But it is a privilege to be called to live my life as a Sister of St.

Joseph among my sisters and brothers in Uwemba.



Blessing coming home after her first day at school. (above)

Dorothy and one of the children.

Sabbatical combines ideal climate, spiritual focus

Maryanne Guertin, ssj

Sabbaticals come in all kinds of packages. I recently read someone's version of what for him was an ideal experience. I, however, think that my Sabbatical Journey in the Southwest was just perfect for me. The weather in this Land of Enchantment is ideal during the months of September, October and November, (08) - always blue skies and warm days and mild nights. The desert seemed to call me to its mountains and dry climate.

There were three parts to the program I tailored for myself in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Boulder, Colorado.



The first six weeks consisted of a rather structured program including excellent optional workshops, good community living, and wonderful space for personal and communal

prayer. Each week's topic was better than the one before.

We started with the *Seasons of our Lives* where we were led by a nationally recognized advocate of holistic wellness. Using stories, poetry and metaphors, Elaine Sullivan created a caring environment where each one of us could engage in understanding and appreciating the depth of our own stories and the stories of those we set out with on our sabbati-

cal experience.

A sampling of the topics during the next five weeks included a mini course on *The Interior Castle - St. Teresa of Avila*, some intensive dream work - *Keeping in touch with our Dreams*, and a most inspiring in-depth approach to the different stories of the four gospels was presented by Alexander Shaia, Ph. D. in *Beyond the Biography of Jesus*.

We rounded out our workshop topics with "*The Body at Prayer - T'ai Chi*" and "*Living Creatively in a Broken World*."

The sessions I found most enriching were the studies of Teresa of Avila. This strong woman who has always spoken to me came alive in new and different ways as I reflected on in which of her mansions I have found myself at different times of my life. . I just loved the approach the presenter took as he brought my previous academic study of St. Teresa into a richer spiritual context.

Each of the three- day workshops was followed by a desert/integration day and some play time. Since the weather in this part of the country was just wonderful for exciting trips to the Grand Canyon, Santa Fe, the Hot Air Balloon Fiesta, nearby mountains and parks, hot springs, and Indian reservations and museums, etc. Play we did!

The package that I had put together included three weeks of "unstructured time" at the Canossian Spiritual Life Center where I had spent the first part of my sabbatical.

Planning for my Post-Sabbatical time was an additional bonus. I just

Continued on page 9

Unstructured time allows for personal discernment

loved looking at the options for the last month.

I used the time with a spiritual director discerning my direction for ministry and living for the years to come. I also had the time and space to just be!

I had the run of the place – enjoying everything from an extended Buddhist retreat to the use of a car to explore local sites like Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation.

All this I did while appreciating the hospitality of the Canossian missionary sisters who live at the center. While I was in the West, I was able to spend an extended Thanksgiving Holiday in the Colorado Rocky Mountains with my aunt and her family. This third part of the plan was most special since my recent ministry at the Soup Kitchen meant spending all holidays with my “friends” and not my family.

I’m using this time and space to first of all thank all of you for the opportunity to go on sabbatical. If it weren’t for the generous decision we all made some years ago, this time in one’s life would

not be possible. I found it a perfect opportunity to take a long loving look in thanksgiving at my life and ministries and to embrace the present as I move with great hope into all that is to come.

Let me end with the prayerful wish that all of you who are giving or have given any thought to this community gift will pursue the idea. If I can be of any help, please don’t hesitate to call, write, or e-mail about my planning process and the outcome.



Maryanne Guertin, ssj, (second from left) shares some of the experiences of her sabbatical journey in the Southwest.

Mont honeybees become casualty of winter

In May of 2007 Mont Marie welcomed Eileen Miller and Xylor Jane who cared for their honeybee hives in a secluded area between our cemetery and that of the Sisters of Providence.



Unfortunately, when they checked the hives the last week in

March they found that all the bees had died, probably as a result of the cold.

Honeybees are responsible for 80 percent of the pollination necessary for the human diet, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, yet their numbers are steadily shrinking, because their genes do not equip them to fight chemicals and disease..

Now, we who have enjoyed the fruits of their labors, have witnessed this firsthand.

Have we raised the clamor for climate change?

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

The latest issue of *Network* contains an article about raising the clamor for climate change justice. This article talks about our responsibility for climate change both individually and collectively. It also connects the impact of climate change with justice issues that affect creation and all its inhabitants.

Challenged by the *Network* article I began searching through Catholic Social Teaching principles, statements written by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. I didn't need to



Blessed Sacrament hosts SSJs

Blessed Sacrament School in Holyoke invited the Sisters of St. Joseph to a special liturgy March 19 at 10 a.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church.

This was held to recognize the sisters on the occasion of the 85th year of service to our school and the 125 years of service in the diocese. Many of the sisters who attended have taught in the school or worked in our parish.

After the liturgy the Student Council hosted a luncheon for the sisters in the church parish center.

The Congregation received a check of \$500 from the school community for the support of our retired and infirm sisters,

look any further to find in-depth material for reflection and action.

The USCCB wrote extensively about Climate Change in June of 2001 quoting Catholic Social Teaching's principle of *Care for Creation*. LCWR's Resolution to Action Paper in October 2007 gave us a social analysis of how *Climate Change Puts Earth at Risk*. Their statement of October 2008 makes the connection with our choices for Clean Energy and its effect on global warming. In January 2009's statement on *Climate Change and Hunger* each of us is called to the moral responsibility to educate ourselves and others about the interrelated issues of climate change, poverty and hunger. And lastly, the CSJ Federation Leadership Council issued a Climate Change Statement in December of 2007. Sr. Mary Quinn is a member of the Council and has also signed the statement. This statement can be found on our SSJ web site.

During the past few months the Justice and Peace Committee has used some of these statements for our shared prayer and reflective action. We invite you to join us in our prayer and action as you read, reflect and make choices to change behaviors that contribute to Climate Change. The time to act is now!



Sisters Lillian Reilly, Louise Thomas, Gill Reilly, Christine Lavoie and Maureen Sheehan were among those who attended the gathering at Blessed Sacrament.

Photo from Blessed Sacrament

Agregees share with potential Agregree Candidates

Natalie Cain, ssj

When Sherry Enserro shared with her teaching colleague about the Community of St. Joseph, Heidi Mendez immediately sensed an attraction to the agreee form of membership. She recognizes a longing for participation in a spiritual community and feels a firm resonance with the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Deirdre Griffin, a former CSJ from Boston, whose work brings her to the Springfield area courts, has found a welcome oasis with the Sisters at the Grey House.

As she comes to learn more about the Community of St. Joseph and meet with sisters, associates and agreees, she too is discerning a call to the agreee form of membership.

Both women joined agreees Teresa Foley, Marisa Brown-Ludwig and Sherry Enserro for a time of prayer and sharing in February. What a rich evening it was as each spoke of her deep call to service, community and walking with the

marginalized of our society.

As we prayed the twilight hour from Macrina Wiederkehr's "Seven Sacred Pauses" we sat facing outward as day faded into night. An insight impressed upon us that agreees were twilight people, holding that space between day and night, as ways of living the charism in new forms of community are emerging.



Agreeges Teresa Foley, Marisa Brown-Ludwig and Sherry Enserro gathered with Deidre Griffin and Heidi Mendez, who are interested in the program.



Gray House honors 'special' educator

Sister Cathy Alaimo was honored for her nearly 20 years of service fostering literary programs at the Gray House during its annual Spaghetti Supper, March 24.

She and her team of tutors have worked with hundreds of immigrants from 22 countries as they learn English as a Second Language as well as those preparing for their GED or citizen's exam.

After her many years of teaching and administration, Cathy's presence at the Gray House has shared her special educational gifts with so many.

She is pictured here with Michael Sweet, president of the Gray House Board.

Giftedness abounds in 'retirement' years

Mary Lou Lacey, ssj

Recently, Joan Chittister, OSB wrote an article in the *National Catholic Reporter*, about the lives and ministry of women religious in the United States today. "There was hardly a place where there were the new poor, sick or suffering that sisters were not there with them," she notes. After describing some examples, Joan says, "Most of all, they went on doing those things years beyond the work life of the average person."

We can see this statement in action in the lives of many sisters who are retired, but are still "working," beyond assignments, schedules, or rewards, for their own good and the enrichment of others.

In her retirement years Imelda Maria Fallon, SSJ has been able to give more



talent and time to answer the siren call of the arts. For some time she has taken advantage of art courses at Wisteriahurst in Holyoke. One of her first works, a painting of water lilies,

took second prize in an exhibit. Imelda is happy that it now adorns Sister Mary Dooley's room, bringing joy to Mary and her visitors. Imelda continues to take part in classes at the Holyoke Creative Arts Center where instruction is given in a series of eight classes per season.

With assistance from Jane Thomas, SSJ, Imelda's painted cards can be transformed into gift cards, checkbook holders, and credit card holders.

Once a month Imelda visits the

retired sisters at St. Joseph's Residence, usually to make seasonal souvenirs or pins. She also shares her home-baked goodies, especially her cranberry bread. Activities like this combine two of her specialties, art and cooking. Her friend and housemate, Patricia James Sweeney, SSJ, especially appreciates the latter skill.



Patricia makes no claim to culinary skills. Rather, she spends many hours reviewing books, mostly about education and poetry, for the *Catholic Library World* at the request of Editor Mary Gallagher, SSJ and President Jean Bostley, SSJ. Patricia also writes for *Mission*.

One of her inventive projects tapped the memories of some members of St. Joseph Residence. "They talked about the past while I took notes," Patricia said. "Then I typed the dialogues and made copies for each one who took part. I enjoyed hearing them chatting and laughing," she said. In a different kind of reaching out, Patricia assisted the late Father Adrien T. Remy, then chaplain at Mont Marie, by taking for him the role of power of attorney.

With her knowledge of the workings of the Mont, and with her years of experience in education, Patricia is often called upon to share her expertise in varied situations. Disclaiming any credit, Patricia says, "Mostly I read . . . anything I can put my hands on, but mostly mysteries."

Two other sisters, Frances Barry, SSJ and Anne Marie Wildenhain, SSJ

Many benefit from volunteers' ministry

have chosen to extend their work as parish ministers instead of retiring.

At St. Joan of Arc Parish, Worcester, Frances serves as minister to the sick and elderly at home or in hospitals and nursing homes, and is always available to serve as Eucharistic Minister. To these posts Frances brings the experience of 22 years spent ministering at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Worcester, as well as a similar post at St. Paul Cathedral, Worcester for five years. Frances has especially happy memories of her time spent at Rosary with the very ill and elderly.

In her free time Frances enjoys craftwork and painting, producing hand-drawn and painted cards for anniversaries or special events. A true New Englander, she also enjoys watching sports, especially the Red Sox, Pats, and Celtics.

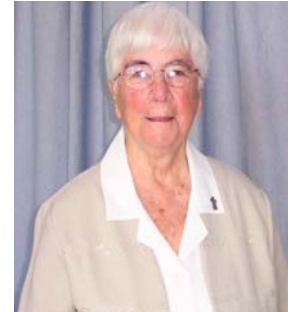
Anne Marie Wildenhein has served at St. Richard Parish, Sterling, for 21 years. Now as a volunteer, she adjusts her activities to her hours, taking communion to the sick, reading at Mass, drawing up schedules, and often serving at funerals and weddings.



Anne Marie continues to be a member of the Fallon Seniors, a local baseball team. For six years she has played second base or catcher with the group of "great guys" and shows no sign of slowing down.

In such voluntary activities, these women are able to draw on their life experiences. All of them began their ministries as teachers. As changes began, they moved with events and prepared for other roles.

Ann Marie taught in Newport, R.I. for 18 years, served as principal in Leicester for seven years, and taught at Worcester Central for 11 years. Then she traveled to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington for further studies.



Foreseeing a need to be ready for change, Frances enrolled in a program at St. Joseph College in West Hartford to become knowledgeable about ministry to the sick and elderly. The first of a group of 30 to enroll, she was one of six to graduate. Previously Frances had taught and served as principal at St. Charles School, Pittsfield.

After teaching at St. Peter's and Sacred Heart Academy, Worcester, and at Holy Family and Cathedral High School, Springfield, Imelda began the retirement program as we know it, working with the elderly sisters for five years. With the late Barbara Gumpright, SSJ crafts became popular, starting a tradition that exists to this day. Imelda later renewed the Gift Shop and made it a thriving enterprise.

Patricia taught at several schools, including St. Joseph's High School, Pittsfield; St. Mary's, Westfield, and St. Joseph, Pittsfield, and served as principal at St. Peter's Worcester, and St. Joseph, North Adams. After earning a doctoral degree at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, she became principal at Cathedral High School. After retiring from education, she became coordinator of Mont Marie.

The coffers of these women are filled with treasures. How fitting that they still dispense their riches.

Team Talk

Network Director reflects on meaning of vows

Mary Ferguson, ssj

The Evangelical Counsels and Catholic Social Teaching was the topic of Simone Campbell sss, Executive Director of Network, as she addressed the Leadership Teams at the Federation Atlantic Region Gathering in Brentwood, NY, March 10-12.

In a day of both input and reflection, Simone reminded us that the vows point both ways, inward and outward. Referencing the CSSJ mission “that all may be one,” and the Benedictine call to conversion of life, Simone spoke of how each vow brings us more deeply into what has been called the best kept secret of the Church, Catholic Social Teaching.

Poverty is the vow that moves us beyond our individualism. No one is excepted from the work for the common good. The dignity of work, the availability of material goods for all, and ecological responsibility are important aspects of living this vow. Questions include: “Do I own my stuff or does my stuff own me?”

Chastity calls us to a keen awareness of the value of every person. Again, individualism is challenged. We are in relationship with all. We are called to subsidiarity, each person involved in the decisions that affect their lives. This vow must take us beyond ourselves, beyond our community, to the world. When we invite everyone in, everyone has a place in our prayers, in the answers. Questions include: “Can I find the value in the “other side” (political party, minority group, etc.) with which I disagree?” “Can I ask the hard questions with care and love?”

Obedience is a call to the contemplative challenge. It calls us to put down our own willfulness and walk willingly for the common good. Solidarity reminds us that the human family has a deep claim on us. Together we must help each other to be our best selves. Questions include: “Do I believe that standing with the poor is really an *option*?”

The business meeting portion of the gathering included the topics of the Weaving Relationships gatherings (about 200 have participated), a Leadership Council Report, discussion of the Federation 2008 Assembly recommendations, conversation on the upcoming Apostolic Visitation, and discussion on the funding needs of Network.

As with most non-profits, Network is facing serious financial issues. As the community of one of the 47 cofounders, Claire Dugan, we encourage each person, or each house, to consider membership (individual \$50, retired \$20) in this important social justice lobbying organization. Further information can be found on the Network website (www.networklobby.org).

These annual gatherings of the Leadership Teams provide time apart for learning, discussing, sharing, reflecting, socializing, and realizing once again that our common issues and struggles, our common heritage and vision, unite us in the journey toward the day when all will be one.

New president, new America, new hope

Ann Keefe, ssj

My hat collection is quite extensive. Sports, culture and politics all fit on a baseball style hat. These past two years I have more frequently than I thought possible worn my BUSH'S LAST DAY hat. The date, of course, of the inauguration of a new president and the beginning of a dawn hoped and prayed for. Tears, cries of anguish and despair all were transformed into a movement of hope led by a man of grace and power.

The privilege of attending the inauguration of Barak Obama as president was one I never imagined. Although I am an optimist and generally find promise in a problem, this new view of the world of possibility has marked me for life. No doubt there will be difficult moments and days when I will know disappointment in this new administration, but for now the swift actions and executive orders that have changed the course of our country are promises fulfilled. Our American passion for justice and peace will again have a place in national decisions.

Now, for the COLD! Nothing, not the cold, the crush of the crowd, delayed trains and a little confusion could have kept me away. Millions of people were gathered, determined to witness the beginning of a new age. It was a sea of over two million. It was a day of superlatives and simplicity. The largest crowd, the most diverse crowd, friendly and helpful. All of this to me was a sign of the goodness that we are capable of creating. And what a celebration!

The cold, the exhaustion from travel and the anticipation made up a significant part of the experience. But in re-

flecting on the moment, it was the sound that stands out. The applause as members of the Supreme Court the Senate Leadership, House Leadership, past presidents, Cabinet members and others was creating a crescendo, an unending applause, happiness and appreciation unleashed. The sound, however, of the hush of the millions when President - elect Obama first appeared was deafening in its respect and awe. There was a collective sigh of relief as this brilliant, compassionate and generous man took his place at the podium. Deafening still, was the roar of the millions. Even more profound, though, was the echo of the millions of hands clapping in mittens and gloves. It was the roar of thunder in August, the roar of thunder that signals the end of a very long drought of despair and disappointment. There will never be another moment in history to rival it. I will never be the same.

President Barak Obama, by his message so simple, invited and even demanded that for our country and people to be whole again, we must be recommitted to the work of creating peace and ending poverty, opening doors and opportunities to all. We must bring the message of this extraordinary day home to each one we meet. We, women religious, educated and respected, have a special responsibility to challenge each other and all of our colleagues and acquaintances to answer the call of this new president.

Pray each day for this new administration. Use every opportunity to bring hope to those most in despair. Change the focus of each day to possibility. We all are capable of playing a part in this new promising future.

Rhode Island SSJ out-does Energizer Bunny

Sr. Patricia James Sweeney

So, you're 72 years of age, your resume says you taught in Catholic schools for 25 years (three of them in the Springfield Diocese), served as a Principal for 17 years and as a devoted friend and caretaker for an elderly Sister of St. Joseph for most of those years. Now you're retired and trying to find books to read, puzzles to finish and TV programs to watch – right? What ?

You're still working with youngsters aged 5-12 from 10:30 a.m. until 5:30 or 6:30 p.m. five days a week???? This work goes on throughout the Summer



as well – except for the week you set aside for retreat ? When asked, “What makes you stay

at the Washington Park Community Center in Providence?” The answer came swiftly and clearly, “The children energize me.”

This is the story of our own Sr. Joan Hawkins. Born, raised and educated in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph after her high school graduation. She truly loves working with children – especially those whom she currently serves – the underprivileged ones who are often doomed to live without resources or hope. These are the youngsters to whom Joanie teaches reading and whom she helps with their

daily homework. Like all such publicly assisted programs, there is always talk of closing due to lack of financial assistance, but only that would bring this phase of Sister's ministry to an end.

Since this program continues during the Summer, Joan explained their daily schedule changes to a Camp type day in which they accompany youngsters on field trips which entails guarding them at the ocean for swimming; the playground offerings, like slides or swings; or museum visits with so many interesting exhibits. Those of you readers who have ever chaperoned young children know what these sojourns entail, but it has not yet deterred our Senior citizen from the task nor discouraged her efforts for “her” children.

Meanwhile, Sister holds the title of Dining Room Manager for Meals on Wheels. This includes ordering special meals and accounting for the Senior Citizens who come there daily for their lunches. Small wonder that when the person in charge of the whole program is confronted with the possibility of reducing staff and fearing that Sr. Joan might decide to leave, implores her, “Please Sister, don't leave. What would we do without you?”

However, our devoted Sister Joan hopes to remain there as long as the funding and her energy remain.

A Rudyard Kipling line (when speaking of a noble character in his novel) applies equally well to Sr. Joan Hawkins' life as an SSJ educator : “You're a better (wo)man than I am, Gunga Dhin.”

Winter gives way to spring, finally

Angela Deady, ssj

“Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and Clouds and Storms, and all the weather through which You give your creatures sustenance.”

Those words were written by St. Francis of Assisi and they are taken from his famous prayer/song entitled “The Canticle of Brother Sun.” Saint Francis, the founder of the Franciscan Order, was born around the year 1182 in Assisi, a small town in Italy . Italy, of



course, enjoys a delightful Mediterranean climate and therefore we can easily understand why Francis extols God’s gift to us of wind, air, clouds and storms.

One can only wonder what Francis might be saying about “Brother Storm” if he lived in Western Massachusetts during the winter of 2008-2009. This winter, snow began falling in September. Snowfall records have been shattered. The number of storms per month has been almost unprecedented. Mother Nature has tested our mettle over and over again while Brother Storm seems none to eager to give way to Brother Sun “who is beautiful and radiant in all his splen-

dor.”

We are New Englanders, of course, and accustomed to snow storms, icy sidewalks, frost heaves, pot holes, frozen car doors, boots, missing gloves, broken body parts, aching backs and standing next to radiators for relief. While we welcome winter as an opportunity to complain about it, at the same time, we marvel at the beauty of a blanket of snow in the backyard, on the trees and on the mountains.

And we know that snow acts as an insulator for the beautiful spring grass and flowers that are sure to come. We are grateful to live where the seasons change for the changing brings us excitement, delight and a reverence for the earth.

All right Brother Storm, you have our attention, our admiration, our gratitude - but it’s time now for the Lord to be praised “through Sister /Mother Earth who feeds us and rules us and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.” Amen.



Associate's vision prepares the way for many

Susan Lavoie, ssja

During this 125th anniversary year it is fitting that we should remember and celebrate an event that happened thirty years ago.

"This 'Covenant of Association' is an historic event for our Congregation and for the Church." These are the words of Sister Mary Dooley, then president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, in a letter to the congregation in March 1979. On March 14, 1979, Mary Creighton McDowell was the first to make a covenant of association with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield.

Mary had lived with the sisters as an affiliate for two years, felt that the



Mary is pictured with the Sisters she lived with on South East Street, when she became an Associate. With Mary in the back row are Betsy Sullivan and Roberta Mulcahy. Seated in front are Kathy Rooney and Winnie Roulier.

Picture from Roberta Mulcahy.

vowed life was not what she was being called to, but wanted to continue her collaboration with the community. During the 1978 Chapter of Affairs, she proposed another form of membership with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Other congregations in the Federation had adopted this form of membership called association, but it was a new idea for Springfield. After much discussion, the concept of associate membership was affirmed by the 1978 Chapter of Affairs.

While Associate membership was a "new" model in 1978/79, it dates back to the 1650s and Jean Pierre Medaille's vision of membership. He had recognized the value of sisters working with lay women who had a deep desire for holiness but who were not called to the vowed life. What was old is new again.

Much has changed in thirty years, but what hasn't is the desire of women and men to collaborate with the Sisters of St. Joseph in carrying out the Mission of Uniting Neighbor with Neighbor and Neighbor with God. Today there are 86 associates, living in eight states, carrying out the mission and bringing the charism to those they serve in the work place, in their families, their parishes and with those with whom they interact on a daily basis.

A special thank you to Mary and all who were part of the 1978 Chapter of Affairs for your vision of a new way to serve with and to be a part of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It has made a big difference in my life and in the lives of many others.

Are we serving life or money?

Roberta Mulcahy, ssj

The financial crisis in the US and globally has spotlighted economic practices that bring about an awareness and that challenge us to action. Are we out of balance with human needs and the natural environment? Did the recent bailout package address the structural causes of a failing system? Will the ultimate answers to our problems be seen as an opportune moment for change?

David Korten is the author of the international bestseller *“When Corporations Rule the World and The Great turning From Empire to Earth Community.”* He offers some essential steps toward a system that can lead us to a path of a just and sustainable economy for all.

-Clean up Wall Street by prohibiting the merger of commercial and investment banks, and breakup financial conglomerates that are too big to fail.

-Redesign institutions of finance to align principles of sustainability and equity.

-Create a fair distribution of wealth to restore a proper balance in favor of “Main St.” not Wall Street.

-Serve life, not money by evaluating economic performance against indicators of what we really want: healthy children, families, communities, and natural systems.

-Convert to debt-free money. This involves changing the way we create money. In publicly issued debt-free money we could greatly reduce debt, taxes, and environmental harm as well as have more equitable and financial stability.

To learn more about these comments and/or to debate their worth please check the following web site and issue of *Yes! Magazine* Winter 2009: www.yesmagazine.org.

Sisters to celebrate Special Anniversaries, June 9

80 Years - Entered in 1929

Sr. M. Dominica Gallagher
Sr. Marie Clotilde Remy

75 Years - Entered in 1934

Sr. Anna James Kilfeather
Sr. Andrea Levesque

70 Years - Entered in 1939

Sr. Mary Frances Honnen
Sr. Rita Morey
Sr. Patricia Thomas O'Connor

65 Years - Entered in 1944

Sr. Gertrude Conway
Sr. Theresa Croteau
Sr. Mary Dooley
Sr. Margaret James McGrath
Sr. Theresa Moran
Sr. Clare O'Brien

60 Years - Entered in 1949

Sr. Joan Bellenoit
Sr. Rita McCauley
Sr. Margaret McNaughton
Sr. Irene Magnant
Sr. Jean Elizabeth Scanlan

SEED Committee prepares for Earth Day

Ann Lynch, ssj

After a very long winter where earth slept under a seemingly endless blanket of ice and snow signs of spring abound, some practical spring activities around the Mont include:

The SEED committee is working with Patricia St. Amand and Christine Cox, communications personnel from the Sis-



ters of Providence on a joint celebration of Earth Day. In addition to an Earth Day presentation at the Mont, Sisters Roberta Mulcahy and Ann Lynch will be doing a presentation on “Think Outside the Bottle” and “Change for Global Change” at Providence Place. They will be joined by Ramona Williams, SP, a member of the SEED Committee, at Mercy and Providence Hospitals and Mount St. Vincent for the same presentation during that week.

Again this year, students from Elms College will be working with Roberta and Ann as part of their service day, April 15. Men and women involved in Community Service from the courts will be working at the Mont on Wednesday mornings beginning in April and continuing until the late fall.

Members of the SEED Committee will be responsible for garden areas around the Mont. They are always happy for additional assistance. Health Care Inner Courtyard, Winnie Roulier and Helen Gannon; Health Care Patio, Sally Marsh and Connie Daub; Herb Courtyard, Carol Hebert and Maxyne Schnieder; Rock Garden in the cemetery, Joan Dumais and Mary Pat Carr; Front of the Mont, Nancy Welsh and Lucille Bertrand; Peace Garden and cracks in Health Care patio, Maureen Charest. Beverly Rochford will trim bushes

At the invitation of Sister Betsy Sullivan, Roberta and Ann took part in a webinar sponsored by Covenant Health Systems. Some thoughts from that presentation might direct our thoughts as we understand our Global Footprint and celebrate Earth Day:

- Earth is a workshop of God.
- The ecological crisis is a moral crisis.
- Even if one culture did not exist a face of God would not exist.
- Look at what the world needs and what we have to be able to do for / with it. This is a vocation – a moral responsibility.
- There are over 160,000 deaths per year due to global warming.
- The good news is that we still have a chance to get it right.

Happy Earth Day