

# Salt

Summer 2017 • A Publication of the Sisters of Charity, BVM

## Navigating the JOURNEY







# SEASONing

## *A Message from BVM Leadership*

**Compelled by the example and word of Mary Frances Clarke in her sensitive response to critical human situations, we strive to seek out and attend to those in need whatever this may require of us.**

**We are called to live in any part of the world where there is promise of furthering the mission of Jesus through works of education, justice and peace . . .**

—BVM Constitutions #15, 16

Fasten your seatbelts! This issue of *Salt* takes us to Fond du Lac and Milwaukee, Wis.; Guayaquil and Quito, Ecuador; Dubuque and Des Moines, Iowa; Montrose and San Jose, Calif.; Chicago; Missoula Mont.; Washington, D.C.; and Vietnam. BVM founder Mary Frances Clarke could not have imagined!

In this issue, our authors attest to BVMs working to further the mission of Jesus as they respond to critical human needs for education, addictions treatment, abolition of human trafficking, leadership training, spiritual comfort, and community. Put simply, Jesus' mission on earth was to embody God's love. That mission has a church and that church has a congregation of women religious named Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The BVM commitment to "being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in God's steadfast love" (BVM *Constitution* #10) is at the heart of each of the stories in this issue. The BVMs and associates you'll meet in these pages not only witness to God's love but also testify to the vibrancy and responsiveness of the BVM congregation in our world today.

We share our stories with thanksgiving to the God who loves us and loves our world. We share so that you will know that your good acts on behalf of charity, justice, education and freedom are not done in isolation but rather combine as a force for good in a world with many needs. You and we together are God's church for the world.

As you buckle up, we hope you enjoy this tour through BVM ministries. Happy reading!

*Jeri Hudro, BVM*  
*Lou Anglin, BVM*  
*Sabonna Manternach, BVM*

**Mission Statement:** We are the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a community of Catholic women called to live the mission of Jesus through our core values of Freedom, Education, Charity and Justice.

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## 2017 Calendar of Events

### July

- 30 Golden Jubilee Celebration  
Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa
- 30 BVM Summer Gathering  
Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa

### September

- 10 Diamond Jubilee Celebration  
Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa
- 30 8th Day Center for Justice  
Gathering of Gratitude, Chicago

### October

- 15 St. Mary HS Alumnae  
All Class Memorial Mass, Stickney, Ill.
- 21 BACAR Conference, Mercy Center  
Burlingame, Calif.
- 22 Immaculata Alumnae/Faculty Mass  
Annual Meeting, Chicago
- 29 Benefactor Mass  
Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa

### November

- 5 Benefactor Mass, Felician Sisters Center  
Chicago
- 10-12 SOA Watch, Encuentro at U.S./Mexico  
border, Nogales, Ariz.

For more information, visit:  
[www.bvmcong.org/whatsnew\\_calendar.cfm](http://www.bvmcong.org/whatsnew_calendar.cfm)

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10 March Madness!



17 National Gun Violence Awareness Day #WearOrange

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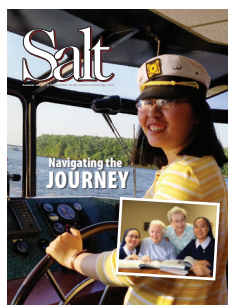


On World Refugee Day, BVM sisters and friends in Dubuque, Iowa, sponsor a peaceful rally supporting our refugee brothers and sisters, honoring those forced to leave their homes.



**Photo Credit:** In the Winter 2017 issue of *Salt*, photo credit for the cover picture and pictures featured on pp. 10-11 were omitted in error. We sincerely apologize for our mistake. Photo credit should be given to:

**Sumptuous Art — The photography of Steve Tosterud.**



**On the cover:** Just as Sister Tuyen Nguyen Thi Thanh, IHM takes the wheel to navigate the waters of the Mississippi River in Dubuque, Iowa, BVMs have navigated their congregational journey over the past 185 years. In this issue, discover how they have changed course, like the mighty river, adapting to the times as they seek new ways to share mission and ministry with others.

Insert photo: Sisters (l. to r.) Tuyen; Marion Murphy, BVM; Mary Crimmin, BVM; and Sister Tram Tran Thi Thy, IHM; enjoy a study session together.





As a BVM scholarship recipient, Germania Moran is well-prepared to continue the mission of heartfelt love and service at Damien House in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

# Legacy of Learning Preserves BVM Ministry

by Ann Credidio, BVM

**For nearly 185 years, the core value of education has guided the mission and ministry of the Sisters of Charity, BVM, shaping lives of love and service through excellence in education.**

**Today, though the majority of sisters no longer teach, BVMs continue to** promote this core value through education scholarships for women. The Mary Frances Clarke (MFC) Scholarship (Est. May 1989) and the Mary I. Griffin Scholarship (Est. 1999) enable women with limited resources to pursue continuing education, GED, or degree programs. The Mary I. Griffin Scholarship focuses on postsecondary and graduate degree programs.

Like a pebble tossed into a pool, the core value of education continues to ripple outward, even across the ocean to places like Ecuador—where, in 1992, BVM Ann (Annie) Credidio founded the Fundación Padre Damián (Damien House) in Guayaquil.

Damien House was established for patient residents with Hansen's Disease (leprosy), who live in the Hansen wing of the government Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Guayaquil. Annie has devoted much of her BVM life and all of her heart to the wellbeing of the patients at Damien House. She tirelessly meets the challenge of raising funds for her beloved ministry as well.



## Future Leader Emerges

Germania Moran was raised in Duran, Ecuador. Just out of high school, at the age of 17, she began working as a bookkeeper, two years prior to the incorporation of Damien House. She received a MFC Scholarship to study business administration at the University of Guayaquil, and with the opportunity of a Mary I. Griffin Scholarship, is presently studying for a master's degree in public health at Catholic University (Universidad Catolica Santiago de Guayaquil).

Today, Germania serves as Annie's right-hand woman, helping run the operation of this unique facility. She has brought the existence of the Hansen community into the public eye through her papers, grant writing, and interviews with the mass media.

"Germania has the heart and soul of a true advocate and is well prepared to continue the philosophy of Damien House—which is helping people affected

by Hansen's disease live and die with dignity," says Annie. "Ninety-five percent of our Damien House staff have been recipients of the MFC Scholarship; their working unitedly in providing loving care and compassion creates such joy among our Damien House family!"

## The 'Voice of the Voiceless'

Germania learned at an early age what it meant to struggle after her father was forced to stop working because of a job-related accident, and when he was later diagnosed and received treatment for Hansen's disease. As a result of her father's past and the fact that her aunt, Blanca, was a longtime resident living at Damien House until her recent passing, Germania has a vested interest in this disease. She is the voice of the voiceless as she advocates for human dignity for those affected by Hansen's disease.

"I'm very grateful to God and to the

BVMs for the opportunity to receive both scholarships," says Germania. While she was attending college, the Ecuadorian currency jumped to 25,000 sucres to one U.S. dollar, which meant many of the students had to leave school due to the unaffordable tuition.

It was then that Germania received the MFC Scholarship so that she could continue her education. This gift had a large impact on her view of service. "Here in Ecuador, most people don't grow up with the idea of service to others," she says. "I learned that when I started to work at Damien House—that service is giving to others without getting anything back. I try to pass that on to others." She adds, "I thank God for the many opportunities presented as a result of these grants."

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**About the author:** Ann Credidio, BVM is an advocate for persons with Hansen's disease and ministers at Damien House in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

## Scholarships Foster Careers of Service



### Jennifer Mosquera: Superb Cook

Jennifer Mosquera always loved to cook. She would occasionally arrive at Damien House to help her mother in the kitchen. One day she was offered a job. She soon realized that she could be a great cook if she enrolled in a cooking class.

When the opportunity presented itself to study for one year at a local chef's school in Guayaquil, Jennifer applied for a MFC Scholarship. She now works at Damien House as the chief cook, and meals have never been better for the residents!

Jennifer is married with two children and wishes to thank the BVM community for helping her achieve the goal of being the first person in her family to study beyond high school.



### Irma Salazar: Loving Caregiver

Even before Irma Salazar finished her multi-drug therapy treatment for Hansen's disease, she realized that she wanted to be like those nurses who cared for her while she lived at Damien House, so she applied for a MFC Scholarship.

Irma was the first former patient hired at Damien House! She is married with three children, and currently works as a nurse aide next door in the Hospital for Infectious Diseases. She visits the Damien House residents regularly and has never forgotten her roots. She was the first member of her entire family who was able to get an education beyond sixth grade!

"I am so grateful to God to have received this scholarship and I thank all of the sisters of the BVM community for making this possible," Irma says.



# 'Let Go and Let Them Shine'

by Marilyn Wilson, BVM



High school students Caroline (l.), Mikaela and Joaquin (r.) talk with Marilyn Wilson, BVM as they give a presentation on human trafficking to eighth grade students.

**The journey of education and advocacy** around the issue of Human Trafficking is both daunting and rewarding. What makes the effort so worthwhile to me is the opportunity and privilege to interact with students from various high schools in the San Jose, Calif., area. Their passion, dedication and expertise continually astound me and motivate this “elder” to keep on.

I first met three of these individuals three years ago when I needed assistance at a Catholic Bay Area Religious Education Conference staffing an exhibit booth on Ending Human Trafficking. Since that time, I have been involved with them in:

- Offering workshops and various presentations at conferences, to seventh and eighth grade classes, to youth groups, to high school assemblies, and for pre-Super Bowl 2016 social media events.
- Creating a senior service-learning project with an original website and YouTube educational videos.

- Producing an annotated bibliography of software applications relating to ending Human Trafficking.
- Making a documentary film.
- Protesting at stores that offer goods produced in sweatshops.

These students work individually and within their high school social justice clubs, campus ministry offices, history classes, Girl Scouts, etc., to spread the word about the horrific injustice of human trafficking.

So I would like to let these young folks speak for themselves—Austin, Joaquin, Mikaela, Caroline, Da-Sol and Vedyā—representing four different high schools from diverse cultures (Hispanic, Caucasian, Korean and Indian).

**How did these young persons get involved? What keeps them involved? How does this affect their lives?**

In a summer class before entering high school, **Joaquin** read David Batstone’s *Not For Sale*, about human trafficking victims/survivors, and he wanted to do something. In his sophomore year, he assisted me as a volunteer and worked on the Justice Summit on Human Trafficking at his school. At an all-school assembly, we presented his story of involvement and our educational efforts.

“Although I do not know personally those affected by human trafficking, it

## To learn more about the projects students are involved in, visit:

### The Hummingbird Project: Human Trafficking:

- <http://bit.ly/2rFDzoZ>
- What is one fact everyone should know about Human Trafficking: <http://tinyurl.com/hvzl79w>
- To be a Hummingbird: <http://bit.ly/2rQoL5k>

### Mitty Advocacy Project (MAP):

<http://www.mittyadvocacy.com>

## Get Involved

- Educate yourself and learn the signs: Polaris <http://polarisproject.org>
- Report tips 1-888-3737-888 or text BeFree (277-377)
- Support local agencies that work with victims: law enforcement, faith-based groups
- Review your consumer practices and go Fair Trade



does not mean that their lives and situations do not affect me. At the end of the day everyone is somehow interconnected . . . That is why I choose to fight human trafficking, for those that are suffering in their current situations and do not have a voice because of someone's cruelty."

**Austin** was part of a panel at a conference workshop. "When I got involved, I did so because as a Catholic, it's my responsibility to ensure the most vulnerable group in society does not continue to be exploited for profit or for labor. I am motivated with the hopes that one day, I may be able to help kids who are growing up in the same city as I did. I want to help stress how important it is for each of us to be aware of what is happening and I know that all together, we can make a difference."

**Mikaela's** involvement began in her freshman year. "When I was 15 years old, I became aware that slavery still exists in our world today. I had gone my whole life and been ignorant of this issue. Fighting human trafficking has never been something that I wanted to do; it has been

something I have needed to do.

"I had been working with my club, Students against Modern Slavery, and when I chose my senior service learning project, I knew I had to work with trafficking. I created **The Hummingbird Project: Human Trafficking**. We taped video interviews with leaders from advocacy groups around the Bay area.

"There have been times when I have felt overwhelmed by the issue, when I have felt small and insignificant. But then, I remember 'The Story of the Hummingbird' and Wangari Maathai saying, 'I will do the best I can,' and I can continue in my efforts."

**Caroline**, who assisted Mikaela, shares: "And I had the camera! I was in the dark about this issue for so long and I did not want other people to be unaware of something that happens so close to us. I stay involved because I want to make sure that people know that it exists. It is hard to fight an issue that no one knows about."

**Da-Sol and Vedy** are part of the **Mitty Advocacy Project (MAP)** "I got involved in fighting human trafficking

when I first went to MAP," says Da-Sol. "Never having known about the extent of its existence in this area and the United States, I felt compelled to work against this blatant human rights violation. Ever since we were little, we learned about our inalienable rights and how they are protected for us . . . So I ran a workshop on human trafficking and advocated to legislators when I went to Catholic Youth Advocacy Network in Sacramento, Calif. I talk to my friends about human trafficking when I can.

"I hope by educating others, people will see that human trafficking is a problem and that change must occur."

So for me (this elder): "I have learned . . . to utilize the talent of the youth, to encourage, invite, network, connect them to one another, to let go and let them move forward and shine."

**About the author:** Marilyn Wilson, BVM (Clau- dia Mary) ministers as retreat facilitator and spiritual director in Sunnyvale, Calif.

## CCHS Students Join March for Life

Carmel Catholic High School (CCHS) in Mundelein, Ill., offers seniors the opportunity to participate in the Right to Life (RTL) events held each January in Washington, D.C. This capstone experience allows students to integrate prayer, witness, action and accountability into their last semester of high school.

BVM Kathleen Sinclair, who ministers as director of Christian Service at CCHS, accompanied the seniors to Washington. Noting that the students are always enthusiastic for the 18-hour (one-way) bus ride, Kathleen shares two examples of what the trip was like for Carmel students who attended the 2017 March for Life:

"I really appreciated the fact that high school students had the courage to stand up for their opinions. It was an amazing experience to see all of the people who have similar views in the Pro-Life movement."—*Erin Kehoe*

"By going on the RTL trip, I learned so much more about myself and my peers. I am the type of person that typically falls under the radar when it comes to controversial issues, but not in this case. I stepped



BVM Kathleen Sinclair (front row, r.) accompanies the CCHS students to the annual Right to Life March in Washington, D.C. in January.

outside my comfort zone and stood up for something I truly believe in, despite what others might think of me. I learned that it is okay to do this and that what other people think of me for standing up for my morals doesn't matter. I also got to know the other participants a lot better and formed a special type of bond with them that I will never forget. Overall, this trip is in the top two of my favorite memories made here at Carmel!"—*Hannah Fruscione*

### CCHS Students Visit Mount Carmel

"The way that all of the sisters interact with each other and with us is like we are a huge family, a family that we feel a part of since we go to a BVM school. It's interesting since I feel this way at Carmel too. In this way, we are keeping the spirit of the BVMs alive!"—CCHS Student



[HTTP://BIT.LY/2RXIWYK](http://bit.ly/2RXIWYK)





"Co-pilots" Sisters Tuyen (in yellow) and Tram navigate the Mississippi River and (far r.) proudly show off their new certificates.



Gathered for the riverboat ride are (l. to r.) Sister Tuyen, BVMs Marion Murphy, Kate Hendel, LaDonna Manternach, Teri Hadro and Mary Crimmin, and Sister Tram.

# Home is Where the Sisters are!

by Kathryn Lawlor, BVM

## Scholarships Provide Opportunities

Every weekday morning at 7:15 a.m., Sisters Tram Tran Thi Thy and Tuyen Nguyen Thi Thanh wait at the back door of the Sisters of Charity, BVM Motherhouse at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa. Soon, a driver arrives to chauffeur them to Divine Word College (DWC) in Epworth, Iowa, a 25-minute trip. Both sisters—members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation (IHM), Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa Province, Vietnam—live at Mount Carmel.

The BVM community welcomed the sisters last summer after they received six-year scholarships from DWC. They had planned on coming with other members of their congregation but the others are still trying to get visas. Tram, after making first vows in 2011 at age 26, and Tuyen in 2015, also at age 26, worked in Vietnam as kindergarten teachers.

Their superiors welcomed the scholarships, which provide opportunities for learning English and theology in the United States. Although both sisters worried about leaving their homeland, they

looked forward to learning about another culture, meeting different people, and speaking other languages. They also look forward to returning to Vietnam and using their newfound knowledge to enrich their own people.

Dubuque Franciscan sisters and the Sinsinawa Dominican sisters in Wisconsin previously provided housing for Vietnamese sisters attending DWC. Sister Anna Trang Mai, Immaculate Heart of Mary Congregation, convinced the BVMs to join in this ministry after she lived for a summer at Mount Carmel while studying at the college.

Following a meeting with DWC President Rev. Timothy Lenchak, SVD, and Dean of Students, Rev. Cong Bang Tran, SVD, BVM leadership agreed that this is indeed a way to continue the congregation's education ministry.

## BVMs Welcome Sisters 'Home'

Carol Marie Baum, BVM (Joseph Louis) recruited drivers to take Tuyen and Tram to classes. Judy Callahan, BVM (Eugene Mary) found English as a second

language (ESL) tutors from among the retired sisters. Angele Lutgen, BVM gathered necessary school supplies and outfitted the two for winter and their first snowfall.

An apartment in the Motherhouse became home. BVMs Mary Crimmin (Agnes) and Marion Murphy (John Patrice) joined Tuyen and Tram in becoming a small community within a large one. Both BVMs quickly discovered their companions' sense of humor when they nicknamed them "Ba," Vietnamese for grandmother. Tram and Tuyen think the name fits because they claim Mary and Marion are very patient, sympathetic and understanding of their needs. "Each are like a grandparent, parent, friend, advisor and teacher," says Tuyen. "But most of all, friend."

BVMs are impressed as they listen to the Immaculate Heart sisters express their love for their families, congregation and homeland. They are equally impressed with how serious the two are about their studies, their positive attitudes, and the deference they have for their Vietnamese superiors.

The apartment's kitchen allows Tram



Global sisterhood is alive and well at Mount Carmel as IHM Sisters (l. to r.) Chihn, Tram and Tuyen explore the campus. (Chihn went on to attend a college in Connecticut.)

and Tuyen to cook food that is native to their own country and share it with their “roommates.” Mary says, “They are very good cooks!” Learning to eat meat the way it is cooked in this country has been an adjustment for Tram and Tuyen. They also miss “pho bun bo” noodles; luckily, they are available in Chicago. Occasionally they invite their Vietnamese friends from the college to join them for a meal.

### Mount Carmel Sisters Teach Again!

After a day studying ESL, they return to the Motherhouse for 5 p.m. prayers with the BVMs in the chapel and the evening meal in the common dining room with all the sisters. They have a chance to test the English they learned during the day and the retired BVM schoolteachers at



the tables consider it a chance to continue teaching. “At first it was difficult, but now we feel more comfortable and confident to talk with others,” says Tram. “It is interesting to learn about American culture.”

Tram and Tuyen said their first big surprise when they arrived at Mount Carmel was seeing the immense convent. The second big surprise was the warm welcome the sisters gave them. Tuyen says, “We are lucky to live in a space with the BVMs.” They fondly speak of being “par-

ented” by the older sisters. Both maintain that the affection they receive has helped them overcome their lonesomeness for home. “We appreciate all the sisters, but Marion and Mary are special.”

Tuyen and Tram spend long hours doing homework but are grateful for their teachers at DWC. They find them not only very helpful during the classes but also enthusiastic about the lessons they are teaching. However, both agree that living at Mount Carmel has many advantages over living at the college. After staying there on weekends for retreats and activities, they gratefully return to the accommodations at the apartment. “This place is like our convent,” Tram shares. “We receive love and give love, like a family. It is very peaceful. We will miss it very much.”

In August, Tram and Tuyen will renew their vows in the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation. BVMs will fondly witness the ceremony in the Motherhouse chapel. They will think of all the BVMs in the communion of saints who gather there with them and marvel that the congregation’s ministry of education has become a part of a global sisterhood. Perhaps Tram and Tuyen put it best: “We are all one community in the world of sisters.”

**About the author:** Kathryn Lawlor, BVM (John Laurian) teaches classes at the Roberta Kuhn Center on the history of the BVM congregation and volunteers in the Mount Carmel Archives in Dubuque, Iowa.

## Alumnae Honor Former Teachers

Members of the Sisters of Charity, BVM leadership team and the Office of Development represented the congregation at the Immaculata HS Alumnae Luncheon on April 23 in Niles, Ill., and the St. Mary HS Alumnae Luncheon on April 30 in Lombard, Ill.

Kathleen Doherty, BVM (Patrick Louis) taught at St. Mary HS for 18 years and served as coordinator/treasurer for the St. Mary Alumnae Association for



17 years. After she passed away on Feb. 9, a Memorial Mass, attended in part by St. Mary alumnae, was held for Kathleen.

A moment of silence was observed in her memory at the luncheon. A reflection from Kathleen was shared: “I thank God for the privilege of being part of the faculty for 18 years, and much later was asked to join the alumnae board . . . I was invited to be an active part of the board in 1993 as moderator/treasurer. A wonderful new

world opened to me and I grew with it.”

The annual luncheons provide an opportunity for alumnae to share memories about their BVM education and the beloved sisters who helped shape their lives. Each group presents the congregation with a financial gift to support the retirement needs of the BVM sisters, who are grateful that their students have chosen to honor them in this special way.



Josephine Roche, BVM (Thomas Kathryn) (r.) celebrates her 75th reunion with classmates at the Immaculata Luncheon.





# A History of 'March Madness'

by Patricia Bombard, BVM

BVMs gathered for their March Madness meeting are (front row, l. to r.) Ann Credidio, Kathleen Sinclair, Eileen Fuchs, Kathy Kandefer, LaDonna Manternach; (back row, l. to r.) Facilitator Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF, Lou Anglin, Paulette Skiba, Saskia Alquina Cahuatijo (screen), Luann Brown, Pat Bombard, Amy Golm, and Sharon Rezmer.

**If you look at Nature with a discerning eye,** you might notice the presence of repeating patterns in progressively smaller scales. Scientists call this phenomenon “fractals.” Picture, for example, the intricate repeating pattern in crystals or snowflakes or, on a larger scale, the tiny florets in the blooms of Queen Ann’s Lace. Such patterns are an important part of how Nature creates lasting structures that support ongoing life.

An understanding of the importance of establishing a repeating pattern that gives life was at the heart of the discerning conversations 30 years ago that led to the formation of the intentional group of “younger” BVMs fondly known today as “March Madness.”

## Vatican II Prompts Changes

The shape and character of the repeating patterns decided upon by the group have their history in the major changes that took place in BVM community life following the Second Vatican Council. Prior to the re-examining of religious life prompted by the Council, women desiring to enter the congregation traditionally arrived at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa, right after high school graduation. There, they spent six months as “postulants.” Their “set” then moved on to become “novices” for another two years, spending their days in prayer, education, work and formation to BVM life and ministry.

The set of 1967 (this year celebrating their golden jubilee) are the last to enter under the old process. The congregation then underwent a self-study, which resulted in a complete overhaul of the entrance process. The philosophy behind these changes centered on research suggesting that the entrance process ought to focus “on the full development of the individual woman” within the context of the ministry goals and traditions of the congregation. (*BVM Self-Study for Renewal*, 1968, p. 51).

The self-study resulted in a different pattern for women interested in entering the community prior to making the leap to live as sisters. Paulette Skiba, BVM, recalls her experience while a student at Mundelein College, Chicago, in the 1980s:

*“While I was at Mundelein I began, in my sophomore year, attending reflection weekends at Mount Carmel. There was one in fall and one in spring. For those of us who entered before 1990 this was a regular pattern of journeying back and forth, to and from Mount Carmel. Some of us did this longer than others. I, for example, met Ann Credidio on my first weekend, but Ann was older and would move more swiftly into formation than I. We did not just meet inquirers on these weekends. The gatherings were in the novitiate, so we also met those in that stage of the process.”*

A woman who wished to move further along in the process moved to the first formal stage of entrance, that of “associate.” She still lived in her own setting, met periodically with BVMs in her own location, and attended reflection weekends. During that time, together with formation personnel, she determined her next move, which was to live with a local community of BVMs. After approximately one year, the woman moved to this local house, and became known as a “resident associate.” This experiment in community living also lasted for at least one year, during which she also attended an annual meeting over the New Year’s weekend, known as “Homecoming.”

Finally, the woman moved to Mount Carmel for her novitiate (canonical) year. During the second year of the novitiate, she left Mount Carmel and joined sisters in another convent while serving in her desired mission. Following that year, the woman could make her first vows, which were temporary, and lasted for one year. At that point, the pattern of gatherings expanded to include an annual meeting of those under temporary vows.

### Finding Ways to Stay Connected

The period of temporary vows could last from six to nine years. For a time, once a sister made her final vows, she stepped outside of the annual pattern of gatherings. However, that began to change in the early 1990s. Paulette, who entered along with BVMs Pat Bombard and LaDonna Manternach, describes what happened next:

*“I remember in the novitiate a conversation with Pat in the kitchen in which we mutually wondered how we would stay connected, not only with one another or with LaDonna as a set, but with the friendships we had formed over the years and how we would build a vision of BVM and religious life together without finding a way to stay connected.”*

Also by this time, only one or two women were entering the congregation each year, and those in the annual vow group who had entered in the 1980s were making final vows, leaving only a very small number of women in attendance at the annual vow gathering. The conversation within the group turned to how to stay connected, how to continue to experience the rich opportunity for personal sharing and growth that it represented, and how to support the women entering.

The group asked Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF, who was the group’s facilitator in 1998, to return the next year to help them continue the conversation. Eventually, a decision was made to expand the size of the group by inviting all of those members who had experienced the same pattern of entrance developed following Vatican II. It was also agreed that attendance at the meeting would be voluntary, and not mandatory as it had been for the annual vow meeting.

### March Madness Evolves

Initially, the leadership of the congregation agreed to continue to support the meeting through the congregational budget. After a few years, the leadership recommended that the group become a self-sustaining “network,” similar to other networks forming in the congregation around particular topics of interest and concern.

Since the gathering now took place in March, the group eventually adopted the name “March Madness,” picking up on the excitement, chaos and surprise that annually surrounds the college basketball tournament of the same name. Eventually, the name expanded to include not just the spring meeting, but also the group of “younger” sisters in attendance.

Though initially the group’s March conversation topics centered mostly around the joys and challenges of living life as women religious, as members aged and settled into BVM life, the topics shifted to helping one another through life transitions such as changes in ministry, professional development, illness, or the death of friends and loved ones.

“These weekends are so energizing and have become a top priority in juggling schedules for the following year. Each member of the group has a deep respect for one another and in listening intently to one another’s stories, there is a trust that builds over the years knowing that what’s said within those walls stays there,” said Ann Credidio, BVM, who makes the journey each year from her place of ministry in Quayaquil, Ecuador. Looking toward the challenges of the years ahead, she added, “We are confident that we are walking into the future TOGETHER.”

Paulette admitted that a major challenge in the present is mourning the loss of so many sisters who have companioned the members since entrance. “Yet, we remain open to the movement of the Spirit renewing religious life for a new century, always ready to be surprised by Spirit.”

**About the author:** Pat Bombard, BVM serves as the director of Vincent on Leadership-Hay Project, DePaul University/School of Public Service, Chicago.



**The oldest member still in community to enter as an “associate” is Mary Ellen McDonagh, BVM, who entered in 1973 after a five-year gap in new members. For everyone following her who wishes to attend, the “March Madness” pattern of gatherings now includes:**

**December** — Homecoming and celebration of New Year for those who can easily travel to Dubuque (a time of prayer and play);

**March** — A three-day gathering facilitated by Dorothy Heiderscheit, OSF (a time of significant personal sharing and of support for one another); and

**July–August** — A week or more at The Spiders, a BVM vacation property (a time of play, relaxation and daily prayer which we take turns planning).

**This pattern of annual gatherings continues to sustain the life and mission of those youngest members of the community who participate.**

Image: Traditions continue with 30 years of pearls of wisdom.



# BVMs ‘Come Alive’ in March Madness Ministries



Sisters share their ministry journeys as they change with the times, ‘giving life’ to others in new ways that challenge old traditions.

## Sharon Rezmer, BVM: Companion on the Journey

by Mary Nolan, BVM

**As Sharon Rezmer, BVM reflects on** her first year of ministry as parish visitor, the words of Howard Thurman come to mind: “Don’t ask what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive and go do it . . .”

For many years, Sharon has engaged in doing what makes her come alive. She grew up on the northwest side of Chicago with her parents Joseph and Gertrude and her sister Nancy. She was taught by the BVMs at St. Ferdinand ES, continued her education at Madonna HS, and graduated from the University of Illinois, College of Applied Health Sciences. She was hired at Chicago’s Resurrection Hospital as a medical technologist specializing in clinical microbiology—a job she loved for 34 years.

### Coming Full Circle

In 2006, Sharon reconnected with the BVMs at Wright Hall in Chicago and became the assistant administrator. She felt drawn into the BVM circle of friends and charism of charity. She followed her heart and entered the BVMs in 2012.

Today Sharon ministers in two parishes in Dubuque, Iowa: St. Raphael Cathedral, the oldest BVM mission in Dubuque and St. Patrick, a bilingual parish. Both parishes have a rich history of

BVM presence through the years. She describes the parishioners as “dedicated and generous in their time and in their donations.”

Sharon brings the art of listening to her ministry—recalling a grieving husband telling again the story of his beloved, a mother celebrating the healthy newborn in her arms, an elder in hospice who is afraid to die. Wherever she meets parishioners—in their homes, on the street, in hospitals or nursing homes—each encounter provides an opportunity to bring God’s love and peace.

### Parish Ministry Offers Life Lessons

As coordinator of the Parish Life Committee, Sharon organizes monthly parish get-togethers and tours of the Cathedral, helps with diocesan receptions and events, and sometimes cleans out closets and storerooms. She volunteers twice a year with other BVMs, serving suppers for people who are poor and/or homeless. She has invited BVMs to assist her: Marjorie Heidkamp (Herberdette) writes a monthly ministry pamphlet; Judy Callahan (Eugene Mary) serves at some events and gives tours of the Cathedral; and Deanna Carr (Bernita) reads to children at the Wednesday night meals.

“I have learned so much from the parishioners—their openness, simplicity and holiness,” Sharon says. She shares how one parishioner opened the church for daily Mass for many years. Over time, he graciously accepted illness: losing his ability to walk, giving up his home, and finally dying with serenity and peace. “He taught me how to live with open hands,”



BVM Sharon Rezmer is immersed in her ministry at St. Patrick in Dubuque, one of two parishes where she serves as parish visitor.

says Sharon. “I can only imagine that Mary Frances Clarke would fit in well with our daily, busy schedules. We are all companions on the journey, encouraging one another to live life to the fullest.”

As she looks forward to next year, Sharon has another goal in mind. “I’d like to study Spanish so that I would be able to better communicate with some of our parishioners.” Sharon will always be striving to “do what makes her come alive” in service to others.

**About the author:** Mary Nolan, BVM (Patricia Mary) lives in St. Louis and ministers in service to the elderly.

## Amy Golm, BVM: Spiritual Specialist

by Lois Dolphin, BVM

**“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for a moment?”** These words of Henry David Thoreau were featured on a video presentation by the chaplains of Agnesian Health Care in Fond du Lac, Wis.

Amy Golm, BVM serves as one of those chaplains. The occasion of the presentation was a “Know and Go” session. These educational endeavors attempt to build community, not just inform staff of the work of their colleagues.

Amy opened the session with an engaging introduction to the role of the pastoral staff as “spiritual specialists during life’s difficult situations.” Amy knows something about life’s difficult situations, having had two falls that resulted in extensive periods of rehabilitation. The healing process caused Amy to grow in empathy and compassion, essential virtues for the health care chaplain.

### BVM Journey

Amy met the BVM community at Carmel HS for Girls in Mundelein, Ill., now Carmel Catholic HS (CCHS). At CCHS, she learned about Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, where she continued her education. She entered wholeheartedly into campus life, interacting with sisters in the classroom, the chapel, the residence hall, and at social gatherings. Amy says, “I was drawn to the mission of the BVMs, their love for each other and for their students, and their commitment to building the reign of God on earth.”

Amy entered the BVM congregation in 1993 and professed final vows in 2003. During her novitiate in Chicago, Amy participated in the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at Loyola University Medical Center. Her first stint as a hospital chaplain was at Palos Community Hospital in suburban Chicago, where her duties were primarily in hospice care.

### Living the Charism

After five years at Palos, Amy returned to Clarke University, where she spent 10 years in campus ministry and liturgy, including several years as director of campus ministry. During that time, she completed a master of divinity degree at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, graduating with honors in May 2008.

Amy began her present ministry with Agnesian Health Care in 2014. The mission of Agnesian Health Care, sponsored by the Sisters of St. Agnes, is “to provide compassionate care that brings hope, health and wholeness to those we serve by honoring the sacredness and dignity of all persons at every stage of life.” Chaplains are integral to promoting the mission throughout the organization as well as at the bedside. Consequently, Amy’s duties are varied.

She is the chaplain dedicated to the palliative care team at Agnesian Health Care. She ministers to people who are suffering from serious, often life-threatening illness. Amy explains, “This year a theme in this ministry for me has been accompanying women my age—that is, in their late 40s to early 50s—who are deep in the process of coping with advanced lung cancer. Several of these women have died.”

Often the care is not just with the patient, but with family members. Amy speaks of a 47-year-old woman, “Sandy,” whom she recently accompanied through her final illness. Sandy was the mother of two grown children and a 10-year-old boy. Amy bonded with one of the daughters, who announced on meeting Amy that she was “not a believer.” The young boy had not had any formal support during his mother’s illness and death. Amy contacted Agnesian bereavement counselors to work with him in his grief and loss. Amy acknowledges that “on some days the grief that I witness is engulfing.”

Amy lives by the BVM charism as expressed in *Constitution #10*: “. . . being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in God’s steadfast love.” She says, “This expresses both how I experience the work of God in my own life and how I employ the disciplines of theology and ministry as a chaplain.” Amy indeed “looks through another’s eyes for a moment” and accompanies vulnerable people in their need—helping them enjoy freedom in God’s steadfast love.

**About the author:** Mary Lois Dolphin, BVM is a retired teacher who is active in volunteer work in Chicago, where she resides.

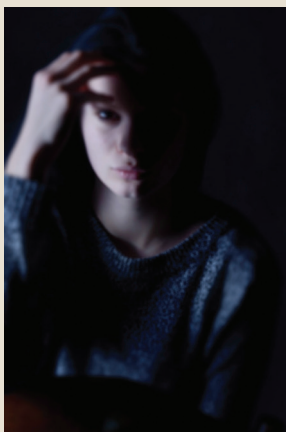


Chaplain Amy Golm, BVM gives the blessing for the new physical therapy gym at Agnesian Health Care.

*March Madness continued on p. 14.*



**Disclaimer:** This is a fictional narrative based on the type of presenting problem I might encounter. Any resemblance to real life individuals is purely coincidental. —Luann Brown, BVM



pixabay

## Tallulah's Story

*I was eight years old when my uncle began to sexually abuse me. Afterward, I was hurt, lost, lonely and afraid. I remember drinking a wine cooler that I found in the refrigerator and the pain went away. A few years later, I was also sexually abused by a female babysitter. When I was 14 years old, an older boyfriend introduced me to heroin. That was an incredible cure for pain. How could people say it was wrong? It was my answer! Then it turned on me and caused all of these problems.*

My role is to help persons like Tallulah find healthy alternatives to alcohol and other drugs to soothe pain, to heal from tremendous harm, to discover personal strengths, gifts and talents, to claim personal worthiness and her own voice, to tap into perseverance and resilience, and to reconstruct and recreate a life. It is a road that is traveled one step at a time.

## Presence Behavioral Health Offers HOPE

by Luann Brown, BVM

**I first encountered Presence Behavioral Health (PBH) in 2013 when I returned to the United States after a 16-year adventure of ministering in Ecuador as a special education teacher. I was searching for a location to complete my internship in the last step in the process of a mid-life ministerial transition to counselor.**

### Internship Validates Ministry Choice

During my nine months of internship, I facilitated groups and provided individual counseling in English and Spanish for persons suffering from substance abuse disorders and other mental health issues. I discovered two defining personal truths during that time: a) that my gifts, talents and life experiences are a good fit for companionship people who desire to improve their mental health functioning and b) that the mission and values of PBH are congruent with mine.

As one of multiple health care ministries comprising the larger Presence Health system in Illinois, PBH is the result of the collaboration of five religious communities. Core values for Presence Health spell the acronym HOPE: Honesty, Openness, People and Excellence. PBH serves a diverse cultural population, most of whom are covered by insurance through public aid or the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Many of our clients are unfunded for health care and receive services through grants.

### Offering Freedom, Empowerment, Dignity

I was hired by PBH after my internship and currently work at the Melrose Park location. We offer individual therapy for children, adolescents and adults; couples therapy; family therapy; and a variety of group therapy options including parenting, substance abuse, domestic violence, coping skills, anger management, attention deficit disorder for children and their parents, and strengthening families.



Luann Brown works in clinical supervision with Irmario Rios, LCPC, senior clinician for Centro de Salud Familiar, which provides services for Latino clients.

We also provide crisis and psychiatric services as well as case management, linking clients to services for basic needs such as housing, food, employment and immigration issues.

Presenting problems of clients include anxiety, depression, trauma, abuse, addiction, attention deficit disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, personality disorders, and a wide variety of other mental health issues.

Our therapeutic programs empower individuals and families to discover the path to freedom from the debilitating symptoms of mental illness and substance abuse. Our clients are marginalized through the stigma associated with mental illness and we support them in creating lives of dignity and wellbeing.

My contribution to the grand effort includes individual therapy, parenting class, a group for chronic pain and depression, substance abuse counseling, and seven groups in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program. I have discovered that the transferable skills from special education to counseling are invaluable, especially in planning and facilitating group therapy. It is an honor and a privilege to be invited into someone's world during the therapeutic encounter. I consider it a sacred space in which the presence of God permeates the interaction.

**About the author:** Luann Brown ministers as a behavioral health specialist in Melrose Park, Ill.

# Missoula Cluster: An 'Awareness of the Divine'

by Associate Jim Tackes

**Imagine a small group of people with whom you feel very much at home, talking about those things that go to the very roots of your soul. Confidentiality and deep trust add to your feeling of being entirely at ease.**

These are the qualities found in our Missoula (Montana) BVM cluster when we gather for our monthly meetings. In years past, there were more BVM sisters in Missoula than there were associates; today there are more associates than BVMs.



Missoula Cluster BVM members at Mount Carmel (l. to r.) Jane Rogers (Jananne), Kathleen O'Sullivan, and Marie Corr engage with other members through a monthly Skype meeting.

All but one sister, Elizabeth Olsen, BVM (Paul Thomas), have retired and returned to the Mount Carmel Motherhouse in Dubuque, Iowa.

## Technology Restores Bond

At first, our cluster felt separated when the sisters left, as if we had lost a close friendship. This past year, we were able to reunite with those in Dubuque through a Skype connection. We see and hear them and they see and hear us! They are again an active, vital part of our monthly gatherings for prayer, discussion and friendship.

We begin each meeting with an agape communion ritual that solidifies our unity and sacredness, with gratitude in the Eucharist and awareness of the divine present in all of us. We share bread and wine, unified as we deepen this reality. After our liturgy, we discuss selected materials for spiritual enrichment.

## Members Share Reflections

To give you an intimate feeling of the members in our cluster, let's listen to what they have to say:

- Marie Corr, BVM (Dona): It is a gathering of hopefulness for me.
- Associate Marge Nordin: It has been a long journey to where the cluster now is, but it has been faith-filled and full of blessings. Meetings with these individuals monthly have increased my spirituality and opened my mind to so many possibilities.
- Elizabeth Olsen, BVM (Paul Thomas): The Missoula cluster is a life-giving sense of the spirit permeating us through relationship and discussion and our common charism. The members stretch me with some of the shared books, occasional guest speaker, and sharing of experiences.
- Associate Joan Butler: We share our journey and allow each other to be who we are. This relationship is one I have treasured since becoming an associate in 2004. It gives more life, hope and great joy.
- Kathleen O'Sullivan, BVM (Donall): I never miss a meeting. I so look forward to them. They are life-giving. Our bonding frees us/me to share deeply our thoughts and feelings interspersed with laughter.
- Associate Jim Tackes: As a man, I was accepted as an equal by the other members in our cluster. These have all been good years. I have grown in my spiritual life way beyond my own expectations. Many thanks to our cluster.
- Maxine Lane: Our BVM Cluster has welcomed me, an Oblate, to attend their meetings. It is a stable group and they challenge my faith and allows me to explore my relationship with God. They also reach out and involve themselves in community problems.
- Patricia (Pat) Perko, BVM (Vincent dePaul): I like the exchange of the *Montana News*, the prayer and discussion of our actions and important religious topics.
- Associate Mary McCourt: As a child going to a BVM grade school I had no idea the excellence in education I was receiving until later . . . the spirit of the BVM core values—freedom, education, charity and justice—shaped my continued connection to BVMs. To belong to a cluster of BVMs and other associates has offered me a setting of trust and love.

Our members have been active in homeless family placement, visiting the ill, and working to bring our church into the 21st century. All of these have helped us be a vital, living and growing cluster.

**About the author:** Associate Jim Tackes is a former missionary priest who has served the developmentally disabled for 30 years and remains active in service to others. Jim lives in Missoula and has been a BVM associate for 17 years.

## Where There's a Will There's a Way

Did you know that August is National Make a Will Month?



Each year charities are the beneficiaries of many simple bequests left by donors to secure their legacy. If you would like information about including the Sisters of Charity, BVM in your estate plans, contact the Office of Development: [development@bvmcong.org](mailto:development@bvmcong.org) or call (563) 585-2854.



# Women's March on Washington: Our Story

by Carolyn Farrell, BVM

**“Hmmm,” I pondered, as I read an** internet notice in November 2016 announcing plans for a “Women’s March on Washington” scheduled for Jan. 21, the day after the inauguration of Donald Trump.

My mind whirled with questions. “Is this really going to happen?” “How will it be organized?” “Who will come?” “Does it matter?” As a BVM—who taught girls and boys, was active in policies and issues affecting women, and was a participant in the 1995 Fourth International Women’s Conference and an early member of the BVM Network for Women’s Issues—I knew it mattered.

Information on the March’s origins and organization was scarce. I kept watching for more communication regarding the event. Shortly, a website for the March appeared, with positive goals stated and directions provided. Energy and enthusiasm went viral.

## Could BVMs Participate?

My next questions were: Where do the BVMs fit in regarding the Women’s March on Washington? How can they actually participate in the March? An answer slowly surfaced: the BVM Network for Women’s Issues. Created by BVMs in 1983, its mission states: “The BVM Network for Women’s Issues is a national grassroots membership organization of persons promoting justice issues, globally, nationally and locally for women in church and society. An annual gathering and a newsletter provide opportunities for consciousness raising, education, and working for social change.”

I sent a message to the membership’s list serve, asking if there was interest and agreement to sponsor several members’

participation in the Women’s March on Washington, using finances from the Network’s budget. The response was a resounding yes!

The three Network conveners—BVMs Marilyn Wilson (Claudia Mary) and Carol Cook (Conrad Ann), and BVM staff member Mary Ellen Madden—took the leadership role in participant selection for the March. A call went out to all members, and three BVMs responded: Joellen McCarthy and Rose Mary Meyer (Sebastian) from Chicago, and Diane Rapozo (Malia) from Dubuque. Their involvement in justice issues regarding women’s concerns prompted their desire to participate in this historical event.

## Sisters Head to D.C.

On the evening of Jan. 20, they joined 20 busloads of participants heading to Washington D.C. Joellen notes: “We were drawn to participate in this march to help create a nationwide, global-wide space for women’s voices to be heard. Having survived the electoral campaign with its months of disseminating fear, hatred and anger, we were hungry for a different way of people coming together. We felt the companionship of BVMs and associates with us in this gathering and in the many gatherings around the country.”

The March exceeded the planners’ wildest expectations as it was duplicated around the world. Our BVMs delighted in the energy and enthusiasm of the teeming crowd in D.C.

Reflecting on the dynamic event, Rose Mary recalls: “Being a part of the Women’s March in D.C. renewed my energy and deepened my faith in the gifts we women share. Although our heart-felt issues may be varied, depending on our circumstances, the Women’s March

strengthened my belief that we will create a society of justice for all women.”

## Nationwide Ripple Effect

Across the country, BVMs and associates participated in local marches and gatherings connecting with the spirit of the D.C. March. BVMs Carol Cook, Barbara Gaul (Charles Mary) and Associate Virginia Piecuch gathered in downtown Chicago. BVMs Elizabeth Avalos, Bette Gambonini (Esther Mary) and Marilyn Wilson joined Associates Carol and Francis De Carvalho and their son, Kevin, plus 25,000 others who gathered at the San Jose City Hall Plaza to march to a rally at Plaza de Cesar Chavez.

In Dubuque, I was one of 20 speakers at the city’s gathering of 400 enthusiastic attendees. Associate Nancy Van Anne called to report that the Colorado cluster was planning follow-up monthly activities to keep the spirit of the March alive. Other BVMs and associates, active in other parts of the country, shared stories via email.

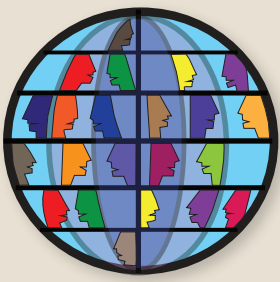
My question was answered. “It did matter.” I underscore my commitment to women’s concerns as I share Diane Rapozo’s message from the D.C. March: “The women promised to continue this March by being involved in the creation of an all-inclusive country.”

In mid-October, the Network will gather in Dubuque for its annual meeting. At this point, future activities are unknown, however I am sure it will be said, “We will keep on keeping on.”

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**About the author:** Carolyn Farrell, BVM (Lester) is the editor of the occasional grassroots newsletter, *BVM Network for Women’s Issues*, volunteer sacristan for Marian Hall, Mount Carmel, and core member of Dubuque Coalition for Non-Violence.





## Commitment to Nonviolence Grows

by Helen Gourlay, BVM

### In living the commitment

to nonviolence made at their 2014 Senate, BVMs and associates read *The Nonviolent Life* this past year. Author John Dear, SJ is a longtime peace activist. Many say they have grown in deeper compassion and prayer for others who think differently from themselves.

*Associate Joann Crowley Beers, Lodi, Wis.:* So, to become nonviolent, I need to see the divine in you, and myself in you, whatever 'you' I am encountering in the moment. This will, of course, be reflected in how I speak about people—with love or not.

*Helen Garvey, BVM (Robert Joseph), Mount Carmel:* The violent environment prompted by our national elections creates a climate for violence on all sides. We need to remember that the love of God and neighbor shapes our mission of justice.

*Catherine Jean Hayen, BVM, Dubuque:* I appreciate this thought of John Dear: "If we dare practice loving, thoughtful, calm nonviolence, we will touch, heal and inspire others. Our nonviolent response will bear good fruit."

*Vice President LaDonna Manternach, BVM, Dubuque:* One way I responded to the multitude of requests for signing petitions and making phone calls to leg-

islators was to start the Digest for the Common Good, a compilation of social justice actions and alerts electronically sent to BVMs and associates once or twice a month. I also took a promise of nonviolence.

*Rosemary Surby, BVM (Rose Mary), Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa:* For me, the motivating line from the book is 'practitioners of nonviolence are reasonable people who demand the impossible.' I am one of those reasonable people who is taking a 'silent and prayerful stance' for nonviolence in my personal life: in movies; the way I speak and treat people; serving on the trafficking committee; and writing letters to congress about immigration and civility in language.

*Pat Taylor, BVM (Wilbur), Mount Carmel:* Judgmental thoughts can easily empower violence in words and actions.

*Roberta White, BVM (Caritas), Montrose, Calif.:* The southern California cluster suggested if a person notices violence in her or others' speech, change to softening one's words. Don't correct another person; instead change a topic from a negative to a positive.

**About the author:** Helen Gourlay, BVM (Frances Helen), Milwaukee, is active online in responding to peace and justice issues and involved in the study and practice of nonviolence.



On National Gun Violence Awareness Day, sisters at Mount Carmel, #WearOrange in hopes for a future free of #GunViolence.



## A Centering Journey

by Carol Spiegel, BVM

### During my sabbatical following nine years in

congregational leadership, I spent Lent and Easter of 2016 at Christine Center in Willard, Wis. Heading north in the winter for two months seemed counterintuitive, but after talking with Johanna Seubert, FSPA, who became my twice-a-week spiritual director, I knew in my bones that this would be right for me.

### Routine Fosters Mindfulness

My hope was to become more centered in my daily life. Some practical decisions and events contributed to my spiritual growth. I opted for a room in the Guest House and chose a plan with three hours of manual labor each weekday. Those hours of labor were key in my experience.

Daily routine included exercise, chanting, and two half-hour periods of meditation with added time for prayer, reading and journaling. I also attended liturgies at Holy Family Church in Willard, a Mandala Workshop, and a Triduum Retreat.

### Healing, Centering Process Evolves

During the two months, some dear friends died; I grieved them, as well as others who had died much earlier. The spiritual journey involves letting the subconscious bring forth feelings that yearn to be healed. I am usually able to ignore pain; this probably contributed to my need to be made whole again after my leadership years.

As the daily routine continued, I found myself wanting to attend to the manual labor without distraction. The work itself kept me in the present moment and gave meaning to the Benedictine motto of "Prayer and Work" (<http://www.osb.org/gen/topics/work/kard1.html>).

### Technology Challenges Serenity

My use of technology was challenged the very evening I arrived. I could not log onto my computer, so I swung into a problem-solving mode and figured out how I could manage without the laptop.

This experience got my attention. I wanted to live meditatively and use the tech tools mindfully. No signal on my cell phone was helpful, and I took care of necessary email during the week, saving longer messages for the weekends. Since I had a tablet for journaling, there were several days when I didn't even turn on the computer.

Christine Center changed me in some subtle ways. I feel more centered now. I still multitask, but do so more deliberately and less frequently. I have unique memories of the people at Christine Center and the moments we shared. For this, I am deeply grateful to our BVM congregation.

**About the author:** Carol Ann Spiegel, BVM (Ann Carla) lives in Oak Park, Ill., and volunteers as a conflict resolution educator.



## Loyola University Chicago Extends Honors to BVM Sisters



**Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM (Clement Mary)** received Loyola University Chicago's Coffey Award on June 9 from the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership. The award is named for the first president of Mundelein College, M. Justitia Coffey, BVM, and is bestowed by the University on alumni from each of their schools in recognition of their leadership and service to others.

Mary Ann shares, "The education we celebrate carries on the passion of Justitia Coffey: freeing students to be who they are and do what they love and so forever transforming the landscape of our world. That is the real Coffey Award—and it belongs to all of us."

Loyola President JoAnn Rooney invited Mary Ann to "receive this award in special recognition for your dedication to advocating for women in the Catholic church and raising awareness of peace and justice issues; your devout leadership as part of the Sisters of Charity, BVM, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious; as member of Loyola's Board of Trustees; and graduate of Mundelein College."

 [HTTP://BIT.LY/2SU8ZQD](http://bit.ly/2SU8ZQD)



**BVM Jean Dolores Schmidt** became the 173rd member inducted into the Loyola University Athletic Hall of Fame on Jan. 21. Sister Jean attended her first Loyola University Chicago basketball game in 1962. At age 97, she has been chaplain of the Loyola men's basketball team since the early 1990s, and an important part of the lives of many Loyola students. Sister Jean says, "I appreciate being in the Hall of Fame with all those wonderful athletes, who have brought such honor to Loyola and have influenced so many people."

 [HTTP://BIT.LY/2JYNSLR](http://bit.ly/2JYNSLR)

**Carolyn Farrell, BVM (Lester)** was honored for her leadership at the annual Mundelein Spring Mass and Brunch on April 30 in Chicago. She was recognized for her role in guiding Mundelein College into Loyola University Chicago and establishing the Ann Ida Gannon, BVM Center for Women and Leadership in 1993 as a heritage piece of Mundelein. The Gannon Center educates and fosters women leaders to contribute in the development of a more just social order—preparing women to lead extraordinary lives.

Carolyn notes, "Some women were leaders in the past and maybe they were recognized as leaders and maybe they weren't—history never really recorded women's stories very well at all, so yes, we want to lift up women and women's leadership . . . today we're talking about the past, a peek at the present, and hope for the future."



 [HTTP://BIT.LY/2RSSVV5](http://bit.ly/2RSSVV5)

Photos: Contributed by Loyola University

### DSHA Celebrates BVM Roots at 125th



BVMs in attendance are: (l. to r.) Suzanne Effinger, Therese Shinnars, DSHA President Ellen Bartel, Virginia Stone and Janet Desmond.

Divine Savior Holy Angels (DSHA) in Milwaukee marked the beginning of its 125th anniversary year with a special liturgy on Feb. 1. Holy Angels Academy opened in Milwaukee in 1892 under the leadership of the Sisters of Charity, BVM. As Holy Angels grew and thrived, it merged in 1970 with Divine Savior HS, established by the Sisters of the Divine Savior, to become Divine Savior Holy Angels.

# Chip in for your Charity 2017

The BVMs will again participate in the John Deere Foundation's Birdies for Charity Event.® The PGA Golf Tournament, held July 13–16 in Silvis, Ill., offers donors an opportunity to support their favorite organization by pledging support for each birdie scored throughout the four-day event. Last year, the sisters received over \$70,000 from donors, as well as a matching gift from the John Deere Foundation. The funds helped to upgrade lighting needs on the Mount Carmel campus. Proceeds from this year's event will enable the update of audio/visual equipment in the Motherhouse Chapel.



To participate, contact the Office of Development: [development@bvmcong.org](mailto:development@bvmcong.org) or call 563-585-2854.

## BVMs Recognized for Years of Dedication



**Linda Roby, BVM** celebrated her 30th anniversary of working in Deaf Ministry for the Archdiocese of Portland on March 16. Claudette Jerez, media services coordinator for the Archdiocese, says, "Sister Linda has become a necessary part to this community, bridging the gap between people of different spectrums and with different challenges in their daily lives. We are all thankful for her service and look forward to her continuous good work at the Archdiocese."



**Ramona Barwick, BVM (Simone)** was honored April 6 with a celebration marking her 60 years of ministry at Clarke University, Dubuque, Iowa. Ramona is one of only four BVMs to serve at Clarke for 60 years or more. BVM Associate and Clarke professor Norm Freund likened Ramona's service to that of one of the original five BVMs who founded Clarke, Rose O'Toole. Rose spent no time in the classroom but dedicated her life to improving the lives of young people through education. "All manners of behind the scenes work is needed," shares Norm. "Sister Ramona, bless you for being the Rose O'Toole of our time at Clarke."



**Theresa Gleeson, BVM** was presented with the Companion Award by the Board of Directors at Taller de José in Chicago during the Eighth Annual Builder's Day Celebration on April 23. The award is given each year to a person "who has been an extraordinary companion, exemplifying the vision of accompanying the dear neighbor without distinction and witnessing to God's love to the world."



## BVMs Co-sponsor Presentation on Immigrant Families

Award-winning journalist and author Margaret Regan shared heartrending stories of people caught in the chaos of the U.S. immigration systems during her presentation "Immigrant Families Under Fire—A Call to Compassion in the Heartland" at Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa, on March 30. The event was sponsored by the Sisters of Charity, BVM and 29 co-sponsors of Crossing Borders—Dubuque, a group of concerned citizens, organizations and religious working to raise awareness of and advocate for the injustices experienced by immigrants.



## Remembering Sisters at Mount Carmel

Over 170 family members and friends joined BVMs at Mount Carmel for the 10th annual Memorial Mass on May 7, honoring deceased sisters who hold places in the hearts of so many. "It's been a difficult year for our BVM community," shares President Teri Hadro, BVM. "We grieve the deaths of 26 of our sisters since last year's Memorial Mass . . . Your presence here today assures us their lives of service are not forgotten. Words cannot express how grateful we are."

## In Loving Memory

**"Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not taken away."**

Please pray for the Sisters of Charity, BVM who have died January 2017–May 2017:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Rosemary Shaughnessy (Gerald)</b><br>Oct. 24, 1929–Jan. 28, 2017         | <b>Therese J. Jacobs (Therese Carmelle)</b><br>May 9, 1929–April 6, 2017 |
| <b>Kathleen Doherty (Patrick Louis)</b><br>Aug. 24, 1922–Feb. 9, 2017       | <b>Therese Fox (Rita Maurice)</b><br>June 17, 1930–April 11, 2017        |
| <b>Janita Curoe</b><br>March 28, 1929–Feb. 10, 2017                         | <b>Mary Kelliher (Maurita)</b><br>July 22, 1927–April 14, 2017           |
| <b>Margaret Mollan (Laurice)</b><br>March 22, 1922–Feb. 26, 2017            | <b>Carmelina Meyers</b><br>Jan. 29, 1926–May 11, 2017                    |
| <b>Margaret Haas (St. Leonard)</b><br>Aug. 26, 1932–March 1, 2017           | <b>Frances Dolan (Franciscus)</b><br>Nov. 10, 1916–May 18, 2017          |
| <b>Therese Mary Waughon (John Francine)</b><br>March 7, 1931–March 15, 2017 | <b>BVM Associates</b>  |
| <b>Elaine Wojcik (St. Lillian)</b><br>Feb. 14, 1928–March 15, 2017          | <b>Mary Versackas</b><br>Nov. 8, 1927–May 20, 2017                       |

To read a sister's obituary and funeral reflection, visit: [www.bvmcong.org](http://www.bvmcong.org).





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<http://blog.bvmcong.org>

**KINDNESS**  
Get in the Habit

**#CatholicSisters**

FACEBOOK.COM/CATHOLICSISTERS  
National Catholic Sisters Week

Mary McCauley, BVM (Mercedie), who was pastoral associate during the 2008 Postville Immigration Raid in Postville, Iowa, welcomes a Hispanic man.

**Catholic sisters of the Upper Mississippi River Valley (CSUMRV)** launched a campaign during National Catholic Sisters Week in March encouraging people to be kind to one another. "Kindness: Get in the Habit" was created to counter the continued divisiveness seen throughout the country. The message is shared on billboards, in movie theater ads, through social media posts, and in Catholic school classrooms. The Sisters of Charity, BVM are one of the 12 congregations that make up CSUMRV.

**KINDNESS**  
Get in the Habit



To learn more about the **KINDNESS** campaign, and watch the video, visit:

[youtu.be/YujgAsnw9sM](http://youtu.be/YujgAsnw9sM)  
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[www.bvmcong.org](http://www.bvmcong.org)