

## SAVE THE DATE

**June 12-17**  
Congregational Assembly  
Dubuque, Iowa

**July 13-15**  
Associate Summer Retreat  
Dubuque, Iowa  
Contact Associate  
Susie Wright, ACT:  
bvmassociates@bvmcong.org

**Sept. 9**  
Diamond Jubilee Celebration  
Mount Carmel Motherhouse

## How Can Our Call Be Heard?



## Summer Retreat

BVMs | Associates  
Candidates | Friends



Bridget Sperduto, M.Ed.  
Eileen O'Shea, B.A.

Why do we exist?  
Where do we come from?  
Who are we?  
What must we do?

Join us as we reflect on these questions through sharing and listening to our stories, meditation, ritual, song, prayer, and liturgy.

**July 13-15, 2018**  
Mount Carmel | Dubuque, Iowa

**Contact:** Suzie Wright  
bvmassociates@bvmcong.org

**BVM Associate News** will be emailed and posted on the Associate page of the members' website. Copies mailed on request. Contact bvmassociates@bvmcong.org.



# BVM Associate News

A Faithful Present, a Hopeful Future

FREEDOM • EDUCATION • CHARITY • JUSTICE

SUMMER 2018

## Dear Circle of Friends,

We are very excited to be so close to so many wonderful things happening at Mount Carmel this summer. We have the 185th Anniversary Celebration, the 2018 Congregational Assembly, and the Associate Retreat. BVM associates are not only welcome; you are wanted to attend any of these activities.

As part of this year's retreat, we are inviting those of you who are artists to share your images, words, and works with us during the retreat. We

will display the art during the retreat and then you can take it home with you. For those associates who are not planning to attend, please feel free to send a digital photo of your art to be included in the display, too.

We are hoping for a diverse collection to witness. There will be a computer to display the digital art such as photos, video, and written works through a PowerPoint presentation. Tangible art (paintings, drawings, sculptures, quilts,



weavings, etc.) will be on display in St. Joseph's Hall.

If you have any questions, please contact Suzie Wright at 563-451-7914, or stop by her office in the BVM Center.

—Suzie, Kimberly, Eileen and Grace  
Associate Coordinator Team (ACT)

## Check out our NEW website!



Visit us at this NEW link:  
[www.bvmsisters.org](http://www.bvmsisters.org).

After months in the making, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary are excited to announce the launch of our new website. Displaying a fresh look, the site features easier navigation with dropdown menus for desktops, mobile phones, and tablets, and quick links on the homepage to help you get to the information you want most.

Visit the "Get Involved" tab to learn how you can participate in on going activities. The volunteer and associate pages feature new videos and associate reflections.

We invite you to explore all the new site has to offer. We hope you like the changes you see. If you have any feedback, complete our new Contact Us form.



## Cluster News



Led by Associate Coordinator Suzie Wright, the Minnesota cluster gathers to learn more about human trafficking and how they can do their part. Our condolences go to the family and friends of Ann Redmond, CSJ (pink vest) who passed away in March.

## MINNESOTA

On Feb. 17, 2018, 15 Minnesota sisters and associates came together to learn more about human trafficking and to socialize at a gathering hosted by Pat Thalhuber, BVM. Associate Coordinator Suzie Wright lead the discussion on the basics of human trafficking followed by Ann Redmond, CSJ who spoke about the realities of trafficking in the Twin Cities.

While in Minnesota, Suzie met one-on-one and with small groups of sisters and associates. They enjoyed local cuisine including the homemade pasta of Associate Anne Klejment and a bluegrass serenade for breakfast in a coffee shop.

## MONTROSE

The 'Top of the Morning' came to Wellness Works (WW) on Saturday, March 17, 2018, on the Feast of St. Patrick's Day as the BVMs of Montrose, associates, candidates, and spouses descended upon the healing grounds of the veteran refuge.

WW is a not-for-profit corporation based in Glendale, Calif. For the past 10 years their mission has sought to promote the optimal reintegration of veterans into the community and to honor their service to our country. Their programs center on the goal of restoring a sense of wholeness of mind, body, soul, and most important, spirit to veterans and their families.

In working to re-build this community, it is essential that non-veteran citizens participate in supporting organizations like WW. It was here that we heard the call! The Montrose-based BVMs and associates hosted a monthly BBQ that Wellness Works provides for veterans and their families.

The BVM crew arrived mid-morning with food and supplies in hand and went right to work. Set-up included everything from a grounds crew that swept and raked, to setting up tables and chairs, and food prep. However, the best part of our day was the time spent breaking bread and visiting with WW staff, guests, and veterans and their families.

—Teresa Tiffany, BVM Associate



Visiting with a military veteran are Associate Clara Schwartz (l.) and BVM Marguerite Murphy.



The Montrose cluster hosted the monthly Wounded Warrior BBQ on St. Patrick's Day.



The road rose to meet us.  
The wind was at our backs.  
The sun shone warm upon our faces.  
The rains fell softly the night before.  
Until we meet again....  
May God fill your heart with gladness.

—Adapted Irish Blessing



## Meet an Associate: Mary Lou Reid



I was taught by the BVMs at Our Lady of Peace High School in St. Paul, Minn., and entered the community from there in 1965, along with Mira Mosle and Teri Hadro who are still in the community.

I am married to John Celentano who is also an associate. John and I met at a business conference in Lake Louise, Canada, in 2000, started working together in our own business, Reid Legacy Group, Inc. and before we knew it, we were walking down the aisle together in 2007.

I am a Certified Financial Planner and John is an Insurance Professional. Together our ministry is to help people plan financially for a fruitful life for themselves and their heirs.

While a BVM, I learned core values that have stayed with

me for life. I also developed lifelong friendships while in the community that I value and treasure to this day.

Becoming an associate was a natural outgrowth of my long time connection with the BVMs, a group of women whom I saw as vibrant and caring . . . women who knew how to tell a good story and how to laugh. BVMs are a group of women who embrace life and are not afraid to grow through change. I like that and I wanted to be a part of that.

Being an associate helps me stay “centered.” When my workdays pull me in multiple directions it’s nice to have people to be with, to pray with, to take time out with who ultimately help me get back on that centered track through life.

Writing the book, *Always Eat Dessert . . . and 6 More Weight Loss and Lifestyle Habits I Learned in the Convent*, is beginning my journey down the path of another kind of ministry. We always ate dessert at Mount Carmel! When I entered the BVMs in 1965, I was 50 pounds overweight. I lost the 50

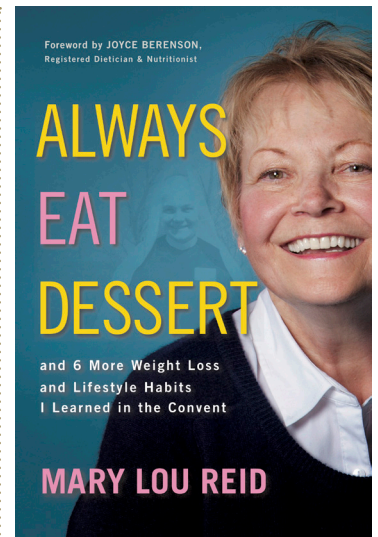
pounds and kept the weight off for the past 50 years. I learned habits at Mount Carmel that stayed with me forever and I want to share those habits with others. One does not have to enter religious life to develop a healthy and productive lifestyle of mind and body . . . and a sense of humor.

I had a great support team through the writing process. My friend Mira was there with me from the beginning with her encouragement and expertise.

My husband is the one who suggested I go back to Mount Carmel to write when I complained I did not have time to write at home. While I was gone John used my good cookie sheet to grill steaks, but that was a minor catastrophe. As Shakespeare said, “All’s Well that Ends Well.”

Now I am off to a new beginning with a new ministry and the thread of the BVMs and associates woven through the story of my life.

—Mary Lou Reid, BVM Associate



Mary Lou Reid's book,  
*Always Eat Dessert . . .  
and 6 More Weight Loss  
and Lifestyle Habits I  
Learned in the Convent*,  
is available in bookstores  
and on Amazon at  
<https://amzn.to/2LqRnvo>.

## Meet the ACC: Jeannie Fritscher



My introduction to the BVMs came in the late '90s when I met BVM Jane Rogers at a Hospice Gathering in Ames, Iowa. After this gathering, our relationship grew and flourished. Through Jane, I came to know about the BVMs, Mary Frances Clarke, and their mission and core values.

Ten years later, I began the journey into association which has been a “gift” to me. A few years ago, I was privileged to participate in the BVM immersion trip to Ecuador. The trip was a great learning experience

and a wonderful opportunity to work together on projects, to share with those less fortunate, and to live out the core values!

I reside in Stanton, Iowa, where I visit people who are experiencing grief, as well as minister to those suffering a loss of someone who has died by suicide. I belong to the Lutheran Church and fill in during the minister's absence, and I am part of a centering prayer group that meets weekly.

During the winter months I am in Arizona where I continue my grief ministry and always

keep my ears open to those around me and assist in any way I can.

I am beginning my second year on the Associate Coordinating Committee. I value our meetings because they allow me to interact with other associates and BVMs and come to know them in a deeper way. I am very honored to be an associate and humbled to be in the presence of all of you when time allows.



Associates Kimberly Emery (l.) and Kathy Linhardt.



Attending the CSW 62 are (l. to r.) BVMs Mary Fran McLaughlin, Eileen Fuchs, Marge Clark, Elizabeth Avalos, Bette Gambonini, Maryknoll Affiliate Kathy Ress, Associate Kathy Linhardt, NACAR Board Member Conni Dubick, and Associate Kimberly Emery.

## United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's Forum

When I look back on my experience at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women's Forum (CSW 62), I am amazed at the range, depth, and outreach of this annual conference, which offered over 10,000 women the opportunity to learn, engage, and move forward in promoting global gender equality.

What impressed me the most about CSW 62 was that it provided an open platform for the voices of women who are

usually not heard because of the constraints of poverty and injustice or the silence imposed under patriarchal systems and religious hierarchies. Among the talks, these had the greatest impact on me:

- A discussion on the risks of sexual harassment and the deportation of female farm workers in Central California because 70% of them are undocumented;
- A panel on the on-going genocide in Myanmar with two women forced to use pseudonyms to avoid retribution upon return to their country; and
- Saudi women discussing an Internet-based women's rights campaign bringing change to their country because, "We can breathe through Twitter."

The week was also about BVM community members coming together from all over the U.S. Over a delicious meal at a Manhattan restaurant on the last evening, we shared stories and insights from our intensive U.N. tutorial on the need for freedom, education, compassionate solidarity, and justice for all women. Then, it was time to return home and put these BVM core values into action.

—Kathy Linhardt, BVM Associate



## Do You Know a "Hidden" BVM?

To celebrate the 185th Anniversary of the community, the BVM Heritage Society is searching for "hidden" BVMs in the congregation's history.

We encourage you to help in this research. A couple of questions to stimulate your thoughts:

- What BVM influenced your ministry? How did she influence it?
- What were the circumstances of this person's influence?
- What "hidden" BVMs influenced the BVM congregation throughout its history?

If you are willing to participate in this research for the BVM

Heritage Society Meeting on Nov. 10, 2018, please email Jeroma Day at [jday@bvmcong.org](mailto:jday@bvmcong.org), or call 563-556-3240.

As we continue planning, we will keep you informed.

**Planning Committee:** Associate Sharon Scully, BVMs Kitty Lawlor and Jeroma Day

### BVM Mission:

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 & JUSTICE.**

### Check us out online:



**Sisters of Charity**  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Freed by Love, Acting for Justice  
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[WWW.BVMCONG.ORG](http://WWW.BVMCONG.ORG)