

Salt

Summer 2018 • A Publication of the Sisters of Charity, BVM



**Worship, Work,
and WIN!**



SEASONing

A Message from BVM Leadership

A year ago in Rome, Pope Francis told leaders of the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master

“Awaken the world, illuminate the future! Always with a smile, with joy, with hope.”

This issue of *Salt* presents several snapshots of how BVMs and associates do just that. The pages you are about to turn reflect joy, hope, appreciation for the beauty of visual arts, gratitude for deficit-erasing BVM piano teachers, and celebrations of relationships which bloom wherever the followers of Mary Frances Clarke find themselves.

In June, BVMs will mark the 175th anniversary of their arrival in Dubuque and in November, we will celebrate our congregation’s 185th year. In anticipation, our theme this year has been “Fostering a Legacy of Love.” Today’s BVMs do this as heirs of Mary Frances Clarke and her companions, and as women who know the steadfast love of our gracious God.

In the BVM tradition, we attribute our founding to five very good friends rather than to a single individual. Before emigrating to the United States from Ireland in 1833, Mary Frances Clarke, Margaret Mann, Rose O’Toole, Eliza Kelly, and Catherine Byrne weren’t just friends; they were united in their faith in a God who loved them and were impelled by a desire to respond to that love by serving others.

Together, they opened a school, Miss Clarke’s Seminary, on North Ann Street in Dublin.

*Together, they crossed the Atlantic to New York and then Philadelphia. **Together, they navigated inland waterways to arrive in the lead-mining town of Dubuque (est. 1788) in the not-yet-state of Iowa (est. 1846). Their love for each other, for their little community, and their bone-deep trust in God’s love enabled them to take great risks on behalf of others. Their legacy of love inspired generations of BVMs to do the same.

The articles in this issue illustrate how today’s BVM sisters and associates foster our founders’ legacy of love. From the 75th anniversary of Xavier College Preparatory, to a quick tour through BVM finances of the 19th and 20th centuries, to snippets of an NCAA basketball team’s BVM chaplain’s story, to vignettes of women working to “become their most faithful selves,” our authors capture the multiple ways in which we offer hope and joy to the world—all in response to God’s great love for themselves and for our congregation.

When you are finished reading, we imagine that you might come away with a little more hope, additional joy, and a renewed awareness of the God who loves you. Happy reading!

* Because of family obligations, Rose O’Toole traveled separately in 1834.

** Margaret Mann and Eliza Kelly arrived in Dubuque on June 14, 1843. Mary Frances Clarke, Rose O’Toole, Catherine Byrne, and the 11 other women who joined the congregation in Philadelphia arrived in Dubuque on Oct. 8, 1843.

Jeri Hadro, BVM

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Ladonna Manternach, BVM

Mission Statement: The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a community of Catholic women religious who, in response to a personal call from God, have chosen a vowed life of prayer, ministry and community. BVMs express their mission of being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in service to God's people through their core values of freedom, education, charity and justice.

Salt is published three times per year for friends and family of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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2018 Calendar of Events

August

6–10 LCWR National Assembly, St. Louis, Mo.

September

- 9 Diamond Jubilee Celebration
Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa
- 23 Immaculata Alumnae/Faculty Mass,
Annual Meeting, Chicago

October

- 21 Benefactors' Mass, Mount Carmel,
Dubuque, Iowa
- TBD St. Mary HS Alumnae All Class
Memorial Mass, Stickney, Ill.

November

- 1 185th Anniversary of the
BVM Community
- 4 Benefactors' Mass, Chicago
- 16–18 SOA Watch Encuentro at the Border
Arizona/Sonora
- 27 Giving Tuesday

For more information, visit:
<https://www.bvmsisters.org/events/>

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On the cover: Win or lose, the Loyola University Chicago Ramblers know they can count on the love and support of their 98-years-young chaplain, Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM. This year's NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament (a.k.a March Madness) propelled Sister Jean and her team to the Final Four—and gave the world a chance to see BVM values in action. Read more about Sister Jean and the BVM Legacy of Love.

Music, Missions, and More

by Bertha Fox, BVM

Gracia Schmidt, BVM was one of the many piano teachers whose income helped support the BVM congregation in their ministry of education.

185
Years

The Mount Carmel Archives of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa, are like Fort Knox gold for anyone digging for stories and facts about BVM life during the past 185 years. It was where this writer searched for answers to two related questions:

First: *Why and how did BVM piano teachers support the BVM education ministry from 1843 on, as oral history suggests?*

Second: *How could BVMs build and operate five academies, eight boarding schools, two colleges, two novitiates, and a Motherhouse and a Scholasticate, while simultaneously teaching thousands of children in more than 200 BVM-administered schools scattered across 20 states—and not go bankrupt?*

Answers can be found in bulky account books preserved in the archives, and perhaps in the experience of Foundress Mary Frances Clarke and her BVM sisters in 1843 Dubuque.

Dubuque: 1843

A week after arriving in frontier Dubuque, the BVM sisters opened a small boarding school. It did not thrive at first, so they had little to live on. During their first Iowa winter, they were in such straits that they took in sewing and gave piano lessons.

It was obvious the sisters needed more than tuition to support themselves. As membership increased, and Mary Frances sent BVMs to open parish schools beyond Dubuque, the group often included at

least two classroom teachers, a housekeeper, and a piano teacher.

Mary Frances also devised a practical way for the sisters to handle the monies they received: “Use what you need, and send in the rest” (to the Motherhouse). That “rule” has guided BVMs ever since.

Why Piano Teachers?

The piano became popular and affordable during the early 1800s. Dozens of competing piano factories sprang up in Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Chicago. Their goal: a piano in every parlor, school, theatre, and saloon. Pianos became social equalizers and entertainment centers. People clamored for piano teachers.

Accomplished pianists had become BVMs in Philadelphia; now they became piano teachers. Four hundred more BVM pianists did the same. When pastors couldn't or wouldn't pay the full salary to classroom teachers, the sisters could neither make ends meet nor send money to support the Motherhouse in Dubuque. The lessons money, however, could erase the convent deficit and provide some extra to “send in.” It became a cushion against hard times.

The money sent to Dubuque could be moved to wherever it was needed. The Motherhouse was supported, needy convents received help, buildings could be built, and the ministry continue.

Other religious communities also relied on piano lessons to balance their budgets; BVMs were not alone.

Accounting for the Money

Struggles to balance budgets show up in the 239 account books (ledgers) written between 1843 and 1994, and preserved in the Mount Carmel Archives. Fewer than half of the nearly

Music, Missions, and More continued on p. 6.

BVM Presence in Archdiocese of Dubuque for 175 Years

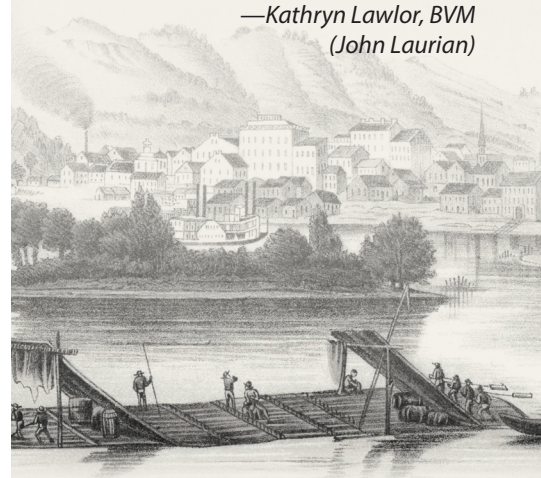
A bell on board a Mississippi River packet rang out on June 23, 1843, announcing the arrival of Eastern passengers coming into the harbor of Dubuque, Iowa. When the townspeople rushed to the dock, they met Bishop Mathias Loras, accompanied by five Sisters of Charity, BVM—Margaret Mann, Eliza Kelly, Patrice Caniff, Francis O'Reilly, and Joseph O'Reilly.

By the middle of July, the sisters, who had been teachers in Philadelphia, began the first school for the children of Dubuque. They urged Mary Frances Clarke, their foundress, and the other 13 members of the BVM community in Philadelphia to join them in beginning the ministry of education in the vast Iowa Territory.

In order to sustain themselves, the sisters obtained a pioneer farm south of the town, through the efforts of their spiritual director, Rev. T.J. Donaghoe. There they built their first Motherhouse and a boarding school for girls. When their graduates joined them, the BVMs expanded their schools to Chicago and westward along rivers, railroad tracks, and the Santa Fe and Oregon trails.

This expansion enabled the other BVMs to move to Dubuque, where they built their Motherhouse, Mount Carmel, along the banks of the Mississippi River. Nearly 5,000 women joined the BVM community in fulfilling its mission and ministry.

—Kathryn Lawlor, BVM
(John Laurian)



Dubuque in the 1940s. Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa

As we enter our 185th anniversary year of the founding of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we feature the second of three articles to celebrate “A Legacy of Love.”

'Use What You Need, and Send in the Rest'

Music, Missions, and More continued from p. 5.

200 schools staffed by BVMs have account books there. That was not a major problem because between 1893 and 1955, nearly every convent sent six-month and 12-month reports to Mount Carmel. These were summarized and copied into five "Mission Receipts and Expenses."

Identically arranged categories (line items) were used for BVM accounts. Entries were written in ink into multi-year ledgers. "Salaries" is the first item on the Receipts page; "Piano" is the second.

These meticulously kept account books contain more than numbers. They hold BVM histories, compressed between two covers.

What the Numbers Show

Four uncomplicated account categories were chosen for examination for this article: *Salary and Piano Incomes*, and *Living Expenses* and *Remittances* (money sent to support the congregation).

Data from accounts of 45 randomly selected large and small parish schools from across the United States, operating between 1890 and 1961, were entered into a dozen spreadsheets and analyzed in various ways.

Here is an example from the decade after the death of Mary Frances Clarke (1887). It shows that the decision she made in 1844, to use piano lessons income to support the congregation, worked. The same process and success continued until cassette tapes and recordings lowered the need for a piano in every parlor, and music teachers found new ways to use their skills.

Data from 1894 and 1899, from accounts of seven (7) convents from California, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas.

Two years' worth of data from each convent are combined. Together they had expenses of \$19,988, but salaries totaled only \$14,387. Ideally, the salaries would have covered expenses with money left over to send in to Mount Carmel. Instead, they were \$5,601 in the red.

However, they had \$3,088 from other income sources (gifts, sales of pencils, etc.), plus the piano lessons income of \$8,689. By taking \$2,513 from the piano lessons income, and adding that to the other income sources, they not only erased their deficit and ended up in the black, but they had \$6,569 left to remit for congregational support. Without the piano lessons income, they would have had nothing to remit and a deficit of \$2,513. (Sound small? The deficit's equivalent in 2017 dollars is about \$63,000.)

During the 1930s, 100 percent of the lessons income was usually remitted, along with every extra dime the sisters could earn and spare, for the congregation had much debt from loans incurred during the previous 20 years. Realmo Sullivan, BVM—treasurer from 1925–55—using loans, bonds, mortgages, and sophisticated juggling, managed to keep the congregation afloat.

Lessons Provide Cushion

For nearly 140 years, more than 400 BVM piano teachers made a significant contribution to the common purse of the congregation by teaching piano lessons. Without the piano "cushion

money," it would have been more difficult to financially support congregational administration, new members, and the sick and aging, or to undertake needed building projects, continue sisters' education, establish special missions, and most importantly, reduce debt, for debts were seemingly without end.

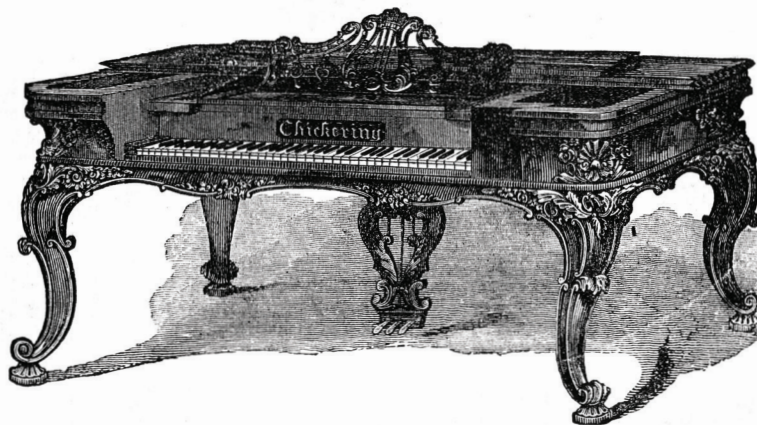
Every BVM helped achieve those goals. Generous benefactors, from 1833 on, have added their support. Prayer accomplished miracles. So did individuals such as Realmo Sullivan, who inscribed in her accounts: "God giveth the increase."

So in spite of debts, mortgages, and multitudinous loans, bankruptcy did not result; the BVMs and their ministry of education continued without interruption for 185 years.

BVM piano teachers played a unique role in making this happen; the account books document it. But Mary Frances Clarke made it possible with the simple but challenging guide: "Use what you need, and send in the rest."

About the author: Bertha Fox, BVM (Dolorose) served on the faculty of Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, as music teacher and music department chair. She is retired and lives at Mount Carmel, Dubuque.

CHARLES F. TRETBAR,
Importer and Dealer in Piano Fortes, Melodeons, Sheet Music, and Musical Merchandise in General,
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Sole Agency for the celebrated Piano Fortes of Chickering's, Boston; Dunham, New York; Albert W. Ladd, Boston (Paris Prize, 1855); Stodard, New York. Also, Geo. A. Prince & Co., Buffalo, and Carhart's New York Patent Improved Melodeons.

The 1870 Dubuque Directory displayed an ad featuring a Chickering square piano (above). Source: Center for Dubuque History, Loras College

Embracing the Future of Religious Life

by Lois Dolphin, BVM

The success of the Loyola Ramblers basketball team

was the feel-good story of March Madness. At the center of the story was the darling of the NCAA tournament—"Sister Jean"—Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM, of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. With her down-to-earth demeanor, her humility, humor, basketball smarts, and affection for the young men who clearly returned that love, she brought attention to women religious everywhere.



Kathy Kandefer, BVM gives a presentation at an RFC meeting.

Fifteen miles south of Loyola's lake-front campus lives another BVM whose ministry is devoted to promoting religious life. Katherine (Kathy) Kandefer, BVM is on the staff of the Religious Formation Conference (RFC), a national Catholic organization serving religious institutes of women and men with programs and services for those in the ministry of initial and lifelong formation, and general congregational membership. The BVM congregation is one of the members of RFC.

Core Values in Action

Kathy's position is entitled "Operations Manager." I asked her how her ministry enables her to live BVM core values. Education is obviously a huge part of her work at RFC. In particular, her role includes hospitality—charity in action.

Whether it is welcoming board members and workshop participants, responding to telephone inquiries, or generally making people feel welcome and at home, it is an essential part of day-to-day living. In planning for meeting venues, Kathy is conscious of justice issues such as trafficking, ecological sensitivity, staff treatment, etc.

Ellen Dauwer, executive director of RFC, says, "As the operations manager for the Religious Formation Conference, Kathy often manages multiple operations simultaneously and skillfully. Many of our members remark on the

warm hospitality that Kathy extends to them on the phone and in person. She is literally the voice and face of the RFC. One example of this occurred a few months ago when I was hosting a committee from my Sisters of Charity Federation during a snowstorm. Despite the fact that CTU was closed, Kathy came to the office with her crockpot and cooked a delicious meal for the group. This is but one example of how Kathy goes out of her way to serve others generously."

RFC Moves to Chicago

About a year ago, RFC relocated from Washington, D.C., to Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. Kathy considers the move a good choice for the organization because of the collaboration possibilities with similar groups like the Institute of Religious Formation and the National Religious Vocation Conference.

The move to Chicago was a homecoming for Kathy, who grew up on the northwest side of the city in St. Ferdinand Parish. The seven Kandefer children, beginning with Kathy, all attended the parish elementary school. Kathy and two of her sisters attended The Immaculata High School, following in their mother's footsteps. Sister Mary Juanita Joseph Malone, BVM was a longtime friend of Kathy's mother since teaching her in high school. Kathy's second name is Juanita and she tells of trekking out to O'Hare

Airport to visit Juanita Joseph during a layover on her visit home to Ireland.

Kathy entered the BVM congregation in 1976. After completing her degree at Mundelein College, she went to Cardinal Spellman ES in Omaha to teach kindergarten. During that time, she studied at Creighton University, receiving a master's degree in pastoral counseling. In the following years, Kathy ministered as a parish pastoral associate, in diocesan and national catechetical leadership, and as BVM Initial Membership Coordinator. She has been with RFC for 5½ years.

One of the RFC vision statements is "to respond to God's ongoing invitation to the 'new' in religious life." Kathy's musing on that statement indicates her belief that there is surely a place for religious life in the future. She says, "We must break out of the old mold, acknowledge the changing nature of religious life and embrace the future with enthusiasm and creativity."

Kathy is grateful "for all I have received from the BVMs over 42 years. We continue to be a vibrant community. It is essential that we keep a positive attitude in all that we do and experience. Life is faith-filled and I have enjoyed sharing that in my ministries."

About the author: Lois Dolphin, BVM lives in Chicago, where she volunteers as parish and hospital care minister.

Mount Carmel: A Showcase for the Arts

by Associate Christine Olsem

“Artworks enliven the visual environment and provides opportunities for conversation,” shares Eliza Kenney, BVM, curator of the Motherhouse Heritage Rooms at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa. “Working with the art is very gratifying, even the tedious tasks of cleaning, repairing, and reframing.”

Eliza’s appointment as curator came in 2007 as the Motherhouse renovations were nearing completion. “It was essentially an enormous blank canvas,” she noted. “A time of challenge and opportunity.”



Eliza Kenney, BVM and Judith Dewell, BVM (John Marie) hang “Birds of Paradise,” a painting by secondary art teacher Fleurette Blameuser, BVM.

The establishment of display criteria for Mount Carmel’s public spaces helped to meet the challenge. The primary objective was to feature the work of BVM artists and pieces significant to BVM history and missions.

Opportunity came in the ability to view large works never before displayed. These included paintings by Helen Kerrigan, BVM (Paulita), then art professor at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, and Blanche Marie Gallagher, BVM, former art professor at Mundelein College in Chicago. Once these found a home, smaller pieces completed the décor.

“We especially enjoy changing the location of the artworks,” says Eliza. “A new location brings different lighting, which highlights new elements in the piece. Changing one work causes the surrounding works to be seen in a new way. However,” she adds, “some sisters use the paintings as visual clues for their room locations. We wouldn’t dare move *them!*”

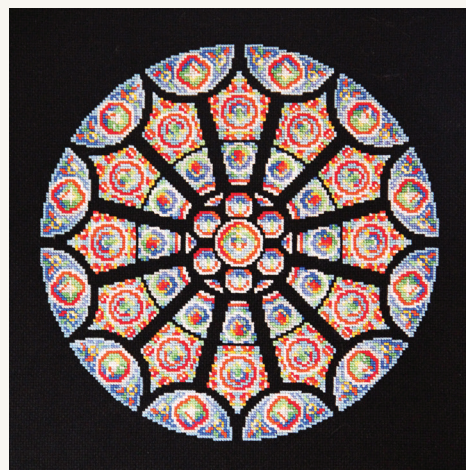
BVM Art Takes Many Forms

BVM artists include the professionally trained as well as sisters who explored their artistic talents during retirement. Many of the latter studied at Wright Hall, a BVM retirement residence in Chicago, under Mary Eustella Fau, BVM, and later Vivian C. Wilson, BVM (Lauren). The closing of Wright Hall in 2011 sent an influx of art to Mount Carmel.

While paintings and sketches comprise the majority of BVM art at Mount Carmel, collections of photography, pottery, and needlework have grown sub-



Pottery:
Carmelle
Zserdin, BVM



Needlepoint: Barbara Brooks, BVM

stantially in recent years. A number of works in these mediums, like the aforementioned ones, received recognition for their artistry.

The needlework exhibit in the Motherhouse Prairie Room featured crewel, cross-stitch, needlepoint, string art, and tatting. It included a needlepoint by Barbara Brooks, BVM (Donna) that received second place in original design in the 1996 needlecraft competition sponsored by the English publication *New Stitches* (see left).

Currently, a collection of pottery by Carmelle Zserdin, BVM, former art professor at Clarke University, fills the display case (see left). Also on display is pottery by Genevieve Kordick, BVM who received multiple awards in Best of Category—Pottery, Professional Division, from the Arts & Recreation Council of Greater Des Moines (Iowa).

Charmaine LeMaire, BVM earned several recognitions for her hand-painted ceramics, including the 2001 Freddy Award, the highest award given to a non-professional by the Iowa Ceramics Association. Her prized 14-piece nativity set is on display in the Motherhouse at Christmas.

Photographs by Helen Marie Wolkerstorfer, BVM (Edith) hang throughout Mount Carmel, including the

award-winning “Angel in Waiting,” the photo of her 90-year-old father’s hand on his cane (r.). Her other displayed works include several selected from among hundreds of entries for the juried mixed media art show at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Curator Role is Essential

Just as the art collections have expanded through the years, so has the responsibilities of the curator. The first curator, Jean Monica Lanahan, BVM, appointed in 1991, focused on the care and display of artifacts and artwork in the Motherhouse and the training of docents to give tours of the Heritage Rooms.

In addition to these duties, Eliza handles the placement of art throughout the Mount Carmel campus as well as floral arrangements and seasonal decorations for the Heritage Rooms. Since 2010, Judith Dewell, BVM (John Marie) has assisted Eliza, particularly with Christmas decorations and rearranging artwork.

Keeping track of the art is a huge undertaking. Jean Monica created a database to assist her in the task, which proved

invaluable during the Motherhouse renovations when art was temporarily packed and stored.

Later, Regina M. Qualls, BVM, former Secretary of the Congregation, and Thea O’Meara, BVM, her administrative assistant, designed a new, expanded database. Thea was instrumental in adding photos and detailed descriptions. The database continues to grow as sisters retire to Mount Carmel, along with their collections.

About the author: Associate Christine Olsem is the administrative assistant to the Secretary of the Congregation.



Photo: Helen Wolkerstorfer, BVM

Greeting Cards Feature BVM Art

Show your love and concern for family and friends by sharing the gift of prayer. Through enrollment in the BVM Prayer Association, they will be included in the monthly Masses and prayers of the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Choose from an assortment of unique Prayer Association cards for any occasion, featuring the artwork of our BVM sisters.

**Contact the Office of Development
for more information at:**

563-585-2854

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www.bvmsisters.org/whats-new/prayer-association/



Artwork was created by (l. to r.)
BVMs Mary Eustella Fau, Barbara
Cerny, and Mary Paulino Crabb.

'It's Better to Wear Out Than Rust Out'

by Eileen E. Fuchs, BVM



Photos on p. 10 courtesy of Loyola University Chicago

"He drains the three from downtown." "Lots of points in the paint." "They are five for five at the line." "Stuffed him." "In his hip pocket." "He gets the roll." "Kisses the glass." "Amongst the trees." "Dialing it up from way deep."

Ah, the sounds of basketball announcers. Some of you may know what these sayings mean. "Amongst the trees" means that a short guy is surrounded by the way taller guys. You knew that, I'm sure.

I know someone who really knows that. Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM. Jean has been the chaplain for the Loyola University Ramblers from Chicago since 1994. She prays with the team and scouts the opponents. Jean had her own bobblehead long before the great run of 2018 by the Ramblers. Oh, the great run by the Ramblers? You don't know? Well, let me tell you!



The Madness Begins

The Loyola Ramblers men's basketball team began in 1914. Since Jean has been chaplain, they were never regular season champs, conference tournament champs, or invited to the NCAA Men's Basketball tournament—best known as March Madness. So Jean has experienced many non-winning seasons.

That is—until 2018—when the current team, under Coach Porter Moser (see left), won the regular season of the Missouri Valley conference and the conference tournament, received an invitation to the NCAA tournament, and made it all the way to the Final Four. Not since 1963 had the Ramblers gone this far in their season.

It was during March Madness that the madness really came to a head for Sister Jean. You could see her at every basketball game wearing the maroon and gold signature scarf. She was pictured in the circle of the “tall trees” praying before the game (see left). She was seen waving her pom pom during the game. And Sister Jean was seen hugging each player after the game. Can you imagine that? Hugging a bunch of sweaty guys? With a huge smile, no less. That is true devotion and love.

Sister Jean was interviewed by ESPN, CBS, and the Chicago Tribune, just to name a few. She handled it all with style and grace.

Sister Jean Reflects BVM “Team” Values

Sister Jean has always practiced true devotion and love to students, to education, and to God. This is not new. What is new is that so many others got to see this firsthand. The Ramblers are best known for their teamwork and any sports fan knows that you do not succeed without lots of practice.

So what kind of practice has Sister Jean had and who is her team? Sister Jean entered the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) in 1937. A great team to say the least! All of her practice was in the field of education, eventually as academic dean of Mundelein College, Chicago, and then dean at Loyola University Chicago.

Most recently, she resides in a residence hall at Loyola to be available to listen to the students. I won't mention, for the 98th time, Sister Jean's age, but will tell you she quotes her mother as saying, “Better to wear out than rust out.”

One reaction to all this madness was from Jean's team. The BVM sisters decided it was time to make up our own basketball team. Sisters who played in high school or Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) teams of old were coming forward to volunteer for the team. BVMs Pat Bombard, Ann DeNicolo, Lou Anglin, Marge Clark and more were ready to lace up the shoes. There were cheerleaders led by our very own Lynn Lester, BVM. We even had BVM Lynn Windsor leading the way in taking care of the logistics, like a scorekeeper.

I'm sure if asked, someone would

step up and bring water bottles and orange slices. It got so popular on BVM airwaves that I actually thought we were going to play a game. True madness.

We thank you, Ramblers, for an exciting season. We thank you, Sister Jean, for being who you have always been—a devoted loving educator, always greeting the day with prayer, meeting each person with grace and dignity. We especially thank God that we do not have to play a game of basketball.

About the author: Eileen Fuchs, BVM lives in Crestwood, Mo., and is currently on sabbatical.



Decked out in Sister Jean apparel, Chicago area BVMs (l. to r.) Peggy Geraghty (St. Cabrini), Diane O'Donnell (Joanella), and Mary Fran McLaughlin (Virginia Mary) appeared on the NBC nightly news to share stories about Sister Jean.

TAPROOTS: Leaving a Legacy of Love

by Jody Iler

Each May at the annual Memorial Mass at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa, a special family comes to honor the memory of Monica Cahill, BVM (Monita).



Alicia Villegas and her daughter Natasha place flowers on BVM Monica Cahill's grave.

"Sister Monica showed me values in life, like loving God, loving yourself, loving others (even your enemies)," says Luis A. Cortez, who was known to Monica as "Tony."

Monica first met Tony's mother, Carmen Villegas, at a hospital when he was just a baby and Carmen was 15 years old. "She took my mom under her wings and took care of her . . . from that moment our lives changed forever, for the better."

It was not only Tony and his mother whose lives were blessed by Monica with her wisdom, presence and love, but also his sisters Alicia Villegas and Maria Cortez, his brother Julio Castro—and now, their own families.

BVM Mary Ellen Meckley (Davidette) has been part of this family's history, too. She says, "I have known the Villegas since that early time in Chicago. There were many occasions when I brought them food from the food pantry."

Monica became a beloved "Grandma" to Carmen's children as they grew up. She was there through the years sharing her love, guidance, faith, and compassion. Tony says, "She saved my sisters' lives and my own life by loving my mother the way she did and raising us the way she did."

Tony is proud of his five children, his "blessings" in life. "I guide them and instill the values that Sister Monica gave us . . . her legacy will live forever in TAP-

ROOTS and the people she touched will teach their own children these values."

A Dream Realized

Monica's story began over 30 years ago, when she dreamed of a program that would help young parents by instilling healthy self-esteem, the importance of their children's early years, and the need to become responsible parents and citizens. Essential elements included helping them to finish school, find a job, and provide low cost day care for their children.

Monica named the program TAP-ROOTS (Teen and Adolescent Parents Realizing Ongoing Orientation Towards Success). The root of the plant that goes





Mary Ellen Meckley, BVM (center) gathers with the family who comes every year to Mount Carmel to honor Monica Cahill, BVM.

deepest into the soil and draws the richest nourishment from the earth is the taproot. Similarly, through nurturing and support, the quality of the lives of parents and children can flourish.

TAPROOTS began in the basement of a church on the West Side of Chicago. The first BVMs to work there were Francilla Kirby and later, Mary Kelly (Hortense). Associate Rosemary Juliano helped for several years, and Kelly Lytle, former BVM, often came to take the boys to a nearby park.

Founded in 1978, TAPROOTS was incorporated as a nonprofit organization, helping adolescent parents and their children. During the '90s, TAPROOTS shifted from its initial services to a more preventative approach, offering social and educational outreach, life skills, and parenting and cultural arts programs with a healthy living theme. Monica served as its executive director for two decades.

Maria Cortez, who has three children of her own, says: "Every day I try to better myself. Sister Monica always taught me to believe in who I am. In this world, I hear horrible news daily. I think back to when Sister Monica taught me the prayer of St. Francis, 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,' when I would ask her, 'Where was God?' I learned in time what she wanted me to learn: God is inside our hearts; we are God's instrument."

Alicia Villegas adds, "She is always going to be in our hearts . . . for me she is still alive in the memories and good things she did in life . . . we will always love her. She was a good 'Grandma' and there is not enough lifetime to say thank you Sister Monica for everything that you did for us."

Remembrance, Respect, Love

When the extended Villegas family attends the Memorial Mass at Mount Carmel, they visit the grave of their beloved "Grandma." Maria says, "Being able to celebrate Sister Monica's life and listening

to the rest of the community share stories and remember her is so special."

"Going to Mount Carmel is like visiting her home and the sisters treat us like we are family. When we visit her grave," says Alicia, "I always tell my kids how she did so much for us."

Love and gratitude abound for BVM Mary Ellen, too. Tony says, "We are so grateful for Sister Mary Ellen, who loves and cares for us as well." Alicia adds, "I want to say thank you to her for her support and we love her like an angel, too."

Mary Ellen shares, "There have been years when Tony or Maria had to work, or there was only one van able to make the three-hour trip." But those in the Villegas family who are able to make the journey, always come, and Mary Ellen is waiting at Mount Carmel to welcome them.

Tony reflects, "When we take that trip to Iowa every year we are doing it for Sister Monica, but also in respect to all the sisters that touched and changed peoples' lives. I want to thank the BVM family for inviting us year after year to their home and treating us with so much love. To us it is the least we can do for Sister Monica and all the BVM sisters who gave their lives to do the work of God."

To learn more about TAPROOTS, visit: taprootsinc.org.

About the author: Jody Iler is communications specialist for the Sisters of Charity, BVM at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa.



After establishing TAPROOTS in 1978, the spirit of BVM Monica Cahill continues through the generations of the families she helped so long ago.

Sheryl Schulte: Following the Path of Leadership

by Jody Iler

"I credit the BVMs with much of my success in my career," says Sheryl Schulte, BVM friend and donor. "Leadership was always encouraged throughout my schooling and in the BVM community. The examples I witnessed of women succeeding as leaders was the best lesson of all."

Growing up in East Moline, Ill., Sheryl and her three siblings went to St. Anne ES, taught by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "I had excellent BVM teachers and still remember every one of them," says Sheryl. "Sister Marie Canfield was my father's cousin, which presented a challenge when I got into trouble. But she was the fairest person I knew. She never reprimanded us in front of our classmates and that really stuck with me," Sheryl recalls.

After high school graduation, Sheryl chose to attend Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. "When I walked onto the Clarke campus," she says, "I immediately felt at home." Impressed with the faculty and picturesque surroundings, Sheryl adds, "I feel like I really came into my own at Clarke. Sister Therese Mackin, BVM (Jeremy), my academic advisor, helped me navigate my freshman year." During a bout of homesickness, Therese



also helped Sheryl "figure out that I was in the right place for me."

Other BVMs and religious influenced Sheryl at Clarke. "Sister Joan Linggen, BVM (Ramone Mary) taught me to appreciate art and became a mentor to me. I try to return to campus once a year to see her, Sister Catherine Dunn, BVM, and Clarke President Sister Joanne Burrows, SC," Sheryl says. "I also visit Sister Therese at Mount Carmel when I can and attend Clarke Alumni events, usually in Washington, D.C."

BVMs Engender Community Values

Sheryl entered the BVM community in 1973. She spent time at St. Paul in Davenport, Iowa, and a summer work-

ing with children of low-income families in Casper, Wyo. Both places reinforced "what community really meant," says Sheryl. "I remember so many and appreciate all they did to help a young associate begin to grow in religious life. It was difficult to leave the wonderful people I knew, but I had determined that it was not meant to be."

During her summers at Clarke, Sheryl had worked at Girl Scout camp. "I loved working outdoors and it quickly became apparent that I could excel in leading others," she says. "Women with strength, humility, compassion, generosity, and spirit taught me that I too could serve that way."

When she left the BVM community, she returned to Girl Scouting. "Although I rarely worked directly with girls during my 35 years in scouting, what I was doing provided great leadership programs for girls in this country and overseas."

Sheryl's love for and willingness to travel enabled her to advance in her career and expertise. For a time she worked on the executive leadership level for the Girls Clubs of America before going back to leadership positions at the Girl Scout National Headquarters on the east coast.

Retired now, Sheryl continues to help others through volunteering, organizing a yearly "Earth Day" event, attending fundraisers, and being politically active.

And she faithfully remembers the sisters in various appeals during the year. "Throughout my life, one or more BVMs have guided me in directions that have led to a full and happy life. I have always felt that I can never pay back what the BVMs gave me," she reflects. As a legacy donor, Sheryl adds, "I want to make sure the sisters and their mission are provided for even when I am gone."

Make a
Will
Month

August is National Make-A-Will Month.

Recent studies have shown that nearly 70 percent of all Americans do not have a will. Wills are an important way to ensure that your legacy is preserved, regardless of how much money you have. Making a will allows you to remember family, friends, and charities in a special way.

For more information about becoming a member of the BVM Legacy Society, contact us at:
development@bvmcong.org

About the author: Jody Iler is communication specialist for the Sisters of Charity, BVM at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa.

Relationships Embody Core Values

by Bette Gambonini, BVM

Freedom: The gift that permits us to become our most faithful self. The gift that permits us to become who we are called to be at the deepest core of our being.

Justice: The principle that assists us to recognize the dignity, equality, and rights of all persons. It is the conviction that calls us to be faithful to the demands of a relationship.

—Core Values, Sisters of Charity, BVM



Associate Carmella Huser (l.) and Program Manager Vivian Clausen check for upcoming events at Catherine Center.



Associate Nancy Harding displays one of her artwork pieces, featured in a recent Associate Retreat brochure.

Associates Carmella Huser from Emerald Hills, Calif., and Nancy Harding from St. Paul, Minn., are living out the BVM core values of freedom and justice. Their stories reveal women who are “relational beings.”

From Mentor to Friend

Carmella serves as a mentor to young women from the Catherine Center, a program of the St. Vincent De Paul San Mateo Restorative Justice Ministry. For the past two years, she accompanied a young woman who served time in prison for drug and alcohol abuse, causing her to lose custody of her adult son and an 11-year-old boy. The woman is now clean and sober, attending school to become a drug and alcohol counselor, and is very involved in her son's upbringing.

“Although we began in a mentoring situation, we have become good friends,” says Carmella. “Every other week we meet for brunch or dinner, a time for moral support and a lot of laughter. As mothers, we share experiences and insights on how to deal with problems raising children, and how to balance time among the responsibilities of motherhood, school, and work. We exchange thoughts and tips on maintaining good health.”

Both women share a strong faith in God and belief in the power of prayer. “Without the spiritual dimension provided by Catherine's Center, my friend says she could not have made the transition from prison into a healthy and productive life,” Carmella says. “She has taught me a lot about the criminal justice system and its need for attention and reform. She dreams of a day when she can help to bring about the change. I will be there, by her side, working to bring about that change.”

Fostering Freedom, Offering Prayer

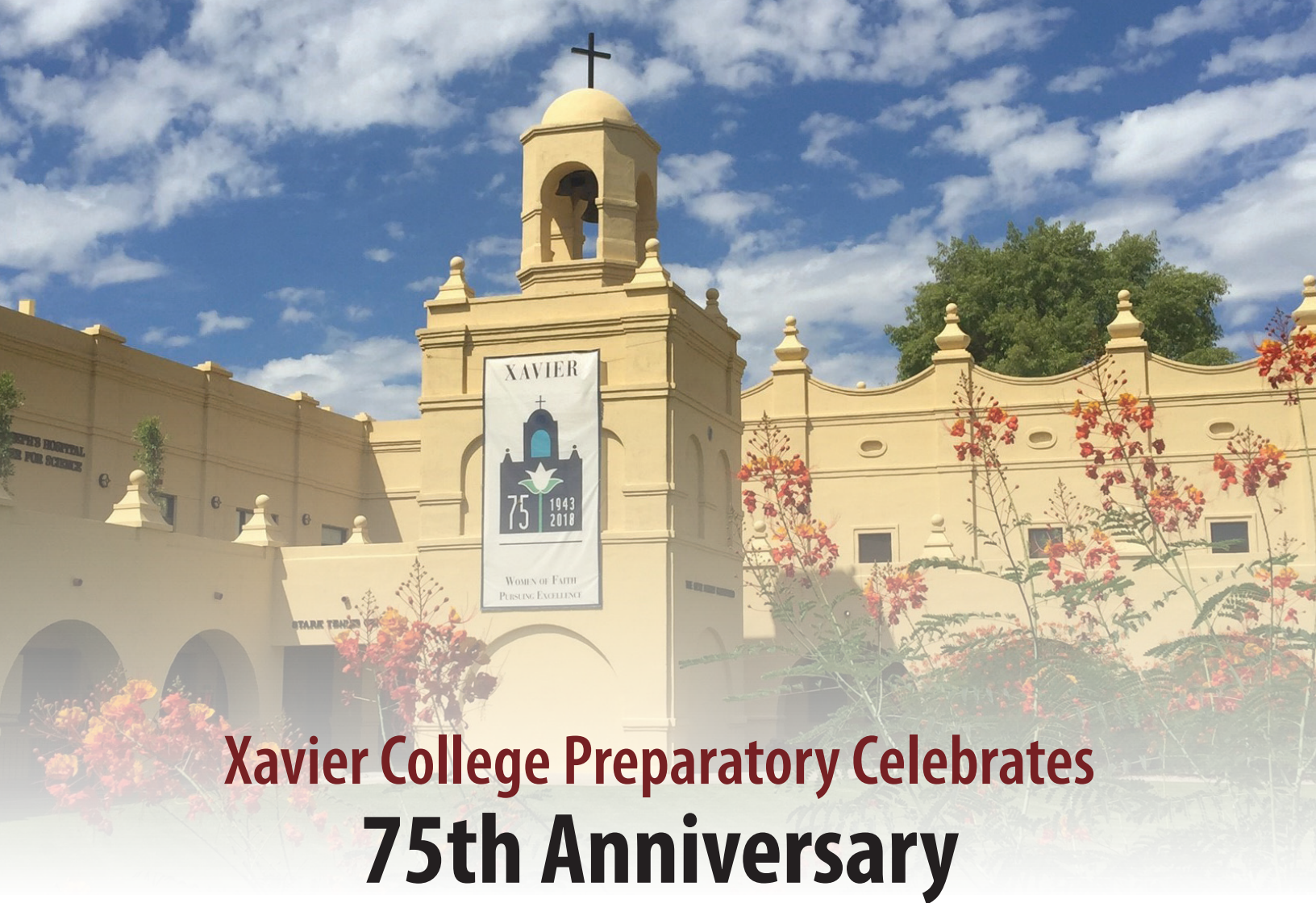
Nancy shares her gift of being relational in living out the core value of freedom. She entered the BVMs in 1966. After leaving, she worked in banking and in-home health care. Becoming a social worker and specializing in serving adults with developmental disabilities became her most valued career. “My challenge in terms of BVM values was ensuring that these adults could have as much freedom as possible to determine the shape of their own lives. This meant challenging unjust systems, treating my clients with compassion and love, and teaching others to do the same.”

Being disabled herself from fibromyalgia and no longer able to do the work, Nancy continues to live a ministry of presence, being more compassionate and loving towards others. “I offer myself as a pray-er for people in my neighborhood and my various communities,” she says. “Some of their photos are on my refrigerator, which has become my ‘prayer wall.’”

To become closer to God, she searches out different methods of praying, including Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness approach. As a watercolor artist, she shares her art with others hoping it will bring them joy and peace. “As I experience the aging process, my desire is to have a more direct experience of the God within me and to be a conduit of God's freedom and love for others.”

Carmella and Nancy help to free others to become their most faithful selves. In this experience, they recognize the inequality and lack of rights encountered by others. With conviction, they continue to build relationships and to bring about the changes needed in our society.

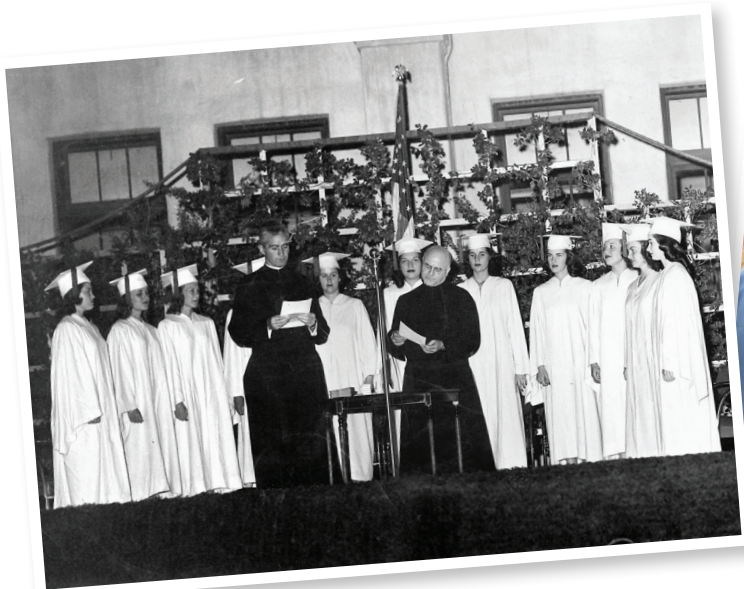
About the author: Bette Gambonini, BVM (Esther Mary) lives in Sunnyvale, Calif., and ministers as a part-time liturgy coordinator.



Xavier College Preparatory Celebrates 75th Anniversary

by Erin Alaimo

Seventy-five years ago,
the first and only all women's Catholic high school in Phoenix opened its doors to its inaugural class of 11 students.



Photos courtesy of Xavier College Preparatory

Founded in 1943 by the Jesuit fathers

of St. Francis Xavier Parish and staffed by three Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the groundbreaking new Xavier High School was originally located in two classrooms at Brophy High School, a Catholic all men's school that had been shuttered during the Great Depression due to financial hardship.

Thus began Xavier's journey from the humblest of beginnings to the remarkable institution that it is today.

Throughout the decades, under the strong, consistent leadership and steadfast dedication of the BVM sisters, Xavier has evolved from a single class of 11 students into a nationally recognized college preparatory with a student body comprised of 1,200 young women.

The school has built a tradition of excellence through its commitment to the Catholic faith, innovative academic curriculum, community service, leadership development, and diverse extracurricular opportunities. One hundred percent of Xavier's graduates attend post-secondary colleges and universities, and its alumnae network of nearly 10,000 women extends across the country and throughout the world.

The original faculty of three BVMs has expanded to a faculty and staff of more than 200. The school's present campus,

which opened in 1953 to accommodate Xavier's burgeoning enrollment, has tripled in size from one building to 20 acres that encompass a beautiful chapel and state-of-the-art facilities. Despite its exponential growth, Xavier's mission to educate young women of faith has never wavered.

This year, the school celebrated the successes of its first 75 years with a myriad of "Diamond Jubilee" tributes and events. A Traditions Day united students and alumnae at a special school assembly and an all-alumnae fete brought hundreds of Xavier graduates from the Class of 1947 through the Class of 2017 back to the school's campus.

In addition, Xavier recently established multiple Jubilee Scholarships for incoming ninth grade students from the four local elementary schools founded by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Francis Xavier, St. Agnes, St. Matthew, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel).

In May, approximately 300 Xavier seniors walked in the footsteps of the 11 young women who led the way, 71 years ago, from Xavier's first-ever commencement ceremony into the world. With the Lord's blessing, Arizona's young women will continue to pursue excellence at Xavier for many decades to come.

About the author: Erin Naughton Alaimo is the director of marketing and public relations at Xavier College Preparatory in Phoenix.



Xavier's Outstanding Leadership

Mary Joan Fitzgerald, BVM (John Raymond) has spent 56 years at Xavier, serving as a teacher, treasurer, and principal for 42 years before being named the school's first president in 2016.

Lynn Winsor, BVM, who is a Xavier alumna, has spent 44 years as a Xavier teacher, coach, athletic director, and vice principal.

Joanie Nuckols, BVM, who was named principal in 2016, has spent 37 years at Xavier as a teacher, campus minister, vice principal, and now principal.

In 2012, Xavier celebrated Sister Joan's "Golden Anniversary" at Xavier; in the fall, Sister Lynn and Sister Joanie were honored at their "Golden Jubilee" as Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



BVMs and Associates Emphasize Nonviolent Lives

by Marge Clark, BVM

One of the ways the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary live out their core values of freedom, education, charity, and justice is through taking a stance on issues of social justice.

Since 2000, the congregation has taken bolder, formal steps in declaring Congregational Stance in four areas, calling each of us to prayer and action on the issue. BVMs are challenged to engage in intentional, focused prayer for those hurting and for wisdom and energy to engage more actively to create change.

BVMs have declared Congregational Stances on issues that speak to the signs of the times:

- Opposition to the Death Penalty (2001)
- Immigration Reform (2010)
- Human Trafficking (2014)
- Nonviolence Commitment (2014)

In the winter 2018 issue of *Salt* magazine, we shared what BVM sisters are doing to support our stances on Immigration Reform and Human Trafficking.

In this summer issue, we focus on Opposition to the Death Penalty and Nonviolence Commitment.

Opposition to the Death Penalty

“As women religious who are ‘being freed and helping others enjoy freedom in God’s steadfast love,’ we believe that all life is sacred. We stand in opposition to the devaluation of human life . . . and the use of violence to exact retribution from the perpetrators of violent acts.”

BVM Gwen Farry (Leontia) carries a “Declaration of Life” card in her wallet in clear opposition to the death penalty. It states, “Should I die as a result of violent crime, the perpetrator should not be subject to the death penalty.”

Rose Mary Meyer, BVM (Sebastian) was instrumental in the legislation that abolished the death penalty in Illinois. BVM Mary Waddell (Valerie) uses the

“We left strengthened and hopeful, with truly global insights into the challenges and successes with gender equality,”

—Roberta Anne White, BVM (Caritas)



Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

BVMs, associates, and students joined a diversity of women at the CSW in New York City March 10–16. This year’s primary theme was “Empowering Rural Women and Girls.” The sub-theme addressed women and technology issues.

Group participants included BVMs Marge Clark and Roberta White; Kathleen Sinclair, BVM and a student from Carmel Catholic HS in Mundelein, Ill.; BVM Associate and Professor Sherry Warren with two students from Clarke University, Dubuque, Iowa; BVM Associate Kathryn Linhardt from Albany, N.Y.; and teacher Rowena Cortina with six students from Bishop Garcia Diego HS in Santa Barbara, Calif.

CSW is instrumental in promoting women’s rights and shaping global standards on gender equality.



internet to learn and participate in actions to end the death penalty internationally and in the United States. She uses email with friends and associates to engage in education across many states and nations—through contacts in Europe, South America, and Guatemala.

Nonviolence Commitment

“Listening to the signs of the times we grieve the level of violence experienced in our local communities and in the global community. The desire to live peaceably with all of creation compels us to recommit ourselves to a life of nonviolence.” The signs of these times bring urgency to transforming minds and hearts to explicitly live nonviolence in all our actions and words.

BVMs continue to oppose the growing racial, ethnic, and religious violence aggravated by hate groups across the nation by taking part in vigils and becoming increasingly active in online support of groups working to counter hate. For example, BVMs take part in Martin Luther King, Jr., events and stand

in solidarity with groups such as “The Movement for Black Lives” a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of black people.

BVM Mary Martens (Loras) continues to support farm workers through calls and emails to legislators and encourages corporations to improve wages and housing for workers. Marge Clark has joined with the Fair Food Program boycotting the one remaining Wendy’s in Washington, D.C., as they refuse to pay the extra penny a pound for tomatoes.

BVMs are challenged to study peace-making, and many have taken a Vow of Nonviolence through group clusters, or with Pax Christi. Mary Waddell links her commitment to the St. Francis Peace Pledge with her volunteer work with the St. Vincent de Paul kitchen four mornings each week. Many sisters take part in nonviolent vigils in resistance to production or potential use of nuclear weapons. One example is Elizabeth Avalos’ participation in vigils at Lockheed Martin, one of the largest U.S. weapons manufacturers. The Shareholder

Education and Advocacy group holds stock in, and participates in resolutions against General Electric and Boeing, which engage in weapons production.

Associate Mary Agnes Leonard speaks, prays with, and supports Veterans for Peace in their work to bring alternatives to violence. She reflects: “I’ve never lost the power of God’s presence in my choices responding, even personally, to abusive, violent attacks. I find the small nonviolent gestures . . . smiles . . . silences are so appreciated in this frightened, angry world. Especially as I age, it’s the blessing that people need, which all heroes and heroines of peace have modeled, that keep me engaged.”

BVM corporate stance inspires us through prayer, public witness, advocacy and hard work! We strive to remain responsive to the Spirit in the exigencies of the times. As we go forward, what new Corporate Stance will call BVMs to act?

About the author: Marge Clark, BVM recently retired as lobbyist for NETWORK in Washington, D.C.

March for our Lives

In response to recent school shootings, over 800 marches were held on March 24 across the country.



“Participating in the demonstration and March for Our Lives was very uplifting for me. Leadership by young people and diversity among the participants gave me hope that we may bring needed changes to gun laws.”

—Carol Cook, BVM
(Conrad Ann)

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD)



EAD 2018, held April 20–23, focused on “A World Uprooted: Responding to Migrants, Refugees, and Displaced People.” Participants included (l. to r.) BVMs Mary Fran McLaughlin, Eileen Fuchs, Marge Clark, Elizabeth Avalos, Bette Gambonini; Maryknoll Affiliate Kathy Ress; Associate Kathy Linhardt; Dominican Sisters of Peace Associate Constance Dubick; and Associate Kimberly Emery.



“I come to EAD with the hope of a renewed faith and energy for the ongoing work to insure justice, refuge, safety, and the opportunity for migrants and their children to thrive,”

—BVM Associate Kimberly Emery

10th Anniversary POSTVILLE, IOWA Immigration Raid **THE SUMMONS** **JUSTICE CANNOT WAIT!**

by Mira Mosle, BVM



Mary McCauley, BVM:
They are challenging us to be authentic Americans, a people and a nation committed to justice, equality, and compassion.

A decade after the largest immigration

workplace raid in U.S. history at Agriprocessors kosher meat packing plant in Postville, Iowa, nearly 350 persons, including many BVMs, answered a trumpet fanfare and the call of their hearts to hear a summons.

They packed into St. Bridget Church on May 11 for an interfaith prayer service, rally and call to action. In solemn remembrance of the nearly 400 persons who were arrested, detained, and deported, they reflected on the lives, families, and communities shattered.

"These same people, as well as those affected by the recent raids in Tennessee and Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, are summoning us!" said Mary McCauley, BVM (Mercedie) who was pastoral administrator at the parish at the time of the raid. "They are calling us out of ourselves to a renewed openness, respect, and love for one another. They are challenging us to be authentic Americans,

a people and a nation committed to justice, equality and compassion."

Recalling the Biblical injunction to neither abuse or oppress a stranger, Rabbi Morris Allen added, "The stranger has become the victim, even as they provide us all with an opportunity for our own economic success."

Immigration lawyer Sonia Parras-Konrad worked closely with many of the victims. "The success of this cruel system of raids and detentions depends on the dehumanization of immigrants," she said. "The real crime is not to cross a border in the dream of building a new life, the crime is to never change the laws to respond to the new reality. ... When you have more than you need, build a bigger table, not a higher wall!"

The Summons now moves beyond Postville to embrace the whole country with a clarion call, loud and clear.

"God of the Universe... I hear your Summons, your call to attend to those in need. I cannot turn a blind eye, a deaf ear. The time is now."

Each resolved:

- To listen to victims of our failed immigration policy.
- To recognize our obligation to welcome and protect immigrants and refugees seeking an opportunity to build a better life.
- To elect leaders with the legislative will to work across political divides to fashion comprehensive immigration reform for the common good.
- To celebrate the richness of our diversity and its untapped potential both for our nation and for those seeking citizenship and asylum within our borders.
- To share this Summons with church and civic leaders, family members, co-workers, and neighbors as a sign of our common quest for justice and compassion.

Will you respond to the Summons?

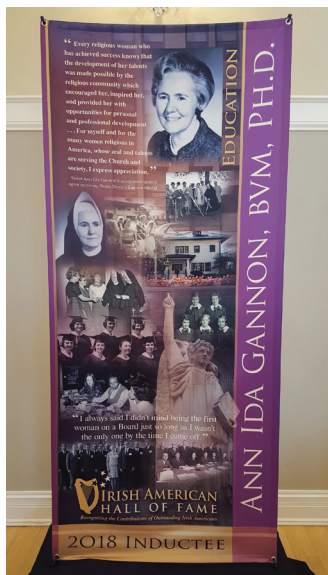
About the author: Mira Mosle, BVM served on the Planning Committee for the 10th Anniversary Observance.



Designed by former BVM Louise Kames, a book of names listing each person arrested in the 2008 raid was placed at the altar with flowers.



Holding a banner at the rally are (l. to r): Rabbi Morris Allen, of Beth Jacob Congregation; Pedro Lopez, a Postville resident whose mother was deported in the 2008 raid; and Father Nils Hernández, pastor of the Trinity Cluster. (Photo by Dan Russo/The Witness)



Ann Ida Gannon, BVM is one of the 2018 inductees into the Irish American Hall of Fame, in the category of education. She was nominated for her lifelong commitment to higher education and encouraging women in leadership roles. Chicago area BVMs attended the April 28 Awards Gala at the Irish American Heritage Center in Chicago. Peggy Geraghty, BVM (St. Cabrini) accepted the award for Ann Ida, who turned 103 on April 2.

[HTTP://IAHOF.ORG](http://IAHOF.ORG)



Helen Marie Wolkerstorfer, BVM (Edith) was honored April 30 at a wine and cheese reception at Bishop Garcia Diego HS in Santa Barbara, Calif. As she retires after 42 years of loving service to the school, BVMs, former students, parents, and faculty attended to wish her well. Helen ministered as biology teacher, campus minister, and counselor and created a "Peace Garden" for students as a quiet and safe place to meet or meditate.



Mary Agnes O'Connor, BVM was named as a Volunteer Nominee from Resources Unite, a resource and volunteer center in Dubuque, Iowa, that serves the tri-state area. Part of its mission is to showcase the work of the volunteers in the local community to inspire others to join them in service. Mary Agnes was honored at the Outstanding Volunteer Awards held May 31 in Dubuque. She ministers as mentor to persons in the Dubuque Drug Program.

Ann DeNicolò, BVM (Ann Thomas)

received the Mother Mary Frances Clarke Award from The Immaculata HS Alumnae Association at the annual luncheon on April 22 at the Chateau Ritz in Niles, Ill. The award is given to an alum for her outstanding accomplishments and efforts she has shown in life. With Ann as she receives her award is Mary Tonoli Teister, President of The Immaculata Alumnae Association. A member of The Immaculata class of 1958, Ann is described by the association as "an amazing woman who has dedicated her life to teaching and helping those in need."



Photo by Sonja Wischne-Mess



Photo courtesy of the Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Mary Breslin, BVM (Brenan) was honored by the Loyola University Chicago Gannon Center, Alumni Relations, and the Mundelein Alumnae Board on April 29, 2018, at the Mundelein Spring Mass and Brunch in Chicago. Mary is a Mundelein alumna and former Mundelein College president.

In Memoriam



**Mary Johnellen
Garrity**

Jan. 1, 1927–Jan. 8, 2018

Mary Johnellen taught elementary school teacher in Chicago, and Hempstead and Bellerose, N.Y. She also taught secondary school in Chicago, Dubuque, Iowa, and Wichita, Kan.

“Johnellen loved life even in the tough times. The twinkle in her eyes and her smile were her signature features, even when she was walking along at a fast clip. She had a big heart and would do anything for anyone. She especially loved children and, upon seeing them, would immediately go to them and play. She was a strong, proud and loyal Irish woman. Even though she may have forgotten many things later in life, it is doubtful that she ever forgot she was Irish.”



**Rita Mary Zander
(Magdalene)**

March 12, 1924–Feb. 7, 2018

Rita Mary taught elementary school in San Francisco, San Jose, and Palm Springs, Calif.; Butte and Missoula, Mont.; and Las Vegas, Nev. She taught ninth grade math and served as high school treasurer in Butte.

“Rita was a good teacher with high expectations for her students. She excelled in teaching in math and art. Mathematics came alive in her classroom through games and guest speakers who demonstrated how concepts applied to everyday life, such as purchasing a car and buying insurance. As an art teacher, she believed that students should create their own pictures instead of simply coloring within the lines. She gave workshops on teaching art and helped teachers decorate their classrooms in different and creative ways.”



**Isabel Miller
(Arcada)**

Aug. 5, 1921–Feb. 17, 2018

Isabel taught elementary school in Waterloo, Boone, Des Moines, and Council Bluffs, Iowa; Chicago, Maywood, and Rock Island, Ill.; Hempstead, N.Y.; Butte, Mont.; Lincoln, Neb.; and Clarksdale, Miss. She was learning center teacher in Muscatine, Iowa, and volunteer in Chicago.

“Isabel was friendly, welcoming and obviously a great teaser with a good sense of humor. She was well aware of people in need, particularly the poor elderly sitting on benches on the Loyola campus. As a mentor and unofficial counselor to the Loyola students she encountered, she matched those who needed help in a particular subject with just the right BVM. Crocheting afghans was a favorite hobby, but even these she generously gave away. She truly was a sister of charity.”



**Mary Ernest
Rothe**

Aug. 19, 1927–March 5, 2018

Mary Ernest taught elementary school in Chicago; Phoenix, Tucson, and Tempe, Ariz.; Kansas City, Mo.; Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Montrose, Stockton, Sylmar, and Glendale, Calif., where she also served as parish director of religious education and tutor.

“Ernest was a good teacher known to be well prepared and always fair. She was prayerful and kind, a pleasant person with whom to live and work. One of her greatest pleasures was talking; the topic of conversation never seemed to matter. Another pleasure was reading. She devoured books and remembered everything that she read. After a visit to the public library, she would stay up half the night reading. Ernest lived simply; what she had was good enough. She suffered from digestive problems for many years. While this kept her away from the dining room, it did not stop her from living and giving.”

Please pray for the Sisters of Charity, BVM who have died

January 2018–April 2018

Note: In Memoriam features excerpts from each Sister's *Welcome*, read at her funeral liturgy. Visit our website to read a sister's entire obituary. [HTTPS://BIT.LY/211D42G](https://bit.ly/211D42G)



**Joan Newhart
(Joan Michael)**

March 21, 1928–March 13, 2018

Joan taught secondary school in Chicago and Mundelein, Ill.; Lead, S.D.; Waterloo, Iowa; St. Louis Mo.; and Bogotá, Colombia. She served as Mundelein College director of academic computing and coordinator for Loyola University Chicago Computer Center. She volunteered for many years as a congregational and high school computer consultant in the Chicago area and Dubuque.

"After retiring in 1998, Joan traveled around the country to provide computer training for BVM sisters. After moving to Mount Carmel in 2007, she taught computer classes in the Roberta Kuhn Center and volunteered as a campus computer consultant. Joan loved old movies. She also enjoyed crossword puzzles, and, of course, 'religiously' followed the career of her brother Bob."



**Patricia Marie Potok
(Liberata)**

May 25, 1934–March 18, 2018

Pat taught elementary school at St. Patrick in Cedar Rapids. She ministered as a nurse for the BVM congregation at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, where she later volunteered as health care provider. She also taught elementary school in Clinton, Iowa; Chicago; and Clarksdale, Miss.

"Pat's favorite place to be was at Two Spiders Lodge in Hayward, Wis. She loved it and spent many hours fishing there. For 14 years, she graciously served as the facility manager, scheduling reservations and overseeing repairs. Pat related well with the local Hayward folks. With their assistance and BVM volunteers, she spent time and energy making the leisure property warm, cozy, waterproof, and animal-free."



**Joan Maga
(Joanice)**

May 9, 1937–April 13, 2018

Joan taught elementary school in Butt, Mont., and San Francisco and Los Angeles, where she was also a vice principal. In Glendale, Calif., she taught elementary school and served as vice principal.

"Every morning, Joan read the sports page so that she could relate to her male students in her classroom. Whether in the classroom or in a coaching format, Joan coached by her inner spirit in speech tournaments, academic decathlons, or in volleyball, basketball, and softball sports. She didn't lead by demonstration, she lead by determination with clearly defined performance standards. She could motivate and coach students to success."



**Rita M. Basta
(James Celeste)**

March 2, 1942–April 18, 2018

Rita taught secondary school in Burbank and Mission Hills, Calif. She served as college/university math professor in Sylmar and Northridge, Calif., where she also served in spiritual ministry to adults.

"Rita wrote in a memoir that considering other novices' stories, she felt that she had 'white collar jobs.' Rita worked in the laundry with Jeanne D'Arc, BVM, who put her in charge of machinery. She also cleaned the barn with several others who enjoyed themselves (bowling alley and basketball court) as well as working. During her duties, she utilized her extra time to memorize poetry of John Dunn, Jessica Powers, and e. e. cummings, which became a lifelong habit."



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Check out our NEW website!



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 was designed with you in mind.

The updated site includes easier navigation with dropdown menus for desktops, mobile phones, and tablets. Quick links have been added to the homepage allowing you to get to the information you most want. We've also published a photo and video gallery and added photos to our online Sister Directory.

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

Visit us at this NEW link: www.bvmsisters.org.