

SAVE THE DATES FOR 2019

Aug. 10

Angels Everywhere
Associates and Sisters
Mount Carmel
Contact: gguinlan@bvmsisters.org

Sept. 08

Diamond Jubilee Celebration
Mount Carmel

Sept. 14

35th Anniversary
Midwest Kindred Spirits
Racine, Wis. (See p. 2.)

Sept. 19

Ray Komar Associate
Commitment Ceremony
Mount Carmel

Oct. 18–19

Associate Coordinating
Committee
Mount Carmel

Oct. 19–20

BVM Network for Women's Issues
Mount Carmel
Contact: drapoza@bvmsisters.org

Oct. 24–Nov. 1

Volunteer Service Trip
Quito, Ecuador
Contact: lritz@bvmsisters.org

Nov. 1–8

Cultural Discovery Trip
Quito, Ecuador
Contact: lritz@bvmsisters.org

Dec. 8

Renewal of Associate Promise

For more information about
associates and events, contact:
bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org.

We would love to share your
associate events, stories, and
photos. Send submissions to:
swright@bvmsisters.org.

For a complete list of events,
visit the members' website:
members.bvmsisters.org>
Resources>Calendar of Events.

For a list of 2019 volunteer
opportunities, visit:
bvmsisters.org/volunteer.

BVM Associate News
will be emailed and posted
on the associate page of the
members' website. Copies
mailed on request. Contact:
swright@bvmsisters.org.

BVM Associate News

A Faithful Present, a Hopeful Future

F R E E D O M • E D U C A T I O N • C H A R I T Y • J U S T I C E

Summer 2019

Dear Circle of Friends,

The spring 2019 Associate Coordinating Committee (ACC) meeting was facilitated by Eileen O'Shea and took place at Mount Carmel in Dubuque, Iowa, May 3–5, 2019.

Updates were provided regarding the upcoming BVM Gathering, Mrs. Berkeley Fund, and future planning.

The committee developed deeper relationships with one another through a shared process of story-telling guided by Eileen. The group also prayed for sisters and associates, as requested.

The ACC finalized plans for an upcoming initiative, "An Associate Conversation—



Pictured (l.) are LaDonna Manternach, BVM; Associates Lori Ritz, Michele Miller, Eileen O'Shea, and Jeanie Fritscher; Vicki Smurlo, BVM; Associate Kathy Weishaar; Mary Frances Reis, BVM; and Associate Suzie Wright.

Making Our Path Together." This process was developed as an outgrowth of the 2018 Spring ACC Retreat facilitated by Jeanne Connolly. More details will come later this year.

The weekend ended with liturgy at the Motherhouse followed by dinner in the Caritas Dining Room.

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



NACAR Associate Leadership Retreat

Associates Lori Ritz, Grace Mendez, Eileen O'Shea, and Suzie Wright were among many who attended the NACAR Associate Leadership Retreat: Living the Charism in Turbulent Times in Houston, Texas, May 13–16, 2019.

Right: Associate Eileen O'Shea sits in the garden of the Holy Name Passionist Retreat Center.



Save the Dates:



Midwest Kindred Spirits (MKS) Reflective Workshop for Associates and Religious

**Creating A Welcoming Community:
Making a Difference in Our
World Today!**

Sept. 14, 2019

**Siena Retreat Center
Racine, Wis.**

Workshop registration fee:
\$35 before Aug. 16 (includes lunch)
\$45 after Aug. 16 (includes lunch)

No refunds or registration
accepted after Aug. 30.

<https://tinyurl.com/y3rtl432>

*Midwest Kindred Spirits:
Celebrating 35th Anniversary*

BVM Network for Women's Issues

**2019 Reimagining
Mysticism:
The Feminine
Journey from
Prayerful Practice
to Prophetic Action**



Facilitated by: Jan Phillips

Oct. 19–20

More details and registration
information coming soon.

Meet the Associate Coordinating Committee (ACC)



Lori Ritz

If I think about my introduction to BVMs it would have been in first grade at Visitation School in Des Moines, Iowa, with Sister Mary John Arthur as our teacher—55 of us! I loved first grade: reading, math, square dancing, and learning the alphabet backwards! Following grade school, I went to St. Joseph Academy and then to college at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa.

I felt a call to be a BVM for 10 years following my time at Clarke. Moving to Phoenix in 1980 was indeed a pivotal point in my life. I opened the first full-day kindergarten for the Diocese of Phoenix.

Once I left the congregation I remained in Phoenix, teaching in the public school and working as a bridal consultant in the evening. I was married for 15 years. I am blessed every day with a phenomenal son, Michael, who is 28 and lives in Phoenix. For forty-five years I followed my natural

calling—that of an educator. During that time I taught kindergarten for 22 years and was an administrator for 18.

Never did I lose touch with what I call my BVM roots. In December 2011, I became an associate, supported by colleagues, friends, staff, family, and Phoenix associates and sisters. I always felt I lived the charism and core values of the BVMs through my work and friendships at St. Paul Parish in Phoenix. I have been on ACC for five years as an associate coordinator and liaison for the Office of BVM Life and Mission.

Following my retirement, I felt a call to return to Dubuque as the Director of the Office of BVM Life and Mission. I have been in Dubuque for two years now; each day excited about sharing the life and mission of BVM sisters and associates as we reach out to others. I continue to be blessed through the “calls” in my life.

—Associate Lori Ritz,
Director of the Office of BVM Life and Mission,
Liaison to the ACC



BVM Year of Prayer and Reflection

This Year of Prayer and Reflection on BVM Life and Mission (YOPAR) has offered a variety of ways to share one's spiritual life and our joint vision of community. We are engaging in this process as sisters and brothers of Mary, to whom BVM life and mission is dedicated as our model and intercessor.

Down in our neck of the woods, our small gatherings have taken place at Shaw's Garden at an outdoor table in early spring, often along the Missouri River banks, in associates' homes, and by way of phone and email! Whatever the place or media, we have enjoyed groups of two or more who can connect from our distant locations.

We all agree it has been a touching experience of the Spirit's continued work within our community's life and mission. The sharing of Mary's scriptural role related to our personal lives has brought us into a deeper contemplative relationship with her personally and as a community.

- As Mary Clair Wenger recently put it, we are blessed in tangible ways with a mutual love that pervades our

gatherings and contacts, citing examples of ongoing concern for each other.

- Theresa Koetting, deeply touched by our leadership's letter on the future of Mount Carmel, feels that love has always been the hallmark in our history, and somehow that spirit will prevail in the new era.
- Jill Burleson cherishes the word often found in scripture, “lovingkindness.” Jill sees that word reflected in BVM communications that stretch our minds to see its broader impact in community action and outreach. BVM publications are grounded in that spirit and she loves to point that out.
- Kay Brown is part of a western Zoom group and Christine Middendorf has started a small church community at her retirement complex.

As a committee member of YOPAR, we'd love to hear your responses to personal and group gatherings; how it may have helped your relationship to Mary, and what ideas or feelings have been generated about our life and mission together. You may send them to Lori Ritz at lritz@bvmsisters.org or respond to me, Mary Frances Reis, BVM at mfreis@bvmsisters.org.

Gratefully,
Mary Frances Reis, BVM

Meet New Associates



Raymond (Ray) Komar

Ray Komar is married to BVM Associate Kathleen Komar. They live in Meridian, Miss. Their 48-year marriage has included four children, and

soon they will welcome their tenth grandchild.

Ray is a retired English professor who offers creative writing classes in various settings.

Kathleen and Ruth Evermann, BVM, companioned Ray. The three gathered together in Mississippi during Holy Week this year for part of the discernment process.

In her letter of affirmation Ruth shares, "Ray works and worships with and among other faith denominations and cultures.

He has a broad vision/understanding of 'church.'"

In seeking association, Ray states his understanding of the connection between sisters and associates: "It is primarily a relationship of prayer and where possible, a support of BVM activities and outreach. It is also a companion journey as the BVMs and the associates move into an uncertain future—but a future where we journey together in hope and faith."



Victoria Roehl

Victoria Roehl, from Chicago, is a former nurse currently working in the Membership and Donor

Services Department of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Victoria shares, "I interpret a major aspect of the BVM charism to be linking contemplation with action. The BVMs and associates are the modern-day circle of friends, inspired by Mother Clarke, who commit to responding to the needs of their community and others by living the BVM core values."

One of her companions, Diane O'Donnell, BVM, describes Victoria's drive to become an associate as: "focused, determined, interested in living the BVM core values, willing to learn from others, and desiring to connect with people whose values she respects and wants to support."

An Associate Reflection



Nancy Niles

I was raised by loving parents who attended mass often and went to confession frequently. They taught our family of six children to live a life that

includes being charitable to those in need.

I remember my father, a grocer, who would feed the hungry, homeless who came into our market. He would give them a loaf of bread, meat, and cheese, and not just one meal's worth, but enough for several days.

My mother visited our local convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet at St. Eugene's Parish in Los Angeles, often taking food as well as bags of avocados from our tree at home.

My parents also supported the church and other charities monetarily. They did not

advertise their charity; my parents quietly did what they could to make the world a better place. This was the way I was raised, and this is what I have tried to carry on throughout my life.

When I first became an associate I often asked what I needed to do because I felt there was more I could "do." BVM Mary Jean Ferry, who was my companion, would reply, "Nothing. You are already doing enough." She kept telling me this until the message finally sunk in. How I lived my life, caring and loving those around me, was what I needed to "do." Everything else would flow from that action of love.

I love visiting the BVM sisters in Montrose. We chat, talk politics and books, play dominoes, and cards—usually Gaigel, a German card game taught to

me by BVMs Suzanne and Mary Jeanne Stopper and Associate Grace Mendez. These games can be very competitive. We always say that friendship is left at the door when we play games.

Our cluster meetings help keep me grounded in the BVM core values of justice, charity, education, and freedom. One of my favorite things we do as a group is the annual Adopt-a-Family at the cathedral in December. We wrap gifts, stock gift boxes of food, and write cards for families in need throughout the archdiocese.

I am grateful for the love of our community. I am thankful for all the prayers of the BVM sisters and associates who pray for me and my family. Prayer and love have sustained me in the tough times.

Commitment Ceremonies: Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa



Maureen Frommelt Commitment Ceremony, April 28, 2019

Attendees include: Associates (I.) Sharon Scully, Betty Takes, Maureen Frommelt, Norm Freund, Marabeth Freund, Marilyn Wasmundt, Christine Olsem, Mary Chapman, Mary Lou Reid, and Jolene Clauer.



Victoria Roehl, Marybeth Coleman, and Laura Field Commitment Ceremony, June 8, 2019

Attendees include: Associates (I.) Jolene Clauer, Victoria Roehl, Sharon Scully, Marybeth Coleman, Norm Freund, Laura Field, Eileen O'Shea, and Therese Hawks.

Associates in Action



In an effort to preserve the tradition of BVM education in dioceses where sisters served, the congregation awarded the Butte Central Catholic School system with a BVM Endowed Scholarship. As a result, four scholarships were awarded to students in the

Diocese of Helena, Mont. On behalf of the congregation, **Associates George Waring and Mary Kay Craig** accepted an appreciation award from the school system for the scholarships. The Helena Diocese is one of eight that have received grants from the Endowed Scholarship Fund. To learn more, see the summer issue of *Salt Magazine*.



Congratulations go to **Associate Dan Abben** for successfully defending his Ph.D. dissertation in the field of organizational psychology at DePaul University in Chicago.



Thank you **Associate Jeanne Harrington** from Bellevue, Iowa, for volunteering to take unclaimed shoes from the Mall in the Hall, located in the Motherhouse at Mount Carmel, to a fundraiser for the Iowa Jackson County Animal Shelter. The shoes will be sent to those who are extremely poor across the country.



The June 14, 2019, issue of *Commonweal* magazine features an article by **Associate Anne Klejment** from St. Paul, Minn. "Staten Island Spirituality, Dorothy Day's 'True Story' Columns" is on pp. 9–11. The article reveals more about Dorothy Day, foundress of The Catholic Worker. Read the article: <https://tinyurl.com/y29v6bak>.



Associates Recognized



Clarke University BVM Core Value Award was presented to **Associate Sean Bradley, Ph.D.**, Professor of Mathematics.

The following is an excerpt from the nomination form for Sean: "He possesses and shines freedom, education, charity, and justice. He goes above and beyond his duties . . . by giving of his time and expressing a warm welcome. He is always available to answer questions, lend a listening ear, and offer his knowledge. In more recent years, he has grown even closer with Clarke's BVM roots. He has been an untiring servant on our Catholic Identity Committee. When I look at him, I see our core values and institutional mission personified!"

Read more:
<https://tinyurl.com/y4ghkmk6>



Associate Linda Parsons Plamondon has been selected to receive the 2019 Distinguished Alumni Humanitarian Service Award by Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. She will be honored at the 2019 Alumni Recognition Brunch during Clarke's Homecoming Weekend on Saturday, Sept. 28. A 1969 graduate of Clarke, Linda has been working as an art therapist/addiction counselor in Chicago's Englewood and Gold Coast neighborhoods. She is grateful for the mentorship and shared wisdom of BVMs in Dubuque and Chicago.



Associate Carol DeCarvalho was recently honored as a Family Member Community Hero for her pioneering work establishing a monthly family jail support group as a part of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) Santa Clara County in San Jose, Calif.



New **Associate Marybeth Coleman** was recently awarded a certificate of appreciation for her years of service to The Learning Center serving the North Lawndale and Little Village areas of Chicago. The Learning Center is a BVM Ministry Partnership Grant recipient and supports adults in their pursuit of an educational path to more confident and effective living.

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, AND JUSTICE.

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