

SAVE THE DATES FOR 2020–2021

2020

Dec. 8

Renewal of Associate Promise

2021

June 24–27

Congregational Assembly

Oct. 23–24

BVM Network for

Women's Issues

Dubuque, IA

For a complete list of events,
visit the members' website:

members.bvmsisters.org

> [Resources](#) > [Calendar of Events](#).

Did You Know?



BVM Associates have a private Facebook group dedicated to just us. If you are interested in being added to the group, please let your associate coordinator know how to reach you on Facebook.

Contact Us

For more information about associates and events, contact:

bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org.

Submit your associate events, stories, and photos to: swright@bvmsisters.org.

For a list of 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.

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

Fall 2020

Dear Circle of Friends,

We pray that you are staying healthy and safe in these chaotic times! We keep you in our prayers and are assured that you are praying with us.

This issue of the fall *Associate Newsletter* includes a new annual feature: the associate necrology, the listing of the associates who have passed since the last fall issue. You may have also noticed that we have begun holding a Sharing of Memories for associates as well. (Zoom has been a gift for this!)

Soon we will be renewing our associate promises. Dec. 8 is our traditional renewal date, coinciding with the sisters' renewal of vows. You may be celebrating on that Tuesday or one of the weekends before or



after. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to help you. Take pictures and send them for the next newsletter! We love to see how creative you are!

Many blessings.

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

Welcome New Associate Sherry Warren



Sherry Warren, of Green Bay, Wis., completed the candidate process and was accepted as an associate on July 30, 2020. Mary Martens, BVM was her companion.

Sherry went through her discernment process while a professor at Clarke University and waited to finalize her paperwork until after she finished her dissertation. She is a newly minted PhD, as well as a newly minted associate!

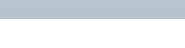
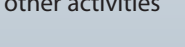
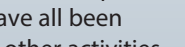
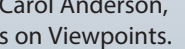
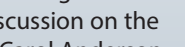
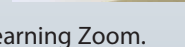
Planning for her commitment ceremony is on hold, as she hopes to have the ceremony at Mount Carmel once it is safe to return. Eileen O'Shea will be assisting Sherry and Mary in this process.

Chicago Cluster Klatch Discusses *White Rage*

The Southwest Chicagoland Cluster met Sept. 11 via Zoom, our first meeting since May. We had a good time catching up and relearning Zoom.

We had a lively discussion on the book *White Rage* by Carol Anderson, and posted our ideas on Viewpoints. Unfortunately, we have all been staying in so had no other activities to report.

—Associate Kathy Weishaar



Wildfires Spread Anxiety But Also Kindness

I have been asked to write a brief synopsis of our experience with Southern California's recent wildfires. Living at the base of the foothills in Monrovia, the Bobcat Fire has created a lot of anxiety and uncertainty.

The fire started on the afternoon of Sept. 6. The temperature was 115 degrees, the humidity was low, and the notorious Santa Ana winds were predicted for the next two days—a potentially disastrous combination.

Forty-eight hours later, our community was on an "evacuation warning" status to ensure we would be ready to go if necessary. Fortunately, Phil and I had already prepared a color-coded (by priority) list of things to take in an evacuation.

Two things were immediately apparent: first, this would have been very difficult to do without a list and in a high-pressure situation; second, it is an interesting exercise to come to grips with what "things" really are most important to you.

It was an answer to prayer. (Thank you, BVM community!) By the grace of God, the winds never materialized. Our cars remained packed and parked on the street in 'go' mode for over a week.

Though an event like this generally leaves you feeling pretty helpless, I was inspired (more God talk!) to call a friend who has a son-in-law working this fire. Through some back and forth texting, I reached him and offered him and a

coworker a place to get a nap and a shower during the little time they had to recharge their batteries.

My husband and I were both humbled and gratified by how grateful they were to have a quiet and comfortable place to land and an opportunity to step away from the calamity—if only for four to six hours.

Another silver lining to this event has been the sense of community that we have discovered with our neighbors.

There has been so much kind communication, sincere concern, and helpfulness on our block and throughout our city. Our alert finally lifted at 4 p.m. on Sept. 19.

Though the smoke and air quality remained hazardous, we have found ways to mitigate that problem also. All in all, I believe we will be able to look back on this and see God's goodness working through us and around us in what we learned about ourselves, our friends, family, and community. We have grown because of our shared effort.

The Bobcat Fire is still burning in



Associate Teresa Tanner Tiffany provided respite for two firefighters during the California Bobcat Fire in September 2020.

Southern California and predicted to burn until the end of October, as are many fires in the Western United States. At this time, our danger is behind us. My husband and I feel incredibly blessed to be at home and unpacking. Our home is a dear place where family and friends gather and memories are built.

We are filled with gratitude, especially to the BVM community, as we all gathered in prayer. May our prayers continue for all those involved with our country's wildfires. God continue to bless our nation.

—Associate Teresa Tanner Tiffany

Professing Prophets: Rethinking Catholic Social Tradition



Loyola University Chicago's Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage offered an engaging symposium called "A Prophet Is Not Known in Her Town: Conversations with Visionary Women," Sept. 24–25.

While not every segment of the program is available as a video, I hope you get a chance to check out this link to the event, where you will find inspirational comments and visionary ideas: luc.edu/ccih/archive/aprophetisnotknowninhertown.shtml.

From various backgrounds and experiences, women offered their research and reflections on being prophets in today's world, starting with a keynote by Carol Zinn, SSJ, and a

response from Mara Brecht on Sept. 24. Three panels followed on Sept. 25.

I was delighted to be the convenor-facilitator for the third panel, "Conversations Among Colleagues: Let's Rethink Catholic Social Tradition," with three stellar contributors: Natalia Imperatori-Lee (Manhattan College), Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos (University of Detroit Mercy), and Christiana Zenner (Fordham University).

Catholic Social Tradition has contributed so much to our thinking and action for living out our faith in the public square. And at the same time, it has basically had a restrictive view of who women "are" and what they can "do." We need to be creative in rethinking that rich tradition and

helping to develop it by hearing the lived experiences of women throughout the world.

This was my first activity for Loyola since becoming professor emerita of the Department of Sociology July 1 of this year. What a great gift to have this position. It affords me the opportunity to express gratitude for a wonderful career and the freedom to push on with various activities such as a research project that seven of us have been undertaking on "Women Engaging Catholic Social Tradition." Do check it out and give us your thoughts! womenengagingcst.org

—Associate Kathleen Maas Weigert

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

"Happy Diamond Jubilee, Sister Mary Frances!" we joyfully chorused as the guest of honor arrived, our voices a bit muffled by our matching masks. An array of balloons, banners, and bouquets also greeted Mary Frances Reis, BVM.

Though social distancing meant that only eight of us could gather to celebrate the jubilarians, we all felt a part of the larger BVM community, especially as we participated in the magnificent virtual Mass. We listened, praised, sang, shared Communion, and someone danced. (Guess who.) Our hearts overflowed with gratitude for this boundless spiritual connection, which reflected the BVM vibrancy of *loving-kindness*.

After Mass, we viewed a surprise video highlighting Mary Frances. We then enjoyed lunch and cake outside; the weather was perfect, a breezy 75 degrees. Back inside, Sister enjoyed opening presents and graced us with copies of her collection of poetry, *Journey Songs*, along



Distanced but still connected: Helping Mary Frances Reis, BVM celebrate her diamond jubilee are (l.) Chris Wenger, Associates Theresa Koetting and Mary Clair Wenger, BVMs Mary Frances Reis, Mary Nolan, and Agnes Marie Keena, and Associate Jill Burleson. Jill's cousin, Jan, made the matching masks.

with a carded fragment of brick from North Anne Street in Dublin. Every guest also received a gift bag.

It was a great honor and privilege to host this celebration in my home. What

a special blessing that the pandemic in no way weakened our enthusiasm, joy, gratitude, and love for all of our Diamond Jubilarians and BVMs everywhere. Thank you, Sisters!

—Associate Jill Burleson

BVM Netflix: *Wisdom Women* by Kitty Lawlor, BVM



During this pandemic, I am sure many of us have watched more movies on Netflix than ever before. I know I have!

Recently I find myself captivated by our own version of BVM Netflix—Kitty Lawlor's *Wisdom Women* series.

Through Kitty's eyes and stories, as well as congregational writings, I have learned much about the women who have encouraged, lived in, and led the congregation from 1833 to the present. The charisma of Mary Frances Clarke and the four core values are truly a part of the everyday lives of all these "wisdom women," discussed and shared at BVM gatherings and meetings and recounted in numerous publications.

For me, as an associate, I am learning about BVM life after the arrival in Dubuque. I am beginning to understand the depth of BVM spirituality, have a small glimpse at how change affected the lives of the congregation over time, and how education and freedom moved them forward to the year 2020.



Maybe you, too, want to start watching this series.

Visit: portal.stretchinternet.com/bvmsisters.

Click On Demand. Type "Wisdom Women" in the Search box. The series will be ready for your access. Password: freedom.

Enjoy!

—Associate Lori Ritz

Diaper Dash

Recently BVMs made 500 cloth diapers to donate to the Lutheran World Relief (LWR).

Volunteers Kristie and Emily Fry and other family members will add the BVM-made diapers to the other items needed to create 125 baby layette kits. LWR will send the kits around the globe.

In addition, 300 cloth diapers and 60 bibs were donated to meet the needs of three families in need in the Midwest. Another 600 cloth diapers and more bibs are available for distribution from the Life Enrichment Department.

Associate Suzie Wright transported the diapers to the LWR volunteers and families in need in Iowa.

For more information about the LWR Baby Kits, see: lwr.org/kits/baby-care-kits.



Kristie and Emily Fry accept the diaper donation for Lutheran World Relief.

Keeping Connected During COVID-19

These photos showcase a few ways associates stay connected to each other, the sisters, their communities, the land, and their creator. Your creativity is valued. Some of these images were included in the monthly Keeping Connected videos produced by the Communications Department. Keep sending in photos and stories so the BVM community can continue to grow closer together.

Please send your photos to Sandra Dieter at sdieter@bvmsisters.org.

Feel free to share a little message, too!

▶ Watch the videos: bvmsisters.org/bvm-sister-updates.



Illinois associates are “spending lots of time outside and in our garage . . . with friends and family and masks!” Associate Laura Field took the pictures of Associates Eileen O’Shea and Marybeth Coleman (middle) with some Chicago friends in Laura’s garage. They watch Mass together and then share a meal.



“I am now living in Roseville, Calif., quite far away from the activities of BVMs and associates in the San Francisco/San Jose area. I stay in touch by way of the internet and the phone, though I miss the gatherings I used to go to. I live in an independent retirement community with my two dogs and one cat. I have many friends here and, before COVID-19, we had many good times together. I help the neighbors when they need help. My regular volunteer work is with the phone reassurance program and I call about 20 people to make sure they are OK. And I read and read.” Associate Arline Elliott (former BVM Mary Georgia, BVM), California.



“Taking long walks during COVID-19, my lifeline!” Associate Coordinator Jeanie Fritscher, Iowa.



“First of all the pandemic hasn’t changed my life much. The main thing is that I can’t have visitors. So now I write notes, send greeting cards and e-mails. I do play a lot of solitaire on my cell phone and tablet. And I build things with the med cups. Most importantly, I have a lot of time to pray. Love and peace.” Associate Sandy Craig, Iowa.



“When my water aerobics and movement classes were stopped by the pandemic, I started walking two miles a day, in town or on trails. This was on an Audubon property near Lodi, Wis.” Associate Joann Crowley Beers, Wisconsin.

Joyfully Our Voice We Raise

Free copies of the CD *Joyfully Our Voice We Raise* are available. The CD showcases BVM-composed songs recorded in 2008 by students from Xavier College Preparatory, Phoenix., for the 175th anniversary of the founding of the BVM community.

Please contact Associate Christine Olsem, assistant to Congregational Secretary, at colsem@bvmsisters.org, or send a request to 1100 Carmel Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52003-7991.



In response to the question, “What am I doing during the virus shut-down,” a box filled with these handmade greetings cards arrived at the BVM Center with the following note: “I make greeting cards. I don’t sell them—I give them away. K.G.” Associate Kathleen Gibson, Minnesota.



“I like to spend days at Two Spiders enjoying the beautiful surroundings and fishing.” Associate Mary Chapman, Iowa. Two Spiders Lodge in Hayward, Wis., is owned by BVMs and is available to BVMs and associates.

Keeping Connected During COVID-19



Associate Joan Crowley Beers (l.) and BVM Janet Desmond enjoyed Two Spiders lodge in Wisconsin together this summer.



BVM Associates Linda Plamondon and Jim Tackes have spent time this year staying connected to their creativity. Linda painted and sewed this butterfly prayer shawl; each butterfly represents the spirit of someone who has passed away.



Jim's painting titled the "4 Seasons" represents the places where he has lived in his native Montana. Together they attended a nature and art journaling workshop in Swan Lake, Mont., in June.



Associate Mary Chapman having a fun night at home with Daniel, her husband.



Associate Discerner Dawn Merges delivered whimsy with a traveling "A Day at the Races" drink cart as part of her work in the Life Enrichment Department at Mount Carmel Bluffs.

Minnesota Cluster Makes Rich Connections Despite Abnormal Year



Normally, the Minnesota cluster meets in person several times a year for prayer, business, and social gathering—with plenty of goodies to consume. Not this year!

Normally, Mary Maas and I drive to Dubuque to visit friends at Mount Carmel. Not this year, either!

The “insteads” include connecting by phone, email, Zoom, and distanced picnicking! It has been a year of rich, vital connections.

Several BVMs and associates helped in a prayer chain I organized for a dear friend who underwent a liver transplant during the COVID-19 lockdown. Thanks to everyone’s prayers, she is doing well according to her six-month checkup.

In emails we have shared information about social justice projects, such as the Iowa City Catholic Worker initiatives in support of refugees and asylum seekers; online resources relating to racism and white privilege; book suggestions, such as Isabel Wilkerson’s “Caste;” invitations to Zoom lectures, such as historian Leslie Tentler speaking about her new history of American Catholicism; or a new DVD about Nicholas Black Elk.

With the support of BVMs, we undertook two writing campaigns: urging our archbishop to offer a more robust approach to racism in church and society, and challenging my parish’s new online video that featured only white families.

Zoom has enabled me to use my expertise in African American history to lead discussion of *White Rage* by Carol Anderson with two clusters.

Distanced picnicking has made it possible for me to meet occasionally with another associate for an evening of shared food, drink, and conversation.

This is not the kind of year I would have desired, but the bonds with BVMs and associates have adapted to technology, creating meaningful new ways to connect and to support each other!

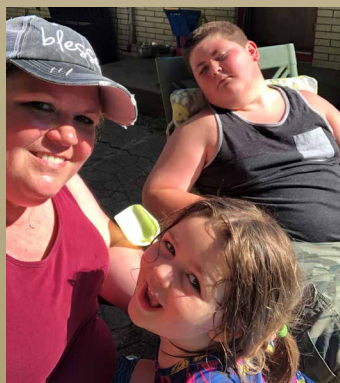
—Associate Anne Klejment



BVMs Flo Heflin (l.), Margaret Sannasardo, and Nancy McCarthy (far r.) enjoy a traveling luau at Mount Carmel Bluffs. Associate Jo Clauer and Associate Discerner Julie Wessels (center) of the Life Enrichment Department added a touch of the tropics to a fall day.



Donning masks and playing cards are California Associates Grace Mendez and Nancy Niles (back) and BVMs Suzanne Stopper and Anne Kendall.



Associate Holly Bernhardt spent time with her children Aria and Lyric in Wisconsin this summer.



Michael McAllister spent his 30th birthday in the Arizona sun at Canyon Lake with his mom, Associate Lori Ritz.

Associate Necrology: October 2019–September 2020

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the observance of All Saints Day Nov. 1, let us give thanks for these associates who died within the last year.

These men and women embodied the BVM charism and core values. They were treasured friends and family members. They are missed.

Recent obituaries have been posted online:
bvmsisters.org/associate-obituaries.



Georg Allen Ek

Jan. 23, 1930–Dec. 15, 2019
Acceptance: Dec. 15, 2013



Mary Elizabeth Luckey Maglione

Feb. 1, 1928–Dec. 24, 2019
Acceptance: April 3, 2011



Ramona Stubbs

June 1, 1939–April 6, 2020
Acceptance: June 10, 1997



Jim Plant

March 31, 1953–June 8, 2020
Acceptance: Sept. 13, 2011



Sheila Feeney

June 29, 1939–June 14, 2020
Acceptance: June 1, 1996



Mary Ann Krems

Aug. 31, 1941–Aug. 5, 2020
Acceptance: Dec. 2, 2005



Jeanette Barnes

June 21, 1950–Aug. 26, 2020
Acceptance: June 25, 2019



Mary Kay Craig

Aug. 28, 1942–Sept. 11, 2020
Acceptance: June 21, 2001

Curiosity, Committee, and Community



Curiosity and the willingness to say yes can lead you to remarkable experiences.

During the last BVM Assembly, a few committees were looking for volunteers. One of them was the Continuity and Coordination Committee (CCC). I had seen it listed in the directory and occasionally read a report on what they had done in the past, but I did not have a good sense of what they did. Associate Grace Mendez suggested I sign up as a potential volunteer and see what it was about at an informational meeting held by the present committee. Grace and I were welcomed as the first two associates to participate on this committee.

I learned that some of the committee's duties include: looking at the congregation holistically; seeking ways of supporting the Assembly's decisions when not in session; and evolving responsibilities as the community moves to the new leadership structure.

We typically meet monthly through Zoom, but with subcommittee work, we stay quite busy. It has been an honor to be the least experienced person in the group. My understanding of the congregation's leadership and governance has increased.

The relationships forged through this committee are precious to me. These women are amazing and faithfully seek to help the congregation's works.

Be curious. Say yes to invitations to join congregational committees and volunteer opportunities when they arise.

—Associate Suzie Wright

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.

BVMSISTERS.ORG
MEMBERS.BVMSISTERS.ORG



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