

## SAVE THE DATES FOR 2023

### May

- 21 We Are All Related  
Speaker Series:  
Mike Harley and  
Rachael Geissinger  
3 p.m. (CDT), Zoom  
21–28 *Laudato Si'* Week

### June

- 21–25 Congregational  
Assembly

### September

- 1–Oct. 4 Season of Creation  
10 Diamond Jubilee  
Celebration  
10 We Are All Related  
Speaker Series Speaker:  
Marian Moore  
3 p.m. (CDT), Zoom

For a complete list of events,  
visit the members' website:  
[members.bvmsisters.org](https://members.bvmsisters.org)>  
[Resources>Calendar of Events.](#)

## Contact Us

For more information  
about associates and  
events, contact:  
[bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org](mailto:bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org).

Submit your associate  
events, stories, and photos  
to: [swright@bvmsisters.org](mailto:swright@bvmsisters.org).

For a list of volunteer  
opportunities, visit:  
[bvmsisters.org/volunteer](https://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

FREEDOM • EDUCATION • CHARITY • JUSTICE

Spring 2023

## Dear Circle of Friends,

I hope you are enjoying the transition of seasons and glorious signs of spring. It's a season of change for the associate relationship as well.

Eileen O'Shea, Suzie Wright, and I are working with Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM on a visioning process that will help clarify purpose, identify opportunities, and develop a vision for the future of the BVM associate relationship.

As John Maxwell reminds us, "Change is inevitable. Growth is optional." We hope you will lend your voice and help the



Pat Maddux



Eileen O'Shea



Suzie Wright

associate relationship grow in beautiful ways. The article below, "A Vision for the Future" will provide more details on this visioning process and outline how all associates will be asked to participate.

—Pat Maddux, Director of BVM Life and Mission

## A Vision for the Future

Change is all around us. BVMs are settling into their new homes at Mount Carmel Bluffs and engaging in critical conversations in preparation for the summer Assembly.

Former Associate Coordinators Grace Mendez and Jeanie Fritscher, and former Director of BVM Life and Mission, Lori Ritz, are adjusting to all the life changes retirement brings.

The Office of BVM Life and Mission is adapting to life without them. Eileen O'Shea and Suzie Wright are patiently adjusting to the new guy (me) as I learn about my new job as Director of BVM Life and Mission.

In the midst of so much change, it is comfortable to hold on to the familiar. However tempting that may be, we believe there is an urgent need to think deeply about the associate relationship, what we are doing now, what we should continue, what we should stop, and what new ideas we should consider.

Beginning in February, Eileen, Suzie, and I have met regularly with Mary Ann

Zollmann, BVM to address the following critical questions:

- What are the current needs, capabilities, desires, and expectations of our associates?
- What is the clearly defined purpose of the associate relationship?
- What does the future of the associate relationship look like?



Mary Ann  
Zollmann, BVM

We soon determined that the voice of the associates was essential to answer these questions authentically. Therefore, we are planning an Associate Visioning Retreat from Sept. 29–Oct. 1 at the Loyola University Retreat Center in Woodstock, Ill. We hope you will consider joining us and being a part of these critical associate conversations. Associates will receive a letter with more information and a formal invitation to participate.

—Pat Maddux, Director of BVM Life and Mission

# What do you love about being an associate?

Being a BVM associate fills me with gratitude because of my ever-changing and always-loving relationships with the BVM family—relationships focused on sharing the core values of freedom, education, charity, and justice. In short, being a BVM associate makes my heart sing!



**Associate Sarah Greer Bush, Iowa**

I am deeply grateful for my journey with the community. I appreciate being a part of the circle of friends, with whom I am united following the path of faithfulness to God, to one another, and to the poor. It is a joy to be part of a group of such wonderful sisters and associates.



**Associate Monica Bittis, California**

My recent associate discernment and commitment is a “coming home” for me. The BVM sisters have been an important part of my life since high school in 1958 and during my almost seven years as a member of the BVM community. I have continued over the years to feel a strong connection to this group of faith-filled women who have continued to show me how deeply they live their core values.



I am so grateful to now formally be a part of this circle of friends! I particularly love the experience of communal prayer and the way it expands my understanding of justice and the way the divine surrounds us in our daily lives!

I am reminded that we are all just walking each other home as we each move closer toward completeness.

**Associate Jerry Snider Delaney, Illinois**

There is so much! I value the rich experience of friendship and prayer with community members. I have enriched my spiritual life through meetings, publications, and interaction with BVMs. It all has been very good!



**Associate Nancy Van Anne, Colorado**

A few thoughts on what I love and value about being an associate:

Although I’ve only been an associate since August, there are many things I love and value. I love and value the new friendships I’ve made and am looking forward to meeting many more sisters and associates.

I love knowing that all I have to do is ask and I will be lifted up in prayer by sisters and associates. I, in turn, am able to pray for the intentions of those who ask for prayers. I value being able to watch Mass and other services on the internet. I value being part of a community working for social justice. The many videos and links provided help us learn how we can begin to make a difference. I am blessed to be an associate.



**Associate Diane Kopp, Iowa**

What I love the most is the continued connection with the BVM community which I left after 14 years (former SM Georgia, set of 1954). I loved the BVMs (and still do) and am so happy to get news of what is going on.



**Associate Arline Elliott, California**

What do I love about being an associate? “Let me count the ways.”

- I love being in the Minnesota cluster with all its various personalities.
- I love it when we have our gatherings with prayer, discussion, and snacks.
- I love being able to connect with other BVMs and associates across the country.
- I love(d) the Advent services of song and prayer.
- I love the videos “Make Everyday Earth Day.”
- And on, and on, and on.



**Associate Mary Maas, Minnesota**

Having been an associate of the BVM community for 10 years, I’ve had the opportunity to live the core values the community promotes. More recently the two directional statements and *Laudato Si’* have led me to recognize the global issues of concern.

My continued love and value of association will be born out in my ongoing efforts to a “light on the world.” (MT. 5:14) I will also add that Elizabeth Seaman, BVM has been my light in association. Without her I might not be writing this!



**Associate Barbara Roy, Kansas**

Being an associate, I value the opportunity to grow in spirituality with the BVMs. What I love is being with each and every BVM and associate. It is always a valuable experience for me because through each person I witness a unique spirituality. This I find expressed through their love and compassion for life, and I find it spiritually enriching. I am grateful.



**Associate Maureen Frommelt, Iowa**



# An associate you should know . . .

## Joann Crowley Beers



I attended Mundelein College in Chicago for two years before I entered the BVM community in 1953.

For the next 44 years I had constant opportunities to learn about community, service, the mystery of God, and unconditional love.

Whether I was teaching in primary grades or high school, working in parishes in Chicago, Colorado, or Minneapolis, or serving in Diocesan offices in Duluth or Denver, I always felt supported by my BVM community. As BVM director of social concerns and as a regional representative, I had broader relationships with the sisters, and really fell in love with them.

Then, a “sabbatical” in Guatemala introduced me to another form of BVM mission, and I met the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, who invited me to come and teach the Mayan novices. They surely taught me more than I taught them!

While I was in Guatemala, I reconnected with Bill Beers, an Episcopal priest with whom I had done a chaplaincy internship at the University of Chicago Medical Center. My prayer at that time was that I would not lose my relationship with God if I left the community, and I felt assured that I would not.

Bill and I married, moved to Wisconsin, and I became director of spirituality at an Ecumenical Benedictine women’s monastery in Madison. Soon, I knew that

I was still “BVM” at heart, and becoming an associate was a logical next step . . . a continuity.

I had led an associates retreat at Mount Carmel while I was a BVM, and shared leadership of another associate retreat with BVM Virginia Stone. I was privileged to serve on the BVM ministry grant committee, so I realized the significance of the associates’ BVM connection.

Now, at age 90, I spend more time *being* than *doing*. Deeply appreciative of the incredible blessings of my life, I am both astonished at its unfolding, and grateful for the inclusive embrace of the BVM community.

—Associate Joann Crowley Beers

## Associates in Action



Grace and Jennifer Maddux (l.), Nancy Miller OSF, Dennis Day, brother of employee Kathy Day, BVMs Jackie Cramer and Gwen Farry, and Associates Suzie Wright and Pat Maddux form the Main Street Misfits, one of two teams of BVM sisters, associates, staff, family, and friends for a night of trivia at the Opening Doors Annual Fundraiser. The Main Street Misfits and Motherhouse of Knowledge teams represented the Sisters of Charity, BVM well. The “Misfits” came in third overall for the night. Mira Mosle, BVM (not pictured) was also on the team.



Associate Lori Ritz met the Kansas City Wolf during this year’s Super Bowl while packing baskets for Baskets of Hope. Football players deliver the baskets to children in local hospitals.

## Associate Anniversary Activities

During the upcoming months associates and sisters will be invited to participate in special Zoom calls to share about the associate relationship. We will focus on the question: What are your hopes for the future of association?

If you would like to send in a written reflection instead of participating via Zoom, please send it to:

Associate Coordinator  
Office of BVM Life and Mission  
1100 Carmel Dr.  
Dubuque IA 52003  
[bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org](mailto:bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org)

## Pondering



The Prayer for Peace of St. Francis of Assisi has a line that's been working on me lately, "It is in giving that we receive." What

happens when we turn this around? In receiving, do we also give?

I bet we've all had an experience of giving that feels like we get much more than we give. But then doesn't this mean those who receive might also be giving something away?

Of course, who wants to be in need? I don't like to ask for help. The relationship feels unbalanced. I am vulnerable. To need help requires me to sacrifice control, independence, self-sufficiency, even pride. And I must trust another. Really, I prefer to do whatever it is by myself!

On the other hand, it feels good to give. I maintain control, do good, share my own giftedness. I feel satisfaction, and even admit that I enjoy being thanked. But on a deeper level, I recognize that to be able to give is a privilege assented to by the receiver, a humble sharing in vulnerability. I feel grateful for the trust allowing to let me in.

So the lines are blurry. Giving and receiving are parts of an exchange, and sometimes it is hard to tell who is doing what. We are invited to communion, a reciprocal, bonded relationship where we each have something to offer and to accept. There is ample room for mystery in this relationship, I think. And for the Spirit.

I wonder what you think. In receiving, do we also give?

—Associate Sean Bradley

**We pray so hard and so often, and maybe we feel a little guilty about asking too much. And then God comes along, dispenses His miracles, and we realize that all along we were asking for too little.**

*Wake Up With Purpose!  
What I've Learned in My First Hundred Years*  
by Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM

## We Remember Our Associates

Full obituaries are posted online at:  
[bvmsisters.org/associate-obituaries](http://bvmsisters.org/associate-obituaries).



**Beverly Wenzel**

Sept. 16, 1938–  
Feb. 23, 2023

Accepted:  
April 7, 2001

### 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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