



Photos by: Associate Grace Mendez

# BVM Associate News

A Faithful Present, a Hopeful Future

FREEDOM • EDUCATION • CHARITY • JUSTICE

Summer 2023

## SAVE THE DATES FOR 2023

### August

- 15 Meet and Greet Zoom Social

### September

- 1 BVM Ministry Partnership  
Grant Applications Due  
6 St. Pat's Meal, Dubuque  
10 BVM Diamond Jubilee  
10 We Are All Related  
Speaker Series Speaker:  
Marian Moore

- 29–Oct. 1 Associate Visioning Summit

### October

- 7 BVM Network for  
Women's Issues

### November

- 1 BVM 190th Liturgy  
4 50th Anniversary  
Associate Celebration  
12 We Are All Related  
Speaker Series Speaker:  
Associate Dr. Sherry Warren

### December

- 2 Advent Begins

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.

## Dear Circle of Friends,

### Happy Summer and Happy Feast Day!

It's been a busy time both personally and as the associate coordinator. Marybeth Coleman and I moved from Chicago to Mount Carmel Bluffs in February. I am writing this on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, sitting on my balcony, watching the boats on the Mississippi River.

It was so good to see so many of you at the 2023 BVM Assembly, both in person and virtually. Associates Kimberly Emery, Nancy McCarville, and Suzie Wright worked on the Assembly Planning Committee. Associate Laura Field was the co-chair of the Assembly Prayer Planning Committee. Laura and Marybeth led the opening prayer on the second day of the Assembly.

The office of BVM Life and Mission provided the dessert reception on Wednesday evening as well as staffed the hospitality room at Mount Carmel Bluffs. It's not too early to begin planning on attending next year's Assembly in June 2024.

For more about the 2023 Congregational Assembly, login to [members.bvmsisters.org](https://members.bvmsisters.org).

Select the heading "Meetings/Committees" and the subheading "Congregational Assembly." Recordings of the Assembly are available at: [portal.stretchinternet.com/bvmsisters](https://portal.stretchinternet.com/bvmsisters).

A special password is needed for viewing. If you are an associate that does not have it, please send an email to [bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org](mailto:bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org).

See the article, *Assembly Reflections*, on p. 5 for the thoughts of Associates Diane Kopp and Sonya Rendón.

Planning continues for the Associate Visioning Summit at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Center in Woodstock, Ill., Sept. 29–Oct. 1.

We are blessed to have Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM as our facilitator for the weekend. Look for more information in the coming weeks and in Pat Maddux's article, *Vision for the Future*, on p. 2.



Eileen O'Shea

—Eileen O'Shea  
Associate Coordinator

## BVM Network for Women's Issues

Come activate your power  
to be the change!

**October 7, 2023**

*Save  
the  
Date*

**Shannen Dee Williams, PhD**  
*Subversive Habits: Black Sisters  
and the Long Struggle for  
Freedom*

and

**Sr. Melinda Pellerin, SSJ**  
*A Black Sister's Experience*

## Visioning for the Future

September and the Associate Visioning Summit are right around the corner! We look forward to listening, learning, and sharing ideas about the future of the associate relationship. We have been asked about our decision to invite only associates to participate in this phase of our visioning and would like to share our thoughts.

BVMs formed the associate relationship and have provided essential leadership, support, and inspiration throughout our 50-year history. We will always be guided by BVM wisdom and charism, but we believe that a primary value of the Visioning Summit is the clear, honest, and unfiltered expression of associate voices.

As you know, Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM has been integral to our planning process and will be present at the summit. Her role during the event will be only as facilitator and listener, so as not to guide or influence the sharing of thoughts and ideas.

In October, we will schedule post-summit Zoom sessions for anyone interested in listening and sharing. If you have any questions, please contact Associate Coordinator Eileen O'Shea.

—Pat Maddux  
Director of BVM Life and Mission

## Pondering Who Am I?



I used to work as an aide in a memory care unit. One afternoon, I watched a resident walk toward me. Her movements were deliberate, slow. She shuffled her feet as she followed her walker across the floor.

Turning her face toward mine, she smiled, and asked, "Do you know who I am?"

Do you know who I am? What a question. Who am I?

If my body becomes weak and frail, if I am not able to remember relationships with friends or family, can't recall what I like to do or what brings me pleasure; if I don't remember my days as student, teacher, traveler,

missioner, committee chair, volunteer, researcher, gardener, reader, solver of crosswords, then these cannot be who I am.

This resident was seeking someone who knew her. She wanted to feel safe, a sense of belonging, home. I wanted to quote her what I imagined God would say: "You are Alice, my beloved daughter. Though you may forget me, I will never forget you. You belong to me. I love you and you are mine. You are home."

I settled for saying, "Of course, I know you, Alice. I am so happy to see you. You are right where you belong. Can I show you to your room?"

—Associate Sean Bradley

## Volunteers Needed for 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Associates, sisters, and discerners are invited to attend an interactive Zoom celebration of the 50 years of BVM associate relationships on Nov. 4, 2023.

St. Joseph Hall will be a gathering site for associates, sisters, and discerners that are in Dubuque. We encourage similar gatherings across the congregation.

If you would like to be on the celebrations committee, or are willing to host a gathering of associates and sisters for the Zoom celebration, please contact Associate Coordinator Eileen O'Shea. The first planning meeting will be in August.

## BVM Associate Relationship 50 Years ~ 1973-2023

### Together We Walk November 4

Save  
the  
Date



# An associate you should know . . .

## Sharon Scully



Clarke University (CU) graduate Sharon Scully has been an associate since 2003. She is a good friend of many BVMs.

Before COVID, she sang second soprano in the BVM Schola choir each Sunday. In July 2023, she moved to Terrace Apartments at Mount Carmel Bluffs.

Sharon speaks of Chicago so familiarly that I asked how she knows my native city so well. She gave me this list of “Positions I’ve Held” that she prepared long ago.

Over the years, Sharon has disproved the provincial mindset for what a “little old lady from Dubuque” would do. After graduating from CU, she immediately became its language lab director/Spanish instructor.

She then joined the Peace Corps and became the first trainer for swimming instructors at the Universidad de Costa Rica, San Pedro Montes de Oca, in the province of San José.

Sharon returned to the United States to teach Spanish in Rochester, N.Y., followed by being a residence hall director at State University of New York in Albany, and at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

She was then the CEO of three Girl Scout Councils, (N.Y., Maine, Kan.). Later, she became a commodities broker in Waterloo, Iowa. Afterward, she served as a director of development for a different Girl Scout Council in New York.

In 1987, CU President Catherine Dunn, BVM appointed Sharon to be the director of capital campaigns.

After serving in that role for three years, Sharon moved to Chicago

and held positions as a manager of corporate/foundation relations for Xavier College, executive director of fund development for St. Anthony Hospital, and director of corporate/foundation relations for Catholic Health Partners. She later held multiple positions at Prevent Blindness America, such as director of planned giving, director of foundation/corporate relations, and assistant vice-president for fund development.

I was surprised to learn how many places she lived. Sharon also has visited Canada, Alaska, England, Ireland, Columbia, Peru, Ecuador, Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico (several times).

—Mary A. Healey, BVM

## Feeling Proud



I’m always proud to tell people that I’m a BVM associate, and often proud to claim Dubuque as the city that is home to me.

On Saturday, June 3, I stood even taller as I claimed membership in both!

BVM sisters and associates were a powerful presence at a rally in Washington Park sponsored by the Dubuque Coalition for Nonviolence. Orange shirts, hats, scarves, and messages were a strong visual statement of our commitment to raise awareness of gun violence and our efforts to pass legislation limiting access to guns.

We were moved by the witness of Katie Fischer and her daughter, Elizabeth Enzler, as they shared the memories and fears of gun violence in their lives.

Art Roche, Chair of Iowans for Gun Safety, challenged us to take action when he said, “Start by talking with friends who agree with you on steps to reduce gun violence. This will make it easier to communicate with those who may or may not agree.”

We bonded through music with performances by dancers from the McNulty School of Irish Dance and vocalists from Safe Passage Singers.

Following the Washington Park rally, many of us made our way a few blocks toward downtown. There we blended our orange shirts with rainbows as we joined the Pride Family Picnic sponsored by the Dubuque Multicultural Family Center. LGBTQ+ resources, vendors, and good food lent to the celebration at the block party. We were “proud” to celebrate inclusivity and raise awareness of our LGBTQ+ friends!

Many thanks and appreciation to our BVM sisters and associates for taking a courageous stance for peace and inclusivity. I continue to stand tall!

—Associate Marabeth Freund



KCRG Channel 9: Protestors rally against gun violence in Dubuque:

[www.kcrg.com/2023/06/04/protestors-rally-against-gun-violence-dubuque](http://www.kcrg.com/2023/06/04/protestors-rally-against-gun-violence-dubuque)



## We Remember Our Associate

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



Associate James (Jim) T. Tackes

April 18, 1932–  
May 10, 2023,

Accepted:  
March 19, 2000

Husband of Associate  
Linda Plamondon

## Engendering Spirit



In my role as minister for women's and gender justice with National Ministries of the United Church of Christ (UCC), I work with

people from all walks of life on gender issues. I keep my eyes on legislation that limits access to services because of reproductive capacity, gender, and/or sexual orientation. I am part of a team that focuses on gender and sexuality in the broader sense.

Learn more about our team at:

[tinyurl.com/mrykhw5d](https://tinyurl.com/mrykhw5d).

One of the needs I saw immediately was a way to connect people to issues that we can address through justice work in our local congregations, so I started a newsletter to highlight important events and happenings.

You can read *Talitha Koum* at:

[tinyurl.com/2uf7ybra](https://tinyurl.com/2uf7ybra).

One of my creations that I am most proud of is a free online learning series, *Engendering Spirit*, in which I talk with people around the globe about issues that meet somewhere at the crossroads of gender and faith. *Engendering Spirit* resides digitally on the UCC's platform, *Frontline Faith*, and is accompanied by resources to deepen understanding. It is free to create an account and access

*Engendering Spirit*, at:

[tinyurl.com/ye2x35ws](https://tinyurl.com/ye2x35ws).

At our recent biennial General Synod, I offered a workshop featuring women from our disabilities and mental health ministry, our transgender resource staff, and a UCC minister who recently authored, *Fat Church: Reclaiming a Gospel of Fat Liberation*.

My goal was to help participants learn about creating community that truly welcomes **ALL** bodies into the sacred spaces we make. The second episode of *Engendering Spirit* features a conversation with the author of *Fat Church*, a body image researcher, and my colleague from the Our Whole Lives curriculum. This resource is for book groups that read *Fat Church* but is a useful tool even if you haven't read it. Please consider the messages that we are exposed to about how our bodies are expected to look and act. These messages can be subtle, and most of them are harmful to our ability to live wholly into God's love.

—Associate Dr. Sherry Warren

Sherry will be the speaker for the November "We Are All Related" event on Nov. 12, at 3:00 p.m. CST.



## Need Help Accessing the BVM Members' Website?

Associates, if you need help accessing the members' website, contact Suzie Wright, administrative assistant to the Office of BVM Life and Mission at **563-585-2860**. Suzie is happy to assist you.

## Points of Interest on the BVM Sisters' Website



Do you know someone interested in BVM association? Send them to this part of the [bvmsisters.org](https://bvmsisters.org) website if they are interested in starting discernment. [bvmsisters.org/discernment](https://bvmsisters.org/discernment)



Do you want to watch the short video, *Together We Walk: 50 Years of BVM Associate Relationship* shown at the Assembly? [members.bvmsisters.org/offices/associates](https://members.bvmsisters.org/offices/associates)



Curious about an associate's or sister's address, birthday, or phone number, and can't find your blue binder? Login to [members.bvmsisters.org](https://members.bvmsisters.org) and select "Directory" from the burgundy tool bar. On the drop down menu, select "BVM Directory" or "Associate Directory" as needed. The information is sorted by last name.



FYI—The new directories are soon to be printed and will be mailed to the associates who have ordered them. Sisters automatically receive copies. Please let us know when you move, change your phone numbers, or email addresses so that we can stay connected through the electronic directory.



# Assembly Reflections

The BVM Congregational Assembly held in late June 2023 provided many unexpected blessings for the associates as well as sisters that attended both in person and via Zoom.

Three of the six Ecuadorian associates were able to attend in person as were the three sisters currently living and ministering in Ecuador.

There were 18 associates who attended in person and another dozen that attended via Zoom. It is unknown how many more tuned in via the Stretch portal for the assembly sessions.

## Here are short reflections by two associates:

Sonya Rendón, wrote:

The whole Assembly was outstanding! I loved the way that sisters and associates mingled so well, since you could not differentiate one from another. The whole setting was very well thought out! I also enjoyed the time we, the associates, had lunch together, since that allowed us to really get to see each other in person.

Best Regards,  
Associate Sonya Rendón

Diane Kopp attended her first ever Assembly and shared:

A few reflections on the assembly—it's hard to keep it at "a few." First of all, it wouldn't have happened for me if Associates Suzie Wright, Pat Maddux, and Karen Kane-Herber hadn't made time to teach me Zoom.

I loved the video with associate pictures at the assembly (**Video:** [youtu.be/HxrHVFqo5e4](https://youtu.be/HxrHVFqo5e4)).

Meeting new friends was at the top of the list for me. Joining a cluster is going to happen which makes me happy.

The "Word Clouds" are a reminder of the importance of everyone's opinion, each one different, but all are important. The quote I will keep with me is, "What you have is enough."

The definition of vulnerability as being part of life and our most accurate measure of courage will stay with me. I'm thankful I could be part of the Assembly.

Peace,  
Associate Diane Kopp



Associates Helen Gabel (back row, l.), Nancy McCarville, Christine Olsem, Maureen "Mo" McGrain, Suzie Wright, Maureen Frommelt, Nancy Niles; Associates Grace Mendez, Jane "Jo" Pohl, Mary Chapman, Virginia Piecuch, Sonya Rendón; Associates Marybeth Coleman, Pat McTeague, Michele Miller, Eileen O'Shea; and Associates Germana Moran and Laura Field attend the 2023 the Congregational Assembly in Dubuque, Iowa.

One table, two countries, and three states! Associates (clockwise, front l.) Laura Field, Marybeth Coleman, Christine Olsem, Virginia Piecuch, Pat McTeague, Michele Miller, and Sonya Rendón enjoy a little bonding time during a poolside lunch at the Best Western during the Assembly.





# Associates in Action



More than 20 associates gathered to welcome four associates to Dubuque and to their new homes at Mount Carmel Bluffs. Enjoying the festivities are Associates Norm Freund (backrow, l.), Marabeth Freund, Mary Moothart, Mary Chapman, Sarah Greer Bush, Diane Kopp, Christine Olsem, Maureen Frommelt, Suzie Wright, BVM and ACC Member Mary Frances Reis, and Associate Pat Maddux; Sharon Scully (front row, l.), and new MCB residents Eileen O'Shea, Miriam Todoroff, Nancy McCarville, and Marybeth Coleman. All five seated in the front row now reside in the Terrace Apartments.



Associate Teresa Tiffany and her husband Phil found one beautiful spot after another in Alaska. They are "Feeling BLESSED!"

## Assembly Hospitality

During the evenings of June 22–23 many associates and sisters indulged in the chance to convene in the new Club Room at Mount Carmel Bluffs to discuss the Assembly and deepen their relationships with one another.



Associates Laura Field (l.), Helen Gabel, and Linda Plamondon enjoy visiting in the new Club Room.





¡Saludos! Las BVMs Annie Credidio y Isabel Conchos, la asociada Germania Moran, las BVMs Luann Brown y Saskia Alquinga celebraron sus amistades en la estación de fotomaton en la Celebración 190.

## Celebrating 190 Years

Associates near and far gathered in St. Joseph Hall on a balmy Saturday evening in June to celebrate the 190th anniversary of the BVM Congregation. Some traveled to the party after having attend the Congregational Assembly while others came just for the party. New and old friendships were enriched through the extraordinary food, entertainment, and decorations.



BVM Josette Kelly (center) is surrounded by Associates Maureen "Mo" McGrain (l.), Sarah Greer Bush, Michele Miller, Grace Mendez, Suzie Wright, and Mary Moothart.



BVMs DeeDee Keena (l.), Mary Frances Reis, and Associate Jill Burleson celebrate their friendships which were forged in the "Show Me State" of Missouri.



BVM Pat Bombard (l.), Associates Sonya Rendón and Pat McTeague, and BVM Kathleen Conway toast the congregation's 190th anniversary.





## BVM Associate Relationship Together We Walk

Together we each walk in the shadows of great love and devotion.  
Demonstrating the continuation of the charism in new and old ways,  
Hand in hand and heart to heart we spread across the lands and times,  
Distances are surmounted through the resonance of the holy spirit.  
Mindfulness is foundational to missions, ministries, and merriment.  
Seeking justice while educating with charity through freedom,  
Community formed, reformed, and transformed.

50 Years ~ June 1973-2023



Attendees of the 2023 BVM Congregational Assembly were given a chance to view the five-minute video, *Together We Walk: 50 Years of BVM Associate Relationship*. This reflective piece features Associates Norm Freund and Christine Olsem, as well as images of associates from across the globe.

If you have images of other associates that you would like to have included in a future video, please scan the images, and send them to [bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org](mailto:bvmassociates@bvmsisters.org).

If you would like to view the *Together We Walk: 50 Years of BVM Associate Relationship* video, go to: [youtu.be/HxrHVFqo5e4](https://youtu.be/HxrHVFqo5e4).

### 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.**

563-588-2351  
[BVMSISTERS.ORG](https://bvmsisters.org)  
[MEMBERS.BVMSISTERS.ORG](https://members.bvmsisters.org)

