The IHM Advisory Board met on December 14 with a full agenda that involved careful discernment of what we are hearing from you, our sisters, and what we are learning as we grow in our understandings of how to best serve the congregation and larger world at this time as a consultative board.

We are making intentional efforts to conduct our meetings in a contemplative manner – meaning that we provide time for reflective thought, that we listen carefully to one another and to what we are hearing from you, and that we continuously look at the whole of the congregation to see how all of our collective hopes and desires might fit together. We consistently stop to ask: what are we learning, what can we do more effectively, and is what we are doing best serving the congregation? We feel this is a good course to follow and we know that by following it, we will be led to re-examine choices and perhaps select alternate paths. In a time of rapid changes in society and with congregation realities, such nimbleness is critical.

We would like to share with you the matters that we discussed at this meeting that include the following.

**Initiatives**

Since last meeting, the advisory board received four initiatives. After receipt of these initiatives, members of the board (Maryalice Jacquinot, Jane Snyder, and Rachel Terry) met with each of the four groups who submitted them. Together, they discussed what prompted the group to bring the initiative forth, hoped for outcomes, the impact the initiative would have on the congregation, and other factors so that the board would have as complete a picture as possible of the group’s intent. A summary of these meetings and a recommendation for how to proceed with the initiative was shared with the whole board prior to our board meeting so that, when possible, the initiative could be enacted without waiting for the board to convene in person. In some cases, additional discussion was needed by the board before a recommendation was agreed upon. (The initiatives and their outcomes follow this article.)

We believe this way of processing initiatives gives a group an opportunity to directly discuss its hopes with advisory board members and can expedite movement on at least some ideas that are being brought forward. The board will continue to evaluate how this process is working and will be asking the members how it is working for them. Gail Cabral, Kathleen Lunsmann, and Lisa Perkowski will be developing some additional guidelines/benchmarks to refine the process for how individuals or groups may submit an initiative. All are reminded that an idea that is not a fully-developed initiative can also be submitted at any time to the board using the Meeting Notes Form found on the IHM website.

Notable ideas and questions that are submitted from mission circles or other groups are being summarized and read by the board prior to our meetings. This practice helps us stay well-informed about what the members are thinking about and hoping for so that we can hold these ideas before us as we deliberate on any matter that comes before us. We find that as we meet, we refer frequently to what you have sent to us.

**Congregation Critical Concerns**

At its last meeting in October, the board divided itself into four groups, with each group charged...
with researching and learning more about one of the congregation’s four critical concerns named at the 2018 chapter: sponsorship, vital living, environment, and relationships. Significant conversation took place on how the board can best work with these areas—assuring that each is given attention and considering how the congregation’s resources can best serve each concern. We are learning together how to think holistically—seeing how all the interests, concerns, needs, and hopes of the members can be viewed as a whole—and how all of these matters intersect with the realities of the world today.

**June 20, 2020 Meeting**

The Advisory Board meeting scheduled for June 20 will be structured so that the members have an opportunity to be present with the board and share their ideas directly. Initial thoughts about how to best use this time were discussed. The advisory board planning committee will be assisted by Kathryn Clauss and Terri Jordan to create the agenda for this gathering. While this will be an important opportunity for members to voice their ideas, we remind you that it is not the only opportunity. We have created many liaison relationships with board members connecting to congregation committees, the Our Lady of Peace prayer circle, and more. We plan to use our many communication technologies to receive your input as various matters arise. We all remain available to you for consultation and conversations at any time.

**Thresholds**

When the Advisory Board held its first meeting in December 2018, we began with a prayer experience that helped us recognize that we were beginning a time of significant change within the congregation governance structure. We reflected on what it means to cross a threshold into something new and unknown. At our meeting one year later, we decided to revisit the concept of threshold-crossing and began our meeting with a beautiful reflection on the thresholds this board has crossed in our work over this year. We were invited to share our insights into the following questions:

- What words would you use to describe the thresholds we’ve encountered in our journey as a board? As a congregation?
- What is our “quest” – what are our deepest yearnings?
- What might be some empty gestures that mask our true intentions?
- On our journey so far, where have we found life? Have we been tempted to choose what will be accepted over what will bring life?
- What are the questions we’ve asked, could ask or have been asked that call us to remember our purpose?
- Are there any fears that we need to release? Any choices that need redemption?
- How have we led others to deeper truth and meaning-making? How have we allowed ourselves to be led to deeper truth and meaning-making?

We invite you to consider these same questions as you consider your own participation in the life of the congregation. We would be happy to hear where your own reflection takes you.

**Advisory Board:** Sisters Gail Cabral, Kathryn Clauss, Fran Fasolka, Maryalice Jacquinot, Kathleen Lunsmann, Mary Persico, Lisa Perkowski, Annmarie Sanders, Jane Snyder, Rachel Terry

**Leadership Team:** Nancy DeCesare, Mary Ellen Higgins, Terri Jordan, Ellen Maroney, Mary Reap

**Summary of proposed New Initiatives, Advisory Board, December 14, 2019**

**Process to respond to New Initiatives**

Following the September meeting of the Advisory Board, Sisters Jane Snyder, Maryalice Jacquinot and Rachel Terry met to develop a process to respond to New Initiatives. The proposed process was emailed to Advisory Board for input in October and affirmed pending use with current New Initiatives to determine if it meets the needs of the Congregation at this time.

Upon receipt of a New Initiative form, one member of this sub-committee, Rachel, Jane or Maryalice, will contact the sender or a representative of the group to schedule a meeting to obtain more information. A meeting with one or more representatives whether in person, by phone or Zoom will be scheduled. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a more complete understanding of the intent of the initiative. The conversation will focus on what prompted the continued on page 3
New Initiative at this time; what is the hoped for outcome; what research has been done to date; how does the New Initiative relate to the Mission Statement, Chapter Direction, Core Values and/or other existing congregation priorities or committees; and what is the potential impact on members and the congregation. Rather than making a more lengthy form with numerous questions, it is believed that important information and detail will be gleaned from a personal meeting.

Following the meeting, the subcommittee member will prepare a summary and develop a recommendation with possible the next steps. Possible next steps might be to suggest additional research be completed by the submitter, request the input/support of a congregation committee, department, leadership team or other resource, refer to Mission Circles for input, move forward or decline the New Initiative. Additional options may also be considered. If the recommendation includes involving an existing congregation committee, the chair for that committee will be contacted.

The summary and recommendation will be emailed to members of the Advisory Board for their input. In some situations, decisions regarding New Initiatives may be made between Advisory Board meetings. New Initiatives will be added to the meeting agenda for the next Advisory Board meeting. Those who submitted a New Initiative will be informed of the decisions made by the Advisory Board about the New Initiative. As each initiative is discussed, a decision will be made by the Advisory Board about tracking and follow-up. When a Committee is involved, the follow-up will be its responsibility.

The congregation will be informed of decisions made about proposed New Initiatives once those who submitted the New Initiative are notified of the outcome.

Initiatives Update

1. Sisters who attended the Healing Racism retreat in June 2019 submitted a New Initiative recommending that the Congregation initiate contact with African-American women who entered the IHM Congregation in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Jane, Rachel and Maryalice met with several Sisters to learn more about the impact of the New Initiative. At the time of the meeting, those who submitted the New Initiative had new insights as a result of talking with one another, prayer, reading and reflection that caused them to change the focus of the New Initiative. Before making contact with the African American women, they felt the need to continue to explore the topic of racism. Therefore, their recommendation was to form an ad hoc committee to work in collaboration with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee as racism is one of its priority areas.

2. One sister submitted a New Initiative, later endorsed by others, to request that the congregation purchase hybrid cars. Rachel met with this sister to learn more about the proposed New Initiative.

3. The Tierra Maria Mission Circle recommends the congregation update and improve the technology equipment as well as provide better technical support to households at Our Lady of Peace and the IHM Center. Maryalice met with several members of the Tierra Maria Mission Circle to learn more about the proposed New Initiative.

The Advisory Board acknowledges that the issue is real and complicated. Greater assistance and solutions are possible. It is agreed that more information is needed to understand the issue. It is recommended that the newly formed Technology Resource Committee develop strategies to gather more detail and propose solutions to provide adequate equipment and technical support for those living at OLP and IHM Center. Although the Technology Resource Committee has not yet met, Terri Jordan, as the committee’s liaison, agreed to include this recommendation as part of the committee’s agenda.

4. The Ecclesia Mission Circle recommended to the Advisory Board that it reset the number of open meetings to three per year. Jane, Rachel and Maryalice met with several members of the Mission Circle to learn more about the proposed New Initiative.
Fifth Annual Christmas Capers Party Held at Our Lady of Peace Residence

The Ecclesia Mission Circle hosted the fifth annual Christmas Capers Party for the sisters at Our Lady of Peace Residence. There were gifts galore for everyone, donated by the Ecclesia members and others. The interactive games this year focused on trivia about the twenty IHM Congregation superior generals/presidents, in preparation for our upcoming 175th anniversary next summer. Two noted take-away facts were: 1.) Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin was in office 26 years! 2.) Three mother superiors were not born in the USA. Two were born in England and one in Ireland!

Sisters Helping Sisters Through Telespond

At present there are seven sisters who volunteer for Telespond. These volunteers visit sisters at Our Lady of Peace Residence and help them with tasks they are unable to perform for themselves. Sometimes the Telespond volunteers accompany OLP sisters to doctor appointments. Remuneration for Telespond volunteers is minimal but at the end of the year their combined services amount to a financial gain for the congregation. Each month the volunteers attend a morning session where they receive input on timely topics that are a help for them personally and also a benefit for the sisters they visit. Telespond is in need of more volunteers. Sisters interested in joining the program can talk to any of the sisters shown in this photo.

Ecclesia Mission Circle

In response to an initiative submitted, several members of the Ecclesia Mission Circle and the Centennials met with Advisory Board members Maryalice Jacquinit, Jane Snyder and Rachel Terry (not pictured).
Street Preaching by Bethany Ministries

On December 6, 2019, the Village of Middleburgh, NY celebrated its Twenty First annual “Miracle on Main Street.” Stores are open late; there are pony rides, a petting zoo, and a tree lighting. Since 1998, Friar Peter Chepaitis and Sister Anna Tantsits, IHM of Bethany Ministries have participated. At first, they travelled from store to store playing carols on the violin and inviting people to sing with them. In 2015, they were invited to do a presentation in the public library. This year, in spite of the stroke Peter suffered in September, they were able to do a reflection on the first live Nativity scene created by Francis of Assisi at Greccio, Italy, in 1223. Instead of live animals, they used puppets, which the children who were present used to help with the presentation.

Peter played carols on the violin and Anna passed the puppets out as she told parts of the story. Publicity for the pair was billed in the local papers as “Fiddling Friar & Anna’s Animal Puppets.” Among other carols, the featured Christmas song was “The Friendly Beasts,” and they made a connection between the animals that cared for Jesus and his mother and the way we can imitate them by caring for each other. A caterpillar was the final creature presented; it transformed into a butterfly to remind us of the way Christmas can transform each of us.

The twenty minute presentation concluded with Peter and Anna singing a verse they had written after Hurricane Irene devastated the Village in 2011. The verse refers to the large, solar powered star that was placed on a high ridge to the east of the village as a memorial. It is set to the melody of “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

♫ O Little Town of Middleburgh - your star still shines so bright. Above the valley from the ridge we see your wondrous light. Yet when the darkness threatened, you found a way to rise. The hopes and dreams of all the years shine out through you tonight. ♫

IHM Center Retreat
June 9 - 14

This year our IHM Center retreat will begin on June 9, 2020. Retreat begins at 5:00 p.m. on June 9 and concludes following lunch on June 14. Jan Novotka will lead the retreat. She has prepared this retreat description as an invitation for our sisters and associates to consider taking some time apart.

Embracing the Mystery of God

Sinking into God’s Still Silent Presence opens us to know God, our True Self, and the whole of Reality in a new way. As we journey together into the Mystery of God we will experience simple techniques to quiet the mind and open the heart. Each day we will be invited to become aware of subtle inner movements, engage with emerging questions and challenges, and give ourselves to seeing with “the Eyes of the Holy.”

IHM 175th Anniversary
July 17 – July 20
Monroe, Michigan

rooted in history, focused on the future, united in fire

IHM sisters and Associates are invited to prayerfully consider interest and availability to participate in the 175th anniversary celebrations, whether in Monroe, at satellite locations, or by prayerful support. For planning purposes, the deadline for completing the form is January 15, 2020.

The form can be found at: https://tinyurl.com/rjqjzva

Registration materials and lodging information will be made available in February with a registration deadline of April 1.
From the Office of the Archives

Someone mused that if it weren’t for the Magi we would not give gifts at Christmas! Where did the custom of giving gifts to a new baby originate? Was it from the Magi’s act of honoring the Christ Child? Gift giving has many purposes/reasons/intentions: gratitude, celebration of a special occasion or an ordinary one or for no reason at all—just because. The IHMs have been gifted by many friends over the course of years. The set of statues of the three Magi, in white china trimmed with gold, was a gift to the sisters in Nyack, NY, from the well-known actress Helen Hayes, who delivered stellar performances on stage and television and in film for decades in the 20th century. This set of elegant delicate statues adorns the IHM Center foyer during this Epiphany season.

Stories about “The First Lady of American Theatre,” told by our IHM sisters who lived in Nyack abound with descriptions of Helen as gracious, charming, delightful, friendly, an easy conversationalist, a neighbor who participated in the activities of St. Ann’s Parish. When the parish was building a new convent, Helen made a sizeable donation for the chapel. (She was generous in many other ways, e.g., contributions/donations in establishing a rehabilitation hospital in Haverstraw, NY, and a Youth Theatre in New York.) Her simplicity was evident in her joining other parishioners taking the bus from Nyack to Yankee Stadium for Pope John XXIII’s visit in 1979. Helen had been asked to be a lector at the liturgy, but traveled with the parish attendees. On the grounds of her magnificent brick home overlooking the Hudson River was a swimming pool which the sisters were invited to use many times. Helen occasionally joined the sisters at St. Ann’s Convent for dinner. At least once, when Helen attempted to help with the dishes in the kitchen, the sisters urged her to go to the living room and entertain the pastor! She felt comfortable enough to sit and read the newspaper at the convent. Helen’s reputation as an famous actress was not a deterrent to being accepted as a “local Nyacker.” She was down to earth; she did not put on airs. She sent her children to local schools and cared about her neighbors. Helen Hayes had a connection to Marywood College also. Neighbors who lived close to Helen in Nyack had three girls all of whom went to Marywood College for their education; Helen came to visit them. In 1953 when the Marywood production was Finian’s Rainbow, Helen was a special guest of honor at one of the performances after which a reception was held for her in O’Reilly Hall.

Gift giving and gratitude are Christmas characteristics. We are grateful to Helen Hayes, The First Lady of American Theater, for her theatrical professionalism, her simplicity of character as a Nyacker and her generosity to others, especially to the IHM sisters.
Christmas in the Andes by Ancilla Maloney, IHM

As more than 100 children from the IHM Sisters’ neighborhood in Sicuani, Peru flocked into the meeting room in the IHM House of Studies, Advent began with song! Every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday during Advent the children came at 7:00 p.m. to practice Christmas carols for the parish Christmas mass. Sister Eileen Egan led the singing accompanied by Miriam Mendoza, Peruvian, and Karina Kroemer from Germany. At the same time Sister Norma Poma Arpi was preparing her youth group for the dramatic presentation of the Nativity during Christmas Eve Mass.

On December 8, the three IHM sisters renewed their vows in the Cathedral at 5:00 a.m. mass. Later in the day, there was a procession through the streets with the statue of our Blessed Mother. Each evening of the nine days before Christmas, the sisters, friends and IHM Associates visited different homes to celebrate “Posadas,” the prayerful enactment of Mary and Joseph seeking a place for Mary to give birth to the child Jesus.

In the Prelature there are priests and sisters from several different countries. Over the course of several months, each group prepared a meal of their customary foods. The Bishop asked Sister Eileen to organize the Christmas dinner for the 50 priests and sisters! Sister Ancilla and children from the neighborhood prepared hundreds of cookies. Sister Norma prepared barbecue chicken and Father Daniel prepared tapioca. With the help of friends, sisters, associates, and priests, the Christmas dinner, a wonderful corporate effort, which included the singing of Christmas carols, became a wonderful community celebration!

Students from one of the city high schools brought hundreds of bags of food which the sisters then distributed to pueblos in the mountains for elderly poor persons. They also sent bags of toys to the pueblos for the children.

On the last day of Sister Ancilla’s library program, the children gathered around a huge birthday cake to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. The culmination of the activities was Christmas Eve mass, followed by Christmas bread and hot chocolate for all as well as gifts for each child present.

IHM Associates and friends prepare a festive dinner. L-R: Juana Puma, Karina Kroemer, Father John Prochaska, Casilda Morocho, Delfina Hualla, Matilde Rendón

Feast of St. Nicholas-Girls in the IHM House of Studies opening their presents.

Sister Ancilla made cookies with neighborhood children who have not had that experience before because their family does not have a stove.

After the children and Ancilla made cookies, she took the children to the market to buy their Christmas presents. Happy smiles with Sister Eileen.
Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center

Manhasset, NY 11030
516-627-9255
olgcenter@gmail.com
www.olgretreat.com
Register online at: http://www.olgretreat.com/programs-retreats

Monthly Offerings

DeMello Spirituality Group
Pat Cuccia, IHM Associate
Mondays: January 27, February 24, March 30, April 27, June 22
1:00 - 3:00pm
Donation - $10.00

Joan Chittister Study Group
Pat Cuccia, IHM Associate
Tuesdays: January 7, February 4, March 24, April 21, May 19, June 9
from 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm
Donation - $10.00

Divine Mercy Prayer and Healing Service
Br. Paul Miller, OFS
Wednesdays: January 15, February 12, March 11, April 15, May 13, June 10
from 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Free Will Donation

Spiritual Practices
Ann Barbara DeSiano, IHM
Thursdays: January 9, February 13, March 12, May 7, June 11
from 10:30 am - 12:00 noon
Free Will Donation

Come Study
A monthly spiritual practice based on the Beatitudes will lead to a vital and healthy spiritual life.

Spiritual Direction JoAnn Walsh, RSM. Please call the Center at 516-627-9255 for more information.

OLG Book Club
Wednesday mornings
February 5, 12, 19, 26
10:00 - 11:30 am
We will be reading and discussing Everything Belongs by Richard Rohr
Sheila Kutner
Free Will Donation

Sunday to Sunday:
A Lenten Reflection Program
Thursdays, February 27 - April 2
7:30 - 9:00 pm
Join us for an historical, literal, and spiritual exploration of the upcoming Sunday readings.
Tony Marinelli
Free Will Donation

Lenten Women’s Retreat
The Women Jesus Loved
Friday, February 28 7:00 pm - Saturday, February 29 9:00 pm
Mass celebrated at 4:00 pm
Journey with the women of Lent to discover the fullness of the resurrection.
Sheila Kutner, Pat McDonough
Cost: $175, $125 Commuter

Lenten Readings and Reflections
Mondays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays
March 2 - April 8 at noon
Triduum Thurs - Sat, April 9 - 11 at 9:30 am
Prayer, discussion, reflection around the readings of the day.
Free Will Donation

Tender Gaze of Jesus
Saturday, March 21
9:30 am - 1:30 pm
Learn how to bring your brokenness to the tender gaze of Jesus.
Joan McGovern
Cost: $35 (includes lunch)

Self Esteem
Tuesday, March 24
9:30 am - noon
Learn to love yourself as God loves you.
Diane Rizzo
Cost: $25

Lenten Day of Prayer: Growing in Prayer
Wednesday, March 18
9:30 am - 3:00 pm
Join us for an exploration of new pathways for a deeper, richer prayer life.
JoAnn Walsh, RSM
Cost: $50 (includes lunch)

Resurrection Moment/Movement
Saturday, April 25
9:30 am - 1:30 pm
How do we put into action the great love of God revealed in the resurrection?
Joan McGovern
Cost: $35 (includes lunch)

Nurturing Wholeness
Thursday, April 30
9:30 am - 3:00 pm
We will learn how to encourage growth in all of our important relationships.
JoAnn Walsh, RSM
Cost: $50 (includes lunch)

Practicing Presence
Saturday, May 2
9:30 am - 3:00 pm
Let us learn together how to love the person right in front of us.
Chris Koellhoffer, IHM
Cost: $50 (includes lunch)
MSA Gymnasium Dedicated

Gaudete Sunday was a day of rejoicing for the long-awaited completion and dedication of the new Mother Seton Academy gym in Baltimore City, MD. MSA is one of the IHM co-sponsored ministries. The new gym will provide space not only for sports, but also for an interactive classroom for music groups. The outside rain garden offers a lovely space for various activities and functions.

Sister Peggy Juskelis, SSND, president, welcomed guests and the co-presidents of the student council offered a prayer. Bishop Dennis Madden, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, blessed the new gym and offered a reflection. Baltimore City mayor, Jack Young, members of the city council and delegates were also present and provided some remarks.

Sister Mary Reap, member board representative, Sister Suzanne Delaney, board of director representative, and Sister Eileen Clinton, former principal of MSA, were in attendance. Also present were Sisters Denise Lyon and Helene Cooke who serve at Mother Seton Academy.

EarthCARE Update

Our EarthCARE Committee continues to unpack and explore climate change, one of the critical issues our IHM Congregation has committed to and chosen for prayer, reflection, and action for justice. We’re growing in understanding that this commitment is a call to wholeness on every level.

Our collective desire for wholeness is echoed in our Direction Statement where we promise to “encourage one another to care for our bodies and spirits by practicing what we each need to be healthy, whole, and available to the world we accompany.” As we do the work of tending to our own bodies with care, we’re also drawn to approach our Earth as a revelation of the Holy, and to ask: What does the Body of Earth hunger for at this moment? What is needed to nourish and nurture and tend to the well-being of our Common Home?

As our January focus, our EarthCARE committee invites us to continue the work of exploring how we can best serve the world now and into the future. Here are two suggestions:

• VIEW THE FILM—NEED TO GROW

This film highlights the efforts of farmers and scientists to capture CO2 and direct it back into the soil. This amazing way to reverse climate change can at the same time nourish the Body of Earth and support the flourishing of native species which can better survive the stresses caused by climate change.

The film, Need to Grow, will be shown on Sunday, January 12, at 2:30 PM at the IHM Center’s Theresa Maxis Conference Room. All are welcome! Those who are at a distance or are not able to be present for the screening of the film may borrow the DVD by contacting Donna Korba at korbad@sistersofihm.org

• PLANT NATIVE SPECIES

Another way to tend to the well-being of our planet is to live with awareness of those who will come after us.

continued on page 10
Featured in the Times Leader

Sister Mary Persico, along with area college and university presidents, was featured in the December 29 issue of The Times Leader.

In this feature article, staff writer Patrick Kernan highlighted Marywood University’s purchase of the former Holy Family Residence, now known as Marywood Heights, that serves as the first university-based retirement community in the area. “It’s a brand new trend in education,” Sister Mary said. Marywood Heights’ approximately 75 residents can expect to have the same level of care as they previously did, but its purchase by the university now opens up new opportunities for Marywood students, as medical and therapy students will be able to do their course-required rotations directly at the home.

Another new initiative at the opposite end of life’s spectrum is early childhood. The NativityMiguel School of Scranton now calls Marywood University home. A school focused on providing education to low-income students in the area, the NativityMiguel School educates 60 students between fifth and eighth grade right on Marywood’s campus. Sister Mary called it a “very specialized program,” which, once again, provides unique opportunities for Marywood students. “Our Marywood students have an opportunity to do student teaching there,” she said, adding that faculty members at the university have also given exciting presentations to the students there.

Sister Mary said the Marywood community has responded incredibly well to the introduction of the wider community directly onto the campus in these new ways. "The students love the interaction, and they love being helpful and being able to give back," she said.

Other programs on campus have similar goals in mind, including the ever-expanding Veterans and Military Center, focusing on providing education to veteran students, and an on-campus daycare for children under the age of 5. She explained that providing unique educational opportunities like these that also have direct community benefits completely falls in line with the university’s mission. “That’s who we really are,” she said. “This exemplifies our service to the community.”

A Pro-life Ministry

I am pro-life. That means that I am also pro-emigres. Daily throughout the world mothers are bundling up their children and seeking safe refuge for them in towns far away from home. The Good Shepherd Sisters in Syria and Lebanon continue to embrace and assist such traumatized families. Pro-life Scranton IHMs continue to support the Good Shepherd Sisters through prayer and monetary donations. You are invited to join this pro-life effort by writing a check to the IHM Development Office with a memo stating the money is for Sisters-to-Sisters, Scranton-to-Syria. A cash donation with the same sort of memo is also welcome. Your pro-life donation may be sent to Sister Vincentia Dorsey or directly to the IHM Development Office.

EarthCare continued from page 9

We can practice this awareness by consciously selecting and planting native species of trees, shrubs, and flowers which are more resistant to altered habitats, more resistant to local pests and diseases, and more likely to survive into the future. Planting native species has a wider reach because these same species provide food, shelter, and habitat for birds, butterflies, and pollinators.

Our EarthCARE committee stands ready to provide information and assistance for anyone looking to plant native species in your area. We invite sisters and associates wherever you live to contact the EarthCARE committee for information on the trees, plants, and flowers native to the places you live and work. Contact Donna Korba at korbad@sistersofihm.org for further assistance in greening and nourishing the earth in this way.
Notes of Gratitude

Ellen Kennedy, the Kennedy children and Sister Terry O’Rourke want to thank all of the IHM sisters and Associates for their kindness at the time of Dan Kennedy’s death. Your presence, prayers and memorials were deeply appreciated. Your prayerful support and friendship meant the world to the family.

My family and I would like to express our gratitude for the many ways you reached out to us upon the death of my sister, Shirley. Your prayers and messages of compassion and support, and especially your presence, were such a comfort to us as we grieved the loss of someone we loved so much.

Gratefully,
Eileen Coleman

Dear Benefactors,

We thank you very much for the generous support you have provided us for our Congregation and our ministries in Haiti. We appreciate your solidarity and your fidelity to us. I hope that my mail will find you well.

As you know our political situation is not okay. We face many challenges right now in this country. We are not free to move about as we would like. All over the country, only if you have an ambulance, is it easy to get through the barricades to continue on your way.

We have money in hand but we don't find what we need to buy. This is a terrible situation. People want change in this system. The government puts gangs with guns in many places. In their demonstration many people die by shooting. This is the first time that we have this situation here. The American government wants dialogue but the Haitian people don't. There are too many crimes from this government.

This year we focused on building our infirmary for our senior sisters. With your donations we have realized eight modern bedrooms with comfort for the senior sisters. We thank you deeply for your generosity. We are not finished completely but we are almost. By next month we could bring these sisters in. It is a drop in the ocean because we have many candidates for the infirmary now. The political situation makes us slow in the work. Everyone in this country suffers from this problem.

Please keep us in your prayers as we do for you, dear benefactor. May Jesus give you strength in this time. May your Christmas and New Year be filled with peace and love.

Once again, thanks a lot for your generous support.

With gratitude and prayers, Sister Denise Desil, psst
Little Sisters of St. Therese in Haiti

LCWR Listed in WRSP

A profile of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has been included in The World Religions & Spirituality Project (WRSP) which was established in 2010 at Virginia Commonwealth University. The mission of the WRSP is to provide "objective, reliable and comprehensive information about the world’s diverse array of religious and spiritual groups. The central feature of the WRSP website is, therefore, profiles of contemporary religious and spiritual movements, established world religions, and historical religious and spiritual movements." Each profile includes a presentation of the group’s history, organization and leadership, as well as issues/challenges.

See the historical timeline and history of LCWR prepared by our Sister Annmarie Sanders for the WRSP website listing:
https://tinyurl.com/rfntk5

Advisory Board-Initiatives, cont from p. 3

The Advisory Board will consider the importance of open meetings when scheduling future meetings. Currently, the June 2020 meeting is planned as an open meeting. The meeting held in September 2019 was open. The Advisory Board will develop a more meaningful way to engage with sisters when attending open meetings.

Future New Initiatives

Those wishing to submit New Initiatives are reminded to utilize the Guidelines for Preparing a New Initiative which can be submitted to the Communications Office or directly to Jane, Rachel or Maryalice. When a New Initiative is submitted, the process outlined on page 1 will be followed before the New Initiative is communicated to the congregation.

Sisters are reminded that the Meeting Notes forms are also an opportunity to communicate with the Advisory Board. Prior to each meeting of the Advisory Board, Sr. Lisa Perkowski will read the Meeting Notes forms and provide a summary to members of the Advisory Board.

Submitted by: Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM
December 30, 2019
Dear Sisters,

Happy New Year! My heart is filled with gratitude for your generous support of our mission. You have stood by Friends of the Poor since its inception, and we welcome your continued guidance as we journey into a new decade.

As we wrapped up December, your generosity of time, talent and treasure allowed us to provide 640 meals at our annual Christmas Dinner. Our call for volunteers to help with the Christmas Gifts for Kids event, in conjunction with Catholic Social Services, was warmly received. Sisters and IHM Associates joined together to transform the Byron Center at the University of Scranton into a toy wonderland. Over 1,800 children were able to have toys under their tree on Christmas morning. Friends of the Poor wrapped up the year with our Family to Family Christmas Food Basket program. A complete meal with turkey or ham, traditional sides and dessert, was provided to over 1,500 families.

Friends of the Poor looks forward to what 2020 has in store for us. There will be challenges and triumphs as the need for our services increases. With your guidance and unwavering prayers, we are prepared to face these tasks head on as we grow our mission in service to others.

I hope you had a blessed and merry Christmas, and I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Meghan Loftus, CEO, Friends of the Poor

A big thank to everyone who stopped by the gift shop during the Holiday Open House. The volunteers were kept busy all day greeting and assisting customers. Cookies and coco along with a basket raffle added to the enjoyment throughout the day.

And of course, none of this would be possible without all of the volunteers who give of their time working in the gift shop as well as the sisters who share their many talents by contributing artwork and handmade items to sell in the shop. Thank You!

The winners of the basket raffle are:
- Sr. Susan Armbuster—Candle Basket
- Sr. Damian Dlugos—Pioneer Storage Containers
- Sr. Beth Pearson—2 lb. Box of Chocolates
- Sr. Mary Ann Adams—Scent Basket
- Jackie Roche—Handmade Afghan

Be sure to check out some of the new merchandise arriving for the spring.

To keep up with what’s new in Heartworks, check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/heartworksgiftshop

Schedule:
January 4-5: Vocation Program for Young Adults about Religious Communities and Charism – Philadelphia
January 6-11: Service trip to Frenchville, PA / Appalachian mountains at Young People Who Care Mission
January 14: Delaware Valley Vocation Directors meeting. Sister Liz McGill, Sister Giovana as guest panelists along with others
God Squadettes meetings in January and February at Holy Cross High School
January 20-24: Finding God in all Things Retreat – Chestnut Hill College
January 26-30: Finding God in All Things Retreat – Marywood University
February 5: Vocation event – Brooklyn, NY with the Franciscan Brothers
February 9-13: Retreat for Busy Persons – Georgian Court
February 17-21: Retreat for Busy Persons – Bucknell University
Initial Formation Update by Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM

The last four months of 2019 were busy ones for the women in initial formation. Both Liz and Gio transitioned into new phases of their formation. Elizabeth McGill entered the novitiate on September 8, and Giovana Fuentes Bendivez completed her canonical year at the end of October and is now in her apostolic year of the novitiate. Congregational-related events and activities, inter-community workshops, formation classes, volunteer experiences and local community happenings occupied a large amount of their time.

Special thanks to all those who teach, mentor and witness the IHM spirit, charism and mission to these women as they continue to discern their call to religious life and their future with our IHM Congregation! Gio, Liz and I are grateful to:

- Sister Cathy Luxner for offering a thought-provoking and reflective class on Marian themes
- Sisters Ruth Harkins and Dora Vizcarra for participating in Catholic Theological Union’s online class and sharing their wisdom with Liz
- Sisters Leonnette Bower, Michael Marie Hartman, Mary Newett and Marie Lourdes Vanston for offering their expertise in teaching English to Gio
- Sisters Maryalice Jacquinot, Ann Walsh, Mary Kay Faliskie, and Meghan Loftus for opening opportunities for Liz and Gio to volunteer and experience first-hand IHM mission at St. Joseph Center, Friends of the Poor and Our Lady of Peace
- Sisters Betty Bullen, Joan McCusker, Mindy Welding and Kieran Williams for their daily presence and accompaniment in the formative community
- The sisters and associates who have invited Liz and Gio to use their unique gifts by participating in these congregation committees—EarthCare, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Vital Living—the Spanish-speaking Circle of Grace and the Weaving Cultures Program
- Our sisters at Our Lady of Peace and the IHM Center whose prayer and embodiment of God’s unconditional love are powerful sources of strength for Gio and Liz
- The Leadership Team for their ongoing support and guidance
- All IHMs who act as friend, mentor and sister to Liz and Gio during the discernment process

As we begin this New Year, let us recognize the importance of each person in our lives and how each of us contributes to the initial formation of Gio and Liz and to the ongoing formation of one another!
Sister Rita Ann Naughton, IHM by Sister Patt Walsh, IHM

“If I could… I would teach each child to be positive, to smile, to love and be loved!”

Sister Rita Ann Naughton and I have one very important fact in common. We share a birthday—March 20th (hers – 1937)—the first day of spring! Sister Rita Ann is the older daughter of Ida and Paul, born in Cascade, PA, a suburb of Williamsport.

Rita was taught by IHM sisters in St. Joseph’s School in Williamsport. Sister Rosalita began to cultivate Rita’s IHM vocation by inviting her to church on Saturdays to work as a sacristan. In her senior year, she met Sister Barbara DuMont. Sister Barbara was kind, approachable and her math tutor.

Entering right after high school, Rita Ann was sent out to teach before she’d completed her degree. She secretly hoped she’d be sent to teach “black” students. Her wish came true when her first mission was to Upper Marlboro where she taught first and second grade in “the black school.” The “black” and the “white” schools were not only separate but they were unequal and all black families were required to sit in the back of the church.

Later, Sister Rita Ann’s mother’s health deteriorated enough that Rita needed to go on home ministry. She earned a salary teaching religious education at St. Boniface Church. While she was on home ministry, Rita also initiated an IHM Circle of Grace to bring women into an IHM Associate Relationship.

Rita also made the decision that she wanted a “therapy dog” and, thus began a 17 year relationship with Curly who first had to complete all of the necessary training courses before he was officially certified.

When her mother died, Rita was now faced with finding her own employment. She took a position as the activity director in the Alzheimer wing of a local nursing home. Later, her knees began to deteriorate. A neighbor asked if she could just “check on her Mother.” Her new ministry of “companion to the elderly” had begun. Initially, she performed this support while the woman lived at home. The woman—Mrs. Baird—who lived to be 101!—later went to a personal care home. It wasn’t long before Rita and Curly were orchestrating events for all residents. By now Rita had developed a reputation and within the week after Mrs. Baird’s death, she was called to companion another woman.

She’d met a student from Africa who at one point went back home. However, when Rena became pregnant, she wanted her child to be born in America. Rita invited Rena to live with her. She also companioned her in birthing training and accompanied her to the delivery room where Alysia was born!

Sister Rita Ann’s Williamsport ministries came to an unexpected end one weekend. She became ill and came to OLP to recuperate. She also stayed with her friend, Jane Roche, a well-known IHM Associate. Later, given her mobility challenges, it was decided she should move to OLP. Here she is still giving back. She can be found calling Bingo or leading other game activities. If there’s a special party, she often comes in costume!

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IHM Development Office

IHM Foundation Sponsors Feast Day Activities

Once again the Sisters of IHM Foundation sponsored a dinner for OLP residents and a brunch for IHM Center residents in celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Pictured L-R enjoying the festivities are: Tim McMullen, Foundation president; Sister Daria McGinn, IHM; John Murray, and Sister Cor Immaculatum Heffernan, IHM, Foundation board members.

Christmas Appeal Response

With Christmas appeal gifts continuing to be sent into the development office, we have raised almost $45,000 in donations to the IHM Retirement Fund. Sister Gracette Baker, IHM, a prayer minister at OLP was featured in our letter of support mailed in early December. Please pray for our benefactors who continue to respond to our request for donations.

Help Us Reach Our Silver Circle Sales Goal!

We are just 13 memberships away from reaching our annual sales goal of 7,022 for Silver Circle! Thank you to all of our sellers and members. There are still plenty of chances to win, so please ask your friends, family, and others to buy a membership in support of the IHM Retirement Fund.

Rita Ann, continued from page 14

As she ages, she has one wish—“don’t let me lose my hearing!” She loves music! The IHMs gave her piano lessons for years!

Finally, she shared a quote with me that she values: “I would teach each child (and sister) that it is O.K. to show their feelings by laughing, crying, or touching someone they care about. Every day I would have each child (adult) feel special and, through my actions, each one would know how much I really care.”

Jane Roche and her family with Rita. Rita first taught Jane's daughter in Pittston and they have remained friends ever since. Jane is one of Rita’s Associates. Pictured L-R back: Jane Roche, Rita and Jane’s daughter, Jane Maas. L-R front: Jane’s grandchildren, Morgan and Taylor

Rita in costume
IHM Calendar

April 3-5, 2020
Retreat Days
Liz Sweeney, SSJ

June 20, 2020
Advisory Board Meeting

175th Anniversary of the Sisters of IHM
Friday, July 17 to Monday, July 20, 2020
Monroe, MI

Sunday, July 26, 2020
IHM Jubilee

IHM Congregation Vitae

as of December 28, 2019

Final Profession - 304
Temp. Professed - 1
Novices - 2
Candidates - 0
Associates - 169

Sisters of St. Casimir Congregation Vitae

Final Profession - 43

Contemplative Prayer, January 18

A communal experience of contemplative prayer will be held at 10:00 a.m. in the IHM Center chapel on January 18.

All are invited to attend this time of centering prayer on Saturday, January 18.

God’s covenant has been fulfilled

Sister M. St. Kenneth Polley, IHM December 19, 2019 in the 66th year of her religious profession

Sister Theresa Bonanza, IHM December 28, 2019 in the 65th year of her religious profession

NEW on the IHM WEB

Wakes and Funerals for Deceased IHM Sisters: https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv
Advisory Board Documents: https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/advisory-board/
List of all deceased sisters by month and day: http://www.sistersofihm.org/who-we-are/ihm-member-directories/
New Sisters of St. Casimir website: https://www.sistersofstcasimir.org/
Remain in Our Love Masses: https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv
A PREVIEW by Sister Patt Walsh, IHM
The Book of Joy
Lasting happiness in a changing world
by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Archbishop Desmond Tutu
with Douglas Abrams

I found this book title as the answer to a Jeopardy question! Actually, the very next day I discovered this very book on my household’s bookshelf! It was the week of the impeachment and verging on the 2020 presidential election year. I realized that this is a book that can help me get through the next year!

More importantly, in a congregation that begins its description of its members as “joyful,” I’ve begun to think that one of the major contributions each of us can make to 2020 is to not only be living witnesses of joy, but to also be able to teach others how to live a joyful life in the midst of what looks like it will be an even more chaotic and stressful world.

Therefore, what you are about to read is NOT a book review! It is a book PREVIEW. I have not read it yet. This is a book to read and reflect on for all of 2020 and, if you bring its truths into your life, it may be the biggest gift you can give as we look for ways to be joyful in these crazy times. So, consider the following a “preview of coming attractions.”

Some background on how the book came about. In April of 2015, Archbishop Desmond Tutu travelled to India (where the Dalai Lama lives in exile) to celebrate his 80th birthday. He brought with him Douglas Abrams, and a camera crew. Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama had decided to spend the week together in conversations that would, hopefully, create a gift for others and answer the question: “How do we find joy in the face of life’s inevitable suffering and how do we live a life brimming with joy?”

Tenzin Gyatso is the 14th Dalai Lama which means he is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan People and Tibetan Buddhism. He lives in exile because the Chinese government has banned him from living in his Tibetan home.

Desmond Tutu is the Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Southern Africa and now lives in Cape Town. He was the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission—a process to bring together the South African people at the end of Apartheid. Both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are Nobel Peace Prize Laureates.

Douglas Abrams is an American literary agent who is dedicated to working with visionaries who are creating a wiser, healthier, and more just world. The reader should look at Abrams as the book’s narrator and interviewer and, most importantly, the observer of what it’s like to be a companion to these holy men during this week. These two men live truly joyful, happy lives. They laugh a lot and call each other “mischievous people” and their relationship is best understood in the pictures of each of them that begin each chapter.

This book has three layers—their teachings on joy; the latest science on joy (and other qualities important for enduring happiness) and the stories of their being together. Note: the “science” here is intended to help the reader understand that these spiritual practices are grounded in the research about the human mind and body. The book describes the “Eight Pillars of Joy” and concludes with a series of “Joy Practices.”

So, as we approach 2020, may we each become models of “joyful, loving, hospitable and self-emptying service...” for those we serve will be in desperate need of our gifts. This book may help!
Local Community Fidelity Checking Accounts Sweep

On December 31, 2019, Fidelity local community checking accounts with balances exceeding two times the monthly allotment amount were swept. If your house contacted Sister Terri Jordan regarding the retention of funds for jubilees or other expenses, that amount was taken into consideration when adjusting the account balance. If your house account was swept, the Business Office will notify you in writing of the amount that was swept from the account. Please be sure to note the deduction in the check register. The January monthly allotment was deposited into the checking accounts on January 2, 2020.

Social Security Notices

The Business Office reminds all sisters receiving social security benefits to send “Form SSA-1099” and “Your New Benefit Amount” to the Business Office. The Social Security Administration will mail these forms directly to the address they have on file for each sister.

Social Security will have completed mailing all SSA-1099’s by January 31, 2020. If a sister does not receive her copy or if she loses it, a copy can be requested from the SSA after February 1, 2020. A copy can be requested by using an online application that can be found on the SSA.gov website, by calling 1-800-772-1213 or by contacting a local Social Security office. Any sister needing assistance with replacing the SSA-1099 after February 1, 2020 should contact Jackie at 570-963-2476 or rochej@sistersofihm.org.

Sisters who receive social security benefits and also have their tax return prepared by the Business Office are required to have the SSA1099 document on file in the Business Office. Your tax return may be delayed if the form in not on file.

Income Tax Preparation

If the Business Office currently prepares your tax returns or you would like us to prepare them, please send all tax forms and documentation in one envelope to:

IHM Center Business Office
2300 Adams Ave
Scranton, PA 18509
Attn: Laura Bondy

Please send all tax forms, even if a tax return is not required to be filed for you, as the IRS/Social Security requires such documentation to be retained in our files.

The tax deadline to file with the IRS is Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

The following is a list of tax forms you may receive that should be included in your tax packet:

W-2—Wage and Tax Statement
K-1—Trusts
1099-B—Proceeds from Broker and Barter Exchange Transactions
1099-INT—Interest Income
1099-M—Miscellaneous Income
1099-R—Distributions from Pensions, Annuities, Retirement, IRA’s
1099-S—Proceeds from Real Estate Transactions
1099-SSA—Social Security Letters from charitable organizations, which state the amount of your donation

Please contact Laura Bondy at 570-963-2492 or bondyl@sistersofihm.org with any questions regarding tax returns.

New Fleet Management Program

Effective December 2019, a new Fleet Management Program became effective for all congregation vehicles. Caritas Vehicle Services, partnering with Network now provides services in the areas of vehicle maintenance and repair management, emergency roadside assistance, vehicle rentals and fleet fuel cards.

Each congregation owned vehicle should have a Driver Kit, which should be kept in the vehicles glove box. If a congregation vehicle does not have a Driver Kit, please contact Debbie Worlinsky at worlinskyd@sistersofihm.org or 570-346-5435.

If you were unable to attend the presentations given in December or view them via live stream, a recorded version can be viewed via Ustream at: https://video.ibm.com/channel/sisters-of-ihm-scranton-pa.

In order for the congregation to receive discounts, vehicles should be serviced at a National Account Shop. The list of National Account Shops by Zip Code is available in Business Office Online. From the IHM Website Sisters page, login to Business Office Online. Go to Business Matters/Vehicles/National Account Shops by Zip Code. Enter your zip code in the upper left hand corner.

Contact information is also available by logging into Business Office Online. Go to Business Matters/Vehicles/Fleet Services Contact Information.

Direct Deposit

Direct Deposit is a safe and timely method for your stipend/wages to be sent to the Congregation. The funds are electronically transmitted into the Congregations account on your regular pay date. A pay advice is then given to the sister advising her of the payment into the account. Please inquire at your place of ministry/employment for the availability of this feature.

Sisters who are currently enrolled in direct deposit are reminded to send their deposit advices upon receipt to the Business Office.