Staying at home
By Margaret Chapman, IHM, and Patricia McCluskey, IHM

There is a quote from Mother Ruth Hankerd, the IHM General Superior from 1932-1944, with which most IHMs are familiar: “Home is where each one lives for the other and all live for God.” Since the “Stay at Home” pandemic directive took effect, we have witnessed countless examples of the living out of Mother Ruth’s words.

Every employee and every department within our circle of essential staff: nurses, CENAs, Human Resources, IS, liturgy planners, Pastoral Care, Life Enrichment, Environmental Services, Reception, Maintenance, Dining Service and Congregational Business Office have spent their work time living for others. They have put aside their personal fears and worries about their families, shown up with smiles on their faces (behind their masks) and given their all for our residents. The fruit of their efforts to build a culture of right relationship, a hallmark of the IHM Mission, is palpable throughout the facility. No expression of gratitude will ever convey the depth of our appreciation and pride.

The staff we have painfully had to furlough during this time, have continued to express concern and pray for everyone who is present here. We sense their care and support every day in the midst of their own challenges and struggles with accepting their stay-at-home orders. They continue to be essential within our hearts and minds.

Our IHM and lay residents have graciously, albeit not without some struggle, accepted the restrictions they have been asked to endure. Lay residents have had to rely on phone calls and FaceTime with family members who must trust that their loved one is being care for. IHM Sister-residents in Assisted Living, Skilled Care and Memory Care who are often visited by sisters in Independent Living, have had to sacrifice those face-to-face visits as well. Our sisters in Independent Living are following the social distancing guidelines, which required discontinuing communal dining and communal gathering for prayer as well as cancellation of all non-essential travel.

It is very evident that everyone is living each day for the Risen One whose Spirit continues to sustain us.
Then and Now

Sister Marianne Gaynor, born to an Irish mother and Polish father, grew up on the northwest side of Detroit along with her younger sister and brother. Having immigrant grandparents created an awareness and concern for people from other countries. “We always had pen-pals, cousins from Ireland,” she says.

She attended Marygrove Preschool and Kindergarten, Christ the King Elementary School and Immaculata High School, taught by the IHM Sisters. Sister Marianne joined the community after high school.

“For me, it was the IHM Sisters I met. They were significant because of what they stood for and how they engaged with us. They were just really good people.” She was attracted to the IHM Sisters’ commitment to service and felt called to a religious vocation. She earned her bachelor’s degree in theology and early childhood education from Marygrove. Read more.

Reflection
By Kathy Onderbeke, IHM

Our world is collectively grieving.
Holding each other up in a virtual hammock of prayer
Embracing a kaleidoscope of feelings amid a myriad of losses
routines, worship, work, connection, security, freedoms
And most profoundly, thousands of lives
Each one a single story
a life unexpectedly ended
setting into motion waves of emptiness and sadness.

We’ve been thrust into uncertain waiting
in an unfolding saga with no script.

There are no shortcuts. Read more.

2020 Royal Blue Classic cancelled

In light of the pandemic, this year’s Royal Blue Classic Golf Outing is cancelled. Next year’s outing is scheduled for Monday, June 21, 2021. If you have questions, please contact Marilyn Meadows at 734-777-9620 or mmeadows@ihmsisters.org.
Having submitted a YouTube link for my musical trilogy: “Places in the Heart,” I received a further invitation. “Please, can you write an article to accompany the link, sharing something of what the journey was like for you in writing this music?” My quick responses could find echoes in the Gospel: first, “What I have written, I have written” (John 19:22) and second paraphrased from an earlier account, “This music is of age. Take your questions there. Let it speak for itself.” (John 9:22)

I was scarcely entering my 20s when I began creating songs: simple melodies wedded to heartfelt words and accompanied by the melodic fabric of a solo folk guitar. They were born out of a desperate need for self-expression. They were also a key into intimate connection. I discovered through the interest and feedback of friends, students and companions on my ministerial journeys that plumbing and bringing forth what is most personal also opens us to the universal. We are deeply interconnected.

Fast-forward to 1990 when I was a student again at Marygrove, finishing up a second degree in undergraduate music. The composition assignment was simply “to write something” and I was fascinated at being introduced to the possibility of harmony moving by descending thirds rather than fifths, creating an intriguing and much softer tone of tenderness, it seemed. Have you noticed how God speaks when we are finally still enough to listen? “Keep me, O God, as the apple of your eye.” (Psalm 17:8) The developing music drew me in, and the second half of this psalm verse seemed to catch me even more deeply when framed in tender sound: “Never, O never let me be ashamed.” In those words, I recognized the feminist journey, breaking free from shame and awakening to the clear, authentic voice of the inner child. I was already schooled in years of Scriptural prayer, and as I played with this refrain over and over, the verses unfolded naturally, each of them familiar through personal journeys of intimacy with God.

I joke with my friends that the composition prof would have been satisfied with 16 measures of well-worked harmony, but no … not me … I needed to let it lead me into a 22-page (11+ minutes) SATB trilogy! In 1990-1991 we were in the midst of the First Gulf War, and the tone of my writing needed to turn to make room first for heartbreak and then for lament. “My Soul Is Sick” was an expression of both personal and universal angst. When would we learn? How would we take together the needed journey of repentance and repair? I wrote with the hope of giving my part to the turning of our American and global heart.

In good form and also for survival, I knew the musical journey was not completed without a third movement that could return us to the foundational energy of God’s gracious creative action. Psalm 104 was a perfect doorway, and the upbeat syncopated rhythm of the 7/8-time signature was the musical inspiration.

A loose use of rondo form allowed for free creative play held together by repetitive outbursts of pure joy: ‘Praise to our God, sing praise!’ Unlike the first two pieces, this third stayed with the one psalm, letting it come to its own fitting conclusion and heart-felt “Amen.”

“It would not be possible to praise nurses too highly.”
— Stephen Ambrose

Raffle Update
Because of the pandemic, and following the advice of the Michigan Gaming Control Board, we postponed the April raffle drawing.

2019-2020 Michigan State Raffle License No. C-28948

On the IHM website
ihmpact is published quarterly, highlighting news and events of the IHM Sisters as well as offering articles for reflection and contemplation. It is available by subscription or online.

Pass it on …
If you know someone who would like more information about what the IHM Sisters and Associates are doing, please forward this publication. If you have received this from a friend and would like to subscribe, please click here.

Visit the IHM website to post information on an upcoming class reunion or to share a memory.

Submit prayer requests to the IHM Sisters.

Follow us!

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Photos around the Motherhouse

Monroe’s “Stronger Together” Huddle group lifted the spirits of both residents and staff at IHM Senior Living Community with a parade.

Sister James Marian Sarchet is among the IHM mask-makers providing masks for IHM staff.

Safe, secure online giving is available for your convenience.