Advisory Board Meets via ZOOM on June 20

The Advisory board meeting held its first ever totally “by zoom” session on June 20, 2020. The opening prayer, entitled *The Threshold Opens to Liminal Space to Make Us What We Otherwise Would Never Be*, invited members to embrace and accept the liminal space to which we are called at this moment, that betwixt and between time, where we have left one room but not yet entered the next. The prayer expressed the challenge before us: “This global pandemic and our long-standing sin of racism have merged into a vast turbulent and collective liminal space within which we are now living.” Board members were invited to be silent, to experience emptiness, and to accept the time such rediscovery takes.

Board facilitator, Mark Clarke, then set a context by leading a discussion on the characteristics that vigilant organizations may need at this liminal time. Mark noted that a deep sense of curiosity, the embrace of diverse opinions, willingness to play the long game, investment in foresight activities, and the ability to adapt a flexible process for strategy development and implementation were critical elements. Board members agreed that these elements would provide guidance as we move forward.

The board members had been asked prior to the meeting to spend time with the important insights and questions that were raised by the members who participated in the May 21 virtual gathering of the congregation. Following a period of reflection, board members moved into small groups to discuss the members’ insights, raise up their important questions and to then prioritize what they saw as the three most critical issues. Preliminary feedback from the breakout sessions reaffirmed that the critical issues of relationships, vital living, sponsorship, and the environment were at the heart of most of the members’ responses with technology being a very important concern for this time. Discussions raised questions such as: What are we learning about the critical issues during this pandemic and period of social unrest? Can we delve deeper into these issues using the lens of our IHM charism and direction statement as we plan for the future? What is the invitation we are being given? Notes from these conversations will be gathered and shared at a future time.

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Juneteenth Commemoration Held in Scranton

Sisters Margaret Gannon and Donna Korba along with Pat Sheehan and Alejandra Marroquin joined hundreds of others at Nay Aug Park in recognition of Juneteenth, short for June 19th, which commemorates the day when the last black slaves were set free in Texas in 1865. This was two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The event hosted by the Black Scranton Project emphasized not only the timeless themes of freedom and perseverance, but also the current injustice, racism, and inequality experienced by minority populations in the U.S. and across the world.

Associate Advisory Committee Update

The Associate Advisory Committee convened for the first time in early March 2020. After a review and discussion of potential areas of focus for our work, the committee identified two priorities that deserve immediate attention. These are the revision of the Prayer Journal, the primary resource used by aspiring associates as they engage in an introductory period of discernment, prayer, and study prior to commissioning, and the development of an associate handbook and a separate guidebook for the facilitators of Circles of Grace. The handbook will include a brief history of both the congregation and the IHM sister-associate relationship in addition to a description of the charism and mission and direction statements. Both the handbook and guidebook will provide practical information regarding process, role descriptions, and examples of appropriate forms and documents. IHM associates and sisters who are engaged in this work include Maureen McCarthy, Jane O’Neill, Karen Rossmell, Sheryl Lynn Sochoka, Kim Sulzinski, Amy Vogel, Jean Louise Bachetti, Helene Cooke, Nancy Elder, and Mary Ellen Higgins.

Advisory Board, cont. from p.1

Following a lunch break the meeting moved to a discussion of the role/identity of the Advisory Board going forward. Members were asked: What is working? What will make it work more effectively, and what are its implications as a piece of the governance structure? Several suggestions emerged. The most persistent issue throughout the discussion was that communication is key to the success of the Advisory Board and to good governance in general. The recent necessity of finding new ways of communication through zoom and virtual meetings encourage additional use of technology to facilitate communication. Closer linking among the work of mission circles, the advisory board, and leadership was also supported.

Other new business included review of the revised congregational policy, Sexual Misconduct by a Member. It was suggested and accepted that the policy be sent back to the governance committee to add any additional language suggested by Pope Francis in his letter on sexual misconduct and the responsibilities of congregations.

Finally, election of new Advisory Board officers was held. Results were: Chair: Sister Maryalice Jacquinot; Planning Committee: Sisters Katie Clauss and Rachel Terry. The new terms will begin following the Assembly in July.

Advisory Board: Sisters Jane Snyder, Gail Cabral, Kathryn Claus, Fran Fasolka, Maryalice Jacquinot, Kathleen Lunsmann, Lisa Perkowski, Mary Persico, Annmarie Sanders, Rachel Terry
Leadership: Sisters Ellen Maroney, Mary Ellen Higgins, Terri Jordan, Mary Reap, Nancy DeCesare
Feast of Corpus Christi in the Peruvian Andes

The Toyota truck wound its way very slowly up and around the rutted dirt road from the city of Sicuani to the top of the mountain overlooking the city. It had to go slowly because it was carrying a very precious passenger: Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance was riding in the back of the truck.

No procession through the streets was possible because of Covid-19. The virus has spread throughout the four Provinces which make up the Prelature of Sicuani. The Bishop, accompanied by some helpers, affixed the Monstrance to a pedestal held fast by one of his priests in the back of his truck and went to the top of the mountain. There, after benediction, he prayed for and gave Jesus' blessing in the four directions where the Provinces of Canchis, Canas, Espinar and Chimbulvicus are located. The event, which the three IHM Sisters in Sicuani were able to enjoy, was carried on Facebook, TV, and radio to the people of the whole region.

Sister Mariam Pfeifer Receives MAR/AMTA Lifetime Award

During these anxiety-filled pandemic times, many of us are discovering the therapeutic powers of music. In 1976, Sister Mariam Pfeifer became an IHM pioneer in that field with a degree-equivalency in music therapy from the University of Georgia. Since then she both established the music therapy program at Marywood University (which is celebrating its 40th anniversary) as well as set up a program and an opportunity for music therapy internships at St. Joseph’s Center. Until the Covid-19 quarantine at OLP, our cognitively-impaired sisters benefited from her work when Marywood music therapy students visit and work with them regularly.

Since the mid-1970s, Mariam has also been actively engaged in both the national and regional music therapy associations. For her work in the national organization, Mariam received the AMTA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008.

And though she has retired from Marywood University, Mariam is still active in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Music Therapy Association – an association that she also served as president in 1993-1994. It was fitting that, during this year’s conference, the MAR/AMTA also gave Mariam its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Because of the pandemic, the MAR/AMTA held its annual conference and awards ceremony “virtually” on June 6 and 7 using a program called Crowdcast. Though the awards ceremony was the last part of the conference agenda on Sunday, a computer was set up in the OLP conference room so that Mariam could “attend” many of the conference sessions. Still involved in the organization, Mariam’s intention is to submit her sessions’ attendance to the organization for continuing education credits so that she can renew her credentials.

The conference concluded with the awards ceremony. The MAR/AMTA president, Beth Deyermond, presented each award as the image of the winner appeared on the screen. Of Mariam, she remarked, "For over forty-three years, Sister Mariam has been a stable in the world of music therapy. She trained hundreds of therapist and traveled around the world so that she herself never stopped learning. Sister’s name will forever be synonymous with the program at Marywood University.”

In response, Mariam’s remarks included a quote from Kahlil Gibran addressed to the students, “You give little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

Beth Deyermond is right—Sister Mariam has never stopped learning!
Statement on the Sin of Racism in Our Time and Place

As IHM Sisters, we desire to be in the midst of the pain of our world. Surely, that is where we find ourselves standing as we bear witness to the murder of George Floyd, the tragic and senseless killing of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and the shameful list of all in our nation’s story who have been treated differently, unfairly, violently because of their racial heritage.

How could our hearts not be profoundly disturbed by images of violence that suggest that some lives hold more value than others, that only some voices merit a hearing, that violence enacted against people of color is in any way normal and is anything but social sin?

We hold in tenderness and prayer cherished lives lost as well as families left to mourn their deaths, their absence, and their unfulfilled promise. We lament the sin of racism and the systemic injustices that disproportionately oppress our sisters and brothers of color.

But that is not enough. Our sympathy does not change the structures of injustice.

We refuse to accept that that is all we can do, all we can be.

We believe we are better than our brokenness and our shadow.

We call on the elected leadership of the United States to make of this moment a movement toward genuine transformation and the restoring of right relationship. We welcome all people to join us as we commit ourselves to embracing continuing conversion of heart;

• to owning and repenting our complicity in contributing to a worldview that treats some with suspicion and hostility based on race;
• to entering into deep inner soul work that challenges attitudes of racial bias;
• to profound listening to and learning from the voices and stories of people who have been unheard, dismissed, silenced, excluded;
• to building relationships with love, trust, and forgiveness in which we assume and draw forth the best of one another.

We call on our welcoming God, the Holy One, to heal our coming together, our breathing together, and to usher us closer to the dream of the beloved community in our beautiful yet wounded world.

IHM Support for Supreme Court DACA Decision

The Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton expresses its gratitude to the Supreme Court for its courageous decision on June 18, 2020 to block the Trump administration’s actions to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program that protects from deportation hundreds of thousands of immigrants brought to the US as children. We affirm and support the statement below from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and pledge our continued efforts to call on the members of Congress to pass legislation that will ensure permanent protection for the hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious is grateful that the Supreme Court struck down President Trump's attempt to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The Court's ruling safeguards the right of 700,000 DACA recipients to live and work in the country that is their home. This is an enormous victory for the immigrant youth who have led the challenge to the Trump administration's attempt to end the program that has protected our colleagues, students, neighbors, and friends from the threat of deportation.

DACA recipients have long contributed to our communities and our economy. They are teachers and engineers, specialist and essential workers of every kind. Nearly 30,000 DACA recipients are among the healthcare workers combating the outbreak of COVID-19 working to prevent the spread of the virus and to save the lives of those infected.

While we welcome the Court's ruling, we recognize that this is not a permanent solution. We call on members of Congress to move expeditiously to pass legislation that will provide lasting stability for DACA recipients, those with

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Everyone Has a Vocation Story

Sister Catherine Sitjá y Balbastro, IHM

I was born and raised in Argentina. If someone ever told me that I was going to enter a religious congregation in the USA, I would never have believed it. In my twenties I started what I call my journey in search of God. Of course at that time I did not know that my search was for God. It took me many years until I was ready to listen to God's call. My journey started with my travel to England, Oxford, then to Madrid, Spain, and back again to London, England, where I finished my studies in a British/American University with a degree in Political Science and a specialization in International Relations. Additionally, I had three years of study in law from my own country. It was clear that my studies, though absolutely fascinating, were secondary to the joy I felt at befriending so many different people from all over the world. I was absolutely fascinated by the diversity and the richness of cultures and people and religion. I would spend hours with a good friend of mine who was Muslim and we would talk about God, prayer, and our beliefs.

After finishing my studies, I went back to Argentina to find myself, again, searching. This time my search took me to Canada where I immigrated and became a Canadian citizen. I thought I finally got it! I had a job I very much enjoyed, new friends, my own place, and a stable and secure life. To my surprise it was in that calm and comfortable environment that God, by surprise, decided to shake my entire life. I attended what I thought was an Advent retreat weekend that turned out to be a weekend retreat for women discerning religious life. God is a great joker! It was during that retreat that God's kindness, gentleness, and love opened my heart to the possibility of religious life. God's call was so enticing and so attractive that I could not resist it. I felt something that I had never felt before and that changed my life. Yes, the fear and the doubt were there but love and courage overtook the fear and doubt. Now my search of God was taking a different route. Now a new journey began that took me to the IHM Sisters of Scranton, PA.

It is said that there is nothing impossible for God. Well, my journey with the IHM Sisters started through the Internet. Yes, God also uses modern means to communicate with us. My initial contact with the sisters was through their webpage where I read all about them. Their commitment and support of women, their joy and their willingness to bring the unconditional love of God to everyone—touched my heart. I moved to Scranton to enter the IHM Congregation and since then, I have had no regrets, only praises of thanksgiving. Yes, the journey is not easy: I did and do have my challenges but also plenty of blessings and joys along the way.

We all need a meaning for our lives, and for me it is God's unconditional love.

Sister Katie presently serves as the coordinator of maintenance for Hour Children in Long Island City, NY.

N.B.: 2020 is the 25th anniversary of IHM presence on the Internet. The Sisters of IHM are the first congregation of Catholic women religious on the World Wide Web. The original creation of the IHM webpage by Sister Kathleen M. Burns, IHM, was launched July 12, 1995.

LCWR-DACA continued from page 4

Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Dreamers, their families and our communities. It is long past time to enact a Dream Act that provides a path to citizenship without including funding for detention, deportation, or border militarization, or provisions that would limit opportunities for family reunification. The House of Representatives has already passed the bipartisan American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (HR 6). It is time for the Senate to do the same.

Catholic sisters will continue to advocate for bipartisan legislation that addresses the injustices in our current immigration system. We will continue to stand in solidarity with our black and brown neighbors who seek the justice and dignity that is their right.

We note that this decision comes as Black people and their allies have courageously organized to demand an end to police brutality, systemic racism, and white supremacy. Our commitment to the gospel mandate to uphold the dignity of all people requires that we recommit ourselves to the work of dismantling all those systems that oppress people of color and to advocate for Black lives and the protection of immigrants.
During the month of July, the United States, Argentina, Colombia and Peru each celebrate Independence Day. When asked what they are proud of and what they hope and dream for their people, IHM sisters from these countries responded:

**July 4 – United States**  
Two dreams I have for the United States are: one, a government in which all those serving uphold people over ideologies; and two, an economy in which capital is measured by the gifts and well-being of all persons and the health of our environment. - Lisa Perkowski, IHM

**July 9 – Argentina**  
We pray for Sister Katie Sitja y Balbastro and the people in her country of origin today.

**July 20 – Colombia**  
Lo que me enorgullece de mi país es que posee una invaluable riqueza de recursos naturales, energéticos, agrícolas, industriales y sobre todo musicales. Colombia tiene el mejor café del mundo. Pero mi orgullo viene principalmente por su gente... laboriosa, emprendedora, hospitalaria, alegre y creativa.

What makes me proud of my country is that it possesses an invaluable richness of energy, natural, agricultural, industrial, and above all, musical resources. Colombia has the best coffee in the world. But my pride mostly lies in my people who are hardworking, innovative, welcoming, joyful and creative.  
- Amanda del Valle, IHM

**July 28 – Peru**  
Estoy orgullosa de mi país porque es tierra de gran diversidad: su historia, su gente, su folklore y arte, sus paisajes y relieves. Su fauna, flora y minerales son de innumerables variedad. Perú destaca con primer puesto mundial en su arte culinario, reconocido por el turista 8 años consecutivos.

I am proud of my country because it is a land of great diversity: its history, its people, its folklore and art, its landscapes and landforms. Its fauna, flora and minerals are of innumerable variety. Peru, world famous and recognized by tourists for its culinary art, has received first place internationally for 8 consecutive years.  
- Denise Montagne, IHM

- Amo a mi país apasionadamente. Me fascina la variedad de su flora y fauna, la increíble belleza de su naturaleza, la variedad de su gente, sus climas, su música y la comida. Me enorgullece ser peruana y ser parte de un pasado milenario y un futuro lleno de esperanza.

I love my country passionately. I am fascinated by the variety of its flora and fauna, the incredible beauty of its nature, the variety of its people, its climates, its music and food. I am proud to be Peruvian and to be part of an age-old past and a future full of hope.  
- Dora Vizcarra, IHM

**My dream for my country is that every citizen has the right to work, healthcare and housing. No discrimination, but rather love and unity as God wishes!**  
- Tomasa Fernández, IHM

Anhelo que mi país pronto se recupere de la recesión económica y que todos reconfiguemos nuestros valores fundamentales para que haya equidad, unidad y compromiso, responsabilidad social, amor y cuidado a nuestro querido prójimo y a nuestra casa común.

I hope that my country soon recovers from the economic recession and that we all reconfigure our core values, so that there is equity, unity and commitment, social responsibility, love and care of our dear neighbor and our common house.  
- Giovana Fuentes Bendívez

Don’t miss the Animotos of the United States, Argentina, Colombia, and Peru that will be made available through the IHMList on the day of each country’s Independence Day!

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**Happy Independence Day! ¡Feliz Dia de Independencia!**
Journey with us as we explore the sacred treasurers of the IHM Archives

Marywood Cemetery, Scranton PA

Miss Lizzie Baxter was born in Paterson, NJ, in 1852. Her father was Peter Baxter of Scotland and her mother was Eliza McNamee of Ireland. She entered the IHM congregation in 1873 in Susquehanna and was a member of the fourth “band.” Lizzie was known in religion as Sister M. Felicitas. She received the habit on April 13, 1874, was professed on April 4, 1876, and died on April 13, 1905.

A few bits of Lizzie’s life have emerged by way of an archival project honoring our deceased sisters with the creation of individual files and verification of their burial information. Even in death our IHM sisters are not forgotten by the community as we develop these records and find sacred treasures of baptismal and birth certificates, last wills and testaments, and community records of assignments from the earliest days of the congregation. We provide space in the archives for the stories of these heroic, gentle, loving members of our community. For many of our sisters, there are no formal obituaries but by searching some obscure documents, our history books, and from annotations on the website, Find a Grave, we in the Archives, along with Maria, our Communications Office secretary, are writing mini-biographies for many of our deceased sisters. Maria then posts this information on our IHM website as well as on Find a Grave: https://www.findagrave.com/

Sister M. Felicitas Baxter is mentioned in endearing terms by Sister Immaculata Gillespie’s history, The Sisters of the IHM. She refers to her as an accomplished artist and art teacher at Mt. St. Mary and St. Cecilia. This memoir is also found on the website at the end Sister Felicitas’ obituary. The IHM Motherhouse was opened for occupancy in 1902. Sister Felicitas was the first sister to be buried in 1905 in Mt. St. Mary Cemetery on Marywood’s campus. The cemetery on the campus of Marywood University was refurbished in 2002 and rededicated in 2003. It holds the graves of 67 sisters who died between 1905 and 1937. It is adorned with a marble marker which is identical to the one found at St. Catherine’s Cemetery in Moscow.

Sisters who died before 1905 are buried in several different cemeteries: in Pennsylvania at St. Joseph’s (Friendsville); St. John’s Susquehanna, St. Rose, Carbondale, St. John’s Pittston, Cathedral, Scranton; and Mt. Calvary in Portland OR.

When you are next on Marywood’s campus, take a moment to stop, rest on a bench at the elegantly refurbished cemetery; spend some time of reflection and thanksgiving, asking God to “Nourish our growth within and without and harvest us for your glory.” (Psalm 9, Sister Michel Keenan).

New on the IHM WEB

Task Force Revisions to Constitution: https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/communications-resources/
Sisters of IHM Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sistersofihm
Sisters of IHM Twitter: https://twitter.com/sistersofihm
Sisters of IHM Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/566819377/sisters-of-ihm
Advisory Board Documents: https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/governance/
With summer sun and warmth comes an abundance of all things green and growing on our land. Jan Novotka and Sisters Kate Clancy and Donna Korba have been spending most weekday afternoons in this summer season planting trees, weeding, watering, cleaning up the rain gardens, and digging up invasive species. In their work, they’ve also encountered new neighbors of both the human and animal species.

Originally, the EarthCARE committee had planned to schedule a “Gathering of Neighbors” for the early evening of June 17. The idea was to design a “Come and See” invitation and place it in the mailboxes of our neighbors in the surrounding area, inviting them to spend some time with us when we could share with them the many aspects of our dream for our IHM land.

When that plan seemed stalled by the arrival of COVID-19, we were surprised to notice that, without any formal written invitation, many of our neighbors were discovering us, perhaps hearing the voice of the land calling in its own mysterious way. Kate and Donna began to notice “regulars,” people who walked our land at the same time every day. Over time, the regulars were joined by new faces, all respectful and practicing social distancing, and many surprised by what they discovered in our back yard.

Some of the visitors include the following:

Michelle and Janet, two retired women who walk each day before noon. Michelle learned of a mutual acquaintance, Tom McLane, whose firm designed our land restoration. From that initial connection, the two women began to share their own plant wisdom, offered an organic recipe for weed killer, brought white lilac saplings for us to plant, and befriended Sister Leonnette, helping her with the flowers at the grotto.

Abby, a teacher of environmental science at Scranton High School. Abby arrives every morning with her two children, Andrew (5) and Allie (2.5), and their dog, Roxy. Abby pulls a wagon led by Roxy, and travels from the Hill section of Scranton to our land each morning. Once here, the children rest under a tree, eat their snacks, read their books, and receive a lesson from Abby at the pond area, where she teaches about tadpoles, birds and insects. Andrew collects stones in the shape of hearts and has given one of his finds to both Sisters Donna and Margaret Gannon. Sister Joyce Marks is another newfound friend to the children.

Carol Elliot, who recently moved to Dunmore. Carol is an avid birder and photographer who captures close-up photographs of birds—birds leaving nesting boxes, baby birds, and more. Carol has offered to help with weeding or any other tasks and has also offered to share some of her exquisite photographs with us.

Conversations between sisters and visitors to the land have included requests for prayers, a sharing of visitors’ reasons for walking the land, and words of gratitude for our graciousness in offering this sacred space to the wider community. In a very real sense, our IHM land is revealing new dimensions to our practice of hospitality, stretching a spirit of welcome and spaciousness of heart beyond the boundaries of our IHM property.

www.jigsawplanet.com

On this website, there are hundreds of free puzzles that puzzle doers can work on right there by just clicking the desired puzzle. The puzzle doer can determine the number of pieces for puzzles. After creating an account, puzzle doers can upload photos and artwork to create unique puzzles.
Circle of Grace Prayer

Our Circle of Grace that is based in St. Petersburg, FL meets virtually every month to continue to learn about our IHM Congregation, to pray, and to keep up with one another’s lives. Historically, Sisters Flo Marino and Lisa Perkowski have planned and facilitated these gatherings. In recent months the associates have taken responsibility for these sessions. Their Circle of Grace meeting in June was led by Mary Lynn Delfino who prepared prayer that focuses on our congregation’s commitment to understand and address our history of racism - and to undo racism. Mary Lynn’s prayer flows from her own deep commitment to IHM core values. She feels gratitude to the IHM Sisters who have been companions on her faith journey since she was a young girl. She says that the IHMs have encouraged and nurtured her vocation of service to the people of God. They have offered a prophetic witness of justice and peace through ministries of accompaniment and action. We share with you here the prayer prayed by our associates and sisters from St. Petersburg, FL as we recommit to undo racism.

You embrace me in all that is good and holy. I remember that every living thing is made from the same stardust from which you first breathed life into this world. (From the Covenant of Mary Lynn Delfino, IHM Associate)

Our IHM Direction Statement presents numerous challenges. It calls us to share our lives with all of creation. None of us comes into the world alone. With God’s grace and protection and the love of others, we live our lives in relationship. Together we say: We, Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Associates, rooted in God and the Gospel, search for prophetic ways to live our vowed and committed life in a world hungering for justice and meaning. We steep ourselves in prayer and contemplation, delve deeply into our brokenness and shadow, and embrace our giftedness and vulnerability, as we share in a life of radical interdependence. On fire with the passion to love unconditionally, we desire to be in the midst of the pain of our world and join with others in seeing and being the light that shines through the cracks of broken hearts. We use imagination, creativity, and fresh thinking to bring about God’s dream for our beautiful, yet wounded world.

Quiet Reflection: Statement on Racism (2007)

As the OSP IHM Board of Directors, representing more than 2,000 Catholic women religious, the Oblate Sisters of Providence (Baltimore, MD) and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Monroe, MI, Immaculata and Scranton, PA), we condemn the sin of racism and stand in opposition to the ongoing existence of this evil. Our four congregations own and admit openly that the dynamics of racism influenced our beginnings and impacted the unfolding of our four histories.

Racism led to barriers of separation among us for over a century. Now, in the graced process of reconnecting our journeys, we fully embrace the dignity of each human person as revealed by the mystery of the incarnation. Therefore, we commit ourselves to the work of undoing racism. By participating in the process of creating right relationships, healing and reconciliation, we are determined to eradicate racism within ourselves, our congregations, our church, and our global community.

Song: Were You There? go to: https://youtu.be/xu_GW2osRVA

Reflection:
Blessing in a Time of Violence

Which is to say this blessing is always.

Which is to say there is no place this blessing does not long to cry out in lament, to weep its words, in sorrow, to scream its lines, in sacred rage.

Which is to say there is no day this blessing ceases to whisper into the ear of the dying, the despairing, the terrified.

Which is to say there is no moment this blessing refuses to sing itself into the heart of the hated and the hateful, the victim and the victimizer, with every last ounce of hope it has.
Which is to say there is none that can stop it, none that can halt its course, none that will still its cadence, none that will delay its rising, none that can keep it from springing forth from the mouths of us who hope, from the hands of us who act, from the hearts of us who love, from the feet of us who will not cease our stubborn, aching, marching, marching until this blessing has spoken its final word, until this blessing has breathed its benediction in every place, in every tongue:

- Jan Richardson from *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*

Sharing
- What words or phrases from the IHM Direction Statement are most comforting or challenging to you at this time?
- How have you been hoping, acting, loving, or marching for peace?

Intercessory Prayer

Closing Prayer

Loving God, we desire to embrace the dignity of each human person as revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation. Help us to live our commitment to undo racism. Empower us to participate in the process of right relationships, healing and reconciliation. Strengthen us in our resolve to eradicate racism within ourselves, our congregations, our church and our global community. We offer this prayer in a spirit of trust and hope in your providence. Amen.

Song: *A Change is Gonna Come* by Sam Cooke
https://youtu.be/wEBlaMOmKV4

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**New Silver Circle Sellers Needed for 2020-2021**

Please contact the Development Office at 570 346-5431 if you can help in any way. All proceeds benefit the IHM Retirement Fund.

It was a team effort by the IHM sister volunteers who pulled together nearly 200 Silver Circle Seller Packets for the 2020-2021 membership year. Since the IHM Days event has been cancelled this year, any sellers who are in the IHM Center can pick up packets for themselves or for others with whom they may be in contact. The development office will be assuming the cost to mail the remainder of the packets through the US Postal Service.

**IHM Sisters Celebration**

This year's IHM Sisters Celebration will be a virtual event. Event updates will be posted on the Sisters of IHM Facebook page and http://www.sistersofihm.org/sisterscelebration2020. Please invite your family and friends to join in the online celebration on August 1 and to support the IHM Retirement Fund by making a donation at https://ministryconnect.org/donate/gala-form.html

**Remain in Our Love**

This month’s Remain in Our Love liturgy is for locations in the Dioceses of Providence, RI; Boston, Springfield, and Worcester, MA; and Bridgeport, Norwich, and Hartford, CT where IHM sisters have ministered but are no longer present. All are welcome to attend the Mass on July 22 at 8:00 a.m. at the IHM Center Chapel or tune in via Ustream at http://www.ustream.tv/channel/ihm-tv
Virtual Reality

A twice yearly event, Bold Choices Retreat: Finding Your Passion and Living it to the Full, was on the brink since we rely on a retreat center to gather young adults together for camaraderie and prayer along with the input. The pandemic called for creativity, fresh-thinking and a bit of imagination in order to answer this question: What are the needs of young adults at this time?

Working with the Scranton Diocesan Vocations office, some felt that student aged young adults would be sick and tired of ZOOM. Others of us felt as though we needed to offer something and define the strategy by the results of offering the retreat online. Through many hours of videotaping, editing and round robin discussions as to how to present this retreat, it was time to find out how a virtual retreat would pass amongst young adults.

A total of thirty-three (33) participants signed up! Here was our answer – the hunger is real. Through the efforts of not only reaching out to the diocesan parishes, a contact with the Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Committee resulted in students from Duquesne University and Robert Morris College joining us along with 3 religious sisters and one lay woman to help with spiritual direction. Father Don Williams, Diocesan Director of Vocations and Seminarians, and Sister Mindy Welding, IHM, IHM Vocation Director, offered spiritual direction. Four others joined us to be companions: Sister Rachel Terry, IHM, Campus Ministry Associate at Marywood University, Father Ryan Glenn, Assistant Pastor, St. John Neumann Parish, Dominick Costantino, Programming/Scranton Diocesan Vocation Office and Shannon Kowalski, Coordinator for Youth and Young Adults, Diocese of Scranton.

Three videos were provided as input to the participants: Finding Your Passion (Sister Mindy), Keys to Discernment (Father Don and Sister Mindy along with Dominick and Shannon) and How to Pray during Discernment (Father Don, Sister Mindy, Shannon, Dominick). Sister Mindy created handouts for each day with reflection questions, links to videos, along with prayer and music suggestions. The opening session was held on a Monday evening to gather, get to know one another, to pray together and to get a "how-to" go forward with the material. Participants could then view the three videos and work on the handouts at their leisure. On Tuesday evening there was a virtual young adult hangout planned with Dominick and Shannon to discuss how the material impacted them and to share among themselves. Wednesday was the closing – a time to ask questions and to reflect on the material, tools for growth and next steps, and a closing prayer of graces.

It was quickly decided that the group wanted a little more time so we added an extra evening the following week so that the participants would have time to process what they learned and what more they may desire. We hope to continue with another offering.

Just a note to say that participants ZOOMED in from Pittsburgh, Georgia, California and Alaska as well as different areas of the larger Scranton area. What a wonderful way to offer a retreat. More participants were drawn to the retreat because of not having to travel, not having to pay, pacing that was on their own time, and they didn’t have to give up a weekend – how convenient! It was a wonderful surprise that all of them took the retreat very seriously and viewed all of the videos and worked on all of the handouts.

This is the young Church active and alive! This is where the essence of a larger notion of vocation is so full of life! These are young adults who desire to grow in their relationship with God. How blessed we are!
“We are blest to have her here. Amen!”

Until now, I have exclusively focused on OLP residents. However, recently I ran into Sister Mary William. I then went into the nurses’ station and asked how often Mary William helped out here. The nurse replied, “I’m not sure, but she’s here more often than I am!” So, though she resides at St. Clare’s Convent, Sister Mary William Philbin is definitely an important member of the OLP community and she seems a perfect subject for an OLP profile.

While I will include some background, I’ve decided to mostly focus on her time here at OLP and supplement her remarks with comments from her OLP colleagues.

Born in Scranton and baptized Mary Therese, one of five girls, she entered the IHMs in 1964 and was given the name of her parents, Mary William. She served as an elementary school teacher from 1969 to 2016, including as a first grade teacher at St. Clare’s School from 1987 to 2016.

After her retirement from teaching, Mary William came to OLP as a Telespond Volunteer. However, she spends so much time at OLP; she is described as a member of the OLP support services.

Some of the staffing in Household 1C comes from the LIFE program, but all of the residents in 1C have challenges. Having observed Mary William as a first grade teacher, it seems to me that many of her skills make her quite suited to the work she is now doing.

But, I’m thinking of an experience I had observing her in her first grade classroom. One day, I was in her classroom with a camera, waiting for someone to come and observe her teach. When I alerted her that the "observer" was near, Mary William turned to the class that was actively and noisily engaged in some project and said, “Boys and Girls! Boys and Girls! The one ‘who knows a lot’ is coming!” While I found myself chuckling at her phrasing, I turned and looked at the students. They’d immediately stopped and she had their attention. More importantly, they were standing tall and eager and I realized that “knows a lot” was just the right phrasing for the age group she was addressing.

Mary William respects the sisters on first floor and even stoops down to be sure she’s at their eye-level when talking with them. She convinces them that she has conferred with the doctors to get them to eat, drink and cooperate with the staff. When visitors arrive she’ll even dance with the sisters. She is sad that the quarantine means the sisters’ lives aren’t “brightened by good friends and loving relatives.”

Beyond her ministry to the residents, it’s apparent that Mary William also ministers to the staff as well. The 1A and 1B staffs were eager to add these comments to her profile:

• She is filled with energy, positivity, and compassion.
• She is the “sunshine of the IHM.”
• I have never met any human being with such warmth, kindness, and sincerity.
• She makes my day.
• The sisters depend on her and would be lost without her.
• She sees the good in everyone.

Yes, Amen!
Worldwide Pentecost Prayer in Sicuani

The Diocese of Osnabruck in Germany has had a volunteer program for its young people for the past 20 years. The IHM sisters’ House of Studies in Sicuani, Peru has been the great benefactor of this program, receiving a volunteer each year to help with the program for young women studying in the high schools of the city. This year's volunteer, Karina Kroemer, had to return to Germany at the behest of the government at the onset of the coronavirus but once there she conceived of the idea of a literal worldwide prayer to celebrate the feast of Pentecost and the many people involved in the program across the globe.

On the morning of June 5, the participants gathered for prayer via ZOOM. They included people from the countries of Israel, Russia, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Botswana, Uganda, and Ghana, India and, of course, Germany. The group consisted of former volunteers, the program directors of the volunteer program led by Ms. Inge Zumsande and several staff members of the locations where there were volunteers. The event also included Mrs. Carmen Contreras Hoos from Weiher in the diocese of Freiburg, southern Germany, who is a member of the St. Nicholas Parish Partnerscaft, one of a group of several women who work the year round to support the IHM Sisters' House of Studies.

The prayer was in Spanish, German, Russian and English. Various members of the group led the prayer itself interspersed with beautiful songs and instrumental accompaniment. Then the group had breakout sessions where the folks from the different language groups greeted and shared with each other.

It was such an exciting and moving experience to be connected with the whole world! Gracias a Dios a Karina y el equipo en Osnabruck!

Update on the Little Sisters of St. Therese in Haiti by Sister Eileen Coleman, IHM

The daily and especially financial struggles of the Little Sisters and all of the Haitian people have been intensified recently because of the ongoing political unrest, provoked primarily by an even more unstable economy and outbreaks of violence. The situation is extremely dangerous around Port au Prince where gangs terrorize people and are believed to have received their weapons from a faction within the government. The sisters are struggling to feed their own sisters as well as the orphans and the elderly in their care. In addition to the scarcity and expensiveness of basic food staples, it has become extremely difficult for them to obtain medical supplies for the many clinics they maintain throughout Haiti where they provide basic medical care to the very poor. Compounding this already critical situation is the Covid-19 pandemic which is spreading rapidly in Haiti, particularly among the prison populations. Haiti is severely ill-equipped to manage the virus because they lack most of the tools necessary to treat and accommodate those infected as well as provide protective equipment and maintain lockdowns and social distancing. Recently one of the Little Sisters, Sister Zulmie Leon, was hospitalized for a week with the virus and is now recovering at the Motherhouse. All of the sisters there are now under quarantine, wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

They are so grateful to our IHM sisters because of the faithful support they receive both financially and through our messages of care and concern for them and the people of Haiti. They ask that we continue to pray for and remain in solidarity with one another.

Sisters and friends wishing to give a monetary gift to support the Little Sisters of St. Therese, can mark donations for "Haiti" and send them to the IHM Development Office at the IHM Center.
The Ghosts of Harvard by Francesca Serritella  
Reviewed by Sister Patt Walsh, IHM

I’m reading The Ghosts of Harvard by Francesca Serritella as an eBook. I am now 34% through it.  
Although considered Serritella’s debut novel, it is not her first book. She has co-written with her mother (and famous author) Lisa Scottoline “beach read” books that are a collection of humorous essays. Her mother (whom I’ve followed for years) also writes bestsellers!

Serritella spent almost twelve years writing a pretty complex book that’s set in her Alma Mater – Harvard. Thus, descriptions of locations, events and history are really detailed. I’ve also come to appreciate that when a person visits a “very old institution,” it seems common to have stories about the “ghosts of its past,” even tales of meeting or hearing the ghosts.

Truly relevant to our times is the fact that the ghosts in this book come from the time in Harvard’s past when its administration kept slaves. If you know anything about Harvard’s recent past, it has been painfully engaged in admitting this long-kept secret and is working at ways to make reparations to the descendants of their slaves.

This book’s main plotline is about “voices” but mostly they are the “voices” that a schizophrenic hears. Specifically, it is the story of a Harvard freshman – Cady – who has come to campus to try to understand the recent suicide of her brother, Eric. She feels guilty about not fully understanding the lengths a schizophrenic will go to escape those voices and hopes that by coming to the place where it happened, she will find the answers to her “why” questions. However, Cady wonders if she risks developing the same disease when she comes to live at this same location.

Eric came to Harvard as a certified genius to study physics. What’s important to know is that there is a common connection between schizophrenia and a high IQ. What’s not important to understand is the physics dialogue, except for the fact that Eric is researching whether there are, in fact, other dimensions. As we wait for scientists to discover a Covid-19 vaccine, it’s also important to know that there is no correlation between science and schizophrenia!

As Cady wonders if she is beginning to develop schizophrenia (and Serritella helps you out by adding the necessary medical descriptions of the disease), I found myself thinking about ‘hearing voices’ and how common it is for all of us. Thinking is really an internal conversation with ourselves. As religious, we believe in hearing “the voice of God.” It is also common to say something and know you’re hearing the voice of your parents!

But I recall being in a group discussion sitting directly across from a woman I knew was a schizophrenic. As I watched her face, it was obvious not only that her voices were a true torment but that she was also constantly battling to shut them up!

Of course, thinking you are hearing a ghost is an altogether different voice. It tells you things you know you didn’t know, but, it is also telling you things that can be historically verified! At Harvard, that is easy to do. Is Cady ill (she does have a high IQ and, unlike her brother, is exceptional in music, a singer who’s “voice” has perfect pitch!)

These are the key plotlines to follow. Is Cady really becoming ill? (Serritella does fill in her backstory through a series of memory distractions.) Does Harvard have ghosts? Did her brother really commit suicide? Will Cady’s search for the truth get her in danger? That’s my bet! What’s yours? There are so many more pages to go!
Notes of Gratitude

Sister Grace Madeline Dusch, on behalf of the Dusch family, wants to thank everyone for the masses, novenas, and prayers on the death of Bobby Dusch. We are so thankful and we appreciate all of your loving care. He will be sorely missed.

Thank you for your concern, support and remembering our family in prayer and Mass intentions for John R. Coyne. We are thankful and overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness and generosity.

Dad, Mom and all their children were educated by IHM Sisters at St. Ann School in Scranton. That experience was a gift for all of us.

Your heartfelt love and compassion challenges our family and friends to be at peace and brings more comfort than sadness. God Bless!

Sister Mary Ellen and the Coyne Family

Dear Sisters and Associates,

The Family of Mark Thomas, his loving wife Paula, his children, Melissa and Ken and his siblings wish to extend their gratitude for the masses, prayers, spiritual bouquets, phone calls, and support during Mark’s illness and death.

Amidst this time of the virus, we were most grateful to be able to celebrate Mark’s life and have a beautiful liturgy.

Mark always expressed his gratitude for the prayers and support during his lengthy battle with cancer. We know in faith that he is now celebrating a new life.

Mark had many signs and symbols in his home to remind him of how much he was blessed. One of his sayings was, "Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future, today is the present, that is why we call it a gift. Mark celebrated each day as a gift."

We grieve our loss of husband, father, grandfather, and brother but also count our blessings for the life of a man who touched so many lives.

With gratitude and prayers, we thank you for your support at this time of loss,

Sister Mary Denise and the Family of Mark Thomas

I want to express my deepest gratitude and love for the many prayers, calls, texts, cards, and emails I received following my recent hospitalization. Your thoughtfulness and encouragement were heartwarming and spirit-energizing. I cannot thank you enough.

Blessings of God’s love and grace to all,

Lovingly, Ellen Maroney, IHM

Recipes to Share

During this time when we're all away from each other, let's stay in touch by sharing our culinary adventures at home.

Share your culinary adventures with all and we'll post your recipe and photos.

Send recipes and a photo of the finished dish to communications@sistersofihm.org

Crème Brulee French Toast
(submitted by Sister Maureen Schrimpe, IHM)
Serves 6
½ cup of unsalted butter
1 cup of brown sugar
2 tablespoons of light corn syrup
1 loaf of Italian bread
8 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups of half and half cream

1. Melt butter in saucepan. Mix in brown sugar and corn syrup. Stir until sugar is melted.
2. Pour into 9 x 13 baking dish.
3. Slice bread into thick slices and remove crusts. Place in baking pan in single layer.
4. Whisk together the eggs, half and half, vanilla extract. Pour over sliced bread. Cover and refrigerate over night.
5. In the morning, remove the dish and bring to room temperature and preheat oven to 350 degrees.
6. Bake uncovered 35-45 minutes in preheated oven until puffed and browned.
7. Serve with maple syrup and fresh whipped cream (optional).
TUESDAYS, JUNE 30-AUGUST 11
10:00 - 11:00 am via Zoom
A Space for Grace
Take time apart to pray Lectio Divina each week, so that we might better practice LISTENING to God speak to us in scripture.
Sister Ann Barbara DeSiano, IHM
Free Will Donation

THURSDAY, JULY 9
10:30 am - noon via Zoom
Gratitude-Recovering Our Call to Joy
If asked the foundational values of Catholicism, many will quote the virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. Yet there is an underlying practice that gives birth to and strengthens these virtues. It is the practice of gratitude and it enables us to find joy in every situation.
Sister Ann Barbara DeSiano, IHM
Free Will Donation

FRIDAY, JULY 17
10:30 am - noon via Zoom
Discovering Abundance
God's desire is for our wholeness and well-being. When life events upend the routines that have offered us security, when they impact the very ways we work, eat, pray and play, such forces can contribute to a sense of scarcity. But God’s dream for us is abundant life. How are we being invited to cultivate daily practices focused on appreciating “enough” and “what already is” in our lives? How can we discover and nurture real abundance?
Sister Chris Koellhoffer, IHM
Free Will Donation

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22
10:30 am - noon via Zoom
Thy Will Be Done
Are we sure we really want to pray, "Thy will be done?"
Trying to understand what God's will is for us can be difficult, but should we persevere? What would our life be like if we trusted God more and surrendered a little more of our control, knowing that God ultimately wants to provide us with joy?
Joan McGovern
Free Will Donation

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7
10:30 am - noon via Zoom
Oh My Soul
What value do you place on your soul? Although we can't literally sell our soul, we can lose it to things of this world. The frequency of distractions can easily shift our focus to things of this world... how do we resist the separation? We will journey with the prophet David, in Psalm 103, as he speaks to his soul.
Joan McGovern
Free Will Donation

Sharing the Journey

Theology of Mission, a course on service and charity, prepares Catholic University of America students for a weeklong trip to the U.S. southern border. Among several course objectives is the hope the students will come to understand the Catholic Church’s teaching on immigration, poverty, and vulnerable populations. Sister Ruth Harkins, IHM, associate campus minister for graduate and professional studies, developed the course in 2013 and has been teaching it and leading the trip every year since. Here, we follow Sister Ruth and her students as they share the journey with migrants in El Paso, Texas, and Las Cruces, New Mexico. Read the article at: https://communications.catholic.edu/special-projects/border-trip.html
by Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM

Just like everyone else in our congregation and the world at large, the women in initial formation are adjusting to the “new normal.” They continue to discern, steep themselves in prayer and engage in community life and ministry.

As Lackawanna County transitioned from the “red” to the “yellow” phase, Sister Giovana Fuentes Bendivez (second year novice) moved from Cathedral Convent, where she was living during her formative activity, back to Annunciation Community–McCarty Hall. A warm thank you to Sisters Michael Marie, Karen, Joan, Fides and Theresa who welcomed Giovana into their local community and shared daily life with her for the past five months! Giovana had only a few days to settle back into Annunciation Community before leaving for St. Raphaela Retreat Center on June 26. We ask for your prayerful support as Giovana enters into retreat.

Sister Elizabeth McGill (canonical novice) currently is participating in a twelve-week virtual Ignatian retreat. Finding Christ in the World and Everyday Life began in June and will continue through August. Liz also is doing a mini-course on the Incarnation and Redemption during the months of June and July with Sister Redempta Sweeney. Thank you, Sister Redempta, for your time, enthusiasm and wisdom!

For the past six weeks, Liz and I have been visiting the graves of our deceased IHM sisters. We began with St. Catherine’s Cemetery in Moscow and the cemetery on the grounds of Marywood University with which we were familiar. When we realized that our earlier sisters were not buried in either of these two sites, we asked for Sister Beth Pearson’s help. Sister Beth provided us with the names of all the cemeteries where our IHM sisters are buried. So far, we have visited St. Joseph’s Cemetery in Friendsville, PA, St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Carbondale, Cathedral Cemetery in Scranton and St. John the Evangelist Cemetery in Pittston, as well as Immaculata where Mother Theresa Maxis is buried and St. Agatha’s Cemetery in West Chester where the early Philadelphia IHM sisters can be found. Visiting the graves of the many IHM sisters who have gone before us has been a humbling experience. It seems fitting that as the IHM Congregation celebrates its 175th Anniversary that we remember the sisters who gave their lives for the sake of the mission. We ask for their inspiration and wisdom as we continue to respond with unconditional love to the needs of today’s world.

IHM Leaders Connect with Members

The IHM Leadership Team while in quarantine for the past three months has adopted a new normal of meeting with members via Zoom. Nearly 70 individual sisters and local communities joined the last fireside chat via Zoom on May 21st.
Prayer for the Beatification of Mother Mary Lange

Almighty and Eternal God,
You granted Mother Mary Lange
extraordinary trust in Your
providence. You endowed her
with humility, courage, holiness
and an extraordinary sense of
service to the poor and sick.
You enabled her to found the
Oblate Sisters of Providence
and provide educational, social
and spiritual ministry especially
to the African American
community. Mother Lange’s love
for all enabled her to see Christ
in each person, and the pain of
prejudice and racial hatred never
blurred her vision.

Deign to raise her the highest
honors of the altar in order that,
through her intercession, more
souls may come to a deeper
understanding and a more
fervent love of You.

Heavenly Father, glorify Your
heart by granting also this favor
(here mention your request)
which we ask through the
intercession of
Your faithful servant,
Mother Mary Lange.”

IHM Congregation Vitae
as of July 1, 2020

Final Profession - 300
Temp. Professed - 1
Novices - 2
Candidates - 0
Associates - 172

Sisters of St. Casimir
Congregation Vitae
Final Profession - 43

IHM Jubilee Cards

Because our IHM Jubilee celebration
has been postponed, kindly
mail jubilee cards directly to
sister jubilarians. Please do not
send jubilee cards to the IHM
Communications Office.
Thank you.

IHM Calendar

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

Saturday, July 25
Assembly via Zoom

POSTPONED!
Sunday, July 26
IHM Jubilee

Saturday, September 12
White Privilege
via Zoom
Sharon Durham

Saturday, September 19
Open to Sisters of IHM
Advisory Board Meeting

October 2-4
Zoom Retreat with
Liz Sweeney, SSJ

Friday, November 6
(Tentative)
Nunsense
PAC Marywood

Sunday, November 8
(Tentative)
175th Mass
PAC Marywood University

God’s covenant has been fulfilled

Sister Maryla Farfour, IHM
June 20, 2020
in the 65th year
of her religious profession