
2020 MINISTRY APPEAL

“For *wisdom* will
come into *your heart*, and
knowledge will be *pleasant*
to *your soul*.”

— PROVERBS 2:10



FROM OUR FOUNDATION, we have been dedicated to the ministry of education and although there are fewer sisters in schools, that dedication continues. The ministries highlighted in this year's appeal provide a glimpse of our involvement in our continued commitment to education, both spiritual and formal. Through our various ministries highlighted in this year's appeal, we guide and educate children and adults.

SISTERS JUDY COYLE, PEG O'SHEA and **SUE RAKOCZY** are involved in education in South Africa. **SISTER DIANE BROWN** is a faculty member at Siena Heights University. **SISTERS YVONNE SPENOSO** and **REBECCA VONDERHAAR** minister in faith formation of children and adults.

Please consider a gift to the Ministry Appeal as a way of joining the IHM Sisters in making a positive impact in our world. Together, we can carry out Jesus' mandate to serve the least of those among us.

IHM's involved in *faith formation* and *education*

As director of Religious Education at Holy Family Parish in Parma, Ohio, SISTER YVONNE SPENOSO coordinates religious formation in the parish.

This includes preparation for first reconciliation and Eucharist, confirmation for students and adults, RCIA and the annual parish mission. “As IHMs we often talk about being lifelong learners. It’s a great feeling to be able to invite others into this lifelong learning experience as children and adults alike learn more about their Catholic faith, grow in their relationship with Jesus and share in the life and mission of the Church. The education process includes helping people



Sister Yvonne Spenoso participating in baptism of RCIA candidate

appreciate sacraments and realize their importance to a life of faith. Working with young Christians and seeing their eagerness to receive Jesus for the first time in the Eucharist; seeing teenagers grow in their faith as they prepare to

complete their initiation through the sacrament of confirmation; walking the initiation journey with the RCIA candidates as they move toward full initiation into the Catholic Church. These are the rewards of my ministry. Through the sacraments I have the opportunity to invite others to journey with Christ and to respond to their own call to discipleship.

“During the time of the pandemic, we were unable to celebrate sacraments with our students and RCIA candidates. Recent weeks have been a time to reconsider how these celebrations will be celebrated in our parish. Things will look different than we remember, but the love of God never changes.”

More than 8,000 miles from Monroe, Mich., SISTERS JUDY COYLE, PEG O’ SHEA and SUE RAKOCZY are continuing a long IHM tradition of offering quality education – in South Africa. The 1948 Apartheid laws denied black children an equal education and has left a legacy that has hindered renewal in the country. Quality education offers a glimmer of hope for a new generation of leaders.

For the past 30+ years, IHMs have ministered at Catholic Theological Institute in KwaZulu-Natal and at the only Catholic university in South Africa in Johannesburg. They have also trained staff and opened a parish

early childhood education center in Howick in response to Nelson Mandela’s request that every church open pre-schools to prepare a new generation of citizens.

With the sudden impact of Covid-19 and the rising global resistance to racial inequality, the sisters have had to adjust quickly to online education and additional outreach projects: making sandwiches for poor children residing in “squatter camps;” continuing to support people suffering from TB and HIV/AIDS; supporting a home for abused children; and setting good examples by cooperating with government and Church directives to “Save Lives by Staying Home.”



Sister Peg O’Shea (center) with the St. Joseph Preschool Outreach Team who care for abused children and those with HIV/AIDS

We are few IHMs in South Africa, but we are using the education that the IHM congregation gave us to gift our sisters and brothers to deepen their lives through education.

SISTER REBECCA VONDERHAAR, better known as Sister Becky, always dreamt of being a missionary. In 1976, her dream was realized when she was sent to serve in northern Ghana. During her 20 years of ministry in sub-Saharan Africa, she was taught and enriched by the poor. When she returned to the United States, her experience among the poorest rooted her firmly in the truth that the human family is beautiful and is ONE. Sister Becky serves as director of Faith Formation at Christ the Good Shepherd Parish in Lincoln

Park, Mich. There, she has been given more opportunities to connect with the church, local community and beyond, again, learning and seeing the countless needs of the human family. Sister Becky loves her ministry and has been given many opportunities to learn and to share. She feels she is meeting the needs of the parish community with the help of others who also wish to reach beyond to those in greatest need. “Let the God of ALL continue to be our guide as we attempt to reclaim God’s dream that we all may be ONE.”



Sister Rebecca (Becky) Vonderhaar (middle) pictured with local “Circle of Support” group that helps families facing immigration challenges

Education is a fundamental ministry of the IHM Sisters. Many sisters began their ministry as teachers in elementary or secondary schools, and SISTER DIANE BROWN did as well. Prior to meeting the IHMs, Sister Diane taught middle school students on the Navajo Reservation in Kayenta, Ariz., fourth–sixth grade Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees in Texas and third–fifth grade children in rural Oklahoma for 21 years. After the passing of her

husband, she moved to Michigan to take a faculty position at Marygrove College. There she met the IHMs and began her journey, which resulted in final vows in July 2019. With the closure of Marygrove College, Sister Diane began a new ministry as a faculty member at Siena Heights University in Adrian, Mich. During the pandemic, her ministry moved entirely online as she taught science and social studies methods classes for pre-service teachers from an office created in a corner of her bedroom.

“Teaching undergraduates online and videotaping lectures has been a challenge. I was glad that students seemed to be pleased to continue their studies remotely, from the safety of their homes.”



Sister Diane Brown



RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO SERVE OTHERS

When you support the IHM Sisters, you help us change lives. Your partnership allows us to serve in 13 states, Puerto Rico, Mexico, South Africa and South Sudan. We serve in such diverse ministries as:

- elementary and secondary education
- colleges and universities
- literacy and tutoring services
- religious education
- spiritual direction
- justice, peace and sustainability
- chaplaincy
- pastoral ministry
- health care
- prison ministry
- outreach to the poor
- mental health
- social and retirement services

Additionally, we partner with other organizations and religious orders to broaden our reach and further enrich the lives of so many more of God's people.

Contributions to the IHM Ministry Fund provide resources to support both ministries of the IHM Sisters and ministries that give evidence "... that with Mary of the Magnificat we stand with and for the poor ... working with others to eradicate the causes of injustice and oppression."

IHM CONSTITUTIONS,
ARTICLES 11 AND 13

As a 501(c)(3) organization, our legal name is Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, Michigan, Inc. Our tax identification number is 38-1359581.

Photo: Students from St. Joseph Preschool, Howick, South Africa



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

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