January 14, 1892 Death of Theresa Maxis

Mother Maria Kaupas Documentary to Air on EWTN, January 6

The case for sainthood of Venerable Mother Maria Kaupas, founder of the Sisters of St. Casimir and her inspirational work in education and healthcare led many to seek her intercession before God on their behalf. Her story airs on EWTN on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. ET.

"Miracle Hunter" Michael O'Neill, examines the lives of men and women of faith on the path to sainthood and the search for canonization miracles in his series, "They Might be Saints." From miracle workers to martyrs and ordinary people living extraordinary lives of heroic virtue, this EWTN original series presents those exemplary people who make us wonder if someday they might be saints.

January—A Month for Going Home

by Margaret Gannon, IHM

There was probably never a January before this one that we welcomed so enthusiastically. We see this January as the early dawn of a new, much happier year.

January was a very significant month for Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin. It was the month for going home—three times.

Theresa’s long-term exile from the Congregation began in January 1869, when she returned to the Grey Nuns in Ottawa. She and Sister Celestine, who was the charter member of the Congregation, and Theresa Renault, had stayed with the Grey Nuns for some months in 1868. Theresa had attempted to return to the Congregation in Monroe, Michigan in September 1868. She and Sister Celestine approached Bishop Lefèvère and asked to be returned. The Bishop re-admitted Sister Celestine but refused Theresa. Traveling east to Pennsylvania, Theresa was refused re-admission there. She went back to her hometown of Baltimore. Finding no home there, she wrote to Mother Elizabeth Bruyère, the superior of the Ottawa Grey Nuns. “Here I am then, an outcast neither more nor less.... I have, as a last recourse, obtained hospitality in this orphanage for a few days only, and I do not know where to go.” Mother Elizabeth generously invited Theresa to return and Theresa arrived in Ottawa on January 7, 1869; it was a going home of sorts, at a moment when Theresa had nowhere else to go.

In the first six years of Theresa’s exile, the Scranton bishop forbade the sisters’ communication with Theresa except for a Christmas card from Sister Ann, her companion from the beginning of the Congregation. (Charlotte continued on page 2
Beginning in 1885, Sister Genevieve Morrissey, assistant to the Scranton superior general, began a correspondence that lasted until the end of Theresa’s exile.

Theresa’s letters are historical treasures preserved in the Scranton IHM archives. They reveal much about Mother Theresa, especially how eager she was to be reunited with her sisters. She offered numerous strategies for persuading or eluding the bishops’ power. Perhaps the most remarkable was the following strategy: “I felt badly on hearing about dear Holy Sister Agatha’s sickness. I always thought I would see her before dying. I will tell you a thought I had though it may be foolish. Since she is expected to die soon, I thought if she expressed a desire of seeing me, that perhaps Bishop O’Hara would permit me to go.”

A number of persons worked to bring about Mother Theresa’s return. Many of her Redemptorist friends continued to take an interest in her situation, but the most diligent was Rev. Francis Schnüttgen, CSsR. He led the effort to appeal with the new Archbishop of Philadelphia, Patrick J. Ryan, to welcome Theresa back to the congregation. Bishop Duhamel of Ottawa also lent his support to the effort. At the same time, the Immaculata IHMs undertook to facilitate her return. Most instrumental was the Superior General, Mother Gonzaga Rooney. This was ironic because Theresa had believed that Mother Gonzaga was one of the opponents of her return. That suspicion disappeared totally when Theresa learned of the extensive efforts Mother Gonzaga had invested in Theresa’s return.

Mother Francis Henry, the superior general of the Scranton IHMs, worked devotedly to persuade Bishop O’Hara to allow Mother Theresa to return to the Scranton congregation. But the bishop refused, since it was Bishop Wood, not he, who had granted Theresa’s dispensation. By 1885, Bishop Wood had died and a new Archbishop had come into office, Patrick John Ryan.

Father Schnüttgen and Bishop Duhamel both interceded with Archbishop Ryan. The Archbishop saw no problem in Theresa’s return and arrangements began to be made. In response to Mother Gonzaga’s announcement, Theresa greeted her with joy and gratitude. “How incomprehensible are the ways of God! How great the power of prayer! Words are inadequate to express my joy and grateful feelings to Our Dear Lord for his great mercies in restoring me again to my own. I am so happy in being in the Institution, so dear to me and which I never left at heart, indeed, we have been here in jubilation, ever since my arrival.” This was her second January going home.

One difficulty that dampened Theresa’s joy was the mandate of Scranton’s Bishop O’Hara forbidding Theresa from visiting the Scranton diocese. In 1871, he had separated the IHMs living in the Scranton diocese into a separate congregation. Thus, Theresa was cut off from a sizable portion of the original congregation. The Scranton sisters were also forbidden to write regularly to Theresa.

Theresa lived happily at the West Chester Motherhouse for seven years. During those years she shared with the sisters her life story, including her participation in the Baltimore African-American society and culture, and her “passing” into the white society when she moved to Michigan in 1845.

Theresa died from complications of influenza on January 14, 1892. Her sisters were with her at her deathbed and she joined in the prayers to the end. She then departed—on her final January journey of going home.

In honor of the IHM 175th anniversary, a virtual blood drive is being hosted, 175 pints for 175 years. Please join us in the lifesaving ministry by rolling your sleeves up. Make an appointment to give blood to the American Red Cross at https://sleevesup.redcrossblood.org/campaign/175-pints-for-175-years/

Please send the number of pints donated to 175pints@sistersofihm.org if not donating through the website.

Drive ends November 10, 2021.
Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery

On September 12, 2020, Sharon Durham engaged the IHMs and the Oblate Sisters of Providence in a conversation about white privilege. During her presentation Sharon introduced participants to the Doctrine of Discovery, a concept dating from the 15th century that legally and morally allowed Christian governments to invade and seize indigenous lands and to dominate and displace indigenous peoples. Those of us who participated in Sharon’s workshop were horrified by the injustices that have resulted from the Doctrine of Discovery and were shocked by Christianity’s role in its implementation.

It is difficult to imagine how our ancestors could possibly justify the domination, the displacement and the enslavement of so many people. However, the justification for the Doctrine of Discovery and its enactment is rooted in the perspective that they had, and that we also may unconsciously perpetuate, of the “other.” When we call a person, or an entire race, that is different from us “not civilized” and refuse to believe that he/she has a soul, we easily convince ourselves that the “other” is not human and readily condone actions that demean and de-humanize.

At the end of Sharon Durham’s presentation, many sisters expressed a desire to collaborate in the dismantling of the doctrine. As a first step, OSP and IHM sisters decided to join together to educate themselves on the doctrine. Sisters and associates from each congregation have been invited to three educational sessions which include prayer, watching a documentary on the doctrine and engaging in dialogue about it. The third and final session will take place via Zoom on January 19, 2021, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., and all are welcome to participate.

Questions to ponder:
- How do we continue to perpetuate, consciously or unconsciously, an attitude of superiority that de-humanizes the “other”?
- How have we integrated ourselves into the culture of the people to whom and with whom we have ministered?
- How do we welcome those who have been displaced and who seek asylum or a place of refuge in our country or neighborhood?

Suggested documentary: “Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery” https://dofdmenno.org/movie/

Suggestion for Dialogue Groups

The Visioning the Future Committee wishes to suggest that over these next months, before Liz Sweeney’s Presentation in April, your dialogue group consider using the feedback from the last evaluation form for one of your contemplative dialogue gatherings. Dialogue groups do not need to send us any notes on their conversations but there is material for an interesting conversation.

Here are some suggested questions for that conversation regarding the feedback:
- What does the feedback reveal to us about what may be emerging among us at this time?
- What insights or questions surface in you as you read the feedback received?
- What encourages you and what challenges you?

Here is the link to the feedback from the evaluations which can also be found on our IHM website under resources for Liz Sweeney’s presentation to us back in October.
Your Voice counts

by Ancilla Maloney, IHM

The past several weeks have emphasized the power of the VOICE of each one of us. That power is heard in many arenas in our country and everyday life: e.g. speaking up to tell someone their behavior is unacceptable, writing a letter to a Senator asking for an investigation of injustice, attending an important meeting when you’re very tired because it affects your community or your colleagues where you work or simply using your voice to teach Christian values to our children.

Another arena where your/our VOICES could be heard is with regard to what we hope our Church will look like as we emerge from this pandemic. It is an understatement to say that our Church has experienced an upheaval. Recently, Pope Francis said that “the crisis isn’t an opportunity to restructure institutions, it is a moment to reflect, and to ask what can be done to make sure every aspect of ecclesial life is focused on missionary evangelization so that it is drawn closer to the Church of the early centuries. [The Pope] wants a Church that is outward facing, in a permanent state of mission and focused on the poor, rather than inward looking and self-referential.” (Christopher Lamb, in “Post-Covid Catholicism” The Tablet, 5/28/20. You can access this article on the internet.)

Last July, at one of our dialogue meetings, a sister raised the question about our VOICE in the Church. Then the discussion which revolved around our voice, moved to the suggestion of contacting Bishops who have the vision of Vatican II and encouraging them to consider our thoughts, dreams, concerns, or particular issues. It seems that at this time the USCCB does not function with a unified mind set-no more than does the country! It would also seem that we could dream together about our vision. It was the idea of the sisters in the dialogue group to suggest that the sisters in local communities, groups of friends, mission circles, dialogue groups, etc. would begin to talk about what we would like our Church to look like. AND then, in groups or individually, sisters, or their friends, would write to bishops identified as having Vatican II vision to share concerns, encourage them to take certain positions and to consider sharing our vision in the USCCB meetings. (Identifying these bishops could be the result of talking to sisters like Annmarie Sanders, Simone Campbell, or other persons we could talk with who could help us learn the viewpoints of various bishops across the country, or your own bishop for that matter!).

To begin the process together we are planning a ZOOM meeting on this topic of YOUR VOICE and VISION for the Church. We will send an invitation for the meeting on January 28, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., via the IHM list for anyone interested. Mark your calendars!

Betty Bullen, Eileen Egan, Loretta Mulry, Carol Loughney, and Ancilla Maloney

Photos Needed!

Photos of you at the Motherhouse are needed! The 50th anniversary of the fire that destroyed the IHM Motherhouse is February 21-22, 2021. If you have photos of yourself and/or other IHM Sisters at or near the IHM Motherhouse, please send them to Fran Fasolka at the IHM Communications Office, 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA., or e-mail high resolution scanned photos to communications@sistersofihm.org
Photos will be returned. Thank you!

Evening of Prayer

On Wednesday, January 13 at 6:30 we will have an intercultural prayer and hope that you will be able to join us using this link: https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv
Vocation Vision 2021

Plans are underway for several virtual retreats!

Bucknell University Retreat for Busy Persons (March 2021)
Robert Morris University Retreat for Busy Persons (January 2021)
Winter Retreat for various Young Adults (first weekend in Lent)

December 8 Reflection

Sister Mindy wrote a piece for Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh, about December 8th as a part of an ongoing series the Campus Minister writes each day entitled: Food for the Journey. These prayers, quotes, and songs are sent daily to the students.

Food for the Journey:
Today the Church celebrates The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Thanks to the following from Sister Mindy Welding, IHM, we are blessed to have a very unique double edition of Food for the Journey...1) to help us celebrate today’s feast day and 2) to highlight Sister Mindy’s order, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, PA. THANK YOU Sister Mindy! We wish sister and members of her congregation a blessed and happy Feast Day!

Feast Day Background: The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic feast celebrating Mary’s conception without sin. Even though this feast day occurs in the liturgical season of Advent, the Immaculate Conception refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception asserts that “from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of Mankind, kept free from all stain of original sin.” The observance of this feast began with a Papal encyclical by Pope Pius IX, when he formally defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, INEFFABILIS DEUS, on December 8, 1854. Several years later, in 1858, the Blessed Mother gave her name to St. Bernadette at Lourdes stating, “I am the Immaculate Conception.”

Scripture: In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her. -Luke 1:26-38

Song: Magnificat, The Canticle of Mary

Prayer: Hail Mary

About the Sisters of IHM

History: Founded November 10, 1845 in Monroe, Michigan by Theresa Maxis Duchemin, IHM and Louis Florent Gillet, CSsR. Theresa Maxis and Louis Florent Gillet were great-souled visionaries who struggled to turn dreams into possibilities. Their lives were a pilgrimage in which they were ever faithful to the inner voice of God’s Spirit. Their groundedness in the truth, persistence in the face of adversity, resourcefulness, boundless energy for mission, joyfulness, love for the abandoned and radical willingness to go where God was leading them are a living legacy to the IHM sisters today. The great fire that is the mission of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to be prophetic witnesses to the presence of God in the world began as a spark in the heart of Louis Florent Gillet. That spark, the original inspiration of Father Gillet, was the spirit of St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, a congregation whose members devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel to the poor. It was this Alphonsian spirit that led Father Gillet to seek to establish a religious community of women.

Mission: The mission of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is to follow Jesus as a community of disciples, aware they sent to be a clear and understandable prophetic witness to the presence of God in the world. They strive to be faithful to their charism: to rejoice and to share in Jesus’ redemptive mission to proclaim the Good News of God’s universal love and to recreate the face of the earth.

Song: Unstoppable God
Marywood Community Spreads Christmas Cheer

by Sister John Michele Southwick, IHM

Marywood volunteers completed more than 5,000 Christmas cards that were delivered to 18 different groups locally, nationally and internationally! Participants included: 17 Clubs and Campus Organizations, 2 athletic teams, 21 additional individual students, 58 individual staff, 20 departments, 5 faculty, 1 retiree, the retired IHM sisters living at Our Lady of Peace Residence, and 97 students at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Elementary School in Dunmore.

The 5,421 cards were delivered to: Marywood Heights residents (76) & staff (110), Our Lady of Peace Residence - residents (83) & staff (161), NativityMiguel School - students (62) & staff (14), Gino Merli Veterans Center - residents (160) & staff (280), St. Francis Commons - residents (30) & staff (10), Regional Hospital staff (800), Moses Taylor Hospital staff (760), Geisinger CMC staff (1,317), St. Joseph's Center - residents (108) & staff (650), Friends of the Poor staff (10), Children in Big Friends Little Friends (After-School program) (25), and Active/Deployed Military (402).

We collected a record number of gifts this year for the Virtual Giving Tree! We collected: 160 gifts for local children/teens through Friends of the Poor, 73 gifts for residents of Marywood Heights, 146 items for persons experiencing homelessness donated to Keystone Rescue Mission.

Finally, 18 volunteers contributed 54 hours of service to decorate the Marywood University campus for Christmas!

Thanks to all who made spirits brighter through their generosity of time, talent, and gifts.

Sister John Michele Southwick, Assistant Director of Campus Ministry at Marywood University, delivers Christmas cards to sister residents at Our Lady of Peace Residence.

News from the UN

January 24 — The International Day of Education. The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, goes even further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

January 27 — International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The world remembers the horror of the Holocaust that resulted in the murder of nearly two-thirds of European Jews. The purpose of remembering this day is to prevent future tragedies.

Old Prayer Books Wanted

If you have any used "Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours," "Gregorian Chant," "St. Pius X Hymnals" or similar books that you are not using, please let me know. I will sell them on eBay with profit going for our IHM Retirement Fund.

Thank you,
Sister Mary Rassley
570-496-8864
or 570-357-5379
Journey with us as explore the sacred treasures of the IHM Archives

Storytelling and celebrating Christmas are small parts of our IHM tradition! Our Archives reveal such heritage in letters and annals of years ago. Among the many accounts of Christmas celebrations are a letter of gratitude from Tillamook, OR, of 1897, and the annals from St. Alphonsus Convent, New York City, of 1917.

The five sisters missioned in Tillamook received a gift from Mother Mary Jackson, Superior General. A letter from Sister Mary Edward Toohey, superior in Tillamook, to Mother Mary in Scranton, thanks her for the Christmas gift and describes life on the west coast at St. Alphonsus Academy. The school, residence for children and the convent (see photo) in one building stood in the center of the prairie, the village being built around it. The principal industries in the 1800s were farming, lumbering, and cheese- and butter-making. In 2021 Tillamook is home to Tillamook Creamery, which makes cheese and ice cream. (Their products are sold in many stores including Giant, ShopRite, Stop and Shop, Wegmans and Weis.)

On the opposite coast of our country, IHM sisters took up the ministry of the elementary school in lower Manhattan in 1913 at St Alphonsus Parish, under the Redemptorist auspices. Mother Crescentia Foster (who had been Superior General from 1899 to 1901) may have been the author of the “Annals of the Foundation and Progress of St. Alphonsus School under the direction of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The entries for Christmas Eve 1917 at St. Alphonsus Convent provide a picture of the “chapel and altar beautifully decorated and the whole house decked in Christmas attire. Everybody, full of the Christmas spirit, attended Solemn High Mass at Midnight.” And on December 25: “The Sisters attended the 6:00 o’clock Mass at St. Alphonsus Church. The morning was spent in Church. In the afternoon, four of the sisters visited the Monastery of the Blessed Sacrament, Hunt’s Point. Four sisters also attended the Pontifical High Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Reverend Father Rector Toohey called to say his Christmas greetings. He very kindly sent a gift of candy and fruit.” A footnote: (St. Alphonsus Parish, school, and convent were closed in 1980, and later demolished, because the buildings were built on marshy land, and were sinking at the rate of about half an inch each year.)

The IHM spirit was alive ‘from east to west, north to south,’ but environs were extremely different. We thank our sisters for their stories, keeping us alive with courage and a hopeful spirit.

New on the IHM WEB

Christmas Greetings to IHM and OLP Sisters: https://video.ibm.com/recording/128902018
Advisory Board New Initiative Form: https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/advisory-board/
Funerals for Deceased IHM Sisters: https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv
Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center  
Manhasset, NY  
516-627-9255  
https://www.olgretreat.com/

A Space for Grace - weekly beginning Tuesday, January 5 via Zoom 10:00 am to 11:00 am with Sister Ann Barbara DeSiano. Free Will Donation. Join us every Tuesday or whenever you can!

Savoring Stillness & Silence  
January 7, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon  
via Zoom with Joan McGovern  
Free Will Donation

Day of Sabbath  
January 8, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm  
at Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center  
A day for those seeking personal prayer and silence.  
Free Will Donation

Behold Him  
Wednesday, January 13 via Zoom  
10:30 am – 12:00 noon  
with Joan McGovern  
Free Will Donation

Seasons of Life: Winter  
January 14, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon  
at Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center with Sister Ann Barbara  
$25

Achieving a Balanced Life  
January 28, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon  
via Zoom with Joan McGovern  
Free Will Donation

Day of Sabbath  
February 5  
March 5  
April 2  
May 7  
June 4  
July 2  
9:30 am – 3:00 pm  
at Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center  
A day for those seeking personal prayer and silence.  
Free Will Donation

Divine Mercy Prayer & Healing Service with Brother Paul every Sunday  
@ 3:00 p.m.  
ZOOM #779 271 5713  
Password: Sunday (capital S)

Advisory Board Meeting, January 16

The Advisory Board will meet on Saturday, January 16th via Zoom. Sisters are welcome to participate in the afternoon session which will begin at 1:00 p.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m. To assist with planning, Sisters are required to register for the afternoon session in advance. Please register at: https://app.surveymethods.com/EndUser.aspx?97B3DFC097D2C3C09C

Following the September Advisory Board meeting, sisters provided feedback by completing the evaluation survey or submitting Meeting Notes. A review of the feedback indicates renewed interest in Shared Leadership and Critical Issues which are Sponsorship, Environment, Vital Living and Relationships. The Advisory Board will use the morning session to gather updated information on the Critical Issues and develop a plan to move forward in a way that engages membership. The afternoon session to which all sisters are invited will focus on Shared Leadership.

Since the September meeting, a few other items mentioned in the feedback, namely Meeting Notes and New Initiatives, were addressed in the November and December IHM Newsletters respectively. Comments on use of technology to host meetings varied based on personal experience. Those who participated via Zoom especially on their own device felt engaged especially during small group discussion. Those who viewed the meeting via UStream or Channel 17 felt disconnected unless they intentionally gathered with others for discussion in local communities or via phone/email.

Sisters have also expressed a desire for the opportunity to address the Advisory Board during one of its meetings, so that ideas can be shared with a larger portion of the Congregation. Therefore, the Advisory Board Planning has allotted open time on the agenda for January 16th’s meeting. To maximize use of this time, interested sisters are asked to provide their name, topic and requested length of time to Sister Maryalice Jacquinot via email (jacquinotm@sistersofihm.org) by Friday, January 8th. Although effort will be made to accommodate all requests, priority will be given to topics related to the meeting’s focus areas of Critical Issues and Shared Leadership.
Nuns and Nones, February 27

The Visioning the Future Committee is delighted to share with you information about our Saturday, February 27th day (via Zoom, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm) with leaders from Nuns and Nones. We hope you will be able to join us then via Zoom. Please register at communications@sistersofihm.org

What is a None? A young adult who is presently disaffiliated with any single religious practice. Although the number of nones is growing, making up nearly 25 percent of the population, according to the Pew Research Center, they are far from apathetic about what religion can offer, and many are self-described spiritual seekers. They have chosen to walk with religious women, both who share the idea that religious sisters are not in decline but rather share the narrative that this is a rebirth and both seek wisdom from one another. They are passionate millennials who desire to help make the world a better place and are energized about work for justice and peace through activism.

Nuns & Nones is an alliance of spiritually diverse young folks, women religious, and friends. Together, our aim is to create prophetic communities of care and contemplation that incite courageous action. In 2016, Nuns & Nones began as a simple invitation: Let’s bring sisters and seekers together to explore things like community, belonging, justice, and spiritual practice. Over the last four years, that humble experiment gave way to more local groups and gatherings, a growing national network, and even experiments like a six-month pilot residency in a convent. Through the journey, we have discovered that sisters and seekers together hold great possibilities for new forms of committed community that can support the long-haul work of repair and rebuilding that is needed in our world. Learn more at: https://www.nunsandnones.org/about

The Nuns & Nones advisory board consists of five women religious, one of whom is Annmarie Sanders, IHM, a Rabbi and a few seekers. Nones have been brought up in a variety of faiths or with no religion at all. What they seek is the wisdom of women religious who have stood for justice and lived in community together and lived vows that society condemns but Nones truly desire to learn as a way of counter-cultural living.

Resources about Nuns & Nones can be found on the Visioning the Future page on the IHM Sisters’ webpage.

Annmarie, Chris, Jean Louise, Maryalice, Mindy and Mary Ellen

A new book from New Ways Ministry
Edited by
Sister Grace Surdovel, IHM

LOVE TENDERLY is an anthology written by twenty-three vowed women religious who embrace their sexual identity as lesbian or queer. While telling their stories of self discovery and acceptance they explore questions related to vowed life, falling in love, and advice they would give to a lesbian or queer woman considering religious life. Readers will be inspired and challenged to deeper consideration of their own psycho-sexual-spiritual journey.

Praise for Love Tenderly

The Mercy Community values, indeed cherishes, each member. It is in that spirit that we thank our four sisters who are contributors to the volume, Love Tenderly: Sacred Stories of Lesbian and Queer Religious. We hope that their stories will open hearts and enlighten minds to the sacredness and endless diversity of God’s creation.

We appreciate this book that alerts us to the many ways we are blessed and that we need to learn to be more and more inclusive and welcoming.

- Institute Leadership Team, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

To purchase a copy, visit
www.NewWaysMinistry.org/lovetenderly
Mystery Solved

Logs, stones, piles of dirt being dragged up the hill by the back parking lot of the IHM Center
Logs cut and piled up to form a barrier
Trip after trip with a wheelbarrow full of stones that unloaded on the hill’s edge
Perhaps the erection of a log cabin? The building of a stone wall?
For those observing the unusual back-and-forth behavior outside at the IHM Center recently, the mystery has now been solved. We’re in the process of building the structure for a pollinator garden.

Aware of the critical role of bees, butterflies, and other insects in the pollinating process, our EarthCARE committee is working on the infrastructure for what will become a pollinator garden filled with native species of flowers and plants.

A pollinator garden is planted and designed with specific nectar and pollen producing plants in a way that attracts pollinating insects known as pollinators. To attract native pollinators, an area must offer adequate sources of food, water, and shelter and provide habitats where these insects can nest, rest, and forage.

Assisted by Penn State Master Gardeners, our EarthCARE committee obtained a small grant for the soil as well as the expertise of the Master Gardeners in planning, designing, building, and planting. The logs being hauled now form two natural looking barriers for the soil; barriers which will become garden beds in the spring. Stones form a circular bed. And with the coming of spring, we will plant native species of flowers and plants to attract pollinators—bees, butterflies, and other insects vital to a healthy ecosystem.

For the cold months ahead, logs have been placed on top of the garden beds, where the dried leaves will decompose and nourish the soil during the winter. We look forward with excitement to a spring planting and soon afterwards the welcoming of our bee, butterfly, and other pollinator families.

For a related reflection, you may be interested in reading “Living Like a Pollinator,” one of Chris Koellhoffer’s blog posts on her site, Mining the Now. Go to https://chriskoellhofferihm.org/2020/07/11/living-like-a-pollinator/

Prayer for the Intercession of Mother Maria Kaupas

Gracious God, we praise and thank You for Your faithfulness and love. You have blessed us with the example of Your servant, Maria Kaupas, whose deep faith in Your presence, love for the Eucharist, and zeal in fostering the faith life of others continue to inspire us. Through her intercession, we pray that __________. Help us to continue life’s journey with a heart filled with a profound faith in You and that trust which is born of love. We ask this through Jesus our Lord and the power of the Spirit. Amen.
Sister Mary and Marywood University

From the *The Times Leader*, December 27, 2020, by Patrick Kernan

If you ask Sister Mary Persico, Marywood University rose to the challenge of COVID-19, and the university continues to come up with new ways to overcome it as the days pass. A Times Leader reporter spoke with her the week after classes wrapped up, and she said she’s amazed by how well the semester went, all things considered.

“I’m very relieved,” Sister Mary said. “In August, people said university students couldn’t do this, but we made it all the way through.” According to her, all classes mostly shifted online, but students were required to come into class about once per week so as to keep students socially distanced, using a model the university dubbed Hy-Bridge.

“It was an opportunity for us to bridge from inperson to online without skipping a beat,” she said. However, students were allowed the option to continue to come into class if they so chose. “It’s easier to learn how to play a tuba on campus than over a Zoom call,” Sister Mary laughed, adding that plenty of classes were taught under tents outdoors well into November.

She said that the challenges this year allowed the culture on campus to show a lot of strength. “I think we all got closer,” she said — only metaphorically, of course. “We developed a greater appreciation for one another.”

Sister Mary said there were relatively few cases of COVID-19 among the student body and, incredibly, none among the residents at Marywood Heights, the on-campus retirement community that was recently purchased by the university. While the university had initially planned on having student involvement with the residents at the center, these plans had to be put on stand-by for safety reasons. But the pandemic also allowed the university to explore new avenues, including a renovation project to build a dedicated esports program — in other words, competitive video gaming at the collegiate level. Sister Mary said the school is working on a massive area that will feature 30 state of the art computer stations in the hopes of recruiting new students.

“We want to be the place to go for this sort of thing,” Sister Mary said, adding that it’s something that is becoming increasingly popular — and lucrative — at schools around the country. “When you’re in this job, you’re always looking around to see what’s trending,” she added. Sister Mary also said that an esports program could allow students to continue to be competitive and social in a world where contact sports might be unsafe. But video games and COVID-19 aren’t the only things happening on campus. Marywood was recognized by numerous publications as being variously one of the best value colleges, one of the best colleges for veterans, numerous top rankings for the university’s healthcare degrees and not to mention being named as one of the best places to work in our area by the Times Leader. Additionally, Sister Mary said the school is always working toward the creation of new programs at the school.

Mission Circle and Associates Celebrate December 8th Feast

The Florida Sunshine Mission Circle and the IHM Associates in Florida gathered on Zoom December 8 to pray together in celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Sisters and Associates both renewed their commitments during the prayer.
Christmas Appeal Donations Continue

Christmas appeal donations to the IHM Retirement Fund continue to be received by development office. So far, we have received over 75% towards our $125,000 goal. Sister Louis Marie Verchick, IHM, a prayer minister at OLP, was featured in our letter of support mailed in early December. Please pray for the special intentions of our benefactors who continue to respond to our request for donations.

Remain in our Love Liturgy Scheduled

January’s Remain in Our Love liturgy is for locations in the Diocese of Brooklyn and Archdiocese of New York where IHM sisters have ministered but are no longer present. Mass will be celebrated on January 27 at 8 a.m. at the IHM Center Chapel. Please send any special intentions to Sister Ann Monica at bubsera@sistersofihm.org

New Silver Circle Sellers Needed

Thank you to all of our Silver Circle sellers and members for your help in reaching our fundraising goal membership in support of the IHM Retirement Fund for the 2020-2021 season. In order to sustain the program, we need your help in identifying new sellers. When reaching out to family and friends, consider asking neighbors, co-workers, former students, and parishioners to become Silver Circle sellers.

We appreciate your patience as we deal with the Covid-19 restrictions that have delayed our invitations to attend the Silver Circle drawings. The development staff has continued the monthly drawings within the confines of our office. You can check out the current winners’ list by visiting http://www.sistersofihm.org, Donate, Silver Circle, View Recent Winners.

Baked Sweet and Sour Chicken

submitted by Maureen Schrimpe, IHM

Servings: 4
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 (16 oz) bottle of French salad dressing
1 cup apricot preserves
1 packet onion soup mix
2 peppers (1 red and 1 green) chopped
1 (15.75 oz) can of pineapple chunks drained

Instructions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray
3. Cut the chicken breasts into 1 inch chunks
4. In a mixing bowl, combine salad dressing, apricot preserves and dry soup mix
5. Add in chicken breasts and stir well.
6. Then pour mixture into baking dish
7. Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes
8. Take out and stir in drained pineapple and chopped peppers. Stir and cook for an additional 15 minutes.
9. Remove from oven and serve over cooked rice.
Notes of Gratitude

Our deep gratitude for your outpouring prayers, sympathies and remembrances extended at the sudden death of our Sister Janice. Her IHM Spirit, love and kindness intertwined with all who were companions on her life's journey. God bless you!  *Sister Daniel Mary and the Heisey Family*

Dear Sisters,

I want to express the gratitude of the entire DeSiano family for your prayers, Masses, memorials and support for us following the death of my brother, Joe. While Covid prevented us from hosting so many relatives and friends, and meant having only the most simple liturgical celebration, your outpouring of comfort and encouragement has meant more than we could ever fully express. In the midst of our sadness, you have brought both light and joy. God bless and keep each one of you safe. A blessed Christmas to all,  *Sister Ann Barbara, IHM*

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**IHM Calendar**

**Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities**  
Saturday, January 9  
10:00 am via Zoom

**Advisory Board**  
Saturday, January 16  
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**Nones and Nuns**  
Presentation via Zoom  
February 27  
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Wholeness**  
Presentation by Liz Sweeney, SSJ  
Part two via Zoom  
April 10-11

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**Join us for prayer via videostream:**  
[https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv](https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv)

**PILGRIM - Let Your Heart Be Bold**  
Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin, IHM  
Collated by Sister Margaret Gannon, IHM

This study of the life of Mother Theresa Maxis Duchemin is a revision of one that was written in 1978. Several helpful studies have been published which add important information and insights into Theresa’s life and experiences. These works supplement and enhance the earlier research and provided basic information to our understanding of Theresa.  
[https://tinyurl.com/y9dtsrej](https://tinyurl.com/y9dtsrej)

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**IHM Vitae**

as of December 29, 2020

Final Profession - 289  
Temp. Professed - 2  
Novices - 1  
Candidates - 0  
Associates - 164

Sisters of St. Casimir  
Congregation Vitae

Final Profession - 38

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**God’s covenant has been fulfilled**

*Sister Jacquelin Servick, IHM*

December 13, 2020  
in the 69th year  
of her religious profession
Let Us Dream
The Path to a Better Future by Pope Francis
with Austin Ivereigh
Reviewed by Sister Patt Walsh, IHM

This is not a review. I’m saving this work as my “Book for 2020” and, I’m hoping I can persuade you to do so as well.

Pope Francis writes a lot but, this book is different. It is not only his reflections on 2020, including Covid and all of the other social and economic and environment issues, but, it is also his recommendations for how to move forward into 2021 – as the book’s title suggests: Let Us Dream.

First, Austin Ivereigh and the role he plays in the creation of this book. Ivereigh is British and he’s also Pope Francis’ biographer – so, they know each other well. But, this book is not an interview and it is mostly Francis’ own thoughts. Ivereigh’s most important contribution to the book is that he’s its English translator. The Pope is not proficient in English but he really wanted to address an English-speaking audience in a conversational tone.

A word about working with a translator. In the 1990s, I travelled to Slovakia to help educators there re-structure their educational system. Unfortunately, they didn’t speak English and I didn’t speak Slovak! But, the translator there had travelled in America to learn this program. Let me share two experiences that capture the challenges of being a translator. First, during a teacher training workshop, I simply said “Now we will share our materials”. And, she conveyed my directions. But…she went on and on and on! Finally, I said “What did you just say to them?” She explained they didn’t have the word SHARE in their vocabulary! She had to explain the process! Second, on another trip, they hired a professional translator (who had no experience with this program!). I shared a list of student expectations and the last one was MASTERY! The man literally froze! He looked alarmed and panicked and started to pace! Finally, he spoke to a colleague, relaxed and went on translating. Why? Well, in Slovak there are two words for Mastery – one means to Master the material BUT...the other means “to be Mastered!” Ivereigh’s role should not be underestimated here!

The Pope grounds his recommendations in his own experience of “three personal covids” When he was 21 he developed cysts and pneumonia and needed to have a lung removed – his first isolation. Before he was forty, he was appointed Jesuit Provincial in Argentina. But, it was a time of great conflict both in the country and within the Jesuits and, in the mid-80s, he was unexpectedly replaced from his Jesuit Leadership role with a man more in line with Jesuit thinking and he was sent to Germany for three months to pick a doctoral thesis – his second “covid”. He didn’t speak German! And, finally, he was sent to Cordoba, Argentina to do spiritual direction and hear confession and he had a self-imposed isolation/retreat for almost two years. However, he does make you laugh – he says he decided to read the “complete biographies of all of the Popes!” Nothing at the Vatican surprises him now!

In short, the Pope grounds us in his “covid learnings” and knowledge/experience of current world events. The review says this book should be “read as a work of Prophecy and Hope and not Analysis.” (Bookmarks). With the end of 2020 in sight, many look to the inauguration with hopes and dreams. May I suggest Pope Francis is offering us a guide to make what is not yet… real tomorrow? Here’s to 2021 and a Year of Dreams fulfilled.