Remembering Our Motherhouse

On July 19, 1900, the cornerstone for the new Motherhouse of the IHMs was laid in the Green Ridge section of Scranton. Two years later, on September 8, sisters, novices and postulants moved in to the four-story brick building named Mount St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. Part of the spacious structure soon became the home for elementary and high school students and eventually for Marywood College women in 1915.

In the following decades, the Motherhouse became the home for nurturing young women religious and a welcoming space for IHM sisters returning for visits and retreats. The chapel became an intricate part of life for Marywood Seminary and Marywood College. “Sister-stories” of peeling potatoes on the back porch, prayer and liturgies in the majestic chapel, serving meals to the student residents on the ‘borders’ side’, waiting to hear of chapter election results and mission changes for the next year are among the memories which the Motherhouse evoke.

Fifty years ago on February 21-22, 1971, the home we called our Motherhouse was completely destroyed by fire. We lost the 71 year old structure, but no human lives nor the spirit of the place. This year we commemorate the Motherhouse in prayer, music, history and stories of the night of the fire.

Our virtual memorial service will take place on Sunday, February 21, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. That day it can be viewed online at:
https://www.ustream.tv/channel/ihm-tv

Please join us in celebrating and thanking our God of Divine Providence for the life and the spirit of our IHM Motherhouse and all who called it home.
**Save the Date!**

**Through the Portal Together: Repair and Radical Imagination**

A day of Retreat  
Saturday, February 27  
via Zoom from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

In this IHM Visioning the Future session facilitated by members of the national Nuns & Nones team, we will explore the prophetic possibilities for repair and reimagining in this transitional, transformational moment.

When we gather in late February, we will be approaching a turning point in a pandemic that has exposed the brokenness of myths and structures that will no longer hold us. There is “no going back” to normal. How do we walk through this Kairos moment together? In our society? As a community?

The day will include three parts: looking back to our shared history and legacy for lessons in repair, looking around to see what this moment in time is unveiling to us, and looking forward with radical imagination to envision our charism in its fullest expression.

Sisters and Associates planning to join this retreat via Zoom, please register at communications@sistersofihm.org

**Leaders:**

Katie Gordon is a spiritual seeker attempting to live out monastic wisdom in new containers. She is a national organizer and co-founder with Nuns & Nones, and also lives and works with the Benedictine Sisters in Erie PA.

Adam Horowitz is a New Mexico-based cultural organizer, artist, and instigator of intergenerational initiatives in the service of love and justice. In recent years, he co-founded: the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (US-DAC), Nuns & Nones, and Taproot.

Brittany Koteles is a Milwaukee-based facilitator, improviser, and auntie, and the team lead of Nuns & Nones. Her most precious spiritual practice is neighboring.

Following are links to several articles that describe a bit more about the Nuns and Nones and their passion and dedication to do good in the world. Please join the retreat day they have planned for us!

https://www.nunsandnones.org
https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/nuns-and-nones-meet-on-the-edge/
https://www.nunsandnones.org/stories-blog

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**Love Tenderly Anthology Available**

The newly published anthology of sisters’ stories, *Love Tenderly*, edited by Sister Grace Surdovel, IHM, is an available resource on the topics presented by Robyn Ochs on January 9. The anthology is available for purchase at:

https://www.newwaysministry.org/orderlovetenderly/

Below is a recent (5 out of 5 stars) review.

Powerfully written individual stories of coming to terms with being gay (or queer) and serving in the religious community. I know many Sisters — including some who identify as lesbian — and it helped me to understand more of their experience. Especially WHY they stay in the Catholic Church and work from within to make it more welcoming and accepting to ALL.

What was unexpected was the beautiful stories of finding acceptance, unconditional love and tender guidance from spiritual advisors, fellow nuns and others as these brave women moved through their journey of self-discovery. I had to put the book down quite often after each chapter to marinate in their stories and to look at the areas in my life that need healing. And to know healing and wholeness is out there. It’s amazing a book like this hasn’t been written before, and this one is a welcome addition. Definitely worth reading and sharing.
IHM Advisory Board Held January 16

On Saturday, January 16, 2021, the IHM Advisory Board met both in executive session and in a meeting open to any member of the congregation.

Executive Session

In the executive session, the advisory board spent time in prayer and reflection centered on the blessing by Jan Richardson, “The Year as a House,” which allowed members to share insights on how they will inhabit 2021 as individuals, an advisory board, and a congregation.

Terri Jordan submitted a recommendation from the subgroup of the board that reviews initiatives. The recommendation was to approve an initiative to form a new congregation committee on interculturality whose first members would be the four sisters who participated in “Weaving Cultures,” a program offered by the Mexican American Catholic College. As these first members implement what they learned in their two-year program, they will later expand the participation in the committee. The board unanimously affirmed the formation of this committee as described.

Updates

Board chair Maryalice Jacquinot reviewed the work of the board that has taken place since September 2020. This included:

- Two one-hour virtual meetings of the board to review initiatives submitted by members:
  - One initiative regarded a workshop on sexual orientation and gender identity which was supported by the board and took place on January 9
  - A second initiative pertained to claiming our voice within the Catholic Church. The board encouraged those submitting this initiative to utilize the IHM newsletter to move forward with this idea which they subsequently did
- Six meetings of the advisory board planning group – work included the refinement of forms utilized by mission circles and those submitting initiatives
- Three meetings of the advisory board planning group with the congregation leadership team
- The decision of the leadership team to continue to employ Mark Clarke as a consultant to the IHM Advisory Board
- Saturday, March 13 will be the next meeting of the board, some part of which will be an open meeting which any congregation member is welcome to attend.

Critical Issues/Role of the Advisory Board

Two matters were discussed by the board both in small groups and as a whole:

1. The relationship of the advisory board to the four issues named as most critical for the congregation in 2019: sponsorship, environment, relationships, vital living. (Subgroups of the board on each of these issues met prior to this meeting and reported to the board at the meeting.)
2. The role of the advisory board and its relationship to the leadership team and to the congregation membership

Conversations on both topics generated interest, energy, and questions. Both matters will be discussed further at upcoming meetings of the board.

Opportunity to Address the Advisory Board

Prior to the meeting, all sisters received an invitation to address the board at the open session about a topic of interest to them, preferably one that related to any of the four critical issues. In order to give each person adequate time, sisters were asked to notify the board ahead of time of their intention to speak so that they could be included in the schedule. No sister responded. It was noted that if a sister decided during the open meeting that she wished to address the board, she would be given the opportunity, provided that there was time.

Open Session

The open session welcomed more than 25 sisters and began with a prayer that included the reading of 12 statements of hopes for the congregation submitted by those who had registered to attend this meeting.

In an evaluation of the September 2020 advisory board meeting, sisters suggested
some topics that they would like to explore more, one of which was the concept of shared leadership. Noting that this concept could be understood in many ways, the planning group invited Mark Clarke to provide some context for understanding the idea of shared leadership. Using three scripture quotes (Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 12:27) Mark spoke of shared leadership as a way of seeking together the common good, balancing the diversity among a group with the reality of the group’s oneness, and sharing each person’s gifts for the sake of mission. He also noted that there exists within a congregation both formal leadership (i.e., elected leaders, committees, sponsorship boards, congregation offices) and informal leadership (i.e., those who plan celebrations, volunteers who give service to the community, those who work on major events). Each level has an important role and the challenge is to bring both levels together in a way that reflects the congregation’s mission, culture, and core values.

Those in attendance at the meeting broke into 10 small groups to further explore their own concepts of shared leadership and to share examples of effective shared leadership. The groups reported on highlights of their conversations with the whole. These highlights will be compiled and shared with the congregation. Individuals were invited to submit additional insights as well to add to the compilation.

**Update on COVID-19 Response**

Sister Ellen Maroney provided a report on the ways the congregation has responded to the pandemic, beginning with forming a response team that advises the leadership regularly. Immediately, the congregation put preventative measures in place at the IHM Center and Our Lady of Peace Residence and this process continues with the most recent implementation of plans to care for sisters who contracted the virus and to isolate the virus and prevent its spread. To the leadership team’s knowledge, to date, 31 sisters have tested positive on the campus (10 at OLP and 13 at the IHM Center) and 8 beyond the campus. One sister died as a result of contracting the virus.

Ellen praised the members of the response team and the resiliency of the sisters at OLP and the IHM Center. She also noted a very generous response to a request sent to sisters in the Scranton area for assistance at these two facilities during the outbreak. However, as the staff at both facilities recognized that bringing in volunteers would increase the chances of greater spread of the virus, the employees offered to increase their efforts to perform the work and service that was needed to care for the sisters.

Following Ellen’s report, the Advisory Board invited comments and questions from the sisters in attendance. Since no additional input was offered, the meeting concluded at 2:30 p.m.

Gail Cabral, Kathryn Clauss, Nancy DeCesare, Fran Fasolka, Mary Ellen Higgins, Maryalice Jacquinot, Terri Jordan, Kathleen Lunsmann, Ellen Maroney, Lisa Perkowski, Mary Persico, Mary Reap, Annmarie Sanders, Jane Snyder, Rachel Terry

**Suggestion for Dialogue Groups**

The Visioning the Future Committee wishes to suggest that over these next months, before Liz Sweeney’s Presentation April 10-11, dialogue groups consider using the feedback from the last evaluation form for one of the 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 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 in October:

IHMs Reach Out to Neighbors

Sisters Marilyn Muro, Sarah Ann Holmes, Ann Monica Bubser and Katie Clauss live in an apartment on Richmont Street in Scranton. In the early days of Covid-19 we talked about our awareness of the loss of community that our neighbors might be feeling. We agreed that occasional letters to them might provide some support for them and would meet a desire we had to reach out to them in some way without putting them or us at risk with a face-to-face conversation. We hoped that they would be welcomed communications.

In March we decided to deliver a letter to the neighbors’ mailboxes around our block every week or two to let them know that they were never far from our love or our prayer and to share something with them – our contact information in the event we could do something for them, prayer and short reflections, links to online resources for prayer and liturgy during Lent and Easter, links to videos or articles that they might find helpful and enjoyable. Around the same time we also placed a sign in the front window of our apartment that states, “You are in our prayer.” -Sisters of IHM

The relatively short duration of the letters that was initially anticipated in March came to a close in August. The letters and the sign evoked warm and interesting conversations with our neighbors. One mother talked about her 13 year-old son who saved and liked to re-read the letters. We received texts from some neighbors requesting a remembrance in our prayer for themselves or a loved one. We are grateful for the opportunity to be a presence of compassion and prayerful support for our neighbors.

Evening of Prayer

All are welcome to join us on February 10 at 6:30 p.m. for an evening of prayer. We will be honoring the 25th anniversary of the OSPIHIM connection with the Little Sisters of Saint Therese in Haiti and also African American History Month in the United States. We hope you will join us for this prayer at this significant moment in our country:

https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.
February 10
March 10
April 14
May 12

In her Christmas letter from Sicuani, Peru, Sister Ancilla Maloney wrote, "Simple joy comes often, if we are on the alert for the glimpses of Light in these dark COVID days such as in this photo of Yhosemel's brightly colored Christmas tree."
Restorative Justice: Is It Possible?
*From the Dismantling Racism Committee*

The recent conversation on the Doctrine of Discovery raised the question of the doctrine’s dark legacy. How do/will the oppressors work through the changes they must make in order to set things right? How do we help the oppressed break the cycle and fallout of that oppression?

A definition of restorative justice might be helpful here. This definition was written by Howard Zehr, *(The Little Book of Restorative Justice)*: “Restorative justice is an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.”

While the programs on the Doctrine of Discovery deal primarily with our indigenous nations, it’s not hard to ask all the same questions of just actions when we look at the manifest problems rooted in racism: racial disparity, immigration fears, gender uncertainties...

A short article written by Father Bryan Massingale, a black theologian from Fordham University, raises some of the obstacles we need to personally own and overcome in order to have a raised and refined consciousness about our thoughts and dealings with those we look upon as “other.” Find the article here: [https://tinyurl.com/yb42yyve](https://tinyurl.com/yb42yyve)

The video links below are also of Father Massingale discussing these concerns.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr wrote, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it always bends toward Justice.” How can I/we help bend that arc toward justice? What will I/we do to “put things as right as possible?”

For reflection:
- A quote from the Doctrine of Discovery video: “What was done in the name of Christ needs to be undone in the name of Christ.”
- Article: How the Church Can Combat Racism and White Privilege
  The assumptions of white privilege and what we can do about it | National Catholic Reporter (ncronline.org)
- Video:Bryan Massingale: The Magis and Justice (about 50 minutes) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyMYQFjzmZQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyMYQFjzmZQ)
- Video:Bryan Massingale: How the Church Can Combat Racism and White Privilege (about 25 minutes) [https://youtu.be/ONiie2oYJCQ](https://youtu.be/ONiie2oYJCQ)

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**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.”

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**New on the IHM Web**

IHM Motherhouse Animoto: [https://animoto.com/play/g6CJpHwFn80jzSnfbIo45Q](https://animoto.com/play/g6CJpHwFn80jzSnfbIo45Q)
Advisory Board Open Meeting: [https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129202640](https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129202640)
Advisory Board New Initiative Form: [https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/advisory-board/](https://sw.sistersofihm.org/index.php/advisory-board/)
Funerals for IHM Sisters: [https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv](https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv)
Update from Friends of the Poor

Dear Sisters,

February is a special month for Friends of the Poor because we honor the memory of our foundress, Sister Adrian Barrett, IHM, born on Valentine’s Day. We know she is beaming with pride at the growth of our mission.

We are also happy to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Friends of the Poor. Sister Adrian began this mission in 1986 on the streets of Scranton. From its humble beginnings to now, we have served hundreds of thousands of individuals through our food pantries, holiday dinners, utility assistance programs, clothing and furniture banks, medical transportation program and so much more.

As we near the one-year mark of the COVID-19 restrictions in our area, we continue to care for the most vulnerable in our community. In recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Friends of the Poor, in collaboration with Scranton Primary Health and the Scranton Housing Authority, conducted a day of service at the Adams High Rise in Scranton. COVID-19 vaccinations were administered to over 200 residents by students from the Marywood University’s nursing and physician assistant programs.

Our pantries at Jackson Terrace in West Scranton and Valley View Terrace in South Side continue to see increased numbers. Pop-up pantries are being held on Wednesdays at various family housing developments throughout Lackawanna County. The Friends of the Poor/Family to Family COVID-19 emergency drive-through food distributions will resume later this month or in early March.

Plans are also underway to collect Easter Baskets for children as part of our Easter Food giveaway in late March.

For 35 years you have supported and prayed for our mission, our leadership, staff, volunteers and families. We remain eternally grateful for that support. Please know that you are remembered in our daily prayers.

Tablets for Sisters Residing at OLP and IHM Center

Recently a questionnaire was sent to each sister living at the IHM Center and OLP asking about her need for a simple personal computing device so that she might take part in congregation meetings and events more fully, access e-mail, access social media, etc. Thirty sisters responded that they would like such a device.

We are happy to announce that the tablets for these sisters have arrived. Once they have been placed in inventory, training will be provided to the sisters who requested them.

We look forward to hearing the voices and seeing the faces of our thirty “channel 17” sisters who will soon be using Zoom.

IHM Vitae

as of January 28, 2021

Final Profession - 286
Temp. Professed - 2
Novices - 1
Candidates - 0
Associates - 164

Sisters of St. Casimir
Congregation Vitae

Final Profession - 38

Photos Needed!

Photos of IHM sisters in ministry. Old or new! 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!
No one would have ever guessed that we would still be social distancing, masking and connecting everyday through social media! Vocation work mainly happens in schools, universities, meeting places – but travel has been upended, non-existent! Would we have ever thought that meeting on ZOOM would boom? These past months have certainly changed our world – we still long for the face to face meetings, conversations, human touch. For the time being, though, we do what we are able. Thus, we look toward ways to reach young adults, and others through virtual support so that people know we are here to help, to listen, to care, to be a support.

Plans are underway for several virtual retreats through various groups and Sister Mindy is working on collaborating with several of them to provide spiritual food.

Bucknell University has reached out every year to help with the Retreat for Busy Persons, scheduled for March 2021. Three team members (vocation directors) will be available for a week to be spiritual guides. They have chosen Discernment and Prayer as their theme.

Robert Morris University, Pittsburgh, is a place where the Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Committee has been a support for many years. The women and men religious of the Pittsburgh area will be involved as spiritual guides for the students in Campus Ministry for the Retreat for Busy Persons, January 2021. The theme chosen for RMU is: 1 Cor 16:13... Be on your guard; stand firm; be courageous; and be strong.

The PRVC (Pittsburgh Vocation Committee) has come together virtually since COVID and Sister Mindy has been able to attend meetings. Sister suggested a Winter Retreat for Young Adults (first weekend in Lent). After two meetings the sisters involved decided to invite young adults to plan the retreat with them! Three students from Marywood, three from Robert Morris and two working young adults have been diligently working together on the theme, process and plans for Our Call to Love: Relationship with God, self and others. It is very exciting to work with the various congregation vocation directors and the young adults together! We are looking forward to the retreat! Please continue to pray for vocations to religious life!

25th World Day for Consecrated Life through the lens of Fratelli Tutti

Fratelli Tutti is the third encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "on fraternity and social friendship."

Celebrate World Day of Consecrated Life, February 2, 7:00-8:00 p.m. (ET) by joining a reflection on consecrated life by newer members in light of the Gospel call presented in Fratelli Tutti. This online gathering will include prayer, listening, and small group conversation.

The gathering is co-sponsored by CMSM, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, National Religious Vocations Conference, Religious Brothers Conference, and Religious Formation Conference.

The program is free, but registration in advance is required to receive the Zoom link. Register at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlc--urj8rGtya983wKglmYZKT1O9I

Dialogue Group Meets

On January 5, the members of Dialogue Group 7 met and shared reflections on the selection provided by Liz Sweeney, “A Human Being is Part of the Whole.” The dialogue focused on the reality of the “I AM,” the God-force that creates, sustains, and dwells with all in the Universe. We reflected on how our true wholeness is found in our sharing the energy of “I AM,” with others in the whole Universe.
Saint Joseph’s Center Baby and Children’s Pantry

Saint Joseph’s Center offers Northeast Pennsylvania’s only Baby and Children’s Pantry. Throughout the year, donations of new or gently used clothing and furnishings for infants and children are accepted. Volunteers receive and organize these items for distribution to local families.

In addition to the generosity of individual families, the Pantry is also supplied with items from organizations, churches, workplaces and others who host collections for those items on the Pantry wish list such as diapers, wipes, baby wash, baby lotions, pacifiers, bottles, diaper bags, etc. Monetary donations restricted to the Pantry are used to purchase items not readily donated such as baby formula and bulk diapers. Over the years, the IHM Mission Integration Committee has hosted collections for the Pantry. Saint Joseph’s Center is a member of Cribs for Kids, National Diaper Bank Network and CEO/Weinberg Food Bank to ensure access to these important items for the health and well-being of local children.

Prior to the pandemic, sixty weekly volunteers including several IHM sisters assisted the Pantry Outreach Coordinator, Mary Griffin, and other members of the Maternity and Family Services Department in providing much needed support to approximately 400 families each month. In addition to its main location on South Blakely Street, numerous community locations made access easier for many families. Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, the Baby and Children’s Pantry continued to provide services. Safety considerations impacted many aspects including the number of scheduled volunteers, client access to the pantry and the availability of outreach locations. Despite these changes, with the assistance of 3,200 volunteer hours, 125,000 items were provided in 2020. Each year, the Baby and Children’s Pantry announces its impact and thanks volunteers and donors with a Valentine’s Day card. This year’s card features a beautiful young girl modeling clothing and a warm coat from the Pantry. As an infant, she and her mother resided at Saint Joseph’s Center Mother Infant Home. Saint Joseph’s Center is blessed to have had this opportunity to assist them. Your prayers for this important ministry are appreciated.

The Occasional Papers

The winter, 2021 edition of Occasional Papers from LCWR is entitled God’s Infinite Vision. This edition has wonderful articles that all speak to discerning our emerging future. Please be sure to take time to read these articles on this pressing topic for us all. Anyone interested in a subscription, they are available for $15 for the year. Here is the link to subscribe:
https://lcwr.org/op-subscribe

Minestrone Soup

submitted by
Maureen Schrimpe, IHM

Serves 4

Low sodium, high fiber, low fat healthy carb

Ingredients
1 tablespoon of olive oil
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup chopped celery
1 carrot diced
1 garlic clove, minced
4 cups fat free, low sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1/2 cup chopped spinach
1 can no salt kidney beans
1/2 cup uncooked whole grain elbow or small shell pasta
1 small zucchini, diced (about 1 cup)

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, celery and carrots. Sauté until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add garlic and continue cooking for another minute. Stir in broth, tomatoes, spinach, beans and pasta. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add zucchini. Cover and cook for 5 minutes more.

Enjoy!
A time capsule is a historic cache of goods or information, usually intended as a way to let future people know about the culture, life and people at the time the capsule was created.

On July 19, 1900, ground was broken for the new Scranton IHM Motherhouse. On November 3rd of the same year, the cornerstone was blessed and laid by Rt. Rev. Bishop Michael J. Hoban. Within the cornerstone, the contents of the ‘strong box’ included (among other things) several newspapers of 1900, statues, medals, coins, holy cards, rosary beads, and IHM congregation information. A copy of the contract for construction of the building and other congregation documents were enclosed with all other items, except the newspapers, in a hand sewn white linen bag.

After the fire in 1971, when the time capsule (a copper box, 15" x 5" x 5" soldered closed) was removed from the cornerstone and opened, all items were intact, although the frame of a picture of Our Lady was charred. Newspapers were found intact and crisp: Scranton Truth (3 copies); Diocesan Record; Scranton Free Press; Scranton Tribune; Scranton Republican; and Scranton Times.

Also unharmed was a list of all the IHM sisters at that time (207 sisters, 16 novices and two postulants), a Book of Customs, the Constitutions, and the papers of congregation incorporation from 1885.

Mother Crescentia Foster and her council provided us with a view of what IHM and Scranton life were like in 1900 as they planned, oversaw and laid the cornerstone of our home, the Motherhouse. The IHM congregation was 55 years of age at that time. Today we hold and preserve the spirit of these treasures and (‘giants of our congregation’), as we celebrate 176 years in 2021.

A pictorial display of the Motherhouse can be viewed at: https://animoto.com/play/g6ClpHwFn80jzSnfbIo45Q

Remembering a Faithful Friend of IHMs

Jan Corbett’s relationship with the IHM Congregation goes back to 1978 when she was hired as an operating room nurse at Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Carbondale, PA. She worked alongside Sister Carleen Boehlert, IHM, nurse anesthetist who was also a spiritual mentor to Jan, her friend, Jeanne Karp, R.N. (now Sister Jeanne Karp, OSF) and others. Jan was a very dedicated nurse and was active on many hospital committees. She also responded to the needs of Saint Joseph’s by accepting many different positions during her 17 years of service. Jan attended mass and evening prayer for several years with the sisters in the hospital chapel.

At the same time that she was working, Jan earned a B.S. in Sociology from Marywood. She pursued further education and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Masters in Public Administration also from Marywood. After Jan left Saint Joseph’s, she became head of Perioperative Services at Moses Taylor Hospital for seven years. In her last role before retirement, she went back to one-on-one nursing as a home health care nurse and brightened the lives of her many patients.

continued on page 11
Faithful Friend cont. from p. 10

Jan was an active participant in many IHM congregational prayer services, retreats, and committees. When the congregation first opened some Chapter sessions to the laity, Jan was a very eager participant.

Jan made friends with some IHM sisters by offering “Jan’s taxi,” a free service providing rides to sister friends and other IHMs whose families lived anywhere along the way. It was usually not just a drop-off because relatives of the IHM sisters frequently invited Jan and friends for coffee and home-made goodies. Such visits led to close friendships with families of these sisters. This service went on for many years.

Jan loved her 10 years of volunteering in the IHM Archives, and she did many creative projects including the Mothers Profiles; the mapping of every place where the IHMs have served; and Founders Day displays with archived photos and a quiz for sisters to identify those in the photo. This delighted all who participated. Jan also volunteered for six years serving in a variety of roles in Maternity and Family Services at Saint Joseph’s Center.

A frequent visitor to the Marian Convent and later Our Lady of Peace, Jan visited her many friends and lifted their spirits with her good sense of humor and her many thoughtful ways. She brought special presents for each one. Jan was a faithful friend of the IHMs while sharing her friendship, talent, and treasure to further the mission and ministries of the IHM Congregation.

Jan passed on to her eternal reward on December 31, 2020. Good and faithful servant, rest in peace.

The History of the IHM Center
Scranton, Pennsylvania:
1962-2019
Michel Keenan, IHM

"From one perspective, this is the story of a building and its transformation over nearly six decades. From a broader perspective, it is the story of God’s providential care operating in the life of the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of the farsighted planning of its administrators, and of the flexibility of the many sisters who resided there. These sisters carried out a wide variety of ministries within and outside of this building. Combining these two perspectives, this is a story about meeting immediate needs as well as preparing for the future."

– Michel Keenan, IHM

Sister Michel died just two weeks after completing the manuscript for this work. God’s covenant was fulfilled with our Sister Michel in the 71st year of her religious profession.

Purchase on Amazon at: https://tinyurl.com/y4mwlno6
Update on Initial Formation by Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM

Sister Elizabeth (Liz) McGill currently volunteers at two of our IHM sponsored ministries. Since mid-November, she has been involved in fundraising efforts at Friends of the Poor and program evaluation, among other projects, at St. Joseph’s Center. A member of the Sponsorship Committee, Liz says that she is energized by the clients and the employees that she has encountered in our IHM institutions and that she is committed to the evolving development of our sponsored works.

As a novice, Liz participates in a weekly virtual class on Human Development with men and women in initial formation from the Delaware Valley Area of the Religious Formation Conference (RFC). She also attends occasional one-day workshops offered by the RFC Hudson Valley Area. The most recent presentation, which focused on Living the Vow of Poverty as a Blessing, took place on January 23. Participation in Inter-Community programs promotes the development of healthy interpersonal relationships among the participants and prepares the way for inter-community collaboration in the future.

Living in community is another important aspect of Liz’s formation. Since entering the IHM Congregation, she has had several community experiences. At the beginning of her candidacy, she lived with the sisters on Capouse Avenue before joining the formation community at McCarty Hall. During her time of residence in the formation house, Liz completed two formative activities outside of McCarty Hall. She spent a month in Sicuani, Peru, and more recently, she lived in community with our sisters in St. Petersburg, Florida. Liz’s next move will be to Spirit of Hope Convent on Dimmick Avenue where she will be welcomed by Sisters Catherine Luxner, Jean Louise Bachetti and Eleanor Mary Marconi.

News from the UN

February 6—International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM

Ending the practice of female genital mutilation would have profoundly positive effects across societies allowing girls and women to reclaim their health, human rights, and vast potential. The UN, and NGOs affiliated with the UN have learned important lessons about what can be done to end this practice which reflects deep-rooted inequality and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls.

February 20—World Day of Social Justice

The UN recognizes that social justice is essential for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of its global mission to promote development and human dignity. Social justice lies at the heart of the work of the UN and includes promoting gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants, and removing barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or disability.

IHM Directory

Update

The online directory at www.sistersofihm.org

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Our IHM Direction statement calls us to “use imagination, creativity, and fresh thinking to bring about God’s dream for our beautiful, yet wounded, world.”

These qualities have been on full display in the work which Sara Melick and her Marywood students engaged in during the fall of 2020. Sara, a dear friend and member of our EarthCARE committee, is a full-time professor at Marywood University. In this month’s newsletter and in our March newsletter, we hope to highlight some of the important contributions Sara and her students have made to our understanding of the plant and bird neighbors which inhabit our IHM land.

In the Ecology Lab with junior and senior Science majors, students learned the importance of using statistics in ecology, interpreting results from experiments and observational studies. Sara notes that, specifically, they looked to answer the research question: “How do pine needles vary in length within and among trees?” Students who attended on-campus enrichment surveyed the trees at the IHM Center’s Land Restoration site. Those working remotely surveyed trees in their own yard or location.

In the lab, Niches at Feeding Stations, students looked at the research question: “Do birds at a feeder exhibit different niches?” A species’ niche is described as a place in an ecosystem where the species has a favorable set of conditions in which it can survive as well as play its role in the community—a description that sounds something like Vital Living for birds!

An experiment was held at the back of the IHM Center at 4:00 p.m. on a day and at a time of perfect weather and quiet. A bird feeder was set up on a low-hanging branch outside the IHM Center. For thirty minutes, students observed the niches of different types of birds that came to feed from the bird feeder. Every one-minute interval, students took note of the species occupying the feeder and where they fed—on the feeder itself, away from the feeder, or on the ground. Data was taken at 4:00-4:30 p.m. at a close distance.

Students saw house sparrow, white-breasted nuthatch, tufted titmouse, chickadee, and song sparrow—as well as several ever-present squirrels who tried and usually succeeded in grabbing some food from the feeder. Students observed that most of the smaller birds like the titmouse and sparrow fed at the feeder, while the larger birds took food to the trees. Sparrows seemed to feed at and on the feeder itself, usually in groups of two. A single tufted titmouse ate only from the feeder. Chickadees fed away from the feeder. The nuthatch took seeds from the feeder and cracked them open in the trees.

Students concluded that the birds have learned to cohabit and, in doing so, have specific areas designated to species so they can avoid one species outcompeting the other.

We’re most grateful to Sara Melick and her Marywood University students for illuminating for us the diversity of life in our IHM backyard and the ways in which the peaceful cohabitation happening outside our windows provides a model for our human family moving forward.
Theresa’s Treasure Reaches Across the Globe to Africa

“Others were going as far as using cups to split what they got into small portions. A cabbage has been cut into pieces to be shared—all through love. They do not eat while others watch. It is so hard for children to perform in school with empty stomachs.”

Reading these words from Kenya’s Maasai cooperative leader, Catherine Kasao Mututua, prompted Sister Ancilla Maloney to send a request to the Theresa’s Treasure Fund for help. Sister Mary Reap, the leadership member liaison to Theresa’s Treasure, responded positively to the request and subsequently approval was given for a donation for food for the many families who are involved in the co-op in Kenya. Drought and COVID have brought this community to near starvation.

Many years ago, when Catherine Mututua was attending a UN Conference in New York City on indigenous peoples, she stayed with the IHM Sisters in Harlem. In the years since that visit, Ancilla has continued to help the Maasai with various projects from helping to build a water tank for the community to selling beaded jewelry crafted by the Maasai women.

Besides suffering from hunger, girls in the Maasai tribe still face the fearful prospect of undergoing ritual female genital mutilation. Catherine and her women have put together a powerful (sometimes graphic) PowerPoint presentation detailing the ritual. The women and girls have made bead necklaces to sell to raise funds for workshops to educate against this barbaric and dangerous practice.

If you are interested in helping, contact Catherine at eloyiankalanilang@gmail.com

IHM Forward Group to Meet March 6

The date is set for the next gathering of IHM Forward: Our Role in the Emerging Future of the IHM Congregation, Saturday, March 6, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The members of IHM Forward are IHM sisters who were born 1951 and later. The planning committee, Mary Elaine Anderson, Rose DiFluri, Fran Fasolka, Dora Vizcarra, Mindy Welding, and Mary Catherine Redmond, PBVM, facilitator, have planned an enriching and thought-provoking morning program for the gathering. Our five youngest members, Liz McGill, Lisa Perkowski, Rachel Terry, Elvia Mata Ortega, and Norma Poma Arpi will speak to us and share their experience in response to these questions:

Why did you enter?
Why do you stay?
What do you need moving forward to sustain and nourish your vocation with IHM?
What do you think we (IHM Forward) need to do or consider as we move into the future?

It is the planning committee's hope that their sharing will serve as a motivator for others to share their responses to these questions and an invitation for us to deepen our reflection and conversation on thoughts and ideas and hopes and passions for our IHM emerging future.

At this gathering, there will be no pressure to share in small or large group conversation. It is your presence that is desired and valued.

For this gathering it is also a hope that we will have a Spanish to English and English to Spanish translator. We hope translation will make our experience and sharing mutual, rich, and meaningful.

Sisters in the IHM Forward cohort are asked to RSVP for the March 6 gathering via Zoom by March 1 to: communications@sistersofihm.org
Little Sister Survives Violent Kidnapping

The recent kidnapping of Sister Severe of the Little Sisters of St. Therese is a heart wrenching reminder of the ongoing as well as deteriorating economic and political situation that persists in Haiti. In fact, according to the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, the country is facing one of its worst outbreaks of violence since 1986. The number of homicides, kidnappings, sexual assaults, and gang related deaths has risen dramatically in the last year. For more than two years, an unprecedented and uninterrupted socio-political crisis has raged in Haiti provoking periods of violent demonstrations, roadblocks, fuel shortages, economic paralysis, limited services, and high inflation rates. Unrest and the pandemic has kept 70 percent of Haitian children from classes throughout the school year.

The government’s legitimacy is questioned, and incidences of corruption are rampant. Alleged complicity between politicians and gangs have contributed to a climate of insecurity. “Aba grangu”—meaning “enough with hunger”—is regularly chanted across the country by people trying to survive. On average, the cost for food has risen by nearly 30% since last year where more than half the population live in poverty and more one fifth live on less than $1.12 a day. The people are exhausted, frustrated, angry and desperate. So they resort to the only option they have, not unlike what has happened recently among people here in the United States… they take to the streets in protests, and yes, sometimes those protests turn violent.

In Sister Denise’s words: “Thank you for your comfort email... for your worry about us. It is so terrible. We are scared. The kidnapping increase now. We try for more security, but we need funds. So any penny help. Thank you for your prayers and economic support since many years. We appreciate your love and fidelity and solidarity. God bless you and He will reward you for everything. With gratitude and prayers.”

So, Sisters, let’s break open those piggy banks. Send any amount to support the Little Sisters of St. Therese and their ministries. Send to IHM Development Office (indicate "Haiti"), 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, Pa 18509.

Zoom Available for Vital Living Conversations

In the 2018-2022, Direction Statement we IHM sisters committed ourselves to “encourage one another to care for our bodies and spirits by practicing what we each need to be healthy, whole, and available to the world we accompany.” A “Conversation Starter” and personal journal created by the Vital Living Committee was sent to each sister to support this commitment. The booklet offers a creative way to deepen our awareness of how we are living our IHM story of wholeness expressed through the eight dimensions of health and wellness.

Storytelling has been a key part of our IHM tradition from the beginning, perhaps because creative engagement supports us both individually and communally to express our hopes and dreams, our needs and our challenges. The “Conversation Starter” provides a framework for engaging with others, sharing our story and listening to the stories of others. The journal guides contemplative reflection regarding what we have shared and perhaps even moves us to shift our own trajectory and bring forward new possibilities.

During this Covid era of social distancing, we have had opportunities to reevaluate what is important and to reconsider priorities. Many have expressed their deepened sense of gratitude for the gift of health and wellness.

The Vital Living Committee hopes that this booklet assists us as we “breathe together” along the journey toward wholeness.

Sisters can reserve a Zoom account for Vital Living conversations. Contact communications@sistersofihm.org indicating the date and time you wish to reserve a Zoom account.
Silver Circle Update

Thank you to all of our Silver Circle sellers for your faithful support and hard work. The IHM development team has continued monthly Silver Circle drawings despite the challenges imposed by the pandemic. We’ve reached our annual goal for memberships but need more sellers! Why not consider asking a family member, friend, or co-worker if they would help support the IHM Retirement Fund and become a Silver Circle seller? It’s not too late!

Medical Supply Firm Donates Thermometers

The Sisters of IHM acknowledge LOH Medical, a medical equipment supplier, located in Clarks Summit, PA, for their generous donation of 200 infrared forehead thermometers. The thermometers are being used at the IHM Center, Pascucci Family Our Lady of Peace residence, and additional IHM sponsored ministries including Marywood University and St. Joseph’s Center. This gift is vitally important to maintaining the safety of our residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We trust that Sisters of IHM will responsibly distribute our donation of thermometers in line with our mission - mobility and independence - to those who need them, said Nadia Richez, general manager, LOH Medical. “If we can prevent even one person or family from getting ill by detecting symptoms early, we can slow the spread of this virus and make a positive impact.”

Capital Projects Update 2021

Thanks to the generosity of our families and friends, work has begun on several capital project jobs at the IHM Center and Pascucci Family Our Lady of Peace Residence. These necessary modifications, and repairs will provide improvements to the safety, wellness, and personal independence of the sisters who reside there.

Project jobs include the installation of a new telecommunications system, upgrades to existing restrooms, and replacement of a garden access door. As faithful stewards of our resources, additional projects planned are renovations to the IHM Center dining room, installation of a fire sprinkler system, an air handler and condenser unit for the chapel air conditioning system, LED lighting, and replacements of a zone pump; also medical carts, flooring, and food service equipment.
Dear Sisters and Associates,
A very warm and heartfelt thank you for all your prayers, Mass cards and messages. They definitely helped with my recovery along with the good care and therapy at Marywood Heights. Our wonderful family took over when I returned home. Be assured of my continued prayers and may the New Year hold many blessings for each one of you. With love and gratitude,
\textit{Kieran Williams, IHM Associate}

The family of Shirley Garner, sister of Sister Jeanne Albrittain, and the entire family are very grateful for the prayers, enrollments, Masses and kind wishes during this sad time in our lives. \textit{Love, Sister Jeanne Albrittain, IHM}

Dear Sisters and Friends,
This greeting comes from Marywood Heights where I am currently in rehab recovering from the coronavirus. While I have little remembrance of my death-brushing experience in the hospital, others have told me of it. It has caused an overwhelming flow of gratitude to well up within me.

For all the prayers which have been offered for me these past weeks and the love and kindness shown, I can never thank you enough. These days of rehab go slowly so I have lots of time to pray for each of you.

My joy will be to be back at OLP and share in person my gratitude for your prayerful presence during this time. Lovingly, \textit{Sister Eleanor Mary Marconi}

Dear Sisters,
I would like to take this moment to express my deep gratitude for your thoughts, prayers and support over the loss of my mother. Thank you, sisters. Your caring words of sympathy, loving memories of my mother, and God’s grace have helped me to find the inner peace and comfort I needed.
Lovingly, \textit{Sister Angela Kim}

Sister Marionette and the Coll family wish to thank you for all your cards and expressions of sympathy upon the death of her brother, John Edward Coll.

\textit{God’s covenant has been fulfilled}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Sister Carol Ann Lubas, IHM January 9, 2021 in the 50th year of her religious profession}
\item \textit{Sister Eleanor Desaulniers, IHM January 12, 2021 in the 74th year of her religious profession}
\item \textit{Sister Mary Sheehan, IHM January 22, 2021 in the 61st year of her religious profession}
\end{itemize}
I spent Christmas testing positive for Covid and quarantining in my room. Luckily, my symptoms were minor. I also discovered I wasn’t alone in my room. Matt Haig’s *The Midnight Library* was with me. Not that I think there is a perfect pandemic read, but for many reasons, Haig’s New York Times current Best Seller was a great choice for me.

Quarantine became a time of wondering about “why?” Enter *The Midnight Library* whose first line is “Nineteen years before she decided to die, Nora Seed sat in the warmth of the small library…. staring at a chess board.”

Her regular game with the school librarian, Mrs. Elm, is interrupted by a phone call.

Nineteen years later, now 35, Nora’s countdown clock is down to 27 hours. In a series of “mini-chapters,” as the countdown clock continues, Haig presents a series of events that have left Nora lost in a deepening depression which Haig understands personally and communicates powerfully.

So, sitting in front of her bottle of antidepressants, Nora has lost the will to live. As the clock hits 00:00:00, Nora finds herself in a room filled with rows of bookshelves filled with seemingly title-less books. Finally, she finds a woman at a table playing chess. Yes, Mrs. Elm is here and she explains that Nora has arrived in the “Midnight Library” – that place in between life and death where you are dying but not yet dead. Mrs. Elm is its librarian. This is Nora’s own Midnight Library! Beginning with Nora’s life regrets, Mrs. Elm tells her that the importance of the library is that each of the books here is the story of Nora’s life if only she hadn’t made a choice she now regrets. She can jump into any of these stories and, if life becomes fulfilling, it will be hers and any memory of the library will disappear. But if it doesn’t, she will return to the library to pick another book… unless that in-between space ends. One after another, Nora has Mrs. Elm find her a book where an important life-choice was different. The task now is to discover if the consequences of this new choice has resulted in a meaningful life. What questions to ask to find out what life is like now and if those she loves are still here? Sometimes she lasts an hour or more. Sometimes she stays a little longer. Eventually she finds herself drawn back to the library in search of a new story.

Is this the perfect book for Covid-positive isolation after nine months of quarantine? For me, yes. For you? I think so. Perhaps not officially diagnosed, I see so many around me clinically depressed. It’s so hard to hope… to find the energy to do anything (unless you’ve been blessed enough to be in a ministry that doesn’t give you so much time to be self-absorbed). My life had become a constant “What if?”

As I write this, gratefully, my life is different. I’m out of isolation; we’ve had a presidential inauguration, and my vaccine arrives soon!

For a time, syncing my life choices with Nora’s and thinking the idea of “multiversions” of me exist; discovering why a different life choice might not make my life any more satisfying and, most of all, coming to the same understanding that Nora does— that in the end—life is a gift worth living. Reading it became a way to believe 2021 could be a better year. It was a blessing for me and I wish that for all of you.