

IHM SISTERS E-NEWS

November 2023

Gathered in Assembly

October 12-14, 2023

Every six years, representatives of the total IHM Congregation meet in General Chapter to foster the renewal of the unique nature, charism and spirit of the Congregation, address affairs of major importance that touch on its life and mission, and fill the elective offices of the Congregation's Leadership Council. The next General Chapter will be held in April 2024. This past October, the community held its Pre-Chapter Assembly. With an overarching theme of *Daring, Risking, Dreaming*, Assembly 2023 welcomed approximately 150 sisters and associates gathered to participate in this preparatory assembly for the Chapter.

The opening BBQ dinner on October 12 provided an opportunity to reconnect prior to the meeting sessions. Sounds of laughter and tables of quiet conversations marked the dinner as sisters living in Monroe and those arriving from places near and far celebrated being together. The official meeting sessions opened on Friday morning to the sounds of bells welcoming participants and calling them to prayer. Sherryl White, CSJ, served as the facilitator for the Assembly and will continue in that capacity for the Chapter.

The Assembly's agenda reflected themes that emerged during earlier community listening sessions and focused on five areas of engagement: Identity, Relationships, Governance, Leadership, and Futuring. A highlight of the Assembly was the exhibit of Mission Alive displays featuring

over 30 programs with IHM involvement, which participants eagerly looked over and referenced in their discussions and open mic feedback during the meeting days. Assembly participants were also gifted with a presentation by a panel of guests entitled *Legacy of Mission for the Future*. Panelists included Heather Sofran, President of Marian High School; Chris Lynch, President of Detroit Christo Rey High School; Robbie Walker, Director of Operations and Strategy for Marygrove Conservancy, Janice Mignano, IHM Associate, and Monica McGowan, IHM Sisters Chief Operating Officer. Each described how they incorporate the IHM mission into the institutions they lead and the ministries they undertake.

Refrains of the opening song of thanksgiving echoed throughout the days, inviting each sister and associate to *Dare, Risk, Dream* as the IHM story is re-told, and in love's retelling, new chapters yet unfold. Saturday evening, all gathered for Liturgy, celebrating the Feast of St. Theresa of Avila, a community patron, followed by a festive dinner.

[View the assembly video here.](#)



Welcome to the new IHM Associate Council Members!

By Barbara Bacci-Yugovich and Sister Anne Crimmins, IHM Associate Co-Coordinators

The IHM Associate Council, initiated in 1988, came together to serve the IHM Mission. As an IHM Associate Council, we welcome new Associates, celebrate Associate anniversaries, encourage participation in the Assembly and the upcoming Chapter and renew Associate commitments at the annual Dec. 8 IHM celebration.

On Sept. 22, along with Mary DesRoches, Ruth Meiring, Chuck VanVleet and Sister Pat McCluskey, IHM Liaison, we welcomed three

new members: Margaret Clor, Janice Mignano and Mary Jean Schoettle. We began the day with a morning orientation process for the new Associate Council members and shared what being a member of this Council means for each of us and what we most look forward to as new council members. During the afternoon meeting of the Council, Janet Cameron led us in an opening prayer titled "Welcoming New Beginnings." The Associate Council looks forward to our ongoing work in the years ahead!



The September 2023 New Associate Councils meeting

Now exhibiting at the IHM Art Gallery ... *Habits transformed*

For many of today's IHM Sisters, their faith journeys that began in youth have seen them through decades of service and times of unprecedented change. As we mark 178 years since the founding of the IHM Congregation, come share the memories of our sisters' years of formation, ministry and necessary adaptation to better serve the world around them. The exhibit is free and open to the public Monday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday,

Featuring photos and artifacts from the IHM Archives



November 9 through Sunday, January 7. For more information about the exhibit and admission, contact ppoirier@ihmsisters.org.

Join us for the opening reception on Thursday, Nov. 9 from 5:30-7 p.m.

Worthy of Note from the Alphonse Liguori Library ...

My Name Is Lucy Barton

By Elizabeth Strout and reviewed by library staff

Elizabeth Strout's fiction writing is grounded in her belief that people always tell you who they are if you only listen. It is the sound of the storyteller's voice that guides her narratives. In her 2016 novel *My Name Is Lucy Barton*, the protagonist is a writer struggling to make sense of her own scarred family legacy. Her voice displays both urgency and a blend of unreliability and sincerity as she often re-clarifies her comments so as not to be misunderstood. Lucy is a truth-teller.

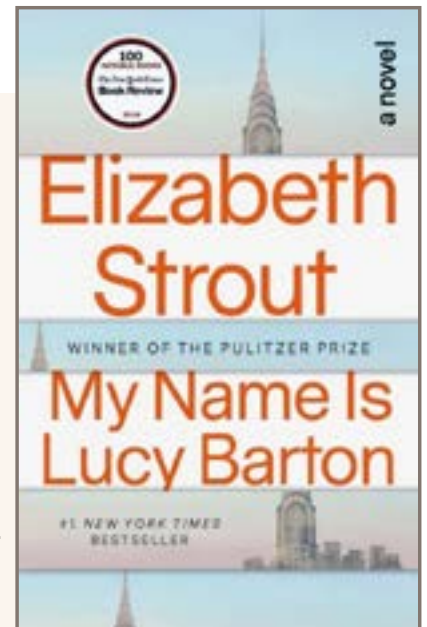
She begins her storytelling from the vantage point of the future. "There was a time, and it was many years ago now when I had to stay in a hospital for almost nine weeks." Alone in the hospital with an undiagnosed illness, Lucy desperately misses her husband and two daughters, aged five and six. Three weeks into her hospital stay, her mother, from whom she has been estranged for years, unexpectedly arrives at her bedside.

For the next five nights, her mother sits in a chair telling Lucy stories about people from Amgash, Illinois, where she raised her family in poverty. Her voice becomes rushed and compressed "as though a pressure of feeling and words and observations had been stuffed inside her for years." At first, Lucy is captivated by this new voice, feels safe and can doze off listening to her mother's stories. At the same time, the stories bring back memories of her childhood in Amgash.

Lucy's recollections of Amgash converge with memories of advice she received when struggling to find her voice as a writer. Years ago, in a creative writing course, Sarah Payne told her

class to go to the page without judgment and reminded them that "we never knew and never would know what it would be like to understand another person fully." Jeremy, her former neighbor, advised her to write "ruthless." Lucy still ponders what that even means.

My Name Is Lucy Barton is a short, haunting novel sparse in expressed sentiment and spacious in insight into the intimacy and nuances of human relationships, particularly that of mother and daughter. With Strout's attention to voice, Kimberly Farr's unabridged reading of the novel (Audiobook by Blackstone Audio) offers an enhanced experience. Additionally, [listening](#) to Strout discuss her novel is both delightful and an opening to the work of this Pulitzer Prize-winning author.



OSP/IHM board meeting

By Mary Ann Penner IHM

As summer turned into autumn, the OSP/IHM Board held their annual meeting at Maxis Spirituality Center in Riverview. The two-day meeting led to camaraderie, input and some future directions. We had feedback from our co-sponsored ministries. We had an update from the [McAllen, Texas Border house](#) staff. They continue with their work on both sides of the border. They appreciate all the donations from the sisters, associates and staff. They are also appreciative of the volunteers who have been coming regularly.

There was a report from the Haiti Committee. The situation in Haiti is dire, with gangs becoming increasingly violent to the citizenry. The committee reported that the best support they can give now is presence in the form of prayerful support, virtual meetings, donations and emails. [The Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus](#) can list all their hardships, but they continue to hope and pray as they continue their ministries. Another co-sponsored ministry is the Healing Racism Committee. They led some workshops and Zoom conferences related to the Doctrine of Discovery, which the Vatican has recently rescinded. This doctrine allowed for the rights of Indigenous peoples to be given to white discoverers, creating a form of second-class citizenship for those who were black and



The Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore, Maryland and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Monroe, Michigan, Immaculata and Scranton, Pennsylvania (OSP/IHM) Board of Directors is made up of the Major Superior, the assistant to the Major Superior, and one member selected at large from the membership of the Oblate Sisters of Providence and the three congregations of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

brown. They also worked with the Provident Hearts Committee on the 175th presentation, where we celebrated women who endured racial injustice, our biases and those of our institutions, as well as the challenges of systemic racism. The Healing Racism Committee is exploring the possibility of a follow-up with Dr. Jeannine Hill Fletcher, our 175th presenter and Dr. Shannen Dee Williams, author of [Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle](#). One other piece of business was to begin planning for a 2025 OSP/IHM gathering in Monroe.

Remembering

[Janet \(Janet Marie\) Provost, IHM: Dec. 23, 1934 – Sept. 12, 2023](#)

[Bernetta Booms, IHM: July 10, 1927- Oct. 4, 2023](#)

[Therese \(James Marie\) Kearney, IHM: May 20, 1927 – Oct. 9, 2023](#)

[Karen Hurley Kuchar, IHM Associate: Jan. 21, 1949 – Oct. 7, 2023](#)

[Beth \(Marie Alma\) Wood, IHM: Nov. 17, 1928 - Oct. 24, 2023](#)

Renowned author and bullying survivor *Jodee Blanco* inspires Marian High School with anti-bullying seminar.

Marian High School hosted a special guest speaker for students, educators and parents this fall. *New York Times* bestselling author and remarkable bullying survivor turned activist Jodee Blanco graced the campus with a three-part bullying prevention seminar inspired by core Catholic values of tolerance, compassion and forgiveness. The seminar, part of Blanco's **INJJA™** (It's NOT Just Joking Around!™) program, emphasized the importance of combating bullying and fostering a culture of kindness within our school community.



The INJJA™ program, which Blanco has taken to numerous Catholic schools nationwide, integrates live presentations, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) follow-up programming and professional development. By addressing bullying head-on and providing tools for prevention, it empowers schools and communities to create safer and more inclusive environments. "My piece of advice is this: tattling hurts and telling helps. Tell if someone is being mean so they get the help and support they need," Blanco told students. "It's about helping them, not revenge."

Blanco applauded Marian for the newly implemented Marian Pledge, a student-led initiative to promote Marian values in the school community. The pledge lays out six core means (Model of Jesus, Acceptance, Relationships, Integrity, Accountability and Nurturing environment) by which the Marian community pledges to represent Marian and the IHM sisters by "upholding a deep respect and love for ourselves and all persons, serving others in the name of Jesus and uplifting the Marian community by striving for justice, belonging, and equity."



From the President

As Marian embarks on a new chapter, [hear from Heather Greig Sofran '96](#) as she shares her vision for Marian's future.

A Singing Life

by Michele Farrell

Sister Maria Theresa (Cecelia Mary) Magrie always knew she would have a life in music. Her mother thought she would be a secular singer, yet Maria Theresa knew it would be sacred music. She is the only child of her Irish mother and her Italian father. Her father played piano and her mother sang in Detroit night spots. Her parents' connections with other musicians enabled them to begin Sister Maria's musical tutoring at an early age.

At high school graduation Sister Maria surprised her parents by telling them she wanted to join the IHM Sisters. After adjusting to the idea, they gave her their blessing. Sister became a choral and choir teacher at every school where she ministered. She could work with any student and seemed to have a flair for those students with whom other teachers would often have trouble. As she became known by her teaching these many diverse students, Maria became known to the wider community. She became known in her community and began receiving invitations to sing at events. She has performed the National Anthem for every Detroit professional sports team.

At the end of Sister Maria's long teaching career, she moved home to the IHM Senior Living Community and found she loved caring for the cats with whom the campus shares a home. This family of ginger tabby cats love her, purring and asking for pets every time she feeds or goes out to spend time with them.

All who live and work in the IHM Senior Living Community have been blessed to experience Sister Maria's still-powerful soprano. On St. Patrick's Day, we heard a beautiful rendition of "Danny Boy." When a new, non-english speaking Italian, resident arrived, Maria greeted her with "Ava Maria" in her native Italian. Sister takes requests and recently she granted my request for a Michael Joncas classic, "Be Not Afraid." The song rang out beautifully and was performed acapella without rehearsal. When she can, Sister Maria visits staff offices and residents' rooms to share her gifts.



Sister Maria with hockey icon Gordie Howe



Sister Maria Theresa was not able to attend the ceremony in April so they recently delivered the award to her at the Motherhouse.

Sister Maria Theresa received the *2023 Trinity Health Oakland Award* for exceptional service.

She volunteered in spiritual care for many years playing the piano and organ for services. Grace Seroka shared, "Sister Maria was and still is loved by so many patients, volunteers and staff. She always went above and beyond."

Rollover

Your IRA for Good

YOU CAN
DIRECT UP TO
\$100,000

70½
OR OLDER

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even reach a higher tax bracket. Rolling over part of your IRA's "required minimum distribution" or "RMD" to the IHM Sisters can help reduce your tax bill while supporting our mission.

Your IRA charitable rollover gift can benefit both you and our ministry and retirement needs. Contact your IRA administrator to get started with your gift. Please also inform us of your plans so that we use your gift for the causes that mean the most to you.

Many blessings to you and your family during this season of giving thanks.

Gratefully,

Marilyn S. Meadows
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A living God in the migratory reality/ Un Dios Vivo en la Realidad Migratoria

María Antonia Aranda Díaz, IHM

It is a difficult task accompanying people who have decided to abandon their home, work, city and country and maintain their fundamental human rights. In Juarez, we live the unfair reality of migration and displacement. The migration decision is not a crime, but it can become one. Humans are murdered, kidnapped and detained for longer than the immigration laws indicate, both in the United States and Mexico.

The Bible speaks of a God who defends the cause of the orphan and the widow and shows his love for the stranger, providing them with clothing and food (Dt. 10, 17-19). In our society, especially in the ministry in Ciudad Juarez, we have tried to offer dignified and loving accompaniment for those who hope to cross or discern staying in Mexico to start a different life. We see people from Juárez who rent their houses, which are not worthy for anyone, to migrants at high cost. They rent to them without contract and ask them to vacate the house immediately and violently at a moment's notice. Many houses are infested with bedbugs, ticks and other pests. The cost of utilities is sometimes prohibitive due to poor electrical installation, water leaks, damaged roofs and air conditioners that do not work. Men and women turn to sexual prostitution; others are trapped by organized crime. Some are kidnapped, waiting for their relatives to pay the \$12,000 ransom with the possibility of being killed.

We see children and adults with insect bites who do not want to go to school or work. These people become desperate, stop working and their thoughts again turn to finding a way to cross

[continued](#)

Es una tarea difícil acompañar a las personas que han decidido abandonar su hogar, trabajo, ciudad y país y mantener en el proceso sus derechos humanos fundamentales. En Juárez vivimos la injusta realidad de la migración y el desplazamiento. La decisión de migrar no es un delito, pero puede llegar a serlo. Los migrantes son asesinados, secuestrados y detenidos por más tiempo del que indican las leyes de inmigración, tanto en Estados Unidos como en México.



La Biblia habla de un Dios que defiende la causa del huérfano y de la viuda y muestra su amor al extranjero, proporcionándoles vestido y alimento (Dt. 10, 17-19). En nuestra sociedad, especialmente en el ministerio en

Ciudad Juárez, hemos tratado de ofrecer un acompañamiento digno y amoroso a quienes esperan cruzar o discernir quedarse en México para iniciar una vida diferente. Vemos juarenses que alquilan sus casas, que no son dignas para nadie, a migrantes a un alto costo. Les alquilan sin contrato y les piden que abandonen la casa en cualquier momento, de forma inmediata y violenta. Muchas casas están infestadas de chinches, garrapatas y otras plagas. El costo de los servicios públicos es a veces prohibitivo debido a malas instalaciones eléctricas, filtraciones de agua, techos dañados y aires acondicionados que no funcionan. Hombres y mujeres recurren a la prostitución sexual, otros quedan atrapados por el crimen organizado. Algunos son secuestrados, esperando que sus familiares paguen el rescate de \$12,000 dólares con la posibilidad de ser asesinados.

Students train with Meta Peace Team



Seventeen Detroit Cristo Rey (DCR) students received certificates after completing an 8-hour violence de-escalation skills training facilitated by the Meta Peace Team (MPT) on Saturday, September 30. Students from all grade levels and DCR faculty and staff were represented. The students engaged in team-building exercises and role plays, practiced nonviolent communication skills, and discussed Kingian principles of nonviolence in small groups. Once these students are 18 and out of school, they will be eligible to serve on domestic peace teams with MPT. In the meantime, they are using the skills they learned at the training to serve as models of peace at Detroit Cristo Rey. DCR's commitment to Gospel peacemaking extended into the next week when a prayer service and peace walk was held on Tuesday, Oct. 2, International Day of Nonviolence. After offering a reflection on our call to be peacemakers, Sister Elizabeth Walters, IHM, introduced keynote speaker and peace educator Ms. Barbara Jones, who shared the story of her son, Conte, a victim of gun violence. Ms. Jones challenged the DCR community to work for a world where children are safe from violence. Local musician Joe Reilly provided music for the service that was both reflective and spirited. Afterward, a group of DCR students, faculty, and staff held a short peace walk around the neighborhood and then joined our IHM guests around DCR's peace pole, where the Prayer of St. Francis was read.



As a follow-up to the training and prayer service, DCR has instituted a weekly prayer around the peace pole each Friday. Since its inception, DCR has committed to peacemaking as a constitutive part of the IHM-Basilian mission. During this troubling time of violence on every front, DCR equips students to walk the path of peace.



Then & Now

Sister Roberta Richmond

College was not an option. She attended classes at New York Foundling Hospital to become a “Baby Nurse.” That was when her mother told her she had been adopted from the same hospital where her parents had adopted her.



While “working out her vocation,” she was certified as an infant care technician and worked as a nanny. She applied to Scranton IHMs, but questions about her adoption made them refer her to the Monroe Congregation, where pontifical status made the issue moot.

Being “on her own” for a couple of years made transitioning to religious life comfortable. Her uncle, a priest, attended her reception ceremony. Her parents visited annually until home visits were allowed. Her first mission was to All Saints Catholic in Detroit. The community was friendly and approachable. She was sent to a larger convent and school, St. Catherine of Siena. Here, she was mentored by Kate Siedenwand from St. Mary of Redford. She became a directing teacher for most of her teaching career, working with primary grades. Roberta’s next assignment was at St. Raymond of Pennafort from 1966-71. She began work in religious education at St. Ives, Southfield. Two years of renewal at the Visitation House of Prayer followed this.

Roberta joined the Southwest province. She, Rose Huelsman, IHM, and Jean Ann Campana, IHM, worked with rural Tennessee parishioners to bring the spirit of Vatican II in outreach to the poor.

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Sister Diane (Ancilla) McCormack

Diane McCormack was born Sept. 25, 1939, to Olive LaJeunesse and Roger McCormack in Lauriam, Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Her younger brother Gary was born three years later. In 1941 her dad took a job with the federal government and the family moved to Detroit; her mom worked at Ford Motor Company. Diane went to public schools and attended Roseville High School, where she was a Student Council Representative, President of the Future Teacher’s Club, a choir member and a varsity cheerleader. On a field trip with her parish teen group, Diane met the IHMs Diane was admitted as an undergraduate to Wayne State University. Instead of attending Wayne State on Sept. 9, 1957, she joined the IHMs. Her parents were stunned, yet they supported her. A blue habit and the opportunity to teach were not enough to keep her in the convent. She left in 1958 and taught in the Warren schools. She had a boyfriend and when he asked her to marry him, she knew she couldn’t. She felt the call to religious life, so she returned to the IHM Congregation June 16, 1963 and made her final profession on May 9, 1970. Between 1963 and 1980, Sister McCormack served as Assistant Principal and then Co-Principal with Joan Charnley at Marian High. Her fondest memories are her years at St. Francis de Sales and St. Mary of Redford. She loved the students and was a class moderator each year.

She earned a degree in theology from Catholic Theological Union. While working on her thesis, Diane was elected a chapter delegate and vice president of the community.



continued

MARYGROVE MINUTE

The Marygrove Alumni Association is pleased to report that 60 Marygrove alumni and friends enjoyed a wonderful day of fellowship, remembrance, luncheon and tours on a lovely September Saturday. With the support of many volunteers, board members and the Marygrove Conservancy, the 2023 Marygrove College Reunion was successful. Sister Jane Herb, President of IHM Sisters, prepared a thoughtful reflection on the history of Sister Theresa Maxis, which she graciously shares with us [here](#). Tom Lewand, Marygrove Conservancy CEO, enthusiastically updated us on the educational miracle of the P-20 program on campus, which continues and deepens the legacy of our beloved college. Marygrove President Emerita Glenda Price offered a beautiful luncheon blessing that voices our feelings since the College closed.



Jubilee class of 1974

God, this organization is perpetually on the road to the future: Reorganizing, reinventing, revising, restructuring. And all this change results in an endless string of bruises, dislocations, cuts, strains, and breaks. No matter how we do it or how necessary it is, every change hurts someone. Yet these changes move us into the future.

There is so much pain in this world. So much loss of health, energy, love, opportunity, security, happiness, and due reward. These wounds are very real. So many of us are working wounded every day; it is a miracle that we accomplish so much. Touch us, Father, console us. Heal us. I know that you love each of us.

The loss we cannot control is bad enough, but I hate it when we do it to ourselves. We try to function as a family, but when family members hurt each other, it is worse than if we did not care. Our caring for each other binds us together, but grief is all the more intense when feelings are hurt and relationships are severed. God, we need your healing. Have mercy on all our hurts and fears, including the pain we have inflicted on ourselves. Oh, God, heal these wounds.

And now, bless us, Oh Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty through Christ our Lord. Amen

President Elizabeth Burns '72 toasted the awesome Jubilee Class of 1973. We enjoyed the dramatic storytelling of Debra Sims '73, which expanded on the life of Sister Theresa Maxis and shared her own class memories. Enjoy this special performance [here](#). One of the day's highlights was the attendance of Nancy Rouen Coles '54 and her husband, Tom. Nancy was class president and one of four sisters in her family to attend Marygrove between 1941 and 1954. It was a pleasure to welcome her back to Marygrove almost 70 years after graduation!



Nancy Rouen Coles '54 and her husband, Tom.

Early Education Center Principal Celina Byrd and Starfish Services representative Peggy Kaczmarek led the tour of the award-winning new building on campus. Lisa Williams, Principal of The School at Marygrove, the high school in the remodeled halls of Liberal Arts, led two tours and enlightened us about current student life. We thank these educators for taking the time to share their students' successes. More photos from the day can be found on the [Marygrove Alumni & Friends Facebook page](#).

Finally, an encouraging message from Sister Jane Herb's reflection:

As graduates of Marygrove College, while the college that you knew no longer exists, a new entity with endless possibilities exists that carries forth in a new way what you experienced. What is Theresa's message to you today? Be risk-takers and support those who dare to envision possibilities. Theresa encourages all of us to persevere in the face of obstacles. While, like Theresa, we are faced with letting go, there is pain, but there are also possibilities. Perhaps today, in this space named after Theresa Maxis, we can echo the words of the Psalmist that took root in Theresa's life – 'Let your hearts be bold!'

We are so grateful to have had this beautiful place to return to. We welcome your questions or comments. Visit www.marygroveconservancy.org and click on Stay Involved: Alumni.



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