



# IHM SISTERS E-NEWS

March 2025



## ***Remembering a 2025 Jubilee pilgrimage*** ***by Pat McCluskey, IHM***

The celebration of the 2025 Jubilee year, intended to bring renewal and rebirth to the Church, includes an invitation of pilgrimage to Rome or a designated church sanctuary within one's diocese. Pope Francis chose the Jubilee motto, "Pilgrims of Hope."

My time volunteering in McAllen, Texas, at the OSP/IHM house in January became my Jubilee pilgrimage. The McAllen community has a mission to be a loving presence in the world and its focus is to assist migrants coming to the U.S. The sanctuaries I visited were not all typical churches. They included the Catholic Charities Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen and the Casa del Migrante Reynosa in Mexico, as well as the Our Lady of Guadalupe Food Pantry, where volunteers prepare and distribute meal packages to some 300-400 food-insecure people. I witnessed the sense of community they had formed during their work together.

During my time there, I was deeply touched and experienced many emotions, including wonder, gratitude, sadness, distress, anger and hope. How could I not be affected by children who responded enthusiastically to the simplest creative activities and gave hugs on arrival and departure?



*IHM Sisters Pat McCluskey and Carmen Armenta Lara*

*Remembering continued . . .*

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Remembering continued . . .

Or when I saw the gratitude of a young man celebrating his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when we presented him with a jacket? How can one not feel the tremendous sadness of the migrants in Reynosa who had completed all the required work on the Customs Border Patrol app, the one legal protocol to enter the USA, and their date to meet with Immigration was scheduled for the very week when the whole system was terminated and the border closed?

Yet, to my amazement, I listened in wonder as those same migrants were able to sing “Alabare al Señor” (I will praise God) and a Haitian family sang in Creole, “How Great Thou Art.” The migrants’ journey as Pilgrims of Hope is supported by the OSP/IHM house community and many other dedicated religious in the area. In light of the current reality, they are even now discerning next steps to continue work with migrants.

My Jubilee pilgrimage will continue as I seek ways here in Michigan to be a Pilgrim of Hope in solidarity with them.

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## Empowering minds: Marian students connect with author Kate Moore

Our AP Language and Women in Literature students had the incredible opportunity to speak with author Kate Moore about her novel, *The Woman They Could Not Silence*, on Feb. 11.

This powerful true story follows a woman in 1860s America who was declared “insane” by her husband simply for thinking and questioning societal norms. The book resonated so deeply with our students that they reached out to the author in December—and to everyone’s delight, she responded with gratitude and offered to host a virtual meet-and-greet from England!

During the Zoom session, students asked Ms. Moore about her research process, the impact of her book, and the lessons to take from this inspiring story. Huge thanks to AP English teacher Dawn Zink for organizing this incredible experience!





## Worthy of Note from the Alphonsus Liguori Library ...

### *If the Creek Don't Rise*

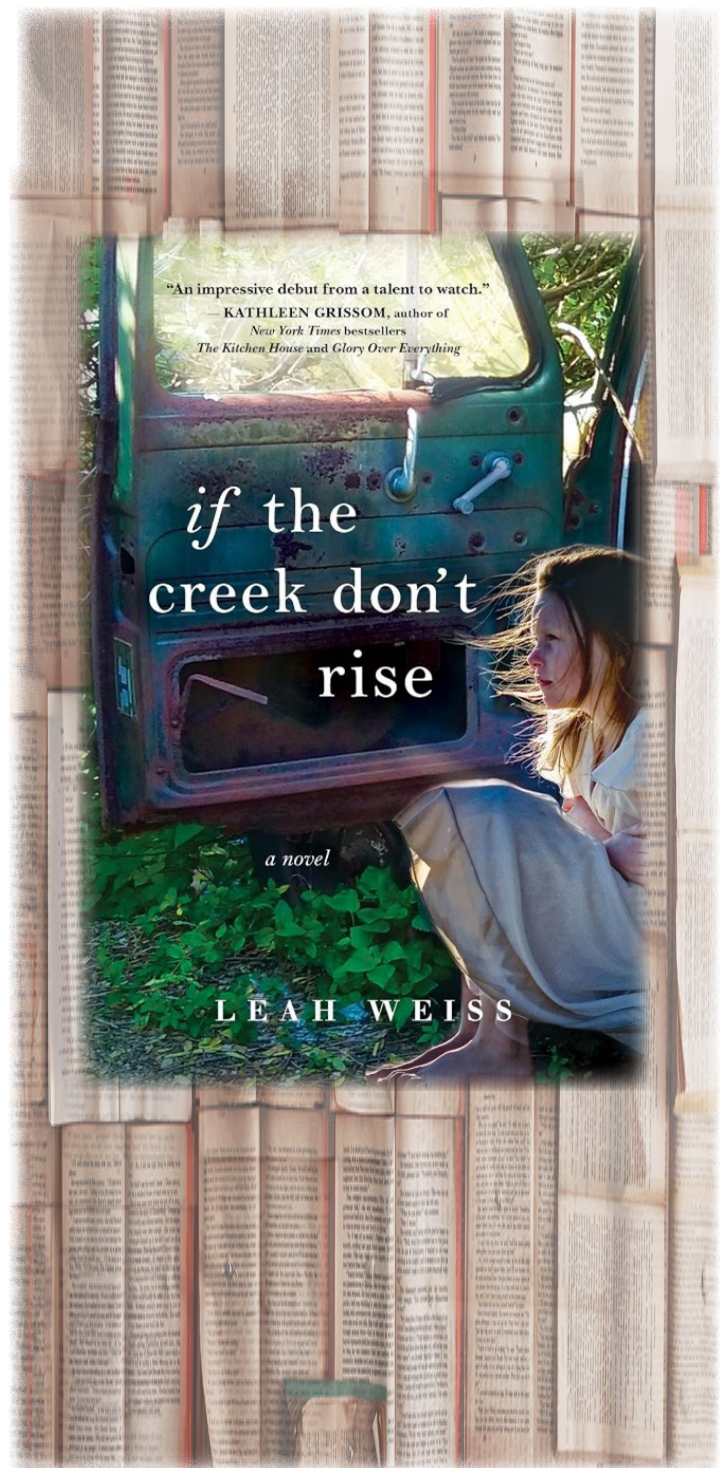
By Leah Weiss and reviewed by library staff

From the opening sentence, danger and desperation share the narrative arc in Leah Weiss' 2017 debut novel, *If the Creek Don't Rise*. "I struggle to my feet, straighten my back, lift my chin, then he hits me again." Only 15 days into her marriage, Sadie Blue realizes that baby or no baby, she should have listened to folks who warned her; she should never have married Roy Tupkin.

In 1970s Baines Creek, a small remote town in the Appalachian mountains of North Carolina, seventeen-year-old Sadie is not the first nor the last woman to face a dead-end future at the mercy of a dangerous drunk. Life here is more than difficult. Life is a constant struggle. Violence is prevalent, moonshine consumed to excess and employment and education are equally uncommon.

Weiss has created a well-crafted, character-driven novel that draws on the perspectives of Sadie and nine other characters to delve deeply into a story revolving around the domestic abuse of a pregnant woman, the arrival of a new schoolteacher and the disappearance of a local young woman. Each chapter focuses on one of the characters - Sadie's grandmother Gladys Hicks, neighbor Marris Jones, Preacher Eli Perkins and his sanctimonious sister Prudence. Kate Shaw, the newly arrived teacher from down in the valley encourages Sadie there's a life for her that doesn't involve Roy, Tattler Swann, "crazy" Birdie Rocas who knows the healing power of plants and the secrets of the mountain, Roy's "shadow" Billy Barnhill and even Roy himself. Each character speaks in the first-person present tense, offering immediacy to their private point of view and backstory.

With a powerful sense of place and fully formed characters – some endearing - others mean and unlikeable - Weiss weaves a tapestry of interconnectedness including the hidden ways people help or hurt each other in this Appalachian town.



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## **2025 Martin Luther King Days of prayer and service**

**By the MLK Planning Committee:**

***Sisters Joan Kusak, Ellen Rinke, Elizabeth Walters, Anne Wisda and COO Monica McGowan***



The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was not just a prominent social activist and renowned Baptist minister, he was also a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change. From the mid-1950s until his tragic assassination in 1968, Dr. King championed the American civil rights movement with unwavering faith and relentless determination. He was a man of profound prayer, deep reflection and decisive action who revered every individual's dignity and human rights. Dr. King envisioned a beloved community where compassion and love were the cornerstones of society. Through his powerful speeches and

peaceful protests, he sought equality and justice for African Americans, all those living in poverty and all victims of injustice. His words resonated deeply, stirring the national consciousness and inspiring countless individuals to join the struggle for a better world.

Across the United States, Dr. King is remembered and celebrated each January. His legacy continues to influence and inspire individuals and communities. This year, we dedicated Jan. 20 to Feb. 7, 2025, to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and to answer our call to pray and serve with all the love in our hearts. Retired IHM Sisters, staff, volunteers and friends came together to sponsor three impactful MLK projects for the wider community:

### **Hosting a prayer service and educational gathering**

We prayed for unity and justice in our community, our nation and the world. We learned about Dr. King and his vision of the beloved community, born of prayer, courage, love and nonviolence. Our distinguished speaker for this event, Lorie Bronson, is the founder and coordinator of "In the Spirit of Giving," an outreach program of Catholic Churches for Monroe County residents needing furniture and household items. Ms. Bronson is also a leader in uniting faith-based social service efforts in Monroe to ensure the availability of services and quality assistance. Ms. Bronson delivered an inspiring presentation on Dr. King's legacy. Her message and unwavering commitment to prayer and service offered attendees fresh and valuable insights into Dr. King's teachings. She emphasized our collective responsibility to champion racial and economic justice and drive meaningful community change.

### **Helping to ensure access to nutritious food**

Dr. King recognized that true equality encompassed civil rights and economic justice, including eradicating hunger and poverty. He believed that access to adequate food was a fundamental human right and an essential component of social justice.

Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of ending hunger and poverty, we and many others brought his vision to life at Oaks of Righteousness, a Monroe shelter. Working closely with the shelter, we recruited

***MLK continued . . .***



dedicated volunteer meal leaders and scheduled meal teams at the center. From Jan. 20-26, our meal teams organized and facilitated meal preparation and service. Twenty-seven volunteers were part of the meal teams and they prepared and delivered over 350 meals. Every person or family who came hungry enjoyed a delicious and nutritious meal prepared by our compassionate teams.

### **Providing Selah Center residents with needed items**

We collected donated items to the Selah Center of Hope. Selah provides housing for women with an unexpected pregnancy. Selah's mission is to create a safe compassionate environment so mothers can focus on their health and the health of their babies. With physical needs and services which empower women on their journeys toward independence. Selah also helps with educational guidance, jobs and childcare. We contacted Selah to learn needed items and set up a schedule for collection and delivery.

Sponsoring and participating in these three projects serves these purposes:

**Promoting equality:** These projects promoted Dr. King's vision of a more equitable society by raising awareness about ongoing issues related to racial inequality and encouraging community engagement.

**Community engagement:** These projects fostered community engagement and unity by bringing local people together to reflect on Dr. King's message, assist at local human service centers, and participate in activities that promote social justice.

**Inspiring action:** These projects inspired individuals to take action in their own communities, whether through volunteering, advocating for policy changes or supporting local initiatives that align with Dr. King's principles. Dr. King emphasized the need to confront injustice wherever it existed and he promoted love and compassion as powerful tools to overcome hatred and division.

**Dr. King's dream is alive in our work.**

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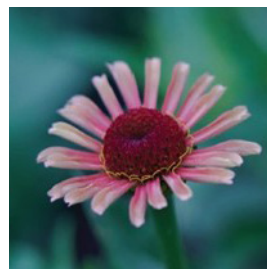
## **In the art gallery**

### **Scott Gordon's Photography**

#### ***A Journey of Resilience and Beauty***

Experience a breathtaking collection of flowers, nature and wildlife captured through Scott Gordon's lens following a life-altering stroke in 2021. His creativity, passion and precision come to life in every photograph. Each image Scott chose for this exhibit tells a story of courage, tenacity and perseverance. Through his work, witness the resilience, hope and love that fuel his artistic journey. The exhibit runs from March 10 through April 11.

*The exhibit is free and open to the public, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. For more information about the exhibit and admission, contact [mmartyres@ihmsisters.org](mailto:mmartyres@ihmsisters.org)*



## From the Development office ...

We had a great time at the Thank-a-thon kickoff party. Throughout February, sisters and associates connected with randomly selected benefactors by phone or greeting card and shared heartfelt appreciation for their friendship and generosity.



## Save the date!

The 29<sup>th</sup> Royal Blue Classic will be held on Monday, June 16, at Fox Hills Golf and Banquet Center in Plymouth, Michigan. Last year, \$95,208 was raised in support of IHM ministries. We are deeply grateful to every friend, sponsor, volunteer, golfer and dinner guest who contributed to its success. Despite the heat, the enthusiasm and smiles from everyone made the day truly memorable.



Some of the exciting offerings at the Royal Blue Classic include:

- A day of fun with friends and sisters
- Award-winning golf course
- Longest putt, closet to the pin and straightest drive skill holes
- PLINKO game hole
- Continental breakfast, grilled lunch and dinner
- 18-hole and 9-hole packages available for women's, men's and mixed teams
- Exciting raffles



Join us for a fun-filled day with friends and sisters. Sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available. For more information, contact the Development office at 734.240.9860 or [development@ihmsisters.org](mailto:development@ihmsisters.org).

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## From the archives ... a look back

### *What made them so "famous?"*

It was a simple statement of fact that caught our eye. It was in the beginning paragraph of Sister Ellen Mary Green's remembering, "This was the famous class of 1932." Next, we found the photo below and began to look up names. They all entered the community in 1932.

They share a couple of twists that could qualify them for distinction. They were among 70 young women who entered in 1932 and they were among the 32 who remained to become novices. So, 32 in '32. They also were in the first class entering the new Motherhouse.

The Class of 1932 held another sad distinction: the deaths of two members of the class just days before their Diamond Jubilee. Sisters Helene Barry and Anne Dumas were returning home from Ishpeming on July 18, 1993, when their car hit a tree, and the sisters were killed. Eleanor Fitzgibbons, IHM wrote this poem entitled *A Double Burial* in the Convent Cemetery.



*This photo was likely taken in 1987 or 1988. Here are (back row l-to-r): Helene (Alphonsine) Barry (1915-1993), Margaret (Anacletus) Cutcher (1915-2002), Cleora Villaire (1912-1997), Margaret (Malachy) Sullivan (1916-2018) and Ellen Mary Green (1916-2005). Front (l-to-r): Angelique Rose (1915-1992) and Gabrieline Wagener (1914-2006).*

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### Double Burial

Had I been standing  
in the front row  
facing only the stark finality  
of your sudden, violent deaths  
I would not, could not  
have been aware  
of a subtle sweetness—

The summer air fragrant  
with clover blossoms  
our feet had crushed.

I would have missed utterly  
what the flowers were telling me!

Had I been standing up front  
where I could see your white caskets  
shining in the sun

I would have missed  
the invisible airplanes  
crossing each other's path  
and leaving in their white wake

Two long intersecting beams  
on the sapphire sky —  
A Saint Andrew's Cross  
pointed toward your open graves.

How it named the Mystery  
and gentled the pain —

This sign of Victory  
from you, my sisters,  
Safe home in the arms  
of our loving God.

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This article was first published in the Winter 2021 issue of the IHM Archives newsletter, *Today and Yesterday*. All issues of the newsletter can be accessed [here](#).





**Sister Jannita Complo**

When she was four, Sister Jannita Complo saw IHM Sisters in their blue habits; she misidentified them as the Blessed Mother. Her mother corrected her and told her they were sisters who worked for God. "I want to work for God, too, Mommy." She grew up in Monroe and attended St. Mary Academy, where she excelled in drama. During her senior year of high school, she told Sister Marie Chantal she would not attend college but would become an IHM. Sister replied, "you can't just walk right in, you need a sponsor. Do you have a particular sister as your sponsor? I expected you to be on a trapeze in a circus."

Undeterred, Sister Jannita found a sponsor and entered the convent in August 1953. She now was going to work for God. During her studies

in formation, Sister Mary Patrick, Dean of Studies, called her into her office. Sister Jannita thought she had done something wrong.

"Sister Complo," Sister Mary Patrick began, "Every time you go by my office, I feel a breeze . . . so I call you Sister Windmill!" When the time came to receive her religious name, she was given her own, Jannita. She was so pleased that she jumped up and hugged Mother Teresa McGivney.

Sister Jannita taught first grade at St. Thomas Aquinas (Detroit) and St. John (Monroe) for nine years and then was assigned to Marygrove College. She earned her doctorate in curriculum development from Wayne State University. While writing her doctoral dissertation, she created Dramakinetics and visited various school children to note what movements were successful abroad.

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**Sister Joan Chicoine**

Joan was born in Barton, Vermont and spent her early years in Lebanon, where the family moved due to her father's job. She attended grade school in Sidon, Lebanon, in a one-room schoolhouse overlooking a refugee camp. Seeing the realities of extreme poverty instilled in Joan a lasting desire to help people.

In Sidon and later during high school in Beirut, Joan experienced the Muslim call to prayer, sung from minarets five times a day. Each time, thousands of people stopped and began to pray. "Although in a different language and culture, the call invited me to prayer too. It invited me into a deeper oneness with God," says Joan. After high school, Joan attended the University of Vermont in Burlington, earning a B.A. in Music Education. For several years, Joan taught in a New York state public school. "It was very fulfilling to help students

experience music and its ability to transcend the everyday and touch into the divine." Joan attended Boston University, College of Fine Arts, earning an M.A. in Music with a major in Voice. She was later awarded a singing fellowship from the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts. For several years, Joan soloed as a vocalist with chamber groups, choral groups and small orchestras and performed as a recitalist in Boston and New York. Being a professional musician was very challenging, says Joan, but also very fulfilling. "Music, like all the arts, is a powerful place of encounter with the divine, a place of hope and new life—not only for those who create music but also for all who experience it."

After her performing career, Joan attended Boston College, where she earned an M.A. in Counseling Psychology and opened a private practice for artists of all kinds. She also trained in analytical psychology. In Jungian ideas about the conscious and unconscious mind, the inner and outer worlds, and the world of symbols and dreams.

[\*continued...\*](#)



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# A CHAPEL CONCERT

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025 AT 3:00 PM

FEATURING MONROE HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL GROUPS:

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL GENERATIONS OF SOUND

SOLOISTS FROM MHS BAND, CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA PROGRAMS

The concert is free and open to the public. A free-will offering will be collected for the benefit of the performers and the IHM Chapel Concert Series.

**IHM Motherhouse Chapel**  
**610 W. Elm Ave., Monroe, MI**

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## *Remembering*



Noreen Tenbusch, IHM  
Sept. 29, 1933 - Jan. 6, 2025



Jane A. Hier-Rose IHM Associate  
Jan. 13 1936 - Feb. 17, 2025



Marietta Murphy, IHM  
Nov. 11, 1924 - Jan. 21, 2025

## Marygrove Minute

Winter greetings as we look ahead from these snowy times to the start of spring in just three weeks! Hopefully, your winter has been a time of reflection and some rest amid your many responsibilities and obligations.

Plenty of 21<sup>st</sup> century education is happening at every level on the Marygrove Conservancy campus. Madame Cadillac is undergoing significant upgrading and renovation. Never fear, we will still be able to access space for the upcoming **All-Alumni Reunion set for Saturday, Sept. 13**. Please mark your calendars now and begin to spread the word!



Acclaimed novelist Percival Everett, winner of the 2024 National Book Award for Fiction, will be the 36<sup>th</sup> CAALS guest author. He will deliver the Bauder Lecture in the Marygrove Theatre at 8 p.m. on April 25, 2025. The winner of over a dozen major awards, Everett is the author of 24 novels, including *Erasure*, the basis for the award-winning film "American Fiction." His most recent novel, *James*, a New York Times bestseller, reinterprets Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from the perspective of the enslaved character Jim. The Chicago Tribune has called him "Our current great American novelist." This event remains free thanks to many wonderful grants, the hard work of Dr. Frank Rashid, his team and your donations. Please visit [here](#) for more information. Hope to see you there!

Finally, a big shoutout and hearty happy birthday to Marygrove Alum Ann Marie Barrett Brady, who turns 102 on March 13. Her daughter Maureen reports Ann still fondly remembers her college years, friends and professors. She taught in Detroit schools for eight years and then raised her four children with her husband, John, of 52 years. The IHM Archives sent her a printed copy of her 1945 Yearbook. Congratulations!

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions to Liz Poliuto Loria, '70; Communications Chair.

**Happy spring!**



IHM sisters

Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

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Phone: 734-241-3660

[ihmsisters.org](https://ihmsisters.org)

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