

IHM SISTERS

# E-NEWS

JULY 2025

## **St. Mary Academy plans unveiled to enthusiastic crowd** **By Deborah Saul, Archives**

Even sweltering temperatures couldn't dampen the overwhelming response to an update on future plans for the St. Mary Academy building: Excitement.

Developer Keith Masserant held a briefing June 29 on the lawn near the front entrance to the Academy. His team set up a white tent with approximately 100 chairs, which quickly filled up with people. Dozens more stood behind. The tent was packed with Academy alumni as well as residents who live in the Monroe neighborhood.

Sister Maxine Kollasch welcomed the crowd and offered a prayer. She mentioned that this year is the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the IHM Sisters, meaning next year will be the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the first St. Mary Academy.

The Sisters have been hoping and praying for a new future for the grand building.

Also speaking were Mark Cochran, Monroe's assistant city manager and economic and community development director, as well as Patsy Masserant, Keith's sister, 1984 Academy alum and marketing director for the project. Marilyn Meadows, IHM Development Director, organized the day, which coincided with the one-year anniversary of the signing of the agreement to purchase the 260,000-square-foot building. Keith's company is KM Cornerstone.

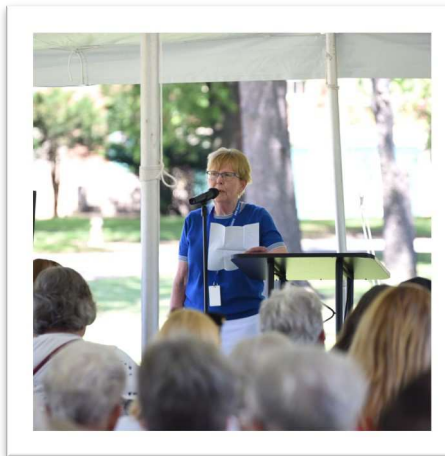
Keith went down a list of topics he knew would be top-of-mind for anyone attending:

*Continued ...*

- ◆ The marble staircase will be preserved and eventually owned by the Alumni Association.
- ◆ Chapel to be restored.
- ◆ Auditorium restored for entertainment, the arts, meetings, movie nights and community events.
- ◆ Of the building's six ballrooms, three will be retained and remodeled for weddings, conferences and other events.
- ◆ The campus will remain open for walkers and visitors. Green space will continue to be park-like, although grass might be cut in a different configuration.
- ◆ There will be 24-hour security.

Keith said the Sisters were "robust" in their building standards, putting up a building that could last 500 years. "They knew it was for the future."

Keith himself attended the Hall of the Divine Child and was a member of the last all-boys graduating class – the 1988 class – at Monroe Catholic Central. He said that when he was approached by his HDC principal, Lenore Pochelski, IHM, and she remembered him, it brought him to tears.



*Sister Maxine Kollasch, IHM President  
Photos courtesy of the City of Monroe*



*Keith Masserant and Mark Cochran  
Photos courtesy of the City of Monroe*

Keith said it is the intention of the team to have the feasibility study done by late summer or fall with physical work to begin in the spring or summer of next year. In answer to questions from the audience, these topics were brought up:

- ◆ Spaces will be included for restaurants, businesses, arts programs and, possibly, an extension of the YMCA programs. These would be on the first two floors. About 100 apartments will be on the top three floors. It will be geared to all ages.
- ◆ The city has received funding from the state to do a market analysis and plan regarding housing needs in Monroe for things such as apartment sizes and rental costs.
- ◆ How to make the building handicap-accessible was the team's first challenge.
- ◆ The team is confident that both parking and traffic issues will be manageable.

He added that he promised the Sisters that he would protect four maple trees in the courtyard, green energy and vegetation.

Every idea mentioned by Keith, Mark or Patsy brought appreciative responses. "I didn't hesitate because I knew I could lead this, but it's going to take a village," Keith said. "Seeing this crowd, I know we're doing the right thing."

### Stay informed!

Follow updates and get involved through the [Friends of St. Mary Facebook](#) group. There, you'll find ways to sign up for committees and stay informed about future tour opportunities as they are scheduled.

## Then & Now

### Sister Lois Jackson



I moved from Detroit to Dearborn with my family in second grade and attended Sacred Heart School. Between my junior and senior years in high school, I spent two weeks at Grailville Center for lay spirituality and action in Ohio, experiencing community

living in the spirit of the early Church. It was the first time I realized we are the church.

After this experience, my religious calling came to fruition. Although my parents were sad to see the oldest of their three daughters leaving home, they supported my decision to join the IHMs right out of high school. I embraced my postulancy as an "adventure." I was anxious to go on a mission but got the opportunity a year earlier than my classmates. I felt special because of this.

[Continued ...](#)

### Sister Janet Hill



Becoming a Catholic and an IHM Sister are precious gifts. My ministerial experiences have been rooted in serving the poor and collaborating with organizations focused on peace and justice. My life and my sense of Charism and mission have been unfolding. I began with a grand illusion, a romantic notion of religious life. Yet, I felt something was incomplete in the Church. I rebelled. Thanks be to God, Vatican II, and my experience in my Newport, Michigan mission with Sister Ferdinand, I learned that "traditional practices" were not as important as people. This changed me and showed me I can make a difference by recognizing the value of each person based on who they are: God's child.

One of my most memorable experiences in the Liberating Mission was ministering on the Island of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

[Continued ...](#)

# The Art of Ballet Costuming: A Celebration of Design and Dance

Join us for a special celebration of the *River Raisin Ballet Company* and the stunning artistry that brings its performances to life. This costume exhibit pays tribute to the extraordinary vision and skill of Dyanne Morehouse, whose decades of costume design have shaped the company's aesthetic and elevated its storytelling on stage.



**Opening reception: Monday, July 21 from 6 - 7:30 p.m.**



## A Civil rights journey

By Margaret Chapman, IHM, Marianne Gaynor, IHM, and Jane Herb, IHM

During our time in leadership, the *LCWR Spirit Call Within a Call*, which invited us to engage in the critical work of recognizing and dismantling racism, captured our attention.

Motivated by that call, we undertook a civil rights journey from Selma to Montgomery as part of our sabbatical. Our pilgrimage began in Money, Mississippi, at the site of the grocery store where Emmett Till was accused of whistling at Carolyn Bryant. We concluded our immersion experience at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. Each day, we reflected on the places we visited and their profound impact on us.

During a walking tour in Selma, we met Omar, Columbus, Amy and Ann Catherine (AC)—local residents who shared their lived experience of Selma today. Standing on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, we were transported to March 7, 1965—Bloody Sunday—when peaceful demonstrators marching for voting rights were brutally attacked by Alabama law enforcement. They returned two days later on what came to be known as Turnaround Tuesday and were again turned back. Finally, on March 21, under federal protection ordered by President Johnson, the march to Montgomery resumed, joined by hundreds from across the nation. AC, an artist and owner of the Five and Dime Restaurant, shared one of her paintings of the Edmund Pettus Bridge and the Alabama River. She depicted the river as calm,

explaining that calm waters symbolize the possibility of unity and change — an aspiration we share.



Driving the Gee's Bend Heritage Trail and visiting the Freedom Quilting Bee Legacy Museum offered us a new lens—one shaped by the hands of women who stitched history into fabric. The quilters of Gee's Bend, descendants of enslaved people, created quilts from old clothing, preserving what Mary Lee

Bendolph called the "love and spirit" in worn cloth. Their art, discovered by an Episcopal minister, became a voice of the civil rights movement, grounded in faith, song and sisterhood.

At the Rosa Parks Museum, we were reminded that Rosa's quiet defiance—her simple "yes" to standing her ground—ignited a 381-day bus boycott. Women walked to work. Carpools were organized. Interracial partnerships flourished. We were left to ask:

**What simple acts might we take?**

**What are we willing to sacrifice?**

**Do we have the courage?**



Words fail to capture the profound impact of the Legacy Museum, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park. These sites, brought to life by Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative, trace the arc from slavery through racial terror, segregation and mass incarceration. Through film, sculpture and testimony, we met the pain and resilience of those affected by injustice. At the Memorial, we walked among the steel pillars etched with the names, when known, of over 4,000 lynching victims. Stories of their descendants underscored the generational trauma that persists today.



Our visit to the Mothers of Gynecology exhibit gave witness to Black women—Anarcha, Lucy, Betsey and others—who were forced to endure medical experiments without anesthesia by Dr. Sims, long revered as the "Father of Gynecology." The art installation challenges this narrative and honors their dignity. One image that stayed with us was of the Sankofa bird, facing backward with an egg in its beak, reminding us, "It is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind." What is ours to carry forward?

Our journey ended at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, steps from the Ohio River—the boundary between slavery and freedom. There, we encountered stories of ordinary people whose courage and cooperation formed the lifeline of the Underground Railroad. The museum also draws attention to modern forms of slavery, including human trafficking.

We left committed to visiting sites in Detroit that were part of this sacred network.

"What is ours to do?" was a continued mantra as we engaged in this tour. The struggle for civil rights continues today in the backlash against Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives and in the treatment of migrants and other vulnerable populations. We found the words of Bryan Stevenson to be an inspiration. "We believe that there is important work that needs to be done in our country to fully overcome the history and legacy of slavery. It is hard to confront these painful truths, but the powerful thing is when we have the courage to learn the

truth, we have the courage to open up doors that permit justice, that permit reckoning, that permit healing." We are deeply grateful for this experience. It compels us to own the past and labor with hope toward a future of equity and justice.





## Leading with heart By Valedictorian Ada Kowalewski '25

The past four years as a Marian Mustang have given me so many blessings and opportunities. As I approach my freshman year at The University of Alabama, I am filled with excitement for what is to come, but also sadness about leaving Marian's halls. Marian has shaped me into the person I am today, and it goes without saying that I will carry every single lesson I have learned into the future.



To start, I would like to recognize the incredible faculty and staff here at Marian. Each of them dedicates so much time and love to ensuring every student feels valued and appreciated. Their commitment to this school is something I have profound admiration for, especially as the daughter of a Catholic school teacher myself. In addition to the staff and administrators, I have had the pleasure of participating in many sports throughout my time at Marian: pompon, field hockey, lacrosse, and senior football. The coaches of these teams have had a positive impact on my Marian experience and have further instilled the values of hard work and responsibility in my day-to-day life.

As for the sisterhood I have experienced over these four years—it is irreplaceable. Through countless hours spent preparing for some of the biggest events—such as field day, raffle skit, senior football, and numerous retreats—

[Continued](#)

## Distinguished Alumna 2025: Kathryn M. Kolasa '67, PhD, RDN, LDN



A legacy of lifelong learning, global service, and heartfelt connection came full circle at this year's graduation as Kathryn M. Kolasa '67, PhD, RDN, LDN was honored as the 2025

Distinguished Alumna. A pioneering voice in the field of nutrition and a passionate educator, Dr. Kolasa embodies the Marian spirit of service, scholarship, and sisterhood.

Dr. Kolasa offered this year's graduates a glimpse into a career—and a life—defined by resilience, purpose, and joy. She recalled the enduring power of Marian friendships, sharing how reconnecting with classmates at their 50th reunion blossomed into a cherished support system of weekly Zoom calls, laughter, and shared strength during the pandemic. "If I had to choose one word that defines our Marian group now," she said, "it's resilience... the ability to grow, to adapt, to be fully present even as the years bring change."

Dr. Kolasa earned her bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and completed her Ph.D. in Food Science at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her early faculty role at Michigan State launched a remarkable academic and professional journey that would take her across the country—and around the world. At East Carolina University, she served as Chair of the Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management Department ...

[Continued](#)



## From the Development office



Everyone had a great time at this year's Royal Blue Classic! Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, participants and volunteers, we raised over \$92,632 in support of IHM ministries. It was a wonderful day of fun, friendship and shared commitment to our mission—thank you to all who made it such a success! View photos and winners here <https://bit.ly/4kZmka8>.

Mark your calendars! Next year's Royal Blue Classic will be held on Monday, June 15, 2026.

The 2024-2025 raffle season has come to an end, raising over \$191,685 in support of retired IHM Sisters. We are so grateful to everyone who participated and helped make it a success. The raffle will resume in October 2025 and run through June 2026—thank you for your continued support!

Stay tuned, tickets for the 2025-2026 raffle season will be mailed in mid-July. Questions? Call 734 240-9863.



SAVE THE DATE

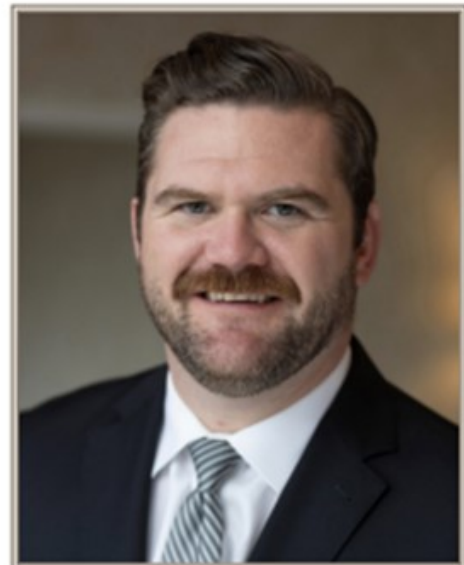
*Theresa Maxis Award*

— 2025 —

HONORING PADDY LYNCH

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

Theresa Maxis Alumnae Hall  
at Marygrove Conservancy



The Theresa Maxis Award benefits the retirement and ministry needs of the congregation.  
For sponsorship or reservation information, please contact the Development Office at 734.240.9861.  
*Invitation to follow in mid-September.*



## Marygrove minute *Honoring our legacy and looking ahead*

Earlier this month, the third graduating class from The School at Marygrove (TSM) received their diplomas, and your Marygrove Alumni Association proudly presented two \$1,000 *Marygrove Alumni Legacy Awards*.

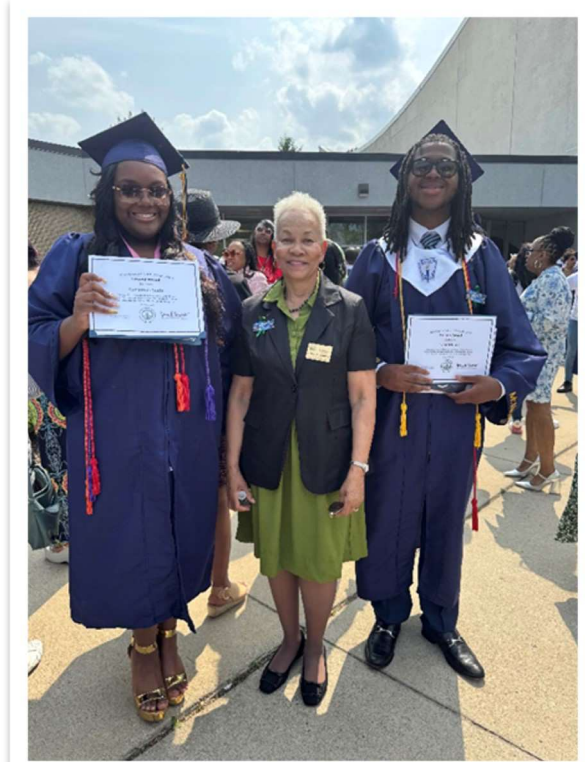
**Kamareah Seale** was described as a remarkable student, not just a passionate leader and advocate for young women—she's a force for positive change in our community. Kamareah took the initiative to organize TSM's first blood drive with the American Red Cross and led two wellness summits to promote mental and physical well-being. As president of Global GLOW, she's been instrumental in guiding daily operations and developing initiatives supporting our school and the broader community. Kamareah will attend Eastern Michigan University.

**Tyler Moore's** teachers were "thrilled to share the exceptional qualities and achievements of Tyler, a hardworking and well-liked student who consistently sets high standards for himself and inspires those around him to do the same. He was recognized for documenting the Class of 2025 through compelling videos and interviews. A dedicated and inspiring student, Tyler will continue his journey at Morehouse College.

Congratulations to both students!

## Save the date: 2025 All-Alumni Reunion Saturday, Sept.13

All alumni (B.A. and beyond) are welcome to join for the day on Marygrove Campus. Registration will begin at 9 a.m., and we have a compelling and informative program to offer. Graduating years ending in 0 or 5 are encouraged to attend and celebrate the Marygrove legacy: past, present and future. Watch for your invitation, which should arrive (via IHM Communications email) any day now. You will be pleasantly surprised if you haven't been on campus lately! Mark your calendars for Saturday, September 13, for a delightful day of reconnecting in Madame Cadillac Hall. There will be several Marygrove Conservancy, IHM, and U of M speakers, a lovely luncheon, and tours, including the exciting School at Marygrove Elementary in the former Immaculata High Building. We need Class Representatives for the years ending in 0 or 5, so please reach out if you can volunteer: we can provide a class database. The registration deadline is August 31, so don't delay making your plans!



*Thank you to board member Frances Simmons for presenting the awards!*

[alumni@marygroveconservancy.org](mailto:alumni@marygroveconservancy.org) | [lorializ@gmail.com](mailto:lorializ@gmail.com)

Follow us on Facebook: [Marygrove Alumni & Friends](#)



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

***The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell***

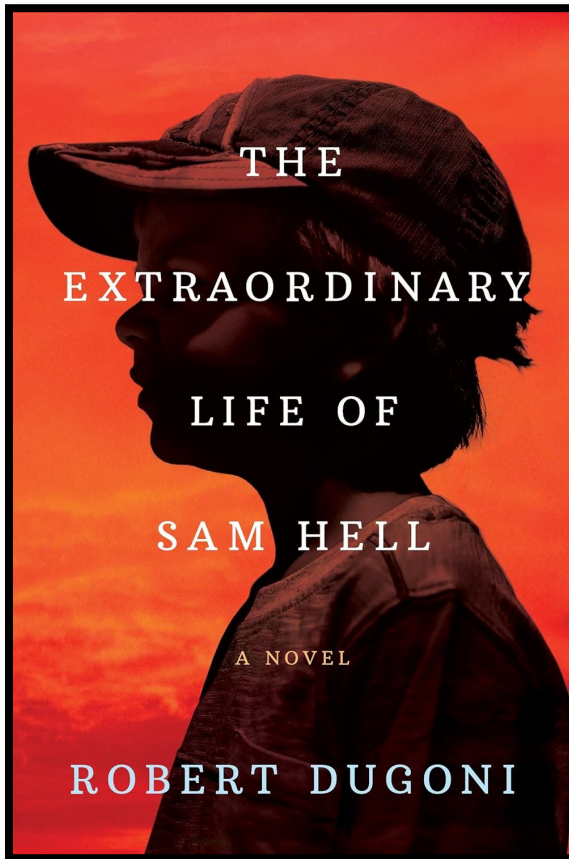
***By Robert Dugoni and reviewed by library staff***

His father had told him that “there comes a day in every man’s life when he stops looking forward and starts looking backward.” His mother had called it “God’s will” at those moments in his life when things didn’t go as he had hoped or planned. And despite living for most of his entire life in close enough proximity to Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church to be able to hear the steeple bells, he could recall hearing the bells only on a handful of occasions.

Today was one of those times. The sound of those bells had compelled him to sit and start to write about his mother and father, David Bateman, Daniela and Trina Crouch, and lifelong friends Ernie and Mickey. The bells even provided a logical place to start his story — a memory of another day when he heard those same bells.

Robert Dugoni, in the forward of his novel, *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell*, introduces Sam Hill, a man in his forties, compelled, as he says, to write about the events and people that helped shape his life. For his mother had been right, as she often was when it came to his life; it was to be extraordinary because God had given him an extraordinary gift, his eyes. That realization, however, came from a life lived. With Sam as the

storyteller, Dugoni translates Sam’s life into a series of relatable events, deftly shifting between the past and present through riveting flashbacks and current-day turmoil.



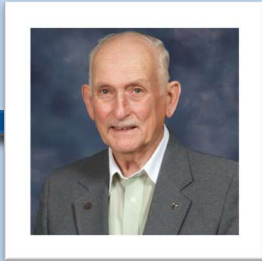
Madeline Hill was not daunted when her son, Samuel James Hill, was born with ocular albinism, a rare eye condition that makes his pupils red. She doesn’t back down when six-year-old Sam is initially rejected from attending Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Elementary School. However, once in school, Sam experiences daily instances of rejection and bullying, is ridiculed and dubbed “the devil boy” or Sam “Hell” by his classmates. In high school, nearly every routine milestone is peppered with new challenges. Fourteen years later, Sam, a small-town eye doctor, finds himself meeting

the same problems, often embodied in the very same people.

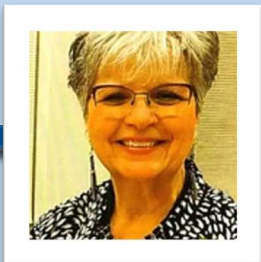
Dugoni’s characterizations and dialogue make this coming-of-age novel ring true. The cruelty of the repeated teasing and physical taunting is there, but how Sam, his parents and his friends deal with it gives this story its lingering power and strength.

***Our skin, our hair and our eyes  
are simply the shell that surrounds  
our soul and our soul is who we are.  
What counts is on the inside.***

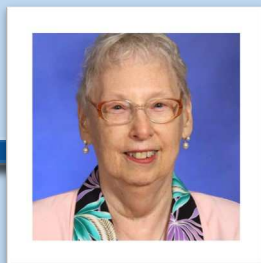
## Remembering



Richard Genord, IHM Associate  
May 14, 1930 – June 1, 2025



Mary Theresa Gotha-McMillan  
IHM Associate  
Feb. 3, 1962 – June 27 2025



Anita (Mary Leo) Pfeiffer, IHM  
Dec. 4, 1939 – June 30, 2025

## We Are Here

Words fail. our bodies stand in streets.  
Count us if you can.  
We are all here on the hard pavement  
sun sweat feet: we stand exhausted/exhilarated  
taking back the flag, garnering words,  
collecting music; we have tales to tell  
epics to hand our children.

We are here. We are here.  
The poetry is ours. The songs, ours.  
We are the streets  
we are the cities  
we will keep  
the stolen power  
we will stay here on our streets  
we will stand.

Words failed.  
Perhaps we did not treasure them enough.  
We learned. We are here. We march.

This is the land we keep  
for our children  
for the children of migrants  
children of the poor  
for children  
who will one day read in our history books  
how democracy  
nearly died.

We are here.  
We have the words.  
We have the guts,  
the anger,  
the love,  
the song;  
we fill the streets.

We are here.

By Sharon Kourous

## From the archives... a look back

### Summer House improved and moved as the Motherhouse moved, too

The old Motherhouse across from St. Mary's Church was a campus with a garden attached. Paths wound around trees and flower beds, giving the Sisters a private escape and a place of refuge.

The Motherhouse Chronicles for June 1929 makes this note: "Our park was never so attractive as this year. A beautiful new grotto, made mostly by our men under Sister Miriam's direction, of tufa stone replaced the former one which Sister Flora had made, the Summer house remodeled, and most prettily designed, roses planted here and there, a lily pond near the grotto."



When fire destroyed the Academy across the street, the Sisters began the process of moving school and Motherhouse farther west on Elm Ave. to land they already owned. The move to a new Motherhouse was difficult as the Sisters found so much that was unfamiliar. Some thought it looked like a grand hotel. Some got lost and just waited to be found. The night noises were all different and unsettling.

The Chronicles report how happy they were, then, when they realized some things moved with them: furniture, statues, the old bell and windows. Later the summer house arrived, too, taken apart and rebuilt next to St. Joseph's Lake.

*\*This article originally appeared in the summer 2021 issue of the IHM Archives newsletter, Today and Yesterday). All issues of the newsletter can be accessed [here](#).*



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

Check us out on our website or on Facebook or Instagram!

#### ♦ Pass it on ...

If you know someone who would like more information about what the IHM Sisters and Associates are doing, please forward this publication. If you have received this from a friend and would like to subscribe, click [here](#).

- ♦ *ihmpact* is published quarterly, highlighting news and events of the IHM Sisters as well as offering articles for reflection and contemplation. It is available by subscription or online.

DONATE



Safe secure [online giving](#) is available for your convenience.



Submit your [prayer requests](#) to the IHM Sisters.