Life at the University
A third year psychology student at the University of Juan Misael Saracho in the city of Tarija, Bolivia, Sister Mery Cari Paz also ministers to the university students at Casa Betania.

Leaving Her Mark
Sister Suzanne Gallagher was honored by St. Mary Immaculate Conception School for her outstanding leadership and accomplishments during a dedication of an auditorium and playground/field in her name.

Community Days
Sisters and associates from as far north as Minnesota, as far south as Bolivia, as far west as South Dakota, as far east as Washington D.C., and points in between, converged upon Dubuque, Iowa, for their Presentation Community Days 2014 gathering.

Celebrating Jubilee
The Presentation community celebrated 10th, 50th and 60th jubilees of 14 Presentation Sisters on July 17-18 with their Presentation community.

Connections of the Heart
After 184 years, the Mooncoin Presentation community in County Kilkenny, Ireland, has closed its doors.

Remembering Our Roots
We remember our years spent in Emerson, Nebraska, and the many stories during that time.

Keeping Her Name Alive
We remember Sister Juanita Boom.

Mount Loretto & Beyond
We share with you special times in the lives of Dubuque Sisters of the Presentation and their associates, near and far.
“What are you doing here? Go and stand on the edge.”

The edge takes us out of our comfort zone. In Scripture when the prophet Elijah heard the quiet voice of God, Elijah went to the mouth of the cave and stood. The quiet voice asked, “So Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?” Elijah said, “I’ve been working my heart out for God…” (1 Kings 19:13-14)

A compelling invitation – to stand on the edge of Mount Horeb, where Moses communed with God and received the Ten Commandments. This edge, too, is where Israel entered into covenant with God. We are all invited to this living edge. So what is the living edge in our proximity?

Throughout history, Presentation Sisters have been called to the living edge to address the needs of children nationally and internationally who live on the edge themselves. Sister Jean Ann Meyer ministers with Dubuque Franciscan Sisters at Excel Commons Family Community Center in the heart of Okolona, Mississippi. What began as a summer youth program in three borrowed classrooms 25 years ago, transformed a former department store into a community hub. Children’s enrichment, senior wellness and GED classes comprise the core of Excel’s programs. Additionally, a community gym, computer lab, resale shop, coffee shop and Catholic Center welcome all in need. Sister teaches in Excel’s after school program, which serves students in grades 1-12. Each day from 3-8:30 p.m., she supports their personal development, offering assistance with homework, basic skills and computer skills.

The living edge can be found where the needs of the world and the gifts and talents of its members intersect. Think basic needs: food and housing. Sister Lynn Mary Wagner intentionally stepped to the edge locally to minister at the Dubuque Food Pantry. Clients are referred by churches, organizations and public and private service agencies to receive food and household items.

The edge nudges a shift in consciousness. Concern for the ecological health of bioregions called Sister Mary Dennis Lentsch to Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center located at the edge of the southern Appalachian Mountains in the Upper Tennessee Valley. There, with others of diverse backgrounds, she teams to build an interfaith approach to Earth sustainability. Organic gardens, orchards and woodlands, a resource center and library of Earth literacy materials are open to all. Narrow Ridge’s mission invites all to become good stewards and to live simply.

Sister Diana Blong stepped to the Tanzanian African edge, accompanying Holy Spirit Sisters during their formation years. Willing to allow her life in Africa to unfold, Sister Diana understands formation as a life-long process of integrating a Christian life of faith with one’s own spiritual, emotional, intellectual and cultural life. Currently ministering in Charles City, Iowa, she continues to raise awareness of diverse ministries in Africa, such as health care, education, social and pastoral work, women empowerment, care for those made poor, HIV patients and empowerment of family. That edge is close to home!

Sometimes the living edge is the very center of an issue. Presentation Associate Billie Greenwood and her husband, Paul Allen, experience the edge at the U.S. - Mexican border in El Paso, Texas. There, they speak for immigrants living on the edge whose basic needs go unmet as their lives are plagued by violence. Over the next 10 years, if passed, the bi-partisan “border surge” in S.744 would further militarize border zones in the southern U.S., transforming peaceful communities into some of the most militarized regions in the world. More than 7 million U.S. citizens who live in border communities are subjected to the “100-mile rule,” which the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) denounces as a “Constitution Free Zone,” stretching from San Diego, California to Brownsville, Texas.

This calls for a deepening understanding of the Presentation charism of hospitality. How do we embody hospitality on the edge? Clearly called, how can we all stand on the edge while “working our hearts out for God?”
SISTER MERY CARI PAZ

Life at the University

by SUZANNE TAKES, PBVM

Sister Mery Cari Paz, a Bolivian, recently celebrated 10 years as a Sister of the Presentation. She is presently in her third year as a psychology student at the University of Juan Misael Saracho in the city of Tarija, Bolivia. Sisters Mery and Therese Corkery are both ministering to the university students at Casa Betania, a home purchased by the Presentation Sisters where university students can meet for friendship, study, reflection, sharing and/or just to relax. While Sister Mery is busy with her studies and classes, Sister Therese is busy making Casa Betania a welcoming place.

Sister Mery’s classes begin early in the morning at 7 a.m. and finish around noon. Other activities, projects and group studies take place in the afternoons and evenings at Casa Betania. The space allows for students to gather and become a part of the Casa Betania community.

Sister Mery explains, “Casa Betania means a welcoming place. Just as Jesus went to Bethany to be with friends, relax and be renewed, it is our hope that the university students who come here can do the same.”

The students gather to celebrate those who have had birthdays during the month. This is a special time for sharing, prayer and socialization. Everyone brings something to share. Sister Therese has been known to surprise and delight the students with her blue ribbon lemon pie made fresh from the lemons on the tree just outside Casa Betania.

Sister Mery comments that after one such sharing, one of the students suggested that they gather at least once a month to pray together. Priority is always given to prayer, and there is a small chapel off the living room where all are welcome.

Sister Mery speaks of feeling welcomed in her life on campus: “I am touched by the people who reach out to me. It would seem that there is a certain confidence in the fact that I am a religious. People open up to me and want to share their lives, as well as their struggles and questions. It isn’t just the students who come to me, but the teachers come as well. I sense their longing for God and the deep desire to have someone who understands and will listen to them.”

“One teacher offered me her cell phone number, which is never given out to the students,” adds Sister Mery. “She felt she could trust me and she wanted me to know that if I should need anything to feel free to call.”

“Acomcompanying young people, future professionals, is a privilege. We have so much that we can learn from one another. We need to support one another in prayer and in our actions,” states Sister Mery. “It is our hope that some of the young women who gather with us will someday consider joining us in our life as women religious. That is in God’s hands, not ours. We do our best and the rest is up to God.”

“Hopefully we can be like the beautiful lavender lapachos in Bolivia that are in full bloom, a welcoming sign of spring,” says Sister Mery.

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Sister Suzanne Gallagher

Leaving Her Mark

by RACHEL FITZGIBBON and CHELSEA MCCARRAHER

Some are born to tell stories; all are born to live them. Sister Suzanne Gallagher’s ministry bears the mark of a natural storyteller being led by the divine Storyteller. This story of her ministry begins in November 1994 when Sister Suzanne made a spontaneous passing comment to the pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church in Guttenberg, Iowa. “If you’re ever looking for a principal, let me know,” she said.

Four months later, she was on her way to St. Mary-Immaculate Conception School in Guttenberg. It was as though God typed the words that spilled from her mouth on that stairwell, setting the plot for the next 16 years of her life.

“Not that long ago, St. Mary School was in serious need,” Beth Sadewasser, leader of the Alumni Committee, said as she honored Sister Suzanne with the naming of a new playground and auditorium at the St. Mary Alumni Banquet on June 7. “But God sees our needs, hears our prayers, and answers those prayers with a gift. God gave us Sister Suzanne.”

Like every good storyteller, Sister Suzanne has the gift of imagination. With a spirit of hope, she saw opportunity rather than obstacle in the condemned 1894 junior high auditorium. With fearless trust, she diligently worked to raise $100,000 in donations, volunteer labor and donated materials—not only saving the arts, but making improvements all over the school.

For every need, she found a solution. From science to the arts, a new auditorium to new playground equipment, Sister Suzanne left her mark on the story of St. Mary’s restoration.

“Every child is a gift, every child is gifted,” Sister Suzanne would often say. With this belief, Sister rebuilt the curriculum to fit her teaching philosophy that there are many ways to learn. She restored the music and arts programs, believing “it is so important for the inner life of a child to have art and music.”

“Sister understood the value of the arts. She would not allow this fundamental aspect of a child’s educational development to be sacrificed. While other schools’ art programs slowly declined, St. Mary’s rapidly expanded,” said Beth.

Sister Suzanne expanded her impact beyond the school. With more than $200,000 in grants, she turned the Family Resource Center over to the local hospital to assist women and children in the midst of “the silent epidemic of domestic assault.” Today, the Family Resource Center is served by 16 agencies providing resources from home heating assistance to parenting classes.

How did one woman accomplish so much? Only with the grace of God, the Author of her story. “I could not have made it without my faith,” reflects Sister Suzanne. “Whatever I needed and asked for, I received. Whenever there was something really difficult, I would ask God for a sign that I was doing what was best for the school and the children. While I was in that area, my sign was the cardinal—it just always appeared.”

The fruits of her faithful trust are fittingly marked with a sign of her own: the new playground and auditorium now bear the name Gallagher.

“I feel so proud to be who I am as a person and Presentation Sister, and I am affirmed that I did make an impact,” Sister Suzanne said in response to the honor.

Sister has continued to make an impact since her time at St. Mary’s. Each day she visits nursing home residents living with dementia. She also ministers to her family by faithfully finishing her teaching career, and I am affirmed that I did make an impact,” Sister Suzanne said in response to the honor.

Sister Suzanne unceasingly lives out God’s storytelling with every hopefult twist and happy ending written by God’s faithful hand.

Leaving Her Mark

Sister Suzanne Gallagher

by RACHEL FITZGIBBON and CHELSEA MCCARRAHER

A Benefit to Support Charitable Ministries

Arts & Crafts Boutique and Bake Sale

Saturday, October 25
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sisters of the Presentation
2360 Carter Road
Dubuque, Iowa
Lakeside Door Entrance

All proceeds will help support Our Lady of Tepeyac School in Chicago, Illinois, where Sister Jessi Beck ministers, and St. John’s Guesthouse, homeless shelter in Dubuque, Iowa.

Find unique, hand-crafted gifts by Presentation Sisters and associates. Gifts range from hand-woven baskets to trivets to watercolor paintings to photography to jewelry to greeting cards and much more. Avoid the consumer rush and start your Christmas shopping now. There will also be delicious bakery items for sale.

Call Sister Dolores Zieser at 563-588-2008 for more information.
Community Days

I Ignited by the Fire of God’s Love...

by FRANCINE QUILLIN, PBVM

Ever since Presentation Sisters began teaching outside the city of Dubuque, it was their custom to “come home” to Mount Loretto for the summer. In the early days when a sister left her mission in June for Mount Loretto, she did not know whether she would be returning to that mission in August, so she packed everything into her trunk to be shipped to her should she go to a new location in the fall. Each sister was commissioned on August 15, the feast of the Assumption of Mary, and she would leave Mount Loretto on that day for the year ahead.

Some of those traditions have changed. Today, for instance, each sister has considerable input into the ministry in which she will be engaged, and thus she knows well in advance what the next year will hold. The only trunks to be packed are in the cars!

But one thing that has remained constant is the idea of “coming home” each summer. Because their ministries are so varied now, the only trunks to be packed are in the cars!

This summer’s homecoming was enlivened by celebrating the jubilees of 14 sisters: nine of those were 50th Golden Jubilarians; four commemorated 60 years, and Sister Mary Cari Paz celebrated her 10th Jubilee. The Golden Jubilarians incorporated everyone into their dream of providing water sanitation kits for communities in Bolivia. This is an effort developed by the United Nations Water for Life action because of the many people in the world who have no access to clean water. The hope of the jubilarians is to provide 50 kits to mark their celebration.

Although there is usually a speaker for these days, and the sisters do some planning for the year to come, it would be a mistake to think of this event as a “meeting.” It is still a “coming home,” a special time when all of the community is together to pray and nurture that wonderful spirit that binds them together before they depart again for their varied ministries. A special gift of their homecoming now is that they are joined in these days by their associates and employees who share in the Presentation spirit as they gather.

Time was provided for those circles to meet individually, and then to share their ideas with the total community and to invite feedback.

Guest speaker Sister Gail Worcelo, SGM, commented that the Emerging Circles are the “beating heart” of the community, and that they are the “blood vessels through which Nano’s spirit now beats.” Using Teilhard’s understanding of evolution, she spoke about how they have “a shared consciousness in a field in which we are all participating.” Like St. John at the Last Supper, all must “lean into the heart of Christ.”

Community Days ended with a co-missioning ritual, during which those gathered prayed: “We ourselves are to become flames of love that burn away fear and bring the warmth of compassion to all of creation.” Then, filled with the spirit of mutual support and renewed energy, the sisters departed for another year of ministry. Memories of each “homecoming” sustain them throughout the year as they live their charism of hospitality to all those with whom and to whom they minister until the next Homecoming.

Sister Patricia Flynn, SSND, has been the facilitator for the community’s recent Chapter and gatherings, and she provided that service for these days as well. She reminded all gathered of where they have been and of what next steps they might consider. Reminding them of their work in their circles and the community directional statement, she encouraged them to “assume responsibility for the congregation in a way that they have never done before. There is a leader in every chair.” She also encouraged them to journey contemplatively with Nano Nagle who “gave her all” to everything that she did. Both speakers emphasized the need for mutual support as the community makes a “communal plunge into something unknown.”

Community Days is an opportunity for the Presentation community to come together to share ideas, visions and time with one another. Like St. John at the Last Supper, everyone joined the circle, and those gathered prayed: “We ourselves are to become flames of love that burn away fear and bring the warmth of compassion to all of creation.” Then, filled with the spirit of mutual support and renewed energy, the sisters departed for another year of ministry. Memories of each “homecoming” sustain them throughout the year as they live their charism of hospitality to all those with whom and to whom they minister until the next Homecoming.

Four commemorated 60 years, and Sister Mary Cari Paz celebrated her 10th Jubilee. The Golden Jubilarians incorporated everyone into their dream of providing water sanitation kits for communities in Bolivia. This is an effort developed by the United Nations Water for Life action because of the many people in the world who have no access to clean water. The hope of the jubilarians is to provide 50 kits to mark their celebration.

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As the Mississippi River flowed quietly on a sunny July 16 evening, nearly 180 sisters boarded the American Lady cruise boat at the 16th Street harbor in Dubuque. Enjoying a festive evening, 14 Presentation Sisters began celebrations of “the year of jubilee” for the Sisters of the Presentation. Invited Presentation Sisters, associates and friends to join them in this endeavor.

Presentation Sisters began celebrations of “the year of jubilee” for the Jubilarians of the Presentation. “Jubilee invites me to remember and give thanks. I am grateful for this grace-filled journey thus far, for the many surprises along the way and for all who have challenged, supported and inspired me with blessings beyond measure,” comments Sister Diana.

Sister Cheryl Demmer
Sister Cheryl was inspired by her parents’ great respect for the priests and sisters who ministered at St. Joseph Parish and School in Farley, Iowa. As she became a Presentation Sister, she grew to love the image of Nano Nagle going out into the streets with her lantern to teach women and children.

“Each time I am teaching a class, whether it be confirmation, RCIA baptism or other faith formation themes, I use Nano as my role model,” Sister Cheryl comments.

Sister Cheryl is presently the director of religious education at S.S. Mary and Mathias Parish in Muscatine and St. Mary Parish in Wilton, both in Iowa. She has served as a primary, intermediate and junior high teacher and principal in Catholic elementary schools and as director of religious education in several parishes.

“In celebrating 50 years in religious life I have found that St. Paul’s letter to the people of Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:9) has sustained me: ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ I saw each new assignment as a wonderful opportunity to be stretched a little bit more, and I was open to the graces that I knew that I would be given,” states Sister Cheryl.

Sister Richelle Friedman
Sister Richelle sees the challenge for those living religious life “the same as those of all humanity, to partner in redeeming a sustainable Earth where peace and respect are the hallmarks of relationships.” Sister Richelle is the director of public policies for the Coalition on Human Needs in Washington, D.C. Previously she served as a school and junior high teacher in Catholic schools. She also served as a national social justice agencies in the Washington D.C. area, particularly those organizations with a focus on the needs of low-income families.

“I am deeply grateful that the Spirit has gifted me with a supportive family and community,” comments Sister Richelle. “My ministry as a teacher provided me the sacred opportunity to influence the education of young people. For the last 25 years I’ve had the privilege of working in political ministry in faith-based and non-profit organizations whose mission of working to create a society marked by economic justice is inextricably aligned with our Presentation mission.”

Sister Suzanne Gallagher
Sister Suzanne finds personal meaning in the “Draw Water Joyfully” jubilees theme. “It reminds me to thirst for the Living Water that blesses, heals and makes us whole. This in turn impels me to invite others to awareness of the presence of this life-giving water in their lives through my hospitality, compassionate presence and listening in ministry.”

Sister Suzanne currently does patient visiting at Good Samaritan Center in Waukon, Iowa. She has also served as a teacher and principal in Catholic elementary schools.

“I am deeply amazed by the presence of God in my life as I celebrate this jubilee year. I have not journeymed alone,” states Sister Suzanne. “Family and friends have also gifted my life and guided me. The most difficult times have been times of the most personal growth, and I live in deep gratitude for them. I am thankful for 42 years in Catholic education and am energized by my current ministry among persons in the company of dementia.”

Sister Elena Hoye
Sister Elena is the International Presentation Association networker with an office in Dubuque. Previously she served as a teacher; director of theology curriculum and dean of students in Catholic high schools; formation director and vice president for the Sisters of the Presentation; pastoral associate; diocesan director of catechesis and faith formation; and hospital vice president of mission.

“I am so grateful that God has nurtured and blessed my life in the Presentation community for 50 years,” says Sister Elena, “Jubilee is a marvelous time to reflect and to recommit to my lifelong promise. It is also an opportunity to express my gratitude for the grace that religious life has been for our Church and to the world.”

Sharing the Gift of Water JUBILIARIAN PROJECT

In this year of jubilee, Sister Elena Hoye shared a call to action from the United Nations to be in support of the International Decade for Action “Water for Life.” Sister Elena and her classmates have chosen to initiate the “Water with Blessings” project which enhances the capacity of local people to solve their need for safe water by utilizing a filtration device.

“The Golden Jubilarian class, like the woman at the well, is profoundly grateful for the living water that has quenched our thirst for 50 years,” comments Sister Elena. “Like the Samaritan woman who was moved to action and returned to evangelize her village, we too, feel called to action. For action flows out of contemplation.”

Partnering with Presentation Sisters in Bolivia, the golden jubilarians have chosen to provide water purification kits for the Guaraní people through each kit costs $50. In thanksgiving for 50 years, the jubilarians hope to send 50 kits.

Please consider giving your support for this special project. To learn more about the filtration device and the difference it makes in many lives, visit http://bit.ly/1tRSHI2.

If you would like to contribute, donations may be sent to: Sisters of Presentation Development Office Water with Blessings Project 2360 Carter Road Dubuque, IA 52001
"Jubilee is a special time to count one’s blessings," remarks Sister Corine. "The Jubilee of our Presque, Nano Nagle, is hospitality. I first experienced it in the sisters who were my teachers in grade school. Nano’s spirit of welcome is something that I try to extend to the immigrants and their volunteer tutors who come to Presentation Lantern Center."

SISTER PAMELA QUADE
Sister Pamela reverences the Presentation charism of Nano Nagle. "To live the charism of hospitality is to be inclusive and to welcome all encounters in my ministry and my life. It is to be aware of and to respond to the needs and challenges of our world."

Sister Pamela is a lobby receptionist and volunteer for the oncology unit at Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa, and a Mercy Hospice volunteer receptionist and home visitor in Johnston, Iowa. She is currently serving as a teacher and principal in Catholic schools; assistant to the director of the House of Mercy in Des Moines; and finance associate for the Sisters of the Presentation.

"This jubilee year is a time to reflect on the ministries and opportunities I have had," comments Sister Pamela. "I am grateful for my Presentation community, for my family, friends and co-workers who have walked with me on my life journey."

60 & 10-Year Jubilarians
Celebrating with the theme “Jubilee – Light – Life,” Sisters Mary Julianne Brockamp, Mary Louann Doering, Mary Dennis Lentsch and Mary Louise Scieszinski celebrated 60 years and Sister Mery Cari Paz celebrated 10 years of religious life on July 18. During the homily, Father Doug Wathier reflected on three shoots which come forth from the Presentation tree: jubiler, light and life and how, through his long association with the jubilarians, the jubilarians connect these to the joy of the past and hope for the future. “Today it is fitting to thank the jubilarians for the ways they have illuminated our pilgrimage as we, for sustaining us with our connections with our traditions and for empowering us to go forward strengthened by their faithful example,” stated Father Doug. “We thank Sister Julianne for her expansive and inclusive global vision. We thank Sister Loann for her joyful wisdom. We thank Sister Dennis for her courageous commitment to justice. We thank Sister Louise for her compassionate presence. We thank Sister Mary for her brave willingness to carry the Presentation lantern into the future. Sisters, we thank each of you for the ways you have lighted, and continue to illuminate, the paths of discipleship.”

“This jubilee gives me an opportunity to celebrate my 60 trips around the sun as a member of the Sisters of the Presentation,” comments Sister Mary Dennis. “My heart is full of gratitude for the many people who have encouraged and supported me during these years in my efforts to live and minister in the Gospel spirit of Jesus and the charism of Nano Nagle.”

SISTER MARY LOUANN DOERING
Sister Mary Louann is in community prayer and service at the Sisters of the Presentation motherhouse (Mount Loretto). Previously she served as an elementary and high school teacher; instructor at Clarke College (currently Clarke University) in Dubuque and parish minister.

Reflecting on her jubilee, Sister Mary Louann states, “I have gratitude and joy for vocation, community, ministry, people I have met and for support from my family. Being part of the Sisters of the Presentation has been a source of blessings and of opportunities to serve God’s people.”

SISTER MARY DENNIS LENTSCH
Sister Mary Dennis welcomes challenges to religious life today. “I think a challenge for religious life today comes from our culture that pushes people as much as they can as fast as they can. I believe as religious we are called to present an authentic witness of balancing being and doing in our lifestyle and our ministry.”

Sister Mary Dennis began her years of ministry as a secondary teacher in Catholic schools. Over time she has served two terms on the Presentation congregational leadership team. Her heart-focus is to effect a better world for everyone. Toward that end, she has variously worked in rural Appalachian non-profit organizations in east Tennessee, offering empowerment and advocacy; actively worked for a nuclear-free future, which involved some non-violent resistance; ministered in the Diocese of Knoxville Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation; and has offered hospitality for homeless people in New Orleans, Louisiana. Sister is currently serving as a peace activist in Washburn, Tennessee.

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SISTER MARY LOUISE SCIeszINSKI
Sister Mary Louise is in community prayer and service at Mount Loretto. Previously she served as an elementary and French teacher and principal in Catholic schools; curriculum director for the Archdioceses of Dubuque and formation director for the Sisters of the Presentation.

“Jubilee is a time of immense amazement and gratitude to God for the gifts of life and family, faith and vocation,” states Sister Mary Louise. “Parents, family, teachers, sisters and friends have enabled me to follow the light of Nano Nagle and share in educational ministry and service experiences with God’s people.”

SISTER MERY CARI PAZ
Sister Mery believes that hospitality is the heart of the Gospel. “The call to live the charism of Nano Nagle for me is a call to live the Gospel. It is in hospitality that it is possible to recognize Jesus Christ, and hospitality is where we gratefully share with our brothers and sisters. Hospitality is not a group thing, but a necessity of each and every one. For that reason it urges us individually to reach out to others.”

Currently Sister Mery is a student at the University of Joan Misael Saracho in Tarisí, Bolivia, where she is studying for a degree in psychology. She has previously served in youth ministry in Ente Rios, Bolivia. Before entering the Sisters of the Presentation in 2004, she was working as a pharmacist in Tarisí.

“Even in the midst of adversities, and amidst a consumer society in which we live, religious life offers hope,” reflects Sister Mery. “When we concern ourselves with care of the environment and care of life, demonstrate that it is possible to share and live a simple lifestyle and give ourselves to the service of others, we offer hope. As a Sister of the Presentation, my dream is to be worthy to be called ‘Sister’ and to joyfully offer hospitality wherever I am.”

Left to right: Sisters Mary Louise Scieszinski, Mary Louann Doering, Mary Dennis Lentsch, Julianne Brockamp and Mary Cari Paz.

PRESENTATION DOORWAYS | fall 2014
SISTER SHARON KELCHEN
Grateful for the presence of past teachers, Sister Sharon states: “The Presentation Sisters were my teachers in grade and high school. They had a quiet but powerful presence in our small town of Ryan, Iowa. I saw them in the community praying, working hard as teachers with meager resources but caring and happy. Their life of service spoke to my heart. I was willing to take the risk to enter into this different lifestyle because I have known the hospitality of the sisters to our God, and to me, a simple farm girl.”

Sister Sharon is minister of care at St. Elizabeth Pastorate of Bankston, Epworth, Farley, Placid and Peosta, Iowa. She has also served as a music teacher and principal in Catholic elementary schools; Spanish and curricular director and parish worker; house coordinator at the Sisters of the Presentation; and staff member at Maria House in Dubuque.

“I carry much gratitude for all the memories within my heart that I will never forget of the many people that I have ministered among and who have given me that journey of life with me,” comments Sister Sharon. “I have grown through educational opportunities, challenges and the time to reflect on the faithfulness of God who continues to animate through the gospel writer, John. ‘I have come to bring you life and to the fullest.’”

SISTER BETH KRESS
Sister Beth appreciates the movements of the Spirit in religious life, the Church and the world. “We are being called beyond power structures of the past to live in greater interdependence, to honor the dignity of all persons and to preserve the gift that is Earth.”

Sister Beth serves as communication specialist for the Sisters of the Presentation and as public relations and marketing coordinator for the Presentation Lantern Center in Dubuque. Previously she served as director of the Presentation; first coordinator of the International Presentation Association; national coordinator for professional communicators for women religious; director of religious education and family caregiver.

“In this year of jubilee, I thank God for being my solid anchor and ground in my journey of life,” remarks Sister Corine. “The Presentation of our Presque, Nano Nagle, is hospitality. I first experienced it in the sisters who were my teachers in grade school. Nano’s spirit of welcome is something that I try to extend to the immigrants and their volunteer tutors who come to Presentation Lantern Center.”

SISTER CORINE MURRAY
Sister Corine has a deep love for her ministry of welcoming immigrants to Dubuque. “In a world where the needs of so many cry to heaven, the Gospel value of hospitality is so important. I believe Catholic sisters are on the right side of history,” she states.

Sister Corine is executive director of the Presentation Lantern Center. She also served as a teacher in Catholic junior high and high schools and as a pastoral administrator/associate.

SISTER MARY JULIANNE BROCKAMP
Sister Julianne is serving her second term in community leadership for the Sisters of the Presentation. She has served as an elementary teacher and principal in Catholic schools and as a missionary in Entre Ríos and Cochabamba, Bolivia. She also served as a pastoral associate; director of religious education; campus minister; parish life coordinator; Hispanic parish minister and ESL teacher in a public school system.

As she celebrates this jubilee and reflects on religious life today, Sister Julianne comments: “The great challenge of living religious life today is to continually read the signs of the times and courageously respond with Gospel compassion, love, justice and wisdom on behalf of all creation.”
SISTER CARMELLE WESTEMEIER
Living with Gratitude

by BETH KRESS, PBVM

“As the oldest of eight children, Sister Carmelle learned to take charge when she and her siblings lost their mother and younger brother to a tragic fire. While serving as food service director for the large Mount Loretto community, she found new challenges in ways of planning. “I was so grateful when I was given the opportunity to go to the University of Notre Dame and take a course from Brother Herman Zaccarelli, C.S.C., on food purchasing and managing,” she remarks.

Years later, when the Sisters of the Presentation purchased and moved to the 2360 Carter Road property, Sister Carmelle undertook the refinishing of 240 chairs and 27 tables that had been used by the residents of Mount St. Bernard Seminary from 1952-1969. She did this in the early morning hours after starting breakfast preparation for the Mount Loretto community or in-between and after the other meals of the day.

“As I look back I ask myself, “where did I get the energy to do it all?” she exclaims.

Her skills and determination to do well were assets when Sister Carmelle was in charge of food service at Marion Home in Fort Dodge, Iowa, years later. Then, after she became a certified nursing assistant, her sense of humor, compassion and ability to help others were gifts that made her transition into the ministry of home health care a good fit.

As Sister Carmelle’s health has declined, she relies on her gratitude, faith and humor – a love of good time with family and community. On a monthly basis she enjoys a good game (or marathon) of cards with her sisters Peggy, Janice and Shirley, who visit her at Mount Loretto or take her for a day-trip to Peggy’s home in Manchester. “From days playing with Dad, my younger sisters or community members, I can say I have been with some ‘card sharks!’” she states with a twinkle in her eye.

Living in Nagle Center offers Sister Carmelle more in life for which she is grateful. She attends Mass and community prayer through the closed circuit television. She watches a few favorite TV programs and has her weekly card group with the sisters. She joins the community for meals in the main dining room. Recently, she had a great time participating in a special summer boat ride. “At this time in my life, I am thankful for and remember the good years,” she concludes.

Associate Radie Roberts Earns Citizen Award

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Associate Radie Roberts, Clarke University assistant director of campus ministry, received honorable mention for an Engaged Campus Citizen Award at the Iowa Campus Compact meeting in Des Moines on June 6. These awards, in their inaugural year, recognize individuals and groups in Iowa higher education for their work toward the Iowa Campus Compact mission of deepening and strengthening campus civic and community engagement.

In nominating Roberts for the award, Anastasia Nicklaus, Clarke’s director of campus ministry and fellow Presentation associate, wrote: “Among the largest efforts Radie undertakes each semester is the into the Streets program. This is a major organizational feat in which Radie is able to develop relationships with various agencies in the Dubuque area and link them with the over 150 students who volunteer for this morning of service. She also has taken on the facilitation of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, which helps the Clarke community to make MLK Day a ‘day on’ rather than a ‘day off.’ Radie seeks to add a dimension of reflection to the service experiences, as well, recognizing that engaged citizens not only serve, but also consider the ‘whys.’

“Just as important, though, are all the one-on-one interactions Radie has with students as they prepare for and complete diversity experience requirements or other service opportunities. During these discussions, Radie is able to help students reconsider stereotypes and see the innate dignity in every person. She opens students’ eyes to the needs in the community around us, and inspires them to make a difference within it. In this way, the students truly become engaged citizens.

“Radie is able to develop engaged citizens because she lives as one. Students know that Radie cares about them because she goes above and beyond to help them. All the time Radie doesn’t seek attention, she seeks to serve.”

Congratulations, Radie! Your dedication to service and education are a true inspiration to many and an example of how Nano Nagle works through you.
**Nano Nagle’s Mission Continues One Pace Beyond**

by RAELLEEN SWEENEY, PBVM and VIRGIE LUCHSINGER, SFCC, ASSOCIATE

The Chicago Presentation associate group strives to follow in the footsteps of Presentation foundress, Nano Nagle, through their shared conversation, prayer, connections and experiences. Taking advantage of their urban setting, this associate group has endeavored to grow in awareness of area cultures and religions. Associates Pat and Gino Pacetti recall a visit to the National Mexican Museum where they learned about the Day of the Dead celebrated in the Hispanic community each November. “From decorated altars to honor their dead to a huge pile of books reminding us of the thousands of undocumented immigrants who are never able to complete their education, the entire exhibit offered each of us powerful messages for meditation.”

An African-American experience was also enriching as the group was educated on the early history and contributions of the black district, touring two aging and beautiful nearby Polish churches and enjoying a traditional Polish buffet of sausage, dumplings, pancakes, stuffed cabbage and crepes. Very much in their thoughts was Associate Mary Ann Schaefer, a group member of Polish descent, who had died earlier that year.

Another gathering found this Chicago associate group knocking at the door of the Polish Museum located in “Old Poland” district, touring two aging and beautiful nearby Polish churches and enjoying a traditional Polish buffet of sausage, dumplings, pancakes, stuffed cabbage and crepes. Very much in their thoughts was Associate Mary Ann Schaefer, a group member of Polish descent, who had died earlier that year.

Unable to attend Dubuque’s “Women in Spirit” exhibit, the group traveled to St. Mary’s in South Bend, Indiana, for the display of the beginnings of women’s communities in the United States. Associate, Sister Virgie Luchsinger recalled the day: “The weather was warm with dry, fall breezes. It matched the euphoria we felt as we owned the struggles and triumphs in education, hospitals and serving that we witnessed through photos, artifacts, and words recorded from these pioneers in America and in the Church. We also learned from Mary Fishman’s “Band of Sisters,” a documentary on a fifty-year history of Catholic nuns in the United States highlighting Sisters’ contributions in ecology, farming, immigration reform and communal contemplation and dialogue. That evening we enjoyed an authentic Italian meal together, researched and planned by Associate Gino Pacetti.”

Transition has been a reality through the years as the group has experienced beloved members’ failing health, deaths and moves to other areas of the country. Associate Betty Spehar reflects that staying connected despite circumstance or distance is a priority for this group. “We remember all of our group members in prayer and love, and continue to include those in ill health by keeping them informed through phone calls and notes.”

During the past year the group has been energized by the call and challenge of the Presentation directional statement and the congregation’s invitation to join an “Emerging Circle” that meets throughout the year to bring to life the work of the Presentation directional statement in various areas of focus. “It’s great to see such enthusiasm for positive change around important justice areas like immigration reform, human trafficking, sustainability and ecology and women and children,” relates Sister Raeleen Sweeney.

Also this year, in keeping with the Presentation charism of hospitality, the group has welcomed in four new prospective associates and growth and discovery led by Nano Nagle’s lantern light. Chicago associate group members include Sisters Raeleen Sweeney, Lou Cota and Jessi Beck, Sister Virgie Luchsinger, SFCC, Verona Buckner, George Evans, Betty Spehar, Gino and Pat Pacetti, Mary Therese Krueger, Bridget Lahart, Ann Marie Spehar and Alicia January.

As part of their request for initial associate commitment, each candidate shared how they might be accomplished in their lives. Diane reflects, “As a Presentation associate, I feel I could bring the gifts of a willingness to participate, generosity, compassion and witness to my Catholic faith and love of Jesus.”

Jim and Judy express, “As Presentation associates, we would like to get to know the sisters better and grow in our faith through prayer and service, visiting hospitals and nursing homes and helping with the needs of the sisters.”

“I feel that the Associate Partnership truly represents the mission of Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters. I would like to continue on this journey as an associate. Women’s rights and equality and education are very important to me and I would like to be involved and help in any way I can,” states Doris.

Both Sister Rita and Linda have found their experience in facilitating this orientation group to be a life-giving privilege. “It has been a joy to witness the desire to be of service that is present in these new associates,” says Sister Rita.

Linda adds, “Each one will embody the Presentation charism of hospitality in their own unique and wonderful way.”

Welcome, Judy, Jim, Diane and Doris! May your lives and ministries be enriched and supported through your participation in the Presentation Associate Partnership.
The International Presentation Association (IPA), along with Presentation sisters working in 22 countries, commit themselves to respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. They seek to understand the relationship between the burning of fossil fuels and pouring carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, the impact of deforestation and contamination of water sources with toxic materials. They express the reality as “Mother Earth is crying.”

Presentation Sisters have representation at the United Nations as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. One of the goals of this council is to establish goals and a plan of action to address environmental sustainability. The sisters’ experience, study, reflect and commit to action. They believe the reality of global warming is in alignment with the findings of the vast majority of scientists. They understand the staggering human impact on Mother Earth as it relates to global warming. They worry about the next generations: their nieces and nephews, grand and great grandnieces/nephews. They believe life as it is now is unsustainable for the next generations unless significant changes are made in human behavior as it impacts Earth.

The Dubuque Presentation leadership team recently participated in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) with about 750 leaders of congregations of sisters in the United States. As reported in the National Catholic Reporter, Joyce Rouse, an exhibitor at LCWR, said “The sisters are so wise, prudent and clever about getting important information into various places. They will have the capacity to take these [renewable energy sources] all over the world.”

Environment has no borders. What happens in one part of the planet impacts everyone on the planet. Presentation Sisters have close working partnerships with both IPA, representing over 2500 Presentation Sisters, a multitude of committed Presentation associates and the LCWR, representing about 50,000 women religious in the U.S. They intend to use this local and global network to address the environmental crises. “We feel that the congregations of Catholic sisters in the United States have a good deal of experience with education and social change on many fronts,” said Claire McGowan, a Dominican Sister of Peace from Ballygriffin, County Cork. “The sisters are so wise, prudent and clever about getting important information into various places. They will have the capacity to take these renewable energy sources all over the world.”

Dubuque Presentation Sister Jennifer Rausch has several opportunities to visit Mooncoin during her 11-month ministry in Ballygriffin, County Cork. In conversation with the seven sisters living in Mooncoin, Sister Jennifer discovered the intense interest they have in their Dubuque “daughter house.” The physical distance between Mooncoin and Dubuque is significant but the connections of the heart are clearly very strong.

Signs of Our Time
by EMMA RIES, PBVM

Thousands of people joined ranchers, farmers and tribal communities to stand together for a powerful message that the Keystone XL pipeline and the tar sands must be rejected to protect this and future generations. Sisters Emma Ries, Richelle Friedmann and Emelie Borman visit with a rancher.

Presentation Sisters are skilled in education. Should they transform their outstanding skill of teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to environmental education? It is a tremendous need of the time.

What can people do? One newly-formed “Emerging Circle” group of Presentation Sisters, associates and employees, have made a commitment to study the environmental sustainability of the Presentation motherhouse, auditing their energy use and establishing a plan for a more environmentally-friendly facility. They will study the impact and costs of investing in inexhaustible and clean renewable resources including high efficiency lighting.

How can one make a difference in caring for Earth?
“Nestled in the rolling hills of northeast Nebraska, the town of Emerson has the distinction of being located in three counties. According to the Presentation Annals by Mother Benedict Emerson, NE, it was established as a junction of three of the first four sisters assigned to Sacred Heart School in Emerson, Nebraska, in 1919 when rain was in such short supply that upon returning from walks the sisters found themselves covered in dust. The corn crop that year yielded 40 bushels per acre. Some of the sisters tell of the living conditions when water froze in the wash bowls, and snowbanks sifted in through the door.

Sister Eunice Kane spoke at length of the grasshopper infestation which “made lace of the curtains” and left the wash on the line covered with “grasshopper tobacco juice.”

A former student recalled that “Sister Calasanctius would take our class over to the church to make a visit or say the Stations. When we were done, we would all kneel and recite the Litany. Sister knew it by heart and this impressed me.” In such ways the faith was sustained even in the harshest weather conditions.

It is that same faith which is still alive in Sacred Heart Parish in Emerson today, according to its website.

There was never a lack of food for the kitchen since parents who could not afford the tuition paid in-kind with whatever they could bring: fresh-baked bread, homemade butter, dressed chickens and anything their gardens and orchards produced.

A parish brochure found in the archives describes the situation in Emerson in 1937 when rain was in such short supply that upon returning from walks the sisters found themselves covered in dust. The corn crop that year yielded 40 bushels per acre. Some of the sisters tell of the living conditions when water froze in the wash bowls, and snowbanks sifted in through the door.

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Juanita Marita Boom, formerly Sister Mary Theodore, was born in Dubuque, Iowa, on October 9, 1928. She began her elementary school education in Dubuque until the family moved to Aredale, Iowa. She graduated from high school in nearby Dougherty where she was taught by the Sisters of the Presentation. Sister Juanita was proud to claim both Dubuque and Dougherty as her home.

In September of 1946 Sister Juanita entered the Sisters of the Presentation community, professing her final vows on May 5, 1952. With a bachelor’s degree from Loras College and later an LPN diploma from Hawkeye Institute, Sister Juanita’s ministries included teaching, nursing and pastoral ministry. Sister retired in 1985 after 35 years in active ministry.

Following her retirement, Sister served as a receptionist and driver at the motherhouse. For recreation she enjoyed tatting, reading, watching television and walking but as her breathing problems increased her walking days decreased. Sister loved nature and missed her outdoor nature delights, but continued to enjoy the change of seasons as she admired “her tree” outside the west window of her room.

In his homily at Sister Juanita’s funeral, Father Doug Wathier described Sister Juanita as an adventurous woman who “colored outside the lines.” Her adventurous spirit was satisfied by her varied travel opportunities, frequently from Dubuque to Dougherty to Davenport, and beyond to Missouri, Mackinac Island, New England States, as well as Ireland and China.

Both qualities identified by Father Doug were evidenced in Sister’s likes and interests, not necessarily the “run of the mill” type, which also changed as she journeyed through life. Sister Sheila Kane remembers her entertaining the members of their novitiate by “yodeling,” an exceptional talent. Yet when asked to list her interests many years later Sister Juanita included listening to classical music, reading novels and watching television programs, programs as different as “Days of Our Lives” and “Dancing With the Stars” along with the Discovery and History Channels, as well as national and world news, determined to keep abreast of current events. A good conversationalist, Sister shared her interests, opinions and concerns of happenings beyond the motherhouse.

Sister Juanita had a unique manner of looking at life which included naming objects in her care. Her wheelchair was Sophia; Freddy, the cart used to move her oxygen tanks; Shakespeare, her coveted computer and one of her plants was Penelope. When asked why she did this she said that the names made them more personal, not just “things” but her things.

Sue Brimmer, a nurse in the Nagle Center infirmary at Mount Loretto, said she felt that Sister Juanita knew for some time that she had a debilitating condition. She confided that she was not afraid to die but that she wanted to extend her life and enjoy it to the fullest as long as this was medically possible. Once she realized what God’s plan was for her, she modeled an example of acceptance. As included in the homily, “God was her stabilizing force and strength.”

Sister Juanita had sheer enjoyment and total delight in the good things of life: nature, fine food, travel and recreational experiences. She had a good time; she enjoyed the celebrations.

Sister found the image of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit engaged in an eternal dance of love to be compelling. When Father Doug anointed her a few days before she died, she told him she was at peace. In life’s struggles she would hear Christ remind her that he was close to her and would stay close to her. Then she said, “I’m still dancing.”

Sister Juanita chose this reading from Jeremiah 6:16 for her funeral liturgy aid: “Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for the ancient paths. Which was the good way? Take it and you will find rest for yourselves.”

Sister Juanita has found the “good way,” and has been invited to join the Trinity in the eternal dance of love in her new home, along with her family members and her Presentation Sisters.
You are invited to join us.

October 25, 2014
Arts & Crafts Boutique & Bake Sale
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Sisters of the Presentation
Dubuque, Iowa

QUEST Service Opportunity
Andrew Connolly Make a Difference Day
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Dubuque, Iowa

October 30, 2014
Sandy Hook Promise Speaker
7:00 p.m.
Loras College - Graber Ballroom
Dubuque, Iowa

November 14-15, 2014
Dubuque’s Got Sisters
Discernment Weekend
Sisters of Charity, Mount Carmel
Dubuque, Iowa

For updated information about the activities and events of the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, please visit our web site at www.dubuquerpresentations.org or call 563.588.2008.

Please pray with us.

November 13, 2014
Foundation Day, 1874
Presentation Lantern Center
Established in 2002, Dubuque

November 21, 2014
Presentation Day

21st of each month
Pray for Vocations

25th of each month
Mass for Benefactors

Mount, Loretto
AND BEYOND

Featured below are special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation Sisters and associates, near and far.

A Long Awaited Trip to Bolivia
For the last 29 years, Sister Martha Donnelly has promised to visit Bolivia. This summer Sister Martha was finally able to keep her promise. After Community Days, she traveled back with Sisters Mery Cari Paz and Suzanne Takes. While there, Sister Martha helped Sister Therese Corkery with Casa Betania and accompanied Sister Suzanne to several Guarani communities in Naurenda, Tentaguasu, Suarurito and Tarupayo. Sister especially enjoyed interacting with the young children on their visits.

An Intense Wii Bowling Match
Sisters René Laubenthal, Emilie Bormann and Hermann Platt enjoyed a competitive game of Wii Bowling. This is just one example of how Presentation Sisters are becoming more involved in various activities that promote an active, healthy and fun-loving lifestyle. A committee of sisters, associates and employees are working on initiating a wellness program that will promote healthy living and enhance existing opportunities.

Mother of Sandy Hook Shooting Victim to Speak at Loras College
Nicole Hockley, mother of first grader Dylan Hockley, who was killed in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, will speak at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 30, at Loras College Alumni Campus Center in the Marie Graber Ballroom. The event, hosted by the Dubuque Coalition for Nonviolence, is free and open to the public.

Nicole will share her story and discuss the work of the Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization led by parents and spouses who lost loved ones in the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Sandy Hook Promise seeks to identify and implement holistic, common sense solutions to make communities safer from similar acts of violence through education, outreach and discussion.

For more information, contact Mary Sawyer
(563) 845-0712 or cnvcoalition@gmail.com

For more information on Sandy Hook Promise visit www.sandyhookpromise.org.
Please help us keep our database up-to-date. Please change this label and send it back to us, call us at 563.588.2008 or email us at info@dubuquepresentations.org. Thank you.

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   (please indicate which is correct)

Sisters, Associates, Family, Friends in Brief

Sister Kathleen Dolphin recently wrote a book called “Praxis-oriented Theology and Spirituality in the Sermons of Edward Schillebeeckx” published by Mellen Publishing Company. The book explores the relationship between spirituality and practical theology. Schillebeeckx was a key player at Vatican II, influencing Catholicism in many ways. Sister Kathleen’s encounters with him were very fruitful, leading to her desire to write about him. Sister Kathleen has a PhD from the University of Chicago. She spent 13 years as the director of the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana. She also taught religious studies at St. Mary’s. Presently, Sister Kathleen is enjoying her retirement.

Sister Dolores Moes was asked by the Dubuque County Right to Life Office to be the guest writer on freedom for their July newsletter. Sister wrote about remembering and praying for men and women in service. She also wrote about the freedom we have to make the right choices, one choice being to stand up for a life for everyone and to support all who regret choices they have made. She encourages all to help freedom ring with prayer and support. Sister Dolores and other Presentation Sisters and friends pray for peace on the corner of Carter and Asbury every Tuesday.

Relationally Speaking

Ministry Updates

1. Sister Kathleen Dolphin, Professional Availability, Mount Loretto, Dubuque, Iowa
2. Sister Julie Marsh, Director of Outreach, Hotel Hope, New Orleans, Louisiana
3. Sister Barbara Rastatter, Community Prayer and Service, Mount Loretto, Dubuque, Iowa
4. Sister Jennifer Rausch, Pastoral Care Coordinator, St. Therese Southwest, Hopkins, Minnesota

Do you have news to share?

We would love to publish it. Please send your news items to: doorways@dubuquepresentations.org.