PRESENTATION
DOORWAYS
offering hospitality to the world
The congregation is a member of Sisters United News (SUN) of the Upper Mississippi Valley, National Communicators Network for Women Religious and the American Advertising Federation of Dubuque.

We want your input. Please send or email photos, stories and information about our sisters, associates, former members, family and friends, or any ideas which relate to the aim of this publication. You may submit the following to:

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Called One Pace Beyond 
Sister St. James Lickteig works with AmeriCorps: Partners in Learning Program, helping elementary students at Hoover and Irving public schools in Dubuque.

Presentation Gathering in Latin America 
The ninth gathering of the Association of Presentation Sisters in Latin America (APLA) took place in February in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Associate Partnership: Cities of Faith 
Connections are made, friendships are strengthened as the Mason City and Forest City associate members journey together and become closer to God.

Conference on Climate Change 
Sister Joy Peterson shares her experience from her travels to Copenhagen, Denmark, to attend the 15th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP 15).

Retreats Offer Renewal 
Retreats offer individuals the opportunity to temporarily leave behind the usual distractions we face for a long enough time to allow relaxation and for an inner change to occur: the ongoing conversion of heart that is critical to deepening faith.

Greening the Kitchen 
The Mount Loretto kitchen is getting greener and greener. Modeling the commitment of the sisters, the food service staff invite all to be part of the global effort for Earth sustainability.

Where in the World is... 
Taking pride in her Irish heritage, Sister Ellen Murphy enjoys the many pleasures of retirement while surrounding herself with community.

Mount Loretto and Beyond 
We share with you special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation sisters, near and far.
Come on in.
We have plenty of room.

“Aw, heck! Come on in. We have plenty of room.” This line from a story told by Father Doug Wathier on Christmas Day is from a primary student playing the role of the innkeeper in the Christmas pageant. Nerves got the best of him and he forgot his line. After some awkward moments, he finally spoke from his heart, “Aw, heck! Come on in. We have plenty of room.”

How often have we spoken those same words, literally or figuratively, as we go about our daily business? Hopefully, quite often as we share Nano Nagle’s passion for serving those less fortunate. Nano always had plenty of room for one more student who needed teaching, one more elderly person who welcomed a visit, one more young woman who needed support, one more family who needed food.

When do we have plenty of room? When do I have plenty of room? Examples abound.

Our retired sisters who serve meals at the Rescue Mission, work with visitors at the Lantern Center, tutor struggling students at Mount Loretto, help set up the annual garage sale, offer once again to take a drive for someone who needs help, volunteer to do service as part of Presentation Quest or take care of young children at the early childhood center always have plenty of room for others. Our mission sisters who teach a religious education class after a full day of ministry, cook and serve a meal for the hungry on a monthly basis, visit the elderly in nursing homes on their ‘day off,’ regularly run errands for an elderly neighbor or baby-sit for the mother of a handicapped child to give her a break always have plenty of room for others. Our associates who help the senior sisters with their Christmas cards, organize the garage sale, give of their time to have ‘spa’ hour in our skilled care unit, write reflections for our Lenten booklet, collect food for their local food pantry or form teams to work on weatherization projects for the poor always have plenty of room for others.

The Mount Loretto sisters had plenty of room when, following the example of Nano Nagle, they invited the men from two homeless shelters in the city to pray and dine with them at Mount Loretto on Christmas Eve. An evening of prayer, good food, great conversation and practical gifts made the evening a good time for all. On the ride home, the thing the men commented on most was their conversations with the sisters at the dinner table. This appreciation serves to remind us that each of us has wisdom to share with others. On Christmas Eve there was plenty of room in the hearts of the sisters and the men.

As we end this Lenten season and celebrate the new life of Easter perhaps we can find practical ways in our life to say from the heart, “Aw, heck! Come on in. We have plenty of room.”
Called One Pace Beyond

by JOAN LICKTEIG, PVVM

The heart of the mission for Presentation sisters is rooted in the life and ministry of our foundress, Nano Nagle. Sister Mary Raphael Consedine, Australian Presentation sister, captures this in her book, One Pace Beyond. The opening poem ends, “Go out! For need calls loudly in the winding lanes and you must seek Christ there. Your pilgrim sister, captures this in her book, One Pace Beyond. The opening poem ends, “Go out! For need calls loudly in the winding lanes and you must seek Christ there. Your pilgrim

Sister St. James was an inspiration to students and staff. The manner in which she lived her faith on a daily basis served as a model for the entire learning community. She went above and beyond in all that she did, and while probably not always recognized, her contributions were always appreciated.

Growing Up in Wesley

Sister St. James, formerly Janice, is the daughter of the late Urban and Agnes Mahoney Lickteig, born third in a family of seven children. Growing up in Wesley, Iowa, she was steeped in her family’s strong faith. She attended St. Joseph Elementary School. In high school she boarded the bus to attend Corwith-Wesley public school until her senior year when Garrigan Catholic High School in Algona, Iowa, opened in 1959; Janice graduated with the first Garrigan class in 1960. Franciscan sisters, Presentation sisters, diocesan priests and lay teachers made up the faculty at Garrigan.

During her senior year the Franciscan sisters arranged a vacation trip to Dubuque for several young women from Wesley; here they visited three motherhouses, including the Sisters of the Presentation. The warm and jovial welcome of the sisters at Mount Loretto, having relatives in the community and the multitude of religious vocations in the Lickteig relationship, propelled Janice forward in her consideration of life as a Presentation sister. Her ministry has taken her in many directions, having taught in three states: Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. Iowa schools included St. Cecelia School in Algona, three Dubuque Presentation schools, and most recently Seton Catholic Schools, where Sister St. James served as technology coordinator and computer teacher at the St. John Center in Peosta. These multiple directions and assignments, oftentimes challenging, did, nonetheless, echo the spirit, mind and heart of Nano Nagle.

Perceptions

A former principal, Deb Fleckenstein, eagerly shared, “It was a privilege to have Sister St. James on the staff. For a number of years she was the only woman religious faculty member. We looked to her as our role model and appreciated the way she shared her religious perspective.” Laughing, she added that Sister St. James had a most exceptional ability to organize, arrange and propel Janice forward in her consideration of life as a Presentation sister. Her ministry has taken her in many directions, having taught in three states: Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. Iowa schools included St. Cecelia School in Algona, three Dubuque Presentation schools, and most recently Seton Catholic Schools, where Sister St. James served as technology coordinator and computer teacher at the St. John Center in Peosta. These multiple directions and assignments, oftentimes challenging, did, nonetheless, echo the spirit, mind and heart of Nano Nagle.

Another former principal, Mary Smock, with equal enthusiasm, commented in a similar vein. “Sister St. James was an inspiration to students and staff. The manner in which she lived her faith on a daily basis served as a model for the entire learning community. She went above and beyond in all that she did, and while probably not always recognized, her contributions were always appreciated.”

Sister St. James has no regrets about the choice she made in 1960 to enter the Presentation community. She describes herself as a homebody who delights in the peace and quiet of her convent home and in the companions she shares there. Sister can be the life of the party as she entertains with stories of her early childhood or breaks into song at the least provocation: a line of conversation suggesting a musical verse, an aria or two to round out the evening. Gratitude names the prominent emotion regarding her Presentation vocation. Dr. Seuss’ popular book, Oh! The Places You’ll Go, resonates with St. James as she reflects on the hundredfold of her life, with special appreciation for her education.

Interests and Hobbies

Personally, Sister St. James has had a number of interests and hobbies, serving as channels for her many talents: creative woodworking, refinishing furniture, silk-screening, computer graphics and computer productions. She is most at home in front of her computer screen, surrounded by related technology that makes it all work together. Recently she has been focusing on her penchant for history: family and community history alike. A researcher at heart, she loves delving into records and accounts of the past. From the time before she entered the Presentation community until now, Sister St. James has found inspiration in the courage and dedication of Presentation foremothers. Family history has been a hobby for 20 years; she makes ancestral discoveries on a regular basis as she leaves out the family tree.

Opportunities for healing and helping others during this time of economic struggle are available in reaching out to the less fortunate. The way Sister St. James sees it, “People didn’t mess with Nano; her courage carried her dream to reality.” With prayers for a share in the fire, courage and dedication of Nano, Presentation sisters throughout the world move one pace beyond in their efforts to spread the mission of Nano’s love and concern for the poor.

AmeriCorps Program:

Initially funded in September 2000, the AmeriCorps: Partners in Learning Program was moved to the City of Dubuque in 2008, at which time the city became the fiscal agent under a competitive three-year grant. Now known as City of Dubuque Partners in Learning, AmeriCorps focuses on literacy with the primary goal of empowering youth to improve academic performance during school and out of school hours. Members provide academic support to students K-12 during school, after school and on non-school days. Through summer programming, members create supportive and safe learning environments providing recreational and cultural enrichment. Members serve in 14 Dubuque Community Schools, Carnegie-Stout Public Library, Dubuque Community Y, Multicultural Family Center, Hills and Dales, Juvenile Detention Center and two neighborhood family resource and technology centers. (Source: City of Dubuque Partners in Learning Web site)
The group pondered the wisdom of four women panelists: Marta Ossui, Estela Ramírez, Claudia Montes and Vicenta Mamani who shared their personal theologies and the future of mission. Each in her unique way delighted those gathered and helped them to understand the call to mission. Marta, a teacher, and theologians, Estela and Claudia, gave their perspectives. Vicenta, also a theologian, charmed all with her personal story and the richness of her Aymara culture. She recalled with fondness her childhood memories of growing up in her family near Lake Titicaca in La Paz, Bolivia. She also shared the difficulties she encountered being the first woman named the maximum authority in her village. It took time but she won respect of even the village men through patience and dialog.

It was a privilege to have Sister Antonieta Potente, a Dominican sister from Italy who presently lives in Guatemala where APLA 2013 will be held. Bottom photo: Participants of APLA 2010.
Once upon a time in Mason City, Iowa, in the late 1990s, Sisters Annette Kestel and Joan Brincks began the Presentation Associate Orientation Process with Harry and Mary Irene Stanton and Rita Cameron (now Sister Rita). Harry and Mary Irene first became involved with the Sisters of the Presentation in 1996 when they responded to a service opportunity to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Both expressed, “We are happy to be a part of this beautiful group and enjoy our sharing in the Presentation missions and ministries. The hospitality and spirit of the group is outstanding. We appreciate being associates.”

During this same time, Sister Dolores Moes was working through the orientation process with Stephanie Jacobson in Forest City, Iowa. All four of the candidates made their initial commitment as Presentation associates on June 14, 2001, in Mason City.

“When I met Sister Dolores, I was exposed to the work and charism of the Presentation community. I wanted to be a part of this charism but did not have a vocation to be a sister,” states Stephanie. “I accomplished this goal by becoming an associate. Although my health has limited my participation in associate activities, I feel that through prayer, meetings and e-mail, I am an active part of the Presentation charism.”

In 2002, Julie Blomme and Sherry Booth, both from Forest City, joined the group. Julie states, “I joined the group because of their commitment to prayer, hospitality and service to others. As a teacher, I have ministered to children of all ages, with all sorts of challenges. I value the fact that my associate group does service projects for others throughout the year, whether we are creating gift baskets for children in Mississippi or collecting books and sending them to deserving organizations.” Julie continues, “I especially enjoy having a group of people with whom I can share parts of my life and know that they love and support me through prayer and friendship.”

The Mason City and Forest City groups became one and chose the name “Cities of Faith.”

Kathy Meinecke, Julie Duncan, Deb Blaul, Lucy Durnan and Jane Nagy, all from the Forest City area, studied and completed the orientation process next, joining the group in 2006. Sessions were led by Sister Dolores coming from Dubuque and Sister Joan from Mason City.

Jane Nagy feels blessed to belong to the Cities of Faith group. “Though we might be a small group, we have been active. I remember the Mother’s Day baskets we prepared for the Crisis Intervention Center in Mason City, the meal we prepared and served at the Community Kitchen of North Iowa and the fellowship of our combined meetings with other groups. I have enjoyed the trips to the Presentation motherhouse and Sinsinawa for retreats. I can really feel the spirit of God among us.”

Jane also shared that she values the discussion the group had on the Earth Charter and the efforts to be more environmentally friendly. “The five year plan to reduce our carbon footprint is challenging but worthwhile.”

The Cities of Faith group has read and discussed books on hospitality, joy, forgiveness in the time of tragedy and the eternal presence of God’s love. Many of these facets were part of their last book discussion of The Shack.

Year 2009 was spent studying with Jeff Duncan and Lydia McDonald as they participated in orientation. The group commented that each time they review the orientation materials, there is more to learn about the spirit and mission of Presentation Foundress, Nano Nagle, and the Presentation sisters. Both Jeff and Lydia made their commitment as Presentation associates in September 2009. As Lydia requested to become an associate, she reflects, “I’ve learned the importance of hospitality that the sisters exemplify every day in helping others. I want to be closer to God. Sisters Dolores and Joan are inspirational role models who continue to show us how we should live, like the apostles.”

With the commitment of Jeff and Lydia, the Cities of Faith group totals 12. Sherry Booth and Lucy Durnan, two of the original members of the group, have moved from the area. The group makes every effort to keep in touch especially through phone calls.

The group plans to meet once a month, alternating between Mason City and Forest City. They will continue to pray and enjoy mission projects and discussions. They feel very fortunate and blessed to have Sisters Joan and Dolores to help guide them as they serve the Lord following the beautiful example set by Nano Nagle.

Sister Joan states, “I feel humbled to see and experience the faith shared by these associate men and women. I feel challenged to become more aware of those in need and to give of my service to them as I continue to be called ‘one pace beyond.’”

Certainly, ‘cities of faith’ are being built and strengthened in the Mason City and Forest City areas as the Cities of Faith group journeys closer to God and shares their gifts with others.

Presentation Associate Mary Ann Cichowski-Schaefer was always grateful for her “connections” with the Dubuque Presentations since the time her young children attended St. Germaine School in Oak Lawn, Illinois. Mary Ann volunteered as a teacher’s aide to Sister Raeleen Sweeney. Over the years, Mary Ann always searched for a deeper spirituality and an understanding of the mission of Nano Nagle. She became a Presentation associate on June 4, 2000.

Six months of illness and hospitalization finally ended for Mary Ann on February 15. Sister Raeleen and Associate Sister Virgie Luchsinger, SPCC, were privileged to join the family the last few hours of Hospice care, quietly singing hymns, praying and supporting one another in silence. It was a gentle, peaceful process to the very last moment. Sister Raeleen was honored to fulfill the request of the family by presenting the eulogy at Mary Ann’s funeral. Mary Ann will be missed by her husband, Frank, also a Presentation associate, her family, fellow associates and friends. The common thread remembered and shared by many was her gracious smile, her kindness, her deep faith and her love for learning. We remember Mary Ann with love and gratitude.

Presentation Associate Mary Ann Cichowski-Schaefer August 8, 1935 – February 15, 2010

ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP

Building and Strengthening Cities of Faith by KARLA BERN, ASSOCIATE CO-DIRECTOR

ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP

In Memory of Mary Ann Cichowski-Schaefer

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Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change

by JOY PETERSON, PRVM

Last December, 45,000 citizens of the world gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark, as part of the 15th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP 15) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. As co-convenor of the Rights of Justice for the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa and with support from the congregations of women religious in Eastern Iowa and the International Presentation Association, Sister Joy Peterson traveled to Copenhagen for the COP 15. All around the city “Hopenhagen” signs reminded her that the world was watching for a just and fair outcome to the conference. Sister Joy shares her experience.

The UN Convention on Climate Change was the result of the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro where countries met to address the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol established legally binding reductions of emissions for the 189 countries that have ratified the document. Since the terms of the protocol expire in 2012, the Copenhagen Conference was considered crucial for creating a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement to move climate change action forward.

While there seemed to be wide agreement at COP 15 that carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere must be stabilized, from the outset coming to an agreement on establishing the level of limits was a stumbling block. Less developed countries called for carbon limits of 350 parts per million (ppm) of the atmosphere. More developed nations and fast-growing countries like India, China and South Africa wanted the limit set at 450 ppm. Unfortunately, the ambitious agreement that many had hoped for did not come from the conference. Instead, a political accord was reached in which governments “recognize” the need to reduce carbon concentrations and promise to “enhance our long-term cooperative action to combat climate change.”

Words like “recognize” and “enhance” carry no legally binding commitments and this was a great frustration to many who had hoped for something more substantial in terms of action. At the same time, many believe that the struggles to reach agreement at Copenhagen demonstrate how seriously governments are taking climate policy. While there was difficulty in setting carbon limits, some direction was set. A Green Climate Fund will be established to help more vulnerable nations adapt to the effects of climate change. And in a separate agreement, steps were taken to address degradation of forests and to fund deforestation in poor countries.

While governments were struggling to work out new levels of agreement on climate issues, those of us who came as representatives of non-governmental organizations were lobbying government representatives and participating in parallel events on issues of climate change. Many groups, including various government-sponsored institutions, offered educational programs on topics such as geothermal heating of homes, electrical cars, the impact of climate change on persons living in poverty and genetically modified agricultural products.

One evening, I attended a program offered by the government of Bolivia. This event was hosted as part of Bolivia’s effort to gain United Nations’ support for a Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth. Bolivian Ambassador Pablo Solon and South African environmental lawyer Cormac Cullinan presented the background for this movement. Cullinan challenged listeners to give up the attitude of ownership that has historically allowed humans to go so far as to “own” other humans – slaves, wives and children. When something is owned, it has no rights and it exists only for the use of the owner. The Rights of Mother Earth calls for a relationship to Earth where respect for harmony with creation replaces an attitude of domination. Pope Benedict spoke with a similar attitude in his World Day of Peace homily (January 1, 2010) when he envisioned “right relationship among all of God’s people and with the Earth that sustains us.”

Residents of Copenhagen opened their homes for renters during the COP 15. I decided to take advantage of this hospitality with a young architect who gave up the single bedroom in her apartment to make room for me. Besides providing me with a delicious breakfast each morning, Bkke taught me many things about her way of life. Like many other Danes, her primary mode of transportation is her bicycle. Over 150,000 Copenhageners ride their bikes to work each day. By constructing well-marked, wide bicycle lanes, city planners hope that by 2015, 50 percent of the residents will bike to work. One day during the conference, I joined others from the U.S. on a transportation tour of the city. Since Copenhagen is known as one of the most livable cities in the world, the U.S. delegation offered this tour as an opportunity to learn from a place that has significantly reduced carbon emissions, while building a state-of-the-art transit system and creating well-planned development.

On one of my last days in Copenhagen, I attended an ecumenical prayer service in the Cathedral of Notre Dame where the Archbishop of Canterbury’s homily challenged us with two persistent questions: “How do we show that we love God’s creation? How do we learn to trust one another in a world of limited resources?” He gave an answer using the Scripture 1 John 4:18: “There is no fear where love exists. Rather, perfect love banishes fear.” After hearing the Archbishop’s homily, I reflected on the following night, “It is a wonderful thing to be with and meeting people who want to help...”

“At your Service
25 Years of Dedication
by JANE BUSE

Randy Engler has been director of maintenance, overseeing the building and grounds, for the Sisters of the Presentation for the past 25 years. Randy was honored during Mass and brunch on Sunday, January 10, 2010.

Sister Ruth Ann Takes, house coordinator, reflected during the celebration, “We are here to celebrate Randy who for 25 years has served the Sisters of the Presentation at Mount Loretto. Over the last 25 years many sisters have come and gone but Randy has been the ‘constant.’ His many gifts have kept our home running smoothly. On behalf of all of our Presentation family we say, ‘Thank you, Randy.’ and may we enjoy your presence for the next 25 years.”

In conjunction with community and staff, Randy has assisted the community through various renovations and improvements—chapel renovation, main building renovation, new formation house, two driveway resurfacings, two new roofs, new windows—to name a few.

“Randy is a hard-working and dedicated employee who takes great pride in his work. We are fortunate to have him here with us,” states Sister Lynne Marie Fangman, personnel director.

Away from Mount Loretto, Randy enjoys spending time with his wife, Shelly, and three boys, Pete, 31, Chris, 29, and Mike, 26. In his free time, Randy looks forward to hunting season and his annual fishing trip to Canada. One of Randy’s hobbies is taxidermy. He is co-owner of Angler-Beaver taxidermy.

“The last 25 years have been a real joy, something different each day,” reflects Randy. “The community has always made me feel like family. My celebration was a trip down memory lane—the sitting in the chapel recalling what it looked like before renovation, eating in the dining room and talking to all of the sisters, remembering all those who are no longer with us. I am thankful for the opportunity to work with the sisters and I hope to be around for another 25 years.”
Integrating Body, Mind and Spirit

Retreats Offer Renewal

by DIANA BLONG, PBVM

Without doubt, a Christian needs certain periods of retreat into solitude to be recollected and, in God’s presence, rediscover one’s path. Pope Benedict XVI

According to the Constitutions and Directory of the Sisters of the Presentation, each sister is encouraged to participate in a yearly retreat – a “time for private communion with God” in order to “renew her promise of steadfast love.”

For many in the Presentation community a special retreat at Mount Loreto near the beginning of each year offers an opportunity to respond to God’s invitation to grow in love. It is a time to pause, to take note of, apprise and to reflect on one’s life and experiences. Other retreat opportunities are also available at retreat centers in Iowa and throughout the country. Sister Janice Hancock values the variety of retreat experiences: preached, scripture-guided, one-on-one, directed and private. Many retreats last five to eight days in order to foster prayerful reflection; however, even one day or weekend renewals throughout the year deepen ongoing spiritual growth.

Sister Jeanine Kuhn, director at American Martyrs Retreat House in Cedar Falls, Iowa, sees a retreat center as “a place of grace” where retreatants experience “peace and serenity” just by turning into the driveway. “They leave behind all that has been so overwhelming and draining and enter into a place set apart so they can return to their daily life refreshed and alive to give of what they received,” states Sister Jeanine.

While retreats may have seemed limited to priests and men and women religious, Sister Ann Jackson, spiritual director at Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center in Hiawatha, Iowa, notes the strong tradition for retreats in the Catholic Church and in other faith traditions. Leonardo da Vinci, nearly 500 years ago, expressed the need each person has for quiet and reflection on one’s relationship with God. A retreat “offers the integration of body, mind and spirit” so that we may “discover places where we can find healing and connections…Retreat centers provide sacred spaces for us to engage this grand invitation of the Divine.”

Retreats offer individuals the opportunity to temporarily leave behind the usual distractions we all face for a long enough time to allow relaxation and for an inner change to occur: the ongoing conversion of heart that is critical to deepening faith.

Sister Jeanine sees a retreat as having all to “do with the heart – that interior place where we move deep within ourselves to discover the truth of who we are and to discover what we can of God. We learn to live more intentionally – we learn the ways of the heart in order to recognize, protect and nurture what is sacred about life.”

Jesus knew the importance of sacred space for his apostles as he invited them to “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” (Mark 6:31) Sister Julia Wingertt, a spiritual director, affirms this “time to stop, look and listen…to eat, sleep and pray in a more focused and leisurely way…to stop all the daily and ongoing ‘do-ing’ and simply ‘be’ and to be more intentionally in and with God.”

A yearly retreat “reenergizes or renews” Sister Bernard Mauz’s desire and deepens her love for God and neighbor, while Sister Marie Therese Coleman values the peace in taking “time to rest in the love of Jesus.”

Sister Marie Barth uses the image of the “tune-up I need – a focus on what’s important – an affirmation of my spiritual journey.” Sister Dolores Zieser also sees the need for a time “to withdraw from the ‘busyness’ of life and tune into one’s spirit.” Sister Julie Siegelkov appreciates the “extra time for prayer and slowing down” while Sister Jennifer Rausch enjoys the “luxury” of reading a spiritual book or “capturing my prayer/reflection in my original art.”

“My yearly retreat is a special time to count my blessings and to listen to God speaking through the director, through Scripture, through the events in my life and through the silence provided for reflection,” says Sister Dolores Mose. Sister Catherine Wingert treasures the quiet time and has “a new appreciation of nature, the beauty of animals, flowers, skies and galaxies. God is so present all around me.”

For Sister Anne Marie Kollasch, a retreat also affords time “to pray for kith and kin, friends and acquaintances.” Others cite discovering new ways of looking at life, becoming more positive in relationships with others and deepening love for the scriptures. Sister Lois Lehmann is aware of the changes in life that can occur through the events in my life and through the silence provided for reflection.”

Sister Sheila Kane paralleled her retreat with three passwords used to prepare for Lent: “a time to plant seeds that nurture my spirituality, a time to prioritize my life and a time to promise that I will continue to live out my commitment of service to God and the people in my life.” She would encourage others to consider a retreat as a “wonderful time for a spiritual vacation. It’s a time to get off the merry-go-round of life.”

Blessed are they who follow the path of Jesus, who find or choose a quiet place and time to rest, that the Spirit might lead anew in love!

So Why Make a Retreat?

Listen to Presentation sisters who have listened to their hearts. Sister Jeanine sees a retreat as having all to “do with the heart – that interior place where we move deep within ourselves to discover the truth of who we are and to discover what we can of God. We learn to live more intentionally – we learn the ways of the heart in order to recognize, protect and nurture what is sacred about life.”

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Walking Gently on the Earth

Greening the Kitchen

by BETH KRESS, PBVM

“Buy Fresh, Buy Local” is a guiding motto for the Food Service department at the Sisters of the Presentation. It is also a local organization that helps farmers and growers connect with buyers. The Keitel Family Farm, owned and managed by Jim and Katy Keitel of Lost Nation, Iowa, is the preferred grower for many food products served in the Mount Loretto dining room. Jim and Katy are members of River Bend Chapter of “Buy Fresh, Buy Local.”

Two years ago Sister Ruth Ann and Lisa started buying locally grown food, namely eggs and some vegetables. Eventually they found a source for meat. “Now the Keitel Family Farm handles most of the orders with our goal to purchase all from Jim and Katy,” states Sister Ruth Ann. However, the Keitel farm is about an hour away from Dubuque. The Keitel farm consists of 70 acres of land, but farming, Mount Loretto participates in the City of Dubuque’s year-round composting program. “It’s a great thing!” declares Lisa. “It’s wonderful to take food scraps and left-overs and do something with them – like to make a lawn greener or to grow awesome vegetables.”

At her home in Farley, Iowa, Lisa and her husband are planning this spring to landscape and garden with compost. “We recycle a lot – glass, plastic, paper bags, cardboard, juice cans,” adds Lisa. Collaborating with the housekeeping department, food service also uses cleaning products that are cleanser in the mineral nutrient solution that runs through pipes that contain the water. "Our approach to sustainable local farming is the Mount Loretto garden," says Lisa. When in season, fresh homegrown tomatoes fill the salad section every day. “We also enjoy her garden produce of lettuce, beets, potatoes and green beans.”

Other sisters, associates and friends also share their homegrown produce. "Today’s message received to not only get a farmer, but to know your farmer," comments Sister Ruth Ann. She and Lisa hope to visit the Keitel farm this spring. Attending the Earth Charter Summit at Augustana College in Rock Island, Sister Ruth Ann Takes, house coordinator, Lisa Behnke, director of food service, and Gina Francois, kitchen staff, agreed that the clearest message of the day was “Get a farmer.”

“The message included to not only get a farmer, but to know your farmer,” comments Sister Ruth Ann. She and Lisa hope to visit the Keitel farm this spring. “Everybody here at Mount Loretto is on board,” states Lisa. “I just request the products and Jim will provide them.”

Having the Keitel farm as “our own grower,” says Lisa, gives her and the staff the incentive to continue the Presentation sisters’ commitment to reduce their carbon footprint and to help sustain Earth. Among the products that Lisa obtains from the Keiteles are eggs, vegetables lettuce, green peppers, potatoes, carrots, peas, beans, beets, squash, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower and homegrown pop corn and meats: poultry, beef and pork. Chickens, pigs and beef cattle raised on the Keitel farm are not fed hormones nor given antibiotics and eat organically grown corn.
Irish folklore describes a leprechaun as a type of fairy usually taking the form of an old man, clad in a red or green coat, who enjoys mischief. Sister Ellen Murphy possesses the gifts of Irish heritage, including wit.

Taking great pride in her Irish heritage, Sister Ellen Murphy makes March 17 one of her favorite days of the year as she shows the talents of a wee sprite and dons her green leprechaun costume for St. Patrick’s Day.

Even more, Sister Ellen’s heritage from Nano Nagle, to teach the faith, is clear in her many years of teaching little ones to read and write and in preparing them for First Communion and First Reconciliation. Since coming to Mount Loretto in 1998 she continues to live Nano’s charism.

Sister Ellen is not totally retired — she spends time rockin’ babies at the Young-Urs Child Care Center, tutoring a Chinese woman in English and volunteering at the office of The Witness, Dubuque’s archdiocesan newspaper.

“Sister Ellen brings lots of pep to the office each Thursday,” says Sister Carol Hoverman, OSF, editor of The Witness.

Steve McMahon, The Witness writer states, “In addition to carrying out her weekly tasks around the office, Sister Ellen offers a real ministry of presence — a pure heart and a quiet spirit of love and compassion that lifts up those around her, undoubtedly without her even realizing it.”

“Given the day-to-day stresses of the workplace and the little tensions that sometimes develop among co-workers on days that she’s not around, Sister Ellen serves as a bridge-builder of sorts, as an instrument of peace, soothing things over with her genuine, unpretentious way of interacting with everyone,” adds Steve McMahon.

Sometimes Sister Ellen brings treats to the office and gathers those who want to join her for a coffee break with bread, light chatter and personal updates.

When faced with life’s inevitable physical frailties, Sister Ellen characteristically bears them with her strong faith, following her doctor’s orders while remaining unbroken in spirit.

Sister Ellen is witness to the hospitable, generous, joy-filled lives of women religious and of her Presentation community. She reveres the time to prepare them for First Communion and First Reconciliation. Since coming to Mount Loretto in 1998 she continues to live Nano’s charism.

The tradition of Nano Nagle and offering their hospitality, wisdom and compassion, both Sandy (left) and Sister Francesca (right) have touched the lives of newly found friends from around the world.

PRESENTATION LANTERN Honors Volunteer Tutors

The light of a lantern can bring hope and courage when life seems too challenging. Such is the light of those who journey with visitors at Presentation Lantern Center.

At the December 2009 Appreciation Dinner for tutors and the board of trustees, two volunteers were honored for their outstanding service. The first, Sandy Amberg, a retired high school Spanish teacher, has been a volunteer since January 2006. She shares her expertise and creative teaching methods with a variety of visitors over the years. With a gentle voice and a loving heart, she welcomes newcomers and helps them understand not only the language but also the culture of a new place. Many a week she is at the center every single day.

“Volunteering at the Lantern Center has opened up a new world for me”, shares Sandy. “I am grateful for the wonderful people I come in contact with daily. Everyone teaches me something. The languages may be different but the common denominator is that all people are seeking a life where they can live in peace, have enough food, adequate shelter and a purpose for being. We smile, laugh and encourage each other. And all leave happier.”

The second volunteer to be honored was Sister Francesca Presseller. From the very first day that the center opened, she was there sharing the gifts she has honed from a lifetime in the classroom. For years, she has come each Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. With the wisdom of her years, she helped newcomers learn English, as she became their friend.

“What an honor to have received the Lantern Service Award. To be able to have been a part of the Lantern family has been a great privilege,” states Sister Francesca. “In my case it is more Blessed to receive than to give! It has been a great privilege to work with the wonderful visitors who come to the Lantern. May the Lord continue to bless all who enter there.”

Sister Corine, executive director of the center, celebrates the gifts of Sandy and Sister Francesca. “I am so impressed by the generosity of these women. As volunteer tutors for people struggling to learn English, they are helping individuals find their own voices. It forever changes the lives of the visitors.”

Volunteer Journal

JENNIFER RAUSCH, PBVM

April 2010 brings to an end the world-wide celebration of Presentation sisters and associates marking the 225th anniversary of Nano Nagle’s death. Two centuries plus have not dimmed the deep admiration and love displayed by the people of Cork who learned of her death with these announcements in the local newspapers:

“Last Wednesday, the disposition of Miss Nagle was announced in the sorrowing faces of the poor of this city to whom she was the best of benefactors and patrons. She died on this day the 30th of November, and truly indescribable is the universal lament for the departure of this lady who for many years was the object of unexampled admiration and universal esteem of all ranks of people.”

The Hibernian Chronicle, April 26, 1784

“Died. Miss Nagle, foundress of the South monastery — her unremitted efforts in the cause of charity have raised a monument to her name which will resist the all-destructive hand of time and transmit the knowledge of her virtues with reverence and admiration to future ages.”

Volunteer Journal, April 26, 1784

And two centuries plus have not dimmed the legacy to which Presentation sisters and associates devoted their lives. They continue to carry the lantern of hope to a broken world.
“Do not let your hearts be troubled.” These are good words when someone dies, especially when it is someone who has been a part of our lives for many, many years. At the time of death there is always a sense of emptiness, but also the reassurance that our loved one is at home - home with the Lord.

On November 30, 2009, Sister Paulette Traut did go home, home to the one she knew and loved so well. The Hindu people refer to death as the quenching of a lamp because the dawn has come. For Sister Paulette the dawn of a new day has come, the day that will not end has come. The light that she now enjoys is that of Christ.

Sister Paulette's journey began February 3, 1922, as the daughter of Adam and Maude Traut. Sister Paulette, formerly known as Mary Kathleen (Kay), grew up in Dubuque, attended St. Patrick Grade School and St. Joseph Academy. She entered the Presentation community on September 8, 1939, and finished high school at St. Columbkille.

Sister received her bachelor’s degree from Loras College and her master’s degree from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee. Throughout her 50 years of teaching, she shared in the Presentation mission by teaching all grade levels in Catholic schools and in religious education programs. Sister Paulette was one of the first to receive the Master Teacher Award from the Diocese of Sioux City in 1986.

Throughout her life Sister was a lover of music and dance and was always involved with the dramatic arts in the schools as she helped with school musical programs. Sister Paulette had many hobbies among which were traveling. She especially enjoyed her trip to Italy with her family and the opportunity to visit the pope while there. She enjoyed crossword puzzles, art, music, dance and reading. Those of us who had the privilege of living with Sister knew she was seldom seen without a book in her hand.

Sister Paulette appreciated her family, the Presentation sisters, her friends and the nurses and staff at Mount Loretto. As she prayed so often, “I thank everyone who has shared my life in any way. I appreciate them and thank God for them.”

We have no idea what eternal life is - the scriptures sometimes speak about it as a meal or a banquet to which everyone is called and sometimes as a paradise in which there will be no more tears. Sister Paulette spent the last several years in a wheel chair praying for the needs of the community. We rejoice that she is home and now enjoying the banquet.
Featured below are special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation sisters, near and far.

**Giving Voice Conference**

In January, Sister Jessi Beck, with 22 sisters in their 20s and 30s from 15 different religious communities, gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, for the 7th annual Giving Voice gathering.

**Time for Tea**

The second annual Epiphany Tea was hosted by the leadership team for sisters living at Mount Loretto. Sisters Matthew Cunningham (left) and Beth Driscoll (right) share a festive moment with tea and treats.

**Memories of Okolona**

A Thanksgiving to be remembered! Sisters Marie Barth, Louann Doering and Dolores Moes travelled with Terry Hilkin to Okolona, Mississippi, over Thanksgiving to help Sister Jean Ann Meyer who works amid the African-American community. They prepared a Thanksgiving meal for 200 people, taught children who were eager to learn and sorted items for the One-of-a-Kind resale store. The sisters were willing to help in any way. Recently Sister Dolores lost a dear friend and associate, Mary Cullen, and a cousin, Lois Connelly. Sister was delighted to be able to donate many of their belongings to the resale store, knowing both Mary and Lois would be appreciative. Pictured is Sister Louann Doering with EXCEL students.

**Exhibit Schedule**

- **January 15, 2010 – April 25, 2010**
  S. Dillon Ripley Center at the Smithsonian
  Washington, D.C.

- **May 9, 2010 – August 28, 2010**
  Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage
  Cleveland, Ohio

- **February 2011 – April 2011**
  National Mississippi River Museum
  Dubuque, Iowa

- **September 24, 2010 – January 22, 2011**
  Statue of Liberty National Monument/
  Ellis Island Immigration Museum
  Liberty Island, New York

**You are invited to join us.**

- **April 5-10, 2010**
  QUEST Service Opportunity
  Chicago, Illinois

- **April 9-10, 2010**
  Dubuque’s Got Sisters
  Sisters of the Presentation
  Dubuque, Iowa

- **April 22-24 & April 29-30, May 1, 2010**
  Garage/Gym Sale
  Sisters of the Presentation
  2360 Carter Road
  Dubuque, Iowa

- **April 25, 2010**
  Taize Prayer
  7:00 p.m.
  Sisters of the Presentation
  Sacred Heart Chapel
  2360 Carter Road
  Dubuque, Iowa

- **May 15, 2010**
  QUEST Service Opportunity
  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.dubuquepresentations.org or call 563.588.2008.

**Please pray with us.**

- **April 11, 2010**
  60th Jubilee
  Sister Dominic Church

- **May 9, 2010**
  25th Jubilee
  Sister Martha Donnelly

- **May 15, 2010**
  25th of each month
  Mass for Benefactors

- **April 17-18, 2010**
  Presentation Associate & Sister Retreat
  Sisters of the Presentation
  Dubuque, Iowa

- **June 19, 2010**
  25th Jubilee
  Sister Martha Donnelly

- **February 2011**
  Pray for Vocations

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  Mass for Benefactors
Tour Area Convents - April 9-10

Religious life
Interested in Checking Out

Dubuque’s
Got Sisters

Join us for a 24-hour tour of four tri-state area convents to share life through praying, dining and storytelling. Local transportation will be provided. There is no fee to attend.

For more info:
563.588.2351
ext. 5134
newmember@bvmcong.org

Sponsored by Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dubuque Franciscan Sisters, and Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters.