



PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

offering hospitality to the world



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PUBLISHED QUARTERLY by the
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*The congregation is a member of Sisters United
News of the Upper Mississippi River Valley,
Communicators for Women Religious and the
American Advertising Federation of Dubuque.*

The PURPOSE

The purpose of Presentation Doorways is to further the mission of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our associates by sharing the news and views of the congregation with our benefactors, families and friends. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and to invite others to become involved in our mission.

Your THOUGHTS & COMMENTS

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. Submit to:

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Cover PHOTOS

The doorways represented on the cover are snapshots of significant doors in the Presentation history: (left to right) doorway of the current motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road; doorway of St. Vincent's Academy (now St. Columbkille) in Dubuque in 1879; doorway of Sacred Heart Chapel at the current motherhouse; doorway of the former motherhouse at 1229 Mount Loretta Avenue which was built in 1909; and doorway by which Mother Vincent Hennessy left Mooncoin, Ireland, to begin the Dubuque foundation in 1874.

PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

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Cover PHOTO

Presentation Associates Bernie Graves and Judi Moritz present Tré Pixley with the Nano Nagle Service Award. Both Bernie and Judi nominated Tré for his willingness to go above and beyond in his service to others and Earth.

A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Openings

by BETH DRISCOLL, PBVM

“...Enter into the reality of people’s lives and know the power of tenderness,” Pope Francis inspires us in the *Joy of the Gospel*, “Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people.”

Lately for prayer, I’ve been re-reading my mother’s letters. The reality of her death in October 2014, continues to reveal her as a person of mercy, part and parcel of a people. Since God called Mom in her 88th year to her eternal home, it is becoming ever more clear to me how her wonderfully complicated life led her to know her part in transforming the world.

Mom’s letters were filled with all that had been most meaningful to her. Reading between the lines I recognized that, for Mom, entering into the reality of people’s lives and tenderly embodying the works of mercy was as integral as breathing air:

- Visiting the sick in the care centers, and often suggesting to the nursing staff that they not pass up the opportunity to take the residents outside for a bit of sunshine and fresh air;
- Comforting her neighbor whose heart ached in the loneliness she felt as a result of her husband’s illness;
- Initiating a welcome and introducing herself to newcomers at the parish;
- Suggesting to the members of her Friday scripture group that they donate, not for flowers for the altar, but to the women of Maria House in Dubuque or the Katrina survivors in New Orleans;
- Baking apple and cherry pies for church events, even though a friend had chided her for “at her age” not putting her name on the ‘in-active’ list of parish Guild members;
- Noticing the progression of Alzheimer’s disease in a high school classmate and informing his wife that he could stay at Mom’s home while his wife shopped for groceries or took some time for herself;
- Singing faithfully in the parish Resurrection choir; promising her prayers and support to family members mourning the loss of their loved ones; and regularly visiting in the weeks that followed...

The works of mercy that were so much a part of my mother’s life never made the newspaper headlines or the local news, but they did make their way into the hearts of the people whose lives she touched. “Enter the reality of people’s lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated...” These small, seemingly simple, yet complicated, local acts of mercy create global impact! As each of us enters the reality of people’s lives in our own locale, the world is mercifully transformed.

As we anticipate the Jubilee Year of Mercy, proclaimed by Pope Francis as December 8, 2015 through November 20, 2016, perhaps we could each reflect on a person who has extended mercy through the power of tenderness. How receptive are we to receiving mercy? To extending it? With deeper intention, may we enter into the reality of people’s lives and surrender to the wonderfully sacred complications of life.



Our MISSION

We, the Sisters of the Presentation, are Catholic women who dedicate our lives to God through evangelization, prayer, service and hospitality. Our way of life is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We share in the vision of our foundress, Nano Nagle, who dared to dream of a better world for the poor, sick and uneducated of Ireland. We commit ourselves to the empowerment of women and children. We reverence and celebrate all creation as gift. We commit ourselves to confronting injustice and working for peace.

As we continue to keep Nano’s dream alive, we are pleased to share our mission with you.

Our DIRECTION

Ignited by the fire of God’s love and impelled by the legacy of Nano Nagle, we, the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, participate in the evolving consciousness of the cosmos by

reverencing relationships
celebrating unity
engaging contemplation and
fostering partnerships

to transform ourselves and our world.

Sisters of the Presentation LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sister Julianne Brockamp

Sister Beth Driscoll

Sister Ann Jackson

Sister Leanne Welch



While visiting the elderly at the Bronzville Park Care Center, Sister Janet Stelken enjoys a laugh with a resident.

SISTER JANET STELKEN

Gentle, Caring, Nurturing

by FRANCINE QUILLIN, PBVM



If you were elderly and loved Jesus, you would feel so privileged to have Sister Janet Stelken visiting you and bringing you Communion. And the people at Bronzville Park Care Center in Chicago, Illinois, do indeed recognize how privileged they are.

They seem in fact, to be God's chosen ones, because Sister Janet has recently replaced Sister Barbara Rastatter who formerly

ministered to the elderly of St. James Parish in Chicago. When Sister Barbara left there, she left big shoes to fill! The residents still ask about Sister Barbara, and their eyes light up when one can give them first-hand information about her. But they know that her replacement also ministers to them with the same love and care they knew before.

Janet Stelken was born in Farley, Iowa, the oldest of 11 children born to Emil and Marian Stelken. She grew up on a farm and thus has great appreciation for the gifts of nature and the value of hard

work. After graduating from St. Joseph High School in 1963, she entered the Sisters of the Presentation. It was not a decision she had made lightly, but one which resulted from much consideration and prayer, prompted initially by an invitation from Sister Helen Marie Feeney.

Sister Janet graduated from Clarke College in 1968 with a major in biology and a minor in education. She began a 15-year career of teaching junior high science in Mason City, Sheldon, Algona, and at St. Columbkille in Dubuque, all in Iowa. She then taught in the religion department of Garrigan High School, also in Algona. Combined with that position was the responsibility of coordinating the confirmation program which included eligible students from both Garrigan and the public high school. Sister Janet met regularly with a team of parents and the parish priests to plan retreats, informational meetings, sponsor meetings, service opportunities for the youth in this program and all of the students of the five parishes involved were confirmed together in one ceremony. "I couldn't have done all of that without the wonderful cooperation and help of all the parents and catechists who worked with me to accomplish this large venture," remarks Sister Janet.

Through the intervening summers, Sister Janet earned her master's degree in pastoral studies from Loyola University in Chicago, which prepared her well for all of her future ministries, each in varying ways.

Sister Janet accepted elections by the community to serve two terms in community leadership, which spanned from 1998 to 2008. During that time she was the leadership liaison to the senior sisters at the Presentation motherhouse, and she comments, "I hadn't had a lot of experience with the senior population before that, so it gave me the opportunity to really appreciate older people." Following her time in leadership, Sister Janet was invited to consider a completely new ministry: pastoral care for seniors at St. Therese Southwest in Hopkins, Minnesota. That further impressed upon her the many gifts the elderly have to offer.

After six years at St. Therese, Sister Janet was invited to participate in a community of Presentation Sisters which was being newly-formed in Chicago, and it happened that Sister Barbara left St. James at about that time; thus Sister Janet resumed the ministry so well established by her predecessor. Sister Janet is a naturally out-going person, so, after living alone in Hopkins, she now observes, "I so appreciate living in community again." And it is easy to tell that she is an essential part of the lives of Sister Marilyn Breen, Sister Jessi Beck and Candidate Mary Therese Krueger.

Sister Janet visits the elderly in their homes, care centers and retirement homes. She prays with the seniors and brings them Communion. She is touched by the spirituality, particularly of the elderly in the Black culture who so treasure receiving Communion. As soon as she comes in the door, many of them will ask, "Did you bring Communion?" Sister Janet says that, in spite of their infirmities or difficulties, they will always proclaim, "I am so blessed!" And, observes Sister Janet, "They truly mean that with their whole heart. They are always most welcoming, so they really live the hospitality of Jesus whom they receive."

To observe Sister Janet pray and visit with these seniors is to see a woman who herself is a person of prayer, and whose gentle and caring nature makes each senior believe that s/he is the most important person in the world at that moment.

There are long years between the high school dances in Farley, the years of teaching science and religion, of ministering to the Presentation community and the privilege of appreciating the elderly in a new way. But they are years which Sister Janet has weathered well and which, if anything, have made her even more attuned to people of all ages and cultures. No wonder people worriedly say, "I was afraid you weren't coming" if she is even a little bit later than usual for her visits. And then, comfortable in her presence, they settle back in bed to have a visit with this imitator of Presentation Foundress, Nano Nagle, who walked the streets at night to visit the elderly confined to their garrets in Cork, Ireland. Sister Janet truly is an example of going "one pace beyond."



Sister Janet Stelken prays with a resident at a care center.



Left to right: The 2015 Presentation Mission Service Award recipients Claira Sieverding (middle left) and Katlyn Elfering (middle right) share a friendship, as well as the same love of service, with past recipients Chelsea McCarraher and Rachel Fitzgibbon.

Exceptional Individuals Honored through Scholarships & Awards

by JANE BUSE and MIRIAM MCKEE

The Sisters of the Presentation initiated several scholarships and awards to further Presentation Foundress Nano Nagle's legacy of education in the spirit of her desire to serve. The sisters are pleased to honor the following commendable recipients.

Nano Nagle College Scholarship

The Nano Nagle College Scholarship rotates among the many Iowa high schools in which Presentation Sisters have ministered. The scholarship was awarded to a student at Wahlert Catholic High School, Dubuque in 2010; Bishop Garrigan High School, Algona in 2011; Newman High School, Mason City in 2012; St. Mary High School, Storm Lake in 2013 and St. Edmond Catholic High School, Fort Dodge in 2014. This year's \$500 Nano Nagle College Scholarship was awarded to **Carly Meyer**, a deserving senior from Beckman High School in Dyersville, who models self-giving service by the numerous service opportunities she has participated in over the past few years. Carly is committed to using her God-given talents to improve the lives of others, whether that be mentoring mentally-challenged students at Special Olympics, playing bingo with the elderly at a nursing home, serving within her parish by singing, distributing communion and helping at parish events or volunteering her time at high school events. This fall, Carly will continue serving as she pursues a college degree in nursing.

"Strong moral values are a part of Carly's character," states Mary Kluesner, teacher at Beckman Catholic. "She has many of the qualities that Nano Nagle possessed when she worked among the less fortunate. Carly is energetic, considerate, reliable and determined to do the best she can, no matter what the challenge or difficulty of the task. I admire Carly's compassion for others and her ability to communicate effectively with adults and her peers."



Nano Nagle College Scholarship recipient, Carly Meyer (middle) celebrates her award with her father and Sister Beth Driscoll.

Mother Vincent Hennessey Foundation Scholarship

In celebration of Mother Vincent and the Dubuque Presentation foundation, the Sisters of the Presentation offer a \$500 Mother Vincent Hennessey Foundation Scholarship to a graduating senior from Wahlert Catholic High School (WCHS), Dubuque, which Presentation Sisters have actively supported since its inception. This year's recipient is **Sabrina Fleege**. Sabrina has been actively involved in multiple service opportunities at Wahlert, at her home parish and in the greater Dubuque community. Sabrina plans to continue her Catholic education at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, this fall.

With a heart for service which is animated by a strong sense of gratitude for the blessings in her life, Sabrina never misses an opportunity to give of herself for the good of another. Humble reflection on her service experiences has compelled Sabrina to view service as a way to "give the gift of empathy." She plans to use this gift from God to "connect with those who need help" throughout college and beyond as she pursues medical school.

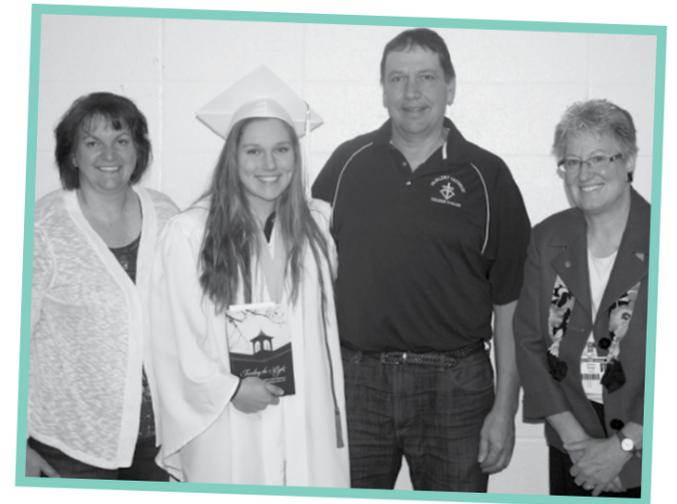
Barbara Ressler, teacher at Wahlert, confirms Sabrina's desire to serve others by saying "her dream is to become a physician and participate in Doctors without Borders," an organization that helps people worldwide with the greatest needs by delivering emergency care. "Where Sabrina is, smiles are! Her love for people shines in her eyes and hands and heart ready to serve."

Presentation Mission Service Award

The Presentation Mission Service Award is offered to a person(s), 18 years of age or older, committed to serving the Presentation mission and who may otherwise be unable to afford a mission immersion experience, locally, nationally or abroad. This year's recipients are **Claira Sieverding** and **Katlyn Elfering**, both recent graduates from Loras College, Dubuque.

Claira and Katlyn plan to travel to Piura, Peru, this summer to offer their time to Santissimo Sacramento, the sister parish of Katlyn's home parish in Wadsworth, Illinois. They plan to work primarily in the school tutoring students on a variety of subjects, assist in an all-girl orphanage and offer services at the parish center. During their free time, they will attend Spanish Mass and Eucharistic adoration and also help with hospitality at the parish.

Claira has "felt a strong calling to work with children" and has four younger sisters whom she enjoys helping with their homework. She believes that service is a two-way system that is beyond the giving of time or skills. She believes that "service is recognizing the human dignity in each person and utilizing our skills to enable others to reach their highest potential." Claira believes that the key way to help people reach their potential is by breaking the cycle of poverty through better education.



Wahlert Catholic High School graduate, Sabrina Fleege, with her parents, expresses gratitude for the Mother Vincent Hennessey Foundation Scholarship presented to her by Associate Barbara Ressler (right).

Katlyn states, "I am anxiously awaiting my return 'home' since I left in 2011. I am excited to see my adopted family, attend nightly Mass in Spanish and work in the school I once helped build." She made her first trip back in 2008 with her godfather and has been thrilled at every opportunity to go back. She has learned that material things do not matter as much as the love one has for God, those around you and yourself. She believes that everything you put in when serving you get back 110 percent. Katlyn has experienced firsthand "among the poverty and desert sand the beauty of the Holy Spirit in full; for what the people of Piura lack in material items, they make up in their faith."

Nano Nagle Service Award

The \$500 Nano Nagle Service Award is awarded to a person of exemplary service, nominated by a Presentation Sister or associate. The service award may be used to benefit a service project or in some way aid the nominee in continuing the gift of service. This year's award was given to **Tré Pixley** from Kansas City, Missouri.



Tré Pixley

Tré, a student at Cristo Rey Catholic High School, was nominated by Associates Judi Moritz and Bernie Graves who met Tré when he and his mother were in the RCIA program, where they witnessed firsthand Tré's passion for justice and the care of the environment. Through this experience, Judi and Bernie felt compelled to nominate Tré for the service award since he "stands out as one who never hesitates to be of service and possesses the gentlest of spirits; he is inviting and comforting to all around him." Tré is planning to study environmental law in the future in hopes of promoting the well being of Earth as an attorney.

Evolving Our Future from a Contemplative Heart

by BETH KRESS, PBVM and CAROL WITRY, ASSOCIATE CO-DIRECTOR

“When we engage in circles of contemplation and dialogue, the outreach is so much greater,” states Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, as she led a gathering of 270 associates and sisters from 16 congregations of women religious, during the biennial Conference of Associates and Religious of the Midwest Area (CARMA), on April 25, in Dubuque, Iowa.



Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM

The day also offered opportunities for conversation. Noting the excitement and energy buzzing in the room, Presentation Associate Barbara Ressler comments, “Sharing among congregations ignited further hope. It was life-giving to all to hear representatives of each congregation share examples of how they are experiencing the future unfolding in their congregation and how their congregational charism is evolving.”

Thinking back on the day, Presentation Associate Janet Leonard reflects, “I’m a tiny cog in the wheel; yet Sister Nancy’s message was that everything we do affects the whole. Maybe I can do only a little bit; but together we can change the world!”

Sister Rita Cameron summarizes the retreat, “This was an excellent experience offering renewal, inspiration, community and insight. There is indeed a reason for great hopefulness as we respond to new needs with a new consciousness!”

Speaking on “Evolving Our Future from a Contemplative Heart,” Sister Nancy began the day by recalling many of the challenges of the past 50 years and recognizing that systems we once knew and relied upon are breaking down. “This,” she says, “can lead to times of chaos from which we either move toward breakdown or breakthrough. The good news is that creativity comes out of chaos!”

Sister Nancy offered participants a foundational understanding of consciousness – how we view the world, the lens through which we interpret reality. She explained how consciousness evolves in a developmental way, offering a new perspective, a new way of seeing.

Commenting on this transition to a new perspective, Associate Becky Searcy says, “I especially liked the image of a spiral that she used to illustrate this movement toward a new way of seeing and interpreting reality.”

Sister Nancy suggested that as congregations of women religious and their associates move into the future, they are called to participate in a new consciousness that “is based on the life mission of Jesus as revealed in the Gospel and includes a deeper commitment to love, forgiveness, equality, inclusivity, non-violence, justice, the power of healing and oneness with creation as Jesus had.”

In response to the query, “It all sounds good, but how do we do this?” Sister Nancy states, “By becoming mystics! As we engage in contemplation we become fully present to the moment in order to be in touch with the Divine presence within us and open to the unconditional love of God.”



Presentation Sisters and associates participate in the 2015 CARMA Retreat.

The Conference of Associates and Religious of the Midwest Area (CARMA) is a regional group of the North American Conference of Associates and Religious (NACAR) that began in 1996. The conference is a membership organization that acts as a catalyst to serve, promote and empower the associate-religious relationship among lay men and women to find ways to embrace and live the charisms of many religious communities in Canada and the United States of America.



Left to right: Associates Ann Cooper and Barb Sauser arrange sale items.

In Memory of George Evans

May 26, 1926 - May 23, 2015

Living almost directly across the street from the convent from the time Presentation Sisters first came to St. Dorothy Parish in Chicago, George Evans, his sisters and a nephew have been long time friends. Block parties were great times to get to know the neighbors as extended community. George was a neighbor everyone could count on.



Many Saturday mornings the “Mass group” including the priest, St. Dorothy sisters, Associates Verona Buckner and Alice Hamilton (now deceased), and George, enjoyed breakfast with lively conversations of church and current events keeping all involved.

George, Verona and Alice all three gave generously of their time and energy to the school, children and the sisters. George was faithfully involved helping as a morning and afternoon crossing guard and tutoring children.

When the associate program was initiated in 2000, George, Verona and Alice were naturals to join and were among the first in Chicago. George was a great reader, loved the arts, classical music, opera and had keen wisdom and insights to share with all. George also had great respect and love for the Presentation Sisters.

“During the past few years George’s declining health made it difficult to leave his home for activities. However he was always interested in all that was happening,” comments Sister Lou Cota. “He is missed, but we know that he is doing all he can for each of us as he sits at the table with our other Presentation saints in heaven. May our associate and friend rest in peace!”

Annual Garage Sale A Win-Win for All

The Presentation Sisters and associates hosted their 11th annual garage sale on April 23-25 and April 30-May 2. The sale continues to grow every year. Each spring, a call goes out to sisters, associates, employees and friends to donate gently-used items. Once again this year, the gym was filled with generous donations that would become someone’s treasure.

This garage sale has become one that shoppers look forward to every year. Presentation hospitality is evident as shoppers are welcomed with coffee, donuts and bake-sale items and enjoy the organized, attractive presentation of the items as well as the fact that it’s all inside!

Reflecting on this year’s sale, Sister Lynn Marie Fangman of the sale’s core committee notes, “Not only is this a great way to clean out unwanted or unneeded items, but is also a way they don’t end up in the landfill and those items are going to someone who will use them.”

Associate Deb McClimon, also a core committee member, states that the Presentation garage sale is a win-win for everyone. “The shoppers go home happy with their purchases, items are recycled and our proceeds help those in need.”

This year, over \$19,000 was collected for Opening Doors in Dubuque, Iowa, and the student endowment fund at St. Mary School in Storm Lake, Iowa.

The garage sale core team is grateful to all who contributed, helped unpack, sort and organize, donated fresh-baked goods, promoted the sale, worked at the sale and shared hospitality with all. We look forward to seeing you again next year!



Left to right: Sister Carmen Hernandez and Associate Joann Gullickson prepare for the sale.



Sister Sheila Kane decorates the walls of her room with all things most important to her: family, friends, community and her Irish heritage.

SISTER SHEILA KANE

Treasuring Family, Community

by BETH KRESS, PBVM

Growing up in a family of eight with Bart and Pearl (Byrne) Kane at the helm, Sister Mary Sheila (June) Kane inherited stories, people and talents exhibited around “West Hill” Dubuque. The legacy includes hard working people, involvement in politics, the gift of scholarship, love of music and a tenacious respect for her Irish heritage.

For many years the Byrne/Kane family owned and operated a neighborhood grocery store where folks gathered and where proprietors served the public. The background provided Sister Sheila inspiration for some of her creative writing interests and with the desire for social service.

“At home mother and dad both encouraged our personal confidence. We could speak out and develop our sense of self,”

states Sister Sheila. While still a senior at St. Columbkille High School she applied this confidence as she did secretarial work at the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Sister Sheila brought her family legacy to her many roles over the years. Among them were music teacher, pastoral minister, member of local ministerial and ecumenical associations, local director and hospitality coordinator.

“Learning how to be hospitable and developing a love for children and adults came from my family and was nurtured by my Presentation community,” comments Sister Sheila. She recalls her mother and dad feeding the workers who were fixing a broken water main near the Kane home and her mother’s strong lesson to not judge others – especially when not knowing the whole story.

In her eight years of pastoral ministry in Iowa City, Iowa, Sister Sheila gave energy to church and community projects, such as a free lunch program, the relocation of refugees and visiting care centers, the homebound and inmates at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center in Oakdale, Iowa, to name a few. When leaving Iowa City, she stated, “Whatever I can do to help the underdog, I will do my best.”

Her interest in politics is a gift from her father. “Dad was a Democratic committee man for the 1st Precinct in Dubuque. He always worked at the polls and encouraged everyone he met to vote.” Sister took a similar role when she moved to Mount Loretto in 1988 by making sure the sisters were registered for absentee ballots and by welcoming visiting political candidates.

Love of learning was pervasive in the Kane household. In addition to being a hard worker, Sister was a serious student graduating with honors. “Mother, who loved music, played the piano and arranged for us girls to have piano lessons,” says Sister. She adds that she and classmate Miriam Rastatter were among the earliest in community to become certified music teachers. “What a pair – Miriam excelled in performance. I was best at theory.”

Continuing her love for articulating ideas, Sister Sheila has taken creative writing seriously with such essays as “The Butcher, the Baker,” “Raising Kane” and “A Love Affair with Notre Dame.” She also uses this talent for memorials to Kane siblings and Presentation Sisters.

Travels with family and community have taken Sister Sheila to Ireland twice. “I am proud of my Irish heritage,” she remarks. “I feel sensitive to what the Irish people endured throughout their history. I was most touched when we, as Dubuque Presentations, walked the footsteps of Nano Nagle in 2000. When hearing the Shandon bells in Cork, I was reminded of my mother singing about the Shandon bells in the song ‘Twas Only an Irishman’s Dream.’”

Journeying as a music teacher throughout parishes and schools in Iowa and South Dakota in a 30-year span, then as a pastoral minister for 10 years and on to community service at Mount Loretto for 20-plus years, Sister Sheila is now enjoying a well-deserved “slow down.”

“I enjoy the more relaxed pace for prayer time, community meals and gatherings,” Sister comments, admitting that she is still the caretaker for absentee voting, participates in the Dubuque Area Congregations United (DACU) and is part of a Presentation associate group.

Blessed with a genuine Irish enjoyment of gathering, Sister Sheila looks forward to times shared with Mary Ann Kane, her younger sister and former Presentation Sister, and with Liz Lynch, their friend and former Presentation Sister. Sister Sheila also treasures visits from nieces, nephews, classmates and other friends.

The icing on the cake of loyalty for this avid fan is to take pleasure in following the Fighting Irish and to celebrate everything good about the University of Notre Dame!

Sharing Our Story, Our Gifts

by RITA CAMERON, PBVM

Vocation stories are found/heard all around us. A sister reflects on her unexpected call as she leaves a life as a surfer in California to become a sister in Pennsylvania; a brother explains his journey from immigrant to religious life in the United States; a deacon salutes the commitment of his wife as the two of them journey through the classes involved in becoming a deacon; a teacher explains the frustration and joy she has experienced as she has worked with students for many years. These people tell their stories and they rejoice in their vocation choices. Their struggles, joys and sorrows emerge as their stories unfold.

An article in the latest *Horizon Magazine* related by Carol Schuck Scheiber, editor of *Horizon*, sparked interest, “Fourth grader Aiden was interviewing his father in Jackson, Mississippi.” He said, “Dad, what is your dream for me?” His father replied: “My dream is for you to live out your dreams. There’s an old proverb that talks about when children are born, children come out with their fists closed because that’s where they keep all their gifts. And as you grow, your hands learn to unfold because you’re learning to release your gifts to the world. And so, for the rest of your life, I want to see you live with your hands unfolded.” Carol Schuck Scheiber went on to say, “This understanding of our gifts and their need to be shared is what ‘vocation culture’ looks like. We don’t always name secular images and ideas like these for what they are, but the vision that Aiden’s father holds for him is profoundly spiritual.” This spiritual journey includes a community which supports, challenges, upholds decisions, helps in the discernment and, most importantly, walks with each of us as we write the book that holds the story of our lives.

A book of life may be brief; it may be long. Whatever the length, the pages hold a wealth of information. What might the pages say if we lived our lives with the image of open hands? What if we felt so comfortable with God that we relaxed our grip and entered into life with a sense of: “Here you are safe. Here you are loved. Here you are supported as you figure things out, as you reassemble, as you revive and become the best and most whole self you can be?” What if we received God’s invitation to love one another through the smell of freshly-baked bread, the sound of familiar voices, the hand on a shoulder, a hug of support, the sight of candles on a birthday cake? Could we respond by letting our bodies relax and rest; could we let our spirit soak up our surroundings; could we let tears run if we are sad; could we let a chuckle become a full burst of laughter; could we become whole knowing it is safe to be who we really are? What if we let the saying “let go and let God” have real meaning for our lives? What a story!

The Presentation directional statement calls us to reverence relationships. May we share the pages of our story that give support, that challenge the listener, that may be helpful in another’s discernment and most importantly give evidence of living with an open hands stance. And as we listen to others tell their vocation stories, may we recognize their need for mentors, friends, and prayerful support and rejoice in all that life has to offer. As the Navajo chant so aptly says: “When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice!”

Remembering Winner, South Dakota 1920-1968

by MARY HERMANN PLATT, PBVM

“In 1920 some timid, home-loving sisters considered South Dakota almost beyond Earth’s end. However, four valiant daughters of Nano Nagle were found who were ready to face anything for the honor and glory of God in the name of the Iowa Presentation Sisters. They were Sisters Mary Albia O’Brien, Mary de Sales Weibel, Mary Winifred Donohue and Mary Rita Duffy. Fired with ambition for achievements in the Master’s ripening fields in the land of the Sioux tribe, Sister Mary Albia, as superior, knelt with her companions before the altar in Mount Loretto Chapel and prayed God to bless their efforts at St. Mary’s in Winner.” *Annals*

Thus began the history of the Presentation presence in Winner, South Dakota. It didn’t take long for the four sisters to succumb to the warm welcome given by Father Charles H. Virnig and his parishioners. Through the years, 39 other sisters followed in the footsteps of Sister Mary Albia and her companions.

One of their students, Alta Dowd, joined the Presentation Sisters and was known as Sister Mary Francis.

The impetus for the building of St. Mary School in Winner came from Bishop John J. Lawler. His letter to Father Virnig, dated March 2, 1918, states, “You may tell the parishioners that I shall insist on a parochial school, and that it is my wish that you begin to take subscriptions and prepare for the building.”

When the sisters arrived in September 1920, they found an unfinished school, and so they began instructions in the church, using the main body of the church and the sacristy. They lived in the rectory while Father Virnig lived elsewhere until the combination school/convent was completed.

With the blessing and dedication of the new building on November 20, the sisters and students were ready to move in on Presentation Day, November 21. The second floor provided space for sleeping quarters for the sisters and 35-40 boarders.

Classrooms occupied the first floor, while the lower floor housed the kitchen, dining room and music practice rooms. The boarders came from great distances, and so arrived on Sunday evening to stay until Friday afternoon. Occasionally they stayed over the weekend as well when the weather did not permit their parents to come for them. The sisters had study hall duties and supervision of bed time rituals and morning wake-up calls along with their teaching responsibilities.

St. Mary School provided instruction in all of the basic subject areas, as well as music and a flourishing extracurricular program for grades one through eight.

Top photo: The first Presentation community at St. Mary School. Left to right: Sister Rita Duffy, Albia O’Brien, Father Charles Virnig, Sister Winifred Donohue and Sister de Sales Weibel. Left photo: St. Mary School, Winner, South Dakota



The music program was very large. The annals describe one of Sister Leo’s recitals from which 40 students were missing because of a blizzard, but “from the length of the program you would never know they were missing.”

In 1934 it became necessary for the Presentation Sisters to return to Dubuque, and for three years the Benedictine Sisters from St. Joseph, Minnesota, took over the teaching duties. According to the parish history book published in 1960, adverse conditions, doubtful crops, price conditions, families leaving the parish and lack of funds closed the school in 1938. By 1940, however, conditions had improved to the point where the Presentation Sisters returned, to remain until 1968. By then the population had decreased to an extent where there were too few students to make a full faculty feasible and the doors closed for the last time.

Oral history tapes available in the archives at the Presentation motherhouse provide interesting anecdotes described by the sisters who ministered at Winner. Sister Denise Kollasch recalls that South Dakota is known as the pheasant capital of the United States. As housekeeper she talked of the day when she helped clean and prepare 157 pheasants for the boarders’ dinner. She was in charge of churning butter from the cream obtained from parishioners.

Sister Clement Bird comments that the older boarders helped with the pheasants. Her impression of the locale was “no trees” and “hot all the time.” Traveling to be with other Presentation Sisters for Thanksgiving entailed a 200-mile trip, but it was worth it to get together “so far from Dubuque.”

Parents sacrificed to send their children to St. Mary School, according to Sister Patrick Waldorf, who recalls that families included the sisters in excursions to the Black Hills, and to Timber Lake to visit fellow Presentation Sisters. The parents were very gracious and often expressed their appreciation for what the sisters were doing for their children. The school population usually included six to 10 Native American families whose children were always ready to help, and who sometimes stayed over the weekend when their parents were unable to have them at home.

Sister Patrick recalls teaching Saturday religion classes at other towns, in addition to full-time classroom activities during the week. A TV station near Winner (150 miles being “near”) once had several sisters on a panel during Catholic Schools Week, giving the sisters a chance to talk about their work and the purpose of Catholic schools. “If busy people are happy people, we were the happiest people alive,” according to Sister Patrick.

Any of the sisters who ministered at Winner, South Dakota, expressed fond memories of the welcoming and gracious people who lived there. Many warm friendships were formed which lasted for years after their departure.

Relay for Life “Relay Like It’s 1985”

Relay for Life, the annual walk and fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, was held on Saturday, June 6, 2015, in Dubuque. Participation from the Dubuque Presentation Sisters has grown since they joined this annual event in its beginnings in Dubuque in the late 1990s. This year the “Presentation Pacers” team numbered 37 members.

With great enthusiasm and spirit, team members held fundraisers at the Presentation motherhouse the month of May with bake sales, prize raffles, ice cream social, movie and popcorn, luminaria event and treats in the dining room, all bringing in donations for a good cause. These fundraisers along with individual donations brought in over \$3,100 for the American Cancer Society. These funds help with cancer research, advocacy, education, service and help provide cancer patients with a safety net of hope and relief. A special honor was received by the Presentation Pacers this year in being presented with a traveling trophy for #1 Fundraising Team in 2015.

“Every one of our lives has been touched by cancer. In keeping with Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters’ mission, participating in Relay for Life is an honor,” states Sister Dolores Zieser, team co-captain. “A person diagnosed with cancer and journeying through treatment may experience a feeling of overwhelming darkness and fear. As a team, we strive to reach out and shed some light into that darkness by recruiting team members, holding fundraisers, including a bake sale, raffles, penny wars, contributing a silent auction birthday basket and asking for individual donations all to help support the Relay’s ministry.”



Clockwise: Left to right: Presentation Pacers present for the Relay for Life team lap: Amanda Kirk, Jean Lange, Randy Engler, Katie Chapman, John Kirk, Mary Dankert, Ron Dankert, Karen Tuecke and Jeff Lange.

The Charismatic Gift of Hospitality

by KAREN TUECKE, PARTNERS IN MISSION COORDINATOR

Dedicated to Sisters Anthony, Michael and Rosanne Rottinghaus, sisters by blood and Sisters of the Presentation.

In life, we come to understand that friendships are special. Friendships are formed by individuals being faithful, honest and trusting of one another. For individuals that have the gift of hospitality, friendships can begin before one is consciously aware. Mary Schmid is one who is blessed with the charismatic gift of hospitality, an attribute she shares with the Sisters of the Presentation, more specifically the Rottinghaus sisters.

Mary Schmid, a life-long Dubuque and parishioner of St. Joseph the Worker Parish, has a daughter Karen. Karen began her teaching career at Holy Trinity Parish in South St. Paul Minnesota, where Sister Anthony Rottinghaus ministered from 1985 until her retirement in 2001. Karen and Sister Anthony were colleague and became friends. "Karen would call and talk about how Sister Anthony would provide guidance to the students in their religious studies. She always talked highly of her friend, Sister Anthony," Mary states.

At Sister Anthony's date of retirement, she packed her belongings with the help of Karen, and Karen brought her things to Dubuque. Unfortunately, due to Karen's responsibilities as a teacher, she did not have time to deliver Sister's belonging to her new home so she had to leave them at her mother Mary's home. Mary recalls, "I remember Karen calling telling me Sister Anthony is coming and she has been away from Dubuque for a long time. Can you help her get settled in?"

Little did Sister Anthony know, but Karen leaving her belongings at Mary's created a life-long friendship through hospitality. When Sister arrived in Dubuque, Mary made arrangements to move Sister's belongings into her new home, with the assistance of Sister Anthony's sisters, Sisters Michael and Rosanne.

"Hospitality is the bridge between the individual and the community. People with this charism build a sense of being cared for as an individual, but also a sense of belonging to the greater community. People with the charism of hospitality thrive on being with others and having people in their space is never an imposition." *Jeffery S. Arrowood, MTS*

At this time, Mary renewed her first encounters with the Presentation Sisters. She became involved and engaged. Mary wrote letters, made phone calls and even joined in on card night. Sister Rosanne mentions, "Mary always added to the fun, especially on card nights. She enjoys the time spent with her friends."

The first moment of this new friendship took place nearly 15 years ago. Since this moment, Sisters Michael and Anthony passed away, 2007 and 2014 respectively. Sister Rosanne reflects on the last 15 years of friendship, "Mary's friendship is a blessing in our lives and continues to grow in my life. Our time together has been spent living out the Presentation mission by attending various religious, social and community events; practicing charitable deeds especially through prayer and support of each other's families at time of sickness and death. I see Mary's response to the larger community as a witness to the Gospel through generosity, hospitality, love of neighbor and God. What more could a friend want?"

Both Sister Rosanne and Mary agree, "May we be able to enjoy more times together in years to come."

Mary also had a few words to say, "I like our friendship. I would not have known the Rottinghaus sisters without the special connection of my daughter Karen bringing us together. Sister Rosanne and I are now life-long friends."

The Sisters of the Presentation are blessed to have a friendship with Mary. She is truly a great partner in mission.



*Left to right:
Mary Schmid
and Sister
Rosanne
Rottinghaus*

Mount Loretto AND BEYOND

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



Best Student Award

On June 5, 2015, in a special ceremony celebrating the 69th anniversary of Juan Misael Saracho University in Tarija, Bolivia, Sister Mery Cari Paz was honored as one of the three best students of the Psychology Department for the year 2014. The public university has a total enrollment of 20,000 students in different fields. Sister Mery is in her fourth year of studies in the university and has received this recognition every year. Her desire is to deepen her understanding of others' realities so as to better accompany and support them on life's journey.

RUAH 2015

On June 14-28, Sisters Jessi Beck, Corine Murray and Sharon Kelchen traveled to Ireland to participate in RUAH 2015, a two week-long spirituality program for participants who have an interest in spirituality and are inspired by the stories of Venerable Nano Nagle and Blessed Edmund Rice. There was a facilitated series of reflections on how individuals encounters Mystery in their lives with Margaret Silf, a well-known author and presenter on spirituality from the UK. There were opportunities to meet and engage with various groups whose ministries and practices reflect deep spiritual commitments; pilgrimages to places that evoked a sense of the spiritual in the living traditions and history of Irish people; time for private reflection and rest; engagement with the stories of Nano Nagle and Edmund Rice in those places hallowed by their memory, Cork, Callan, Ballygriffin and Waterford; processes that facilitated the integration of the RUAH experiences in their lives; and involvement with social and spiritual ministry with people made poor (homeless, asylum-seekers, migrants).



A Surprise Family Visit

Sister Catherine Wingert enjoyed catching up with her niece, Jenifer Hensley from Dakota Dunes, South Dakota, and her nephew, Jerry Johnson from Cedar Falls, Iowa. The siblings came for a spontaneous visit with their aunt, Sister Catherine. Their mother, Eileen Johnson, was Sister Catherine's sister.

You are invited to join us.

July 27, 2015

August 24, 2015

Centering Prayer

6:15-7:00 p.m.

Sisters of the Presentation

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.

July 15-18, 2015

Community Gathering

Dubuque, Iowa

75th Jubilee Celebration

Sister Mary William Allen

Sister Mary Linus Coyle

Sister Anne Marie Kollasch

60th Jubilee Celebration

Sister Lou Cota

Sister Maura McCarthy

Sister Mary Francine Quillin

Sister Carmelle Westemeier

50th Jubilee Celebration

Sister Lynn Marie Fangman

Sister Marjorie Healy

Sister Jennifer Rausch

July 23-26, 2015

Conference of Presentation Sisters

Dubuque, Iowa

August 1, 2015

Profession of Perpetual Vows

Sister Jessi Beck

21st of each month

Pray for Vocations

25th of each month

Mass for Benefactors

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.

- ____ New Address
____ Misspelled Name
____ Wrong Address
____ Remove my Name
____ Receive Duplicate Copies
(please indicate which is correct)

Relationally SPEAKING

Sisters, Associates, Family, Friends in Brief



Congratulations to **Sister Julie Marsh** for receiving the University of Iowa Newman Center's 2015 Discipleship Award for extending the mission of the church in the world. A \$500 gift was given to Hotel Hope in New Orleans in honor of Sister Julie's service.



Harpers Ferry Vision for Our Future committee leaders. Left to right: Front row: Betty Steege, Darin Valley, Mike Whalen, Mayor Jerry Valley, Karen Soper, Sister Suzanne Gallagher and Pat Cota; Back row: Larry Schulte, Lowell Engel, Kari McCann and MJ Smith.

Stronger Together

by KAREN TUECKE

Over the last six months, Sister Suzanne (Theresa) Gallagher has facilitated seven conversations with 70 community members of Harpers Ferry to create sustainability in their community. She serves as a facilitator to the Allamakee County Community Foundation in conjunction with the Executive Director Betty Steege and has fostered partnerships with local businesses to make improvements.

The collaboration has included Mayor Jerry Valley and the Harpers Ferry booster club, local business owners, all community organization. Together, they worked to implement a USDA grant through an affiliate, the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, to conduct research and identify the gifts and pains of Harpers Ferry and create a plan for good economic development.

Sister Suzanne works to meet the needs of each of the communities she serves in Northern Iowa. The last six months have been the first steps in creating a strong future in the sustainability and growth of Harpers Ferry for years to come.