



Sharings

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary USA Province

Volume 44 No. 1 Winter 2014



Maria van Galen, fmm

The Mother of the Redeemer goes before us and continually strengthens us
in faith, in our vocation and in our mission.

By her example of humility and openness to God's will
she helps us to transmit our faith
in a joyful proclamation of the Gospel to all, without reservation.

In this way our mission will be fruitful,
because it is modeled on the motherhood of Mary.

To her let us entrust our journey of faith, the desires of our heart,
our needs and the needs of the whole world,
especially of those who hunger and thirst for justice and peace, and for God.

Pope Francis

EDITORS' NOTES

As we prepare our winter edition of Sharings we are experiencing the coldest, most dangerous blast of polar air in decades that has gripped the Midwest and pushed toward the East and South “closing schools and day care centers, grounding flights and forcing people to pull their hoods and scarves tight to protect exposed skin from nearly instant frostbite.” Those of us born and brought up in New England are accustomed to variations in weather but this winter surpasses any memories of intense cold. As St. Theresa proclaims in one of her prayers—“all things are passing, God alone is changeless.”

We are amazed as we follow Pope Francis' daily writings and actions on the Internet, TV, radio and newspapers. The whole world is paying attention to Pope Francis as evidenced by so many articles and pictures; for example, Time Magazine's selection of Pope Francis as the “Person of the Year.” We have experienced the question by believers and non-believers: “what do you think about the new Pope?” This question provides us an opportunity for evangelization since what Pope Francis proclaims is based upon the Gospel as it was for his namesake, Francis of Assisi. Like the Poverello, he proclaims by his actions as well as his words. . . pointing towards new Gospel paths in the Church's journey. (cf . Evangelii Gaudium 1)

Rosemarie Higgins, fmm, Maryann Alukonis, fmm & Anne Turbini, fmm

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NEXT ISSUE: SPRING

Our Deceased Sisters

Emma Marie Balaguer, fmm
(M. of Bl. Philippine Duchesne)

Born to Eternal Life
November 16, 2013



Our Deceased Relatives & Friends

Edward Carpinello, brother of Gloria Carpinello, fmm

Petra Sanchez de Pesce, sister of Cristina Sanchez, fmm

Emma Agudo Villaseran, sister of Philomena Agudo. fmm

Robert Arrigan, generous benefactor

Our Sick Relatives

Mother of Goska Bukowska, fmm

Father of Kim Loan Nguyen, fmm

Mother and sister of Nga Le, fmm

Michelle Gardner, niece of Claudette Simard, fmm

Ted Gavriluk, brother-in-law of Joyce Gardella, fmm

Greg Conyers, nephew of Elizabeth Conyers, fmm

Kate Wordeman, wife of John, nephew of Helen Riordan, fmm

EULOGIES for ...

Emma Marie Balaguer, fmm

On June 17, 2002 Sr. Emma, at nearly 70 years of age, while job hunting in the St. Louis, MO area, wrote in an email, "...each day I'm trying to remember to say YES to whatever happens." I believe this is how Emma lived her entire life saying YES to whatever happened.

She said Yes to God's call when she began her journey as a Franciscan Missionary of Mary here at Fruit Hill in September, 1954. Her YES continued as she completed her studies and obtained her Doctorate of Medicine degree and began her overseas mission in Malaysia and India. Her YES continued when she returned to the US Province and worked in several areas here in the States, using her medical skills to ease the pain of those who came to her in their need. Emma lived out these words of our foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion, who wrote, "Jesus took with Him Peter, the apostle of faith, John, the apostle of love, and James, the model of generosity. Marked with



Trinidad Castrillo, fmm
(Mary of the Divine Wounds)

Born to Eternal Life
December 18, 2013



Mary Elizabeth Ward, fmm
(M. of St Edmund Canterbury)

Born to Eternal Life
January 13, 2014

In Australia

Maria van Galen, fmm

Born to Eternal Life
January 17, 2014



these three signs, let us imitate Jesus: Be souls of faith, love, innocence and complete generosity, and allow ourselves to be led by Jesus wherever the designs of His presence point the way.” (MD:752)

When Emma’s health began to fail she was peaceful, living her life in a calm atmosphere. Her sense of humor never left her and when asked how she was doing her answer often was “surviving”. I always interpreted that to mean that she was surviving in God’s love, just waiting to give her final Yes to God’s final call which she gave last Saturday.

Dear Emma, may you rest in peace.

Lois Pereira, fmm

Trinidad Castrillo, fmm

Twenty-two years ago plans were being made for Trini to join the Province of the United States. In her files were letters from Trini to Sr. Mary Petrosky expressing her delight and enthusiasm about her new mission here in the US. Among Trini’s papers I came across the following: “I wanted to take up law. I was actually doing very well in my studies. I was just beginning my third year in college when, out of the blue I was shaken...the Lord reminded me of a seemingly “childish” promise I made to Him many years ago. Vividly the incident came to life. I was in Grade IV. I do not remember for what reason, but one Sunday morning my mother called the five of us and gave each one a ring. I do not know what pushed me. When the parish church was empty, I went directly to the tabernacle and there took off my ring (curiously designed like a wedding ring) and told the Lord in the tabernacle, ‘I am giving You this ring as a pledge that I shall belong to you forever.’ I inserted the ring in the space under the tabernacle. Then I returned home and forgot about it...” Perhaps over the years after placing her ring there, these words of our Foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion, express what was happening within Trini. Our Foundress wrote, “As we advance in age, and grace is increasingly given to us, Jesus should grow in our souls. His wisdom should strengthen our faith, our fidelity should kindle our hope, the light of faith should make our love more fervent.” (MD 97) Trini responded to the graces given her and entered the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in 1954 in the Philippines. As a Young Religious she was missioned to Indonesia, teaching in the schools, working as a catechist, as convent secretary, as a translator and a few other little ministries while living out the words of our

Constitutions, “As missionaries, ready to go anywhere and to anyone...” (CS 4)

When Trini’s health began to fail she accepted her Mission Sending to our Assisted Living Program here at Fruit Hill. These past few months she lived her sense of mission and victimhood at Saint Antoine Residence. Trini lived these words of Blessed Mary of the Passion, “I will make my life a prayer. I will possess God. I will see Him, I will love Him without ceasing. Then I shall be unceasingly immolated with Jesus victim.” (NS: 14) Trini, may you see a reflection of your smiling face in the loving face of God. Rest peacefully in the arms of the God whom you have loved all your life.

Lois Pereira, fmm

Mary Elizabeth Ward, fmm

Almost sixty-six years ago Sr. Mary Ward began her journey as a Franciscan Missionary of Mary when she entered as a postulant here at Fruit Hill. In a letter to me she stressed how happy she had always been as an FMM. Her missionary life brought her to the Province of Ghana/ Liberia, West Africa, Florida, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. Her life in these missions was always one of service to others. She was giving her all while living in the shadow of God’s grace.

Moving from one mission to another one would have expected Mary to have a collection of “stuff.” However Mary was not a collector except for one very important item - one she treasured all her life - the desire to do whatever God was asking of her.

It seems that Mary was very taken by the words of a song by the Monks of the Weston Priory entitled “Hosea.”

“Come back to me with all your heart,
don’t let fear keep us apart.
Trees do bend, though straight and tall,
so must we to others call.
Long have I waited for your coming home to me
and living deeply our new life.”

During an annual retreat at her beloved Cenacle Retreat House Mary realized that she was daily “living deeply a new life.” She wanted to live the “now.” She prayed for the grace to carry out this desire. Perhaps Mary’s life echoed these words of our Foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion who wrote, “The more we die to selfish love, the more God triumphs in us. Then the perfect life of union in

Congratulations!



December 14, 2013 a bright sunny day in El Paso when 2,200 students graduated from UTEP

(University of Texas in El Paso). With them were 58 students who received their Master of Business Administration. Among these 58 was our own YEN NGUYEN FMM. It was a huge accomplishment for Yen considering that when she arrived in the U.S., she knew very little English and here she is graduating with her Masters! This degree was well deserved! Yen spent many hours studying, many times in the wee hours of the night. She still gave her all to her prayer life as well as her community life.



Her celebration was enhanced by the presence of her family... her sisters Hao, Lien, Ha, her brother Lam and her brother-in-law Thanh. They came loaded down with her favorite foods including sticky rice and egg rolls! Of course we all enjoyed them as well! Her best friend from school, Erika and her husband also joined us for each event ... the hooding, the receiving of the diploma and the delicious meals. Her family became our family and we had such a wonderful time together. It was a very special weekend for Yen, her family and our community here in El Paso. Congratulations Yen! We are so proud of you!

Marie Cinotti, fmm



grace takes place. This is a prelude to the perfect union in heaven." (MD: 26) Our dear Mary did not have a selfish love. She was always on the lookout for ways to help others, to be of service - especially with her "Doc's Taxi Service," her ministry of sending birthday cards made by MEW, and in praying for others.

Blessed Mary of the Passion also said, "Let us not fear trials, but advance in all simplicity, doing, day by day, the good pleasure of God, sure that at difficult moments grace will be given to us to say and do what we ought to do, because it will not be we who are speaking and acting, but the Holy Spirit who is speaking and acting in us." (MD: 28). As Mary's illness progressed she moved to Cherry Hill Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and then was missioned to Saint Antoine Residence. She accepted this second move knowing that she would now have daily Mass. This move was Mary's trial, so to speak, but she knew that no matter where she lived she would continue to live in the shadow of God's grace.

Now dear Mary, you have gone home to God to "live deeply your new life." May you rest in peace.

Lois Pereira, fmm



Thanks!

My brother Edward asked me to thank all the sisters for their prayers.

Gloria Carpinello, fmm

Dear Sisters,

Thank you for your prayers, kindness and sympathy during our time of loss. It gives me and my family much comfort to know that you are thinking of us as we grieve our sister Petra's death.

With many thanks and prayers,

M. Cristina Sanchez, fmm and family

Sending of Annie Nebres, fmm



On November 10, 2013, the atmosphere in Holy Family Chapel in North Providence, RI was joyful. Franciscan Missionaries of Mary from communities in Boston, New York and Rhode Island gathered for a Mission Sending Prayer for Annie Nebres, fmm to the province of Columbia/Ecuador.

Sr. Lois Pereira, fmm, provincial welcomed all to the blessing:



Today our ambiance symbolizes the flags of the country that Annie is leaving and the two countries that make up the Province of Columbia/Ecuador that Annie will be joining.

We send Annie today with all our love and prayers as she brings her joy, her many gifts and her talents to the sisters and people to whom she is missioned.

So let us begin our prayer with a feeling of gratefulness for the gift of Annie to the Province of the United States and the Province of Columbia/Ecuador and to the entire Institute of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

During the entrance procession all sang "Life is a Journey." Significant readings selected from the writings of Bl. Mary of the Passion were proclaimed during the service.



After Lois anointed Annie, sending her as a Gospel woman to continue the mission of Jesus, all the FMMs present came forward to embrace and send Annie. Then, with one voice, all sang Mary's prayer "My soul proclaims the greatness of God...."



At the conclusion Annie expressed her thanks to all Franciscan Missionaries who participated in her preparation for her new mission and those who have journeyed with her in the communities here in the United States.

A NOTE from FUKUSHIMA, JAPAN

We read, in *Meeting Space*, about our new **FMM** insertion in Fukushima, the site of the tsunami and accompanying disaster of two years ago. Here three sisters are in Haramachi, a place where many have abandoned because of the nuclear Power Plant about 15 miles away.

Sr. Gertrudis Ozawa, fmm, a friend, teacher and fellow community member in Kobe when I was there, is one of the sisters assigned to this new mission. She wrote me a note at Christmas to describe what they are doing there. I would like to share it with you.

"Dear Joyce, We are now in Fukushima to support the people there ... it is colder here than in Kobe. But, the people here are gentle and kind. We are happy."

"We rent a small house near the owners' home. They are not Catholic but generous and treat us as if we were family... They run a company and have a large log house where they wanted to meet and talk with the surviving people. We have had eight tea parties so far. The last time was in December and because of the Christmas season, we gave a Christmas message, sang carols and one of the women danced. Another woman sang "Amazing Grace" and one of our sisters played the violin. We all enjoyed it."



"Many people here lost someone in their family or a friend during the tsunami and feel very sad and discouraged. We cannot do much for them except live among them and be with them in their suffering. Please continue to pray for us."

"I feel happy that you still remember me and send me messages. God bless our friendship."
Gertrudis, fmm

Joyce Gardella, fmm



ROSLYN, NY

As usual we have lived through a very busy Holiday Season here at SFH. When we last wrote to you near the end of October, Carol Ann Kane requested prayers for her forthcoming knee surgery. She had that on October 21st. She had some stressful events during her recovery but now is feeling better and is walking well. She still uses a cane or a walker on occasion but she is also able to walk on her own. She thanks everyone for their prayers and good wishes.

In addition to all the usual Holiday Events which we celebrated in connection with the Hospital, we've had some joyous events of our own here in the Community. Four Sisters celebrated December birthdays: Carol Ann, Elisa, Lucie and Pauline. We ordered in food from Attilio's Pizza in Mineola. Each Sister viewed the menu and signed for what she would like. Food was packaged and delivered in individual containers.

We also had a sad event. Minda Castrillo's sister and ours: Trini Castrillo, F.M.M. died on December 18th. Minda had gone to Fruit Hill and North Smithfield to care for Trini when it was apparent that doctors could no longer do anything for Trini. She was by Trini's side for 10 days to 2 weeks. You can see Minda's hand in the biography of Trini in the F.M.M. flyer produced by our Communications Office.

Minda gave a beautiful talk at the end of the Wake Service thanking EVERYONE at Fruit Hill and North Smithfield who had cared for Trini in any way over these last months. It was very moving! Trini's Funeral was celebrated by Fr. Edward St. Goddard. He gave a nice homily in which he also gave us a few laughs as he remembered a conversation with Trini.

Our New Year's Eve is always a special event here in St. Francis Community. Not only do we anticipate New Year's Day, we also anticipate Vita Riccardelli's New Year's birthday. This year, Vita's sister Margaret came from Virginia to stay with us for a few days and to travel to NYC to see the Opera, "Tosca." They returned in time to celebrate New Year's Eve. Vita prepared a very moving prayer service of forgiveness and reconciliation. We all left that service and some waited up and some stayed around to watch the festivities from Times Square and to ring in the New Year. Betty prepared a birthday cake with candles, and

brought in drinks and chips, etc., and we sang "Auld Lang Syne." The following day at noon dinner we had many guests.

As the month of January set in, Mari Garesche began to pack. She will be moving to Holy Family Community at Fruit Hill on January 15th as this "Sharings" is going to press. As you may know, Mari retired from Chaplaincy here at St. Francis one year ago and began her new ministry of bringing the Eucharist every day to SFH patients. Not only did she bring the Eucharist, she brought her lovely, smiling and listening self to many patients and their families. A relative of one of the patients remembered her kindness to his family member and honored her by inviting her and Betty to a night of entertainment featuring the music of Frank Sinatra!!!

Pauline Gilmore prepared a very lovely Evening Prayer of Mission Sending for Mari. Mari loves light houses. So, Pauline found a picture of a lighthouse for the cover of the Prayer Service and duplicated that photo on a lighted candle. The antiphons Pauline chose for the psalms were quotations by Mary of the Passion. "No matter where I may go, I am always in the presence of God who is my All." "The spirit of our missionary vocation is to bring the whole world to Jesus Christ." As part of the Prayer, we each spoke words to Mari re what she has meant to us. We will all miss her very much and wish her peace and happiness in her new mission.

Sisters and Guild Members in our Hospital Community were saddened this past week by the death of Gina Mollura who died on January 10th. Most of the Community attended her Wake and several attended her Funeral. F.M.M.s were invited to sing the "Peace Prayer of St. Francis" at the Communion of the Mass.

Carol Flaherty, fmm



2013 Session of Temporary Vowed Sisters

Amidst the joy and peacefulness of the days after the Nativity of Our Lord, Thuy Nguyen, fmm and Kyong-Ha Yim, fmm gathered with Lois Ann Pereira, fmm and Loan Nguyen, fmm for the December, 2013 Session of Temporary Vowed Sisters at Bethany Retreat Center. The themes were on the Footprints of Mary of the Passion and Community Life.

The first part of the session was presented to us by Loan Nguyen, fmm who had just returned from her pilgrimage to Rome and France this past fall following the footsteps of Mary of the Passion, especially in the early days of the Institute. The second part of the session was given by Lois Pereira, fmm who led us into reflections of our communal living experiences of the present moment in corresponding to the spirit Mary of the Passion had for the early Institute, which are Charity and Unity. The two themes of this year's session were very enriching and they came together for us to learn and to appreciate the Institute more as we continue to deepen our love for the charism of Mary of the Passion.

Loan opened her presentation with her personal reflection on how this pilgrimage to both Rome and France have meant for her own FMM vocation, and her sharing became fully alive as she presented a wonderful power point presentation of her pilgrimage, place-by-place, with full explanations on why and how each place became so dear to Maman Passion and to the FMMs throughout the years. In addition to the power point presentation, a DVD entitled "Mary of the Passion in Rome" was presented to us illustrating the early days of the Institute. We were also treated with current pictures of the Chatelets, the first house and the Cathedral in St. Briec, our house in Paris and the various places in Nantes where Mary of the Passion spent her childhood. We were struck by how well the Institute has preserved and maintained our heritage places. The presence today of our sisters touched us as living witnesses to our history and the continuity of our charism, despite the changes our sisters must have had to adapt and embrace throughout the years. We also reflected on an excerpt from the book "Rome, my spiritual homeland" entitled 'Happy and Holy.' This was about the beginning days of the Institute where Maman and our sisters truly experienced the poverty and joy of having nothing but God as their portion. With this in mind, our pondering about all the places Maman made her pilgrimages, the vulnerability she faced at the beginning of our Institute as well as her trust in her Lord in His Providence became more profound and moving.

The second part of the session on Community brought back memories of our recent Novitiate classes on the FMM Constitution, yet with different eyes and heart due to our community experience since September 29, 2012, the day of our First Vows. Lois led us into reflection on what is communal life and

what is not in the present culture, also focusing on what this signifies for us as Christians and disciples of Jesus, and how does this call for communal life challenge us in the present day. We shared our "day-to-day" community life experiences and its challenges and growths. We concluded our sharing in an attitude of thanksgiving for the graces and gifts that Mary of the Passion had left behind for us as a heritage, which is our internationality/intercultural way of Community Life.

Our four days together in learning, reflecting, sharing, relaxing and laughing rejuvenated our energy and spirit as each of us headed back to our respective communities for the FMM life of prayer, community and ministry. We greatly appreciate the input and sharing of Lois and Loan of their knowledge, experiences and love for the Institute. We look forward to our next session and time together in the summer.

United in Prayers!

Thuy Nguyen, fmm, Kyong-Ha Yim, fmm



Dear Sisters,

I hope all is well with each one of you. I am doing good by the Grace of our Loving Creator. I am living with 2 others sister in my mission Tatale, the northern region of Ghana near the border of Togo. Now it is the cool season, which to me seems warmer and warmer. I teach Kindergarten level 2 over 60 children by myself with a part time helper. The RC KG is overcrowded, one of our challenges, and unfortunately the fmm sisters do not run this school. Sr. Marcelina and I teach middle school children at the convent catechism twice a week. I also prepare a young adult for the sacraments at Easter time. I took the time to learn the local language called Basari, and the people respond with a big smile when I said a word or two. Now, it is papaya and mangoes season and dusty season as well. My application to apply for resident permit in Ghana finally got approved thanks be to God. I hope for the best. I am grateful for all your prayers and support in my mission in Ghana/Liberia.



United in Christ Jesus. Pax et Bonum.

Cathy K, Tshitenge, fmm

2014 Threshold

The threshold of 2014 marks Fruit Hill Day Services for Elderly (FHDSE) 40 years of compassionate care. In the words of Pope Francis, it is 40 years of betting on hope for FHDSE. When on the 4th of October, 1973, Sr. Ruth Crawly, FMM opened the first Senior Center in the State of RI, she must have bet on hope as well. Her broad vision embraced many challenges and responded to the hopes of the elderly and their families who entrusted their loved ones under our care.

These 40 years of our compassionate care have been shaped by the evolving needs of an aging society. During this time many other Senior Centers were opened around the area. Consequently, FHDSE became smaller in number but the demand of the seniors' medical care became greater. Many of our participants could not attend other centers because their medical condition jeopardized their physical safety. However we were able to respond to their needs and again, we bet on hope for them.

Finances have always been a challenge for the survival of FHDSE. There were many moments that questioned whether the program might end. Yet, with hope to keep our services running as long as possible, the present Director, Sr. Aline Giroux, FMM set off on a fundraising quest. The Fortieth Anniversary was a perfect opportunity to celebrate and at the same time benefit our program financially. On October 5th, we celebrated our Jubilee Dinner at Lancellotta's Restaurant. This was a wonderful event that generated support and boosted our finances -- *every penny counts*.

Mary Stoeckel, our Chairperson wrote: "Wow! What a wonderful evening to celebrate Fruit Hill's 40th Anniversary!! So many people contributed to this event with their time, energy, enthusiasm, creativity, skills and more. It was truly a team effort! How many of the attendees are connected to Fruit Hill through their experiences and the experiences of their loved ones."



Also, we were lucky to receive a donation from Thomas Brady and Associates - a jersey signed by his Son Tom Brady was a greater gift than we expected. Wow! Wow! The spontaneous reactions kept echoing through the staff... Tom Brady, wow! Then, the idea to frame the jersey surfaced. When it was done, joy overcame us again. Now the framed jersey was displayed during our fundraising dinner at Lancellotta's. However, we opted not to auction it as originally intended at the 40th dinner celebration. As our supporters in general would not, for the most part, be financially able to contribute significantly to an auction of the jersey -- even though there are many Patriots and Brady fans among them. We decided to display Tom Brady's framed, autographed jersey at the 40th Anniversary dinner, opening the process of selling tickets for a Bazaar raffle that took place on November 30, 2013.

Each weekend preceding the Bazaar, we sold raffle tickets at different sites while displaying the jersey. St. Thomas Church in North Providence, Holy Ghost Church in Providence, St. Antoine's Nursing Home in North Smithfield and St. Robert Bellarmine Church in Johnston welcomed our presence amidst their own holiday sales. Displaying the jersey helped us not only to sell the tickets but also offered us the opportunity to meet the people, listen to them, and build relationships, as we exchanged views and concerns about different matters, and of course, about the Patriots and Tom's great contribution to football! On Saturday, November 30th one of our Sisters, Sr. Savina D'Agostino, fmm, who is 100 years old, selected the winning ticket. Mrs. Kathleen Morry, Principle of St. Augustine Elementary School in North Providence was the lucky and very excited winner. Only with the Providence of HOPE has FHDSE survived 40 Years and continues with its compassionate care for seniors.

Thank you to all for making this very enriching experience, both financially and spiritually, possible for Fruit Hill Day Services for Elderly on its 40th Anniversary. May this Holiday Season enrich all of your Bets on Hope!

Barbara Dopierala, fmm



DECEMBER ACTIVITIES Assisted Living, Fruit Hill

The month of December is always filled with the excitement of the season. Our 1st Craft activity for the Christmas season was inspired by a craft my 8 yr. old grandson Ryan had created at his friend's house with his friend's Great Grandmother. It was a beautiful Christmas Wreath. I just thought if the children enjoyed the craft and it was simple to make that maybe the Sisters would enjoy it too! It turned out that the sisters were very enthusiastic and it did not promote any great challenges for them. It started with a plastic dinner plate that I had cut out the center for them before the activity started, sparkling garland, small Christmas ornaments and red velvet bows. It turned out to be a great success and many sisters and staff stopped in to observe the fun.

We also had a night time activity dipping delicious treats in chocolate. Many participated in this activity and it was quite satisfying for me to see how happy they were enjoying this activity and the fun the sisters had with each other. I also invited anyone who would enjoy being taste testers. The next day we had a large tray of awesome goodness for everyone to try. It was the talk of the day!! We also created



Cards for our Troops

Christmas cards for our troops. The cards were designed by our new administrator Laurie Ann. Laurie Ann also participated in demonstrating to the Sisters on the creation of the Christmas cards and it gave a chance for some of the sisters to get to know her and what a talented person she is. She makes over 60 cards to send out at Christmas time. The Sisters were very pleased and happy with this activity.

2013 Christmas Party: We started with Sr. Conchy given the Blessing. Entertainment was provided by Susan McLeod Orchestra of One. Our dietary department served us a delicious meal and fabulous deserts. Great food and good company made our

Christmas Party complete. The Christmas party for Sisters and staff was a wonderful time for all.

Cindy Christianson



POETRY

Sr. Agnes Kozak had many gifts in the creative arts. The last years of her life she gradually lost her vision. Yet, she was able to create poetry, which we discovered in a book of her poems.

MY BOOK OF POEMS

Agnes Kozak, fmm
February 7, 1988

I began writing poetry when I was in high school around 1940. I wrote for the Hobby Club section of the local newspaper where the poems were printed. Unfortunately, they are all lost now. I also wrote some poetry in my early religious life, but those are also lost. I began saving them during my religious renewal year 1978-1979. They are gathered together in this booklet.

MAGNIFYING GLASS

With magnifying glass in hand
I try to write some poetry and verse
In ways that I can understand,
Nothing that can make life worse.

With joyful thoughts and magic words
And nature's music in my ears,
Listening to the songs of many birds
That banishes unwanted fears.

(Written at Bethany at a retreat June 4, 2009)

Woman of Faith: Sister Marie-Paule Willem, FMM

by Donna Curtiss, Diocese of Las Cruces
December 2013/ January 2014

Sister Marie-Paule Willem is a Franciscan Missionary of Mary, whose mission is deeply rooted in the Holy Eucharist. A woman of faith, her spirituality is infectious and an integral part of her ministry.



Sister Marie-Paule's work is blessed by the grant funding support awarded by Our Sunday Visitor Institute. The grant funding supported the startup and the first year of Sister's bilingual family and community outreach program. Sister Marie-Paule works in two parishes: Saint Genevieve and Saint Joseph, Fairacres. Her community outreach includes the women's detention center.

At Saint Genevieve's and Saint Joseph's parishes, Sister leads programs in catechesis for adults and families, sacramental preparation, to include RCIA and faith formation programs for youth and their parents. Dear to her heart are meetings with the families.

At the Women's Detention Center, Sister Marie-Paule meets with approximately 60 women each week. Sister counsels the women one-on-one. She works with Father Ricardo Bauza to prepare the women for reconciliation and to receive Holy Eucharist.

Sister is uniquely qualified to lead these programs. Sister Marie-Paule has a Master of Arts degree. She majored in religious education and family. She served 13 years in South America, working in Argentina and Paraguay. At times Sister's prison ministry in South America included ministering to entire families who were held together in outdoor prisons. She describes her time in Paraguay as feeling surrounded by angels who protected her in her ministry during that time. Among her favorite memories is being in Buenos Aires at the same time as Pope Francis, then a Jesuit priest.

The first project for Sister and her faithful volunteers at Saint Joseph's, Fairacres, was restoring the long-neglected statue of Jesus on the church grounds. Sister and her volunteers planted beautiful flowers on the grounds and thoroughly cleaned and updated the church and parish hall. The parish raised the funds and purchased new tables and chairs for the hall. In addition to the Masses on Saturday and Sunday, Saint Joseph parish holds special Eucharistic services on Wednesday evenings. At the Wednesday evening Eucharistic Service, following the homily and Holy Communion, the parents take turns sharing their parenting successes.

At Saint Genevieve's parish, Sister Marie-Paule is blessed by the excellent participation of the families. Sister meets with nearly 200 parents each month. Sister is supported by excellent CCD teachers and by Cuca Medina who has been the Director of Religious Education for fifty years at the parish.

Sister Marie-Paule developed a model program for youth years ago. She taught ethics, specifically a strong work ethic, to thirty-five youth who are now productive citizens, contributors to society. Today, Sister weaves character building into religious education and faith formation.

Following the Franciscan way of minority and simplicity, Sister Marie-Paule goes about her work filled with hope and joy. She touches hearts and brings us with her as she travels toward the fullness of God's reign.



Mary Petrosky shared this letter. Mr. Molinaro was a grandnephew of Blessed Assunta. The family has kept some contact with the FMMs over the years.

12/28/13

I would like you all to know we have Middle School dedicated to Blessed Maria Assunta Pallotti opened three years now (Waterloo, Iowa). It is very well attended and construction is wonderful. Bl. Assunta in 1954 was beatified. She has 2 miracles and we hope with the two it will lead to her canonization. Tell Sister Mary Petrosky hello. I enjoyed her note I received in November. Please share this news with the nuns in Providence, RI. My husband, Robert Molinaro, went to heaven along with our son Henry Molinaro. All my love and respect,

Mary Ellen Molinaro

Please pray for both our families. I have Parkinson's and need prayers.

BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT From Colombia/Ecuador



From the 29th of December to the 6th of January, I was wholly immersed into the life of the FMM in the province of Colombia/Ecuador. As all my senses are always fully engaged, transformation evolves within as well.

The evergreen terrain in this mountainous region of Colombia kept my eyes glued to the evergreen vista for almost nine hours ride by car from Bogotá to Sta. Rosa de Cabal. "Oohing and ahing" at the beautiful scenery did not stop me also from exclaiming "ouch" in between whenever we turned on every curve on the long and winding road. I felt like my spine was getting dislocated. The sight of the grazing cows that peppered the grassy slopes reminded me and my sisters in the car of my "holy cow" experience.

This sensory experience continued once we reached the convent at Sta. Rosa de Cabal. I was met by FMM sisters coming from different parts of Colombia and Ecuador. Their greetings varied from Como estas? and other sorts unintelligible that I just assumed they meant "How are you and Welcome." I responded with "Muy bien, gracias" and a smile.

Days went on rapidly while we took on different topics for enrichment ranging from Stages of Human Growth and Development, Protection of Children and the Elderly to basic rules of bookkeeping in the context of Colombian regulations. They were like fast track courses in Spanish for me.

Someone asked me if I have a headache from listening to all these talks and I said that I am managing quite well with the help of a Spanish-English dictionary at hand. They were all enriching for me for I got some sense of the issues that we, sisters in Colombia/Ecuador, have to deal within ourselves and in our ministries and view them in the light of the Gospel.

This gathering also allowed all of us to have a day of rest and recreation at a nearby resort. Music played non-stop while the sisters danced to the tune of cumbia, salsa and whatnot. Even our cooks were dancing as they roasted chicken and some beef. They sure have good rhythm. I joined some sisters in the pool that looked temperate enough but was actually cold. After having a good lunch, I went down to play with some sisters ping pong, billiard

and sapo (a game where we try to shoot metal rings inside the mouth of small bronze frog). I rested for a while hoping to mellow down after a competitive game of pingpong. Yet the excitement never waned as we moved on to play bingo. Most sisters seemed to enjoy bingo. We all went home happy and ready to tackle another day of learning. That night a slight tremor woke some us while the rest had fallen into a deep sleep.

Since we were still in the Christmas season, all Masses in the chapel were celebrated joyfully with the singing and playing of guitar, maracas, rattles, etc. On the 5th of January, we culminated the gathering with the golden jubilee celebration of two sisters and the 137th anniversary of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. To wrap things up at night, Ma. Eugenia, the provincial, announced some news in the province. For me, the highlight was that I will be going to Ecuador. I be will joining the sisters in Quito as soon as I get my documents ready.

Going back to Bogotá already posed a new challenge for me. A Senegalese sister named Therese Diolene just arrived from Spain on the 3rd of January. She speaks Spanish very well for she teaches Spanish in her country. Like me, she needed to apply for a "cedula extranjeria" (identification card for foreigners). With full trust and confidence, Alicia, our provincial bursar, asked me to accompany her to the office of migration. I took on the task and was able to accomplish what was asked of me. Being able to accompany Therese not only gave me confidence but also joy for I was able to pass on to her what Sr. Margarita Peraza taught me. I believe when things are done in faith and love, then we are able to live out our community life fully. And life goes on...

Annie Nebres, fmm



ON THE SIXTH DAY, GOD CREATED HER ... WOMAN

What happened on that sixth day of God's Creation, as told in the story of Genesis, continues to unfold whenever women are together in celebration....

December 25, 2013 was one of those days as our friends the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Srs. Loan, Pat, Gloria, Emily, Veronica, and Kyong hosted 3 Franciscan Missionaries of Africa, Antoinette, Mary and Anne + Shieun Hong from South Korea presently doing her masters in nursing at Boston College. We ten represented many countries of origin and heritage, including Vietnam, South Korea, Pakistan, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Swiss, French, English.

As we gathered around the beautifully decorated table, sharing fellowship, prayer and food our relating together took on 'an experience of the Mystery of the Incarnation' as each one of us expressed something very particular and personal about our own identity and vocational calling.

Writing about this now, on the final day of 2014 Vocation Awareness Week seems an appropriate time to dwell on the various forms that 'call' took in each one of us.

Then, as is happening in recent years, it was for one of us the traditional habit that was the attraction to a particular congregation. For another it was a recurrent 'prompting and urging' since the age of 6. Two of us had no desire to respond to such a call and yet, over a period of time, with listening and discernment, had an inner knowing of a vocational 'calling.' Others shared movingly of how Spirit God was working in them and with them in wonderfully enlightening happenings, even strange and dangerous situations which powerfully displayed the workings of a Provident God. Encounters with the well known philosopher Douglas Hyde and a film of one's Foundress and early members were also instrumental in showing the way forward, for choosing life!!!

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' lines from "You Are Good" continues to bring unfolding understanding to 'why this meal' was different from any other meal many of us have shared.

"The Universe yet incomplete, on the sixth day
 God created her...Woman
 And God said to her, I shall give you a heart
 full of compassion;
 A spirit free to fly with the birds; a vessel
 to carry life into the world."

And, this we have done in various parts of the world!
 And, in the NOW in USA we continue...

Anne Schoettelkotte, fmsa
 Jan. 18, 2014, beginning of Church Unity Week



100th Birthday

Sr. Simone Decelles, FMM

On the feast of Holy Innocents December 28th here at St. Antoine's we had a very special celebration - Sr. Simone's 100th Birthday.



Our little chapel was filled and overflowing with Sr. Simone's family, friends, some former students and FMMs. The music and singing added to the festive atmosphere. Our own Bishop Gelineau was the celebrant of our Mass and as always he added much to the beautiful and meaningful liturgy.

Following our Mass was a simply reception with a cake, decorated with Sr. Simone's picture, coffee and tea, balloons and fancy decorations - offering all the opportunity to greet one another and spend some time with our special birthday Sister. Many happy moments were shared by all. So once again dear Sr. Simone we wish you God's blessing and happy birthday.



Las Cruces, NM: A Small Franciscan Moment

Every year, around Christmas time, the Las Cruces community drives south to our former home in Chamberino village to visit a few families we knew well during the 17 years of FMM presence there. This year, on January 6th, the three of us and Ginger, our dog, visited Linda and Rudy, who did so much to get us the two trailers we used for our home in Chamberino. Linda's ongoing leg problem had improved since last year, but the condition of Rudy, her husband, had degenerated. Rudy, who has severe Alzheimer's disease, is now confined to bed and no longer speaks or recognizes people.

After Rudy woke up from his nap, we gathered around his bed, but there was no response, no recognition, just a blank and vacant stare and the sad realization that any human interaction was impossible. So, on impulse, I picked up Ginger, our dog, from the floor and held him near Rudy. Suddenly, Rudy's eyes began to focus and he looked straight at Ginger and held out his hand to pet her on the head. Ginger quietly allowed Rudy to pet him

for a few moments. What a truly beautiful Franciscan moment! All I could think of was how Francis' gift of communicating with animal creation had just been repeated with this gentle, good, and vulnerable man, our friend Rudy... This was a very special gift for Rudy's wife and all of us that day...

Sheila Patenaude, fmm



Maria van Galen, fmm



With our Sisters in the Australian province we celebrate the life of Maria van Galen, fmm. Over the years Maria has gifted our Institute with her art, and opened us anew to the wonder and beauty of our loving God.

EULOGY

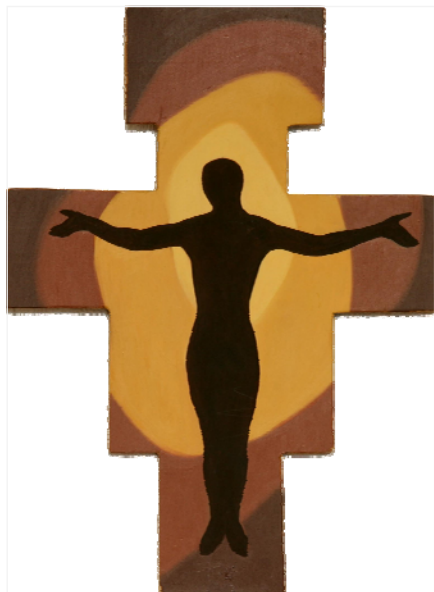
Welcome... to the van Galen Family and all who have come today to celebrate the life of Maria and to remember her with love.

Maria was born in Holland the second child and only daughter of Franciscus and Aleida van Galen. She had four brothers – three of whom are with us today – Frank, Ray and John. Her brother Gerard died suddenly in 1997 and left behind his wife Jennifer and 6 children.

Maria was a child during the second World War in Holland when her father was a prisoner of war and her mother threatened with death after she had saved twelve men including her own brother from a detention camp.

Her father was a painter and decorator and her mother a full time Mum and housewife - a woman with creativity and integrity. Of that time Maria reflected: "We have all inherited the talents that both my parents were blessed with, as well as the shadow of their pain."

Looking for a better future the family decided to immigrate to Australia and in 1955 they came by boat and settled in Geelong.



Maria had done 3 years study in art while in Holland and continued when she got a job in Melbourne as a typist. She did Art at evening classes at the TEC. Maria told me she had a boyfriend and one night while discussing marriage plans he suggested that she would be happier if she were to become a nun. Maria said: We were both stunned at his statement, but I recognised the truth of what he said. I made up my mind there and then and have never regretted it.

She entered religious life at the FMM Farm at Mittagong on the 30th December 1957 just 20 years old and deeply convinced that God was calling her. Because she was called Maria she had always had a special relationship with Mary, the mother of Jesus. Her mother had dedicated her to Our Lady from birth and being a lover of nature and all things living and beautiful the vocation of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary suited her well. She knew she was in the right place as her heart was filled with a peace and joy that only God could give. ["I believed I could make a positive contribution to the world by my dedication to God's Kingdom in this way."](#)

Maria made her first profession at Mittagong in 1961 and was given the religious name of Maria van Bethlehem. Mittagong was her first experience of being so close to the world of nature and it contributed to her lifelong appreciation and contemplative attitude to all creation. Ever after, wherever she went she tended the garden with contemplative gentleness.

After novitiate, in 1961, she was missioned to Rome where she studied and worked as a painter in the FMM Roman Art studio together with other FMM painters. They painted pictures and portraits for churches, and repaired artworks, mainly for the Vatican. She painted a portrait of Pope John XXIII and when he selected it saying "That is Me." She was very proud of that achievement. At that time we FMM were fairly enclosed but being one of the artists in Rome, Maria was allowed to go out to visit churches and museums and to learn Italian. Maria made her final profession in our convent at Grottaferrata outside Rome in 1963.

In 1966 she returned to Australia and was sent to Marymead Children's Centre in Canberra where the FMM were setting up cottages for disadvantaged children. She was well known for her big dog Nero and in most places she lived she had at least one devoted canine friend.

Then in 1970 came a new challenge and a very different culture when Maria was transferred to Papua

New Guinea where she spent 4 years in Wati and 6 years in Wassisi. Again it was a place where she felt close to nature and worked with her intuition and feelings for the people using her gifts of painting, faith and belief in developing community relationships. It wasn't an easy mission.

In 1980 she was asked to go the Holland to see why young people were not entering Religious Life. It was a huge challenge when she landed in Amsterdam in the red light district and she did not like it but stayed for 10 long years and 5 years more in Halfway just outside of Amsterdam. Maria said of that time "The most challenging apostolate I was asked to take up was working in Amsterdam in the "red light" district. I did not ask for it, I did not want it and I did not like it at all. I hated what I saw and heard and met up with every day as I stepped outside our convent door. However we as a community were all in it together and that was a good experience. The street women, with their direct questioning, challenged me to look at my own hidden-and-ignored emotions and feelings as a woman."

Young people told Maria "Our heads are pumped full of information but no one teaches us how to cope with our feelings." Maria then started to use the colours she used herself in painting to get them to touch into their story and feelings, to battle on paper with their shadows and lights, then find words to share these insights."

For Maria to share on this level of feelings, life and faith experience was the best use of her talent and energy she could have ever imagined and she found it the most rewarding and life changing apostolate. Maria used her colour programme right up until last year in Alice Springs.

Maria returned to Australia in 1995, to take care of her sick mother and was at home when Gerard died. Her mother died in 1997 and Maria then went to the FMM community in Wantirna Melbourne where she continued to use her program with colours for retreats, recollections and workshops. It gave her plenty of work and great satisfaction for 9 years.

During that time she did a personal retreat at Santa Teresa Mission outside Alice Springs and then decided to go across to Warmun, 200km south of Kununurra in Western Australia to learn from Aboriginal artists there. She stayed with the Josephite sisters and while walking alone up a mountain had a fall and very badly injured her foot. She had to get herself back down the hill and get help. Her courage,

tenacity and strength were outstanding. The pain was excruciating and incredibly two dogs out walking with a woman found her which led to her rescue. She was flown to Perth and it took many months of slow recovery for her to be mobile again. Some effects of her injury stayed.

Later, she had the opportunity to go to New Zealand to follow 5 months of a personal renewal program. There, for the first time in her life she was able to go back and re-track the journey of my life with all its highs and lows, all its joys and fears, specially visiting those hidden memories that seemed to have got lost. All this in the company of a wise Marist called Jim who accompanied her with great love and remained a friend to the end. That experience was healing and liberating for Maria and it continued to have a positive influence for the rest of her life.

Maria then volunteered to go to Palm Island off Townsville in Queensland. She had dreamed about working with an Aboriginal community to get to know something about Aboriginal art, its spirituality and meaning. She had always been fascinated by their inspiring spiritual paintings, so full of color and harmony. She worked with many Aboriginal artists there and after 5 years left when we closed our convent there still awed by the mystery of their work. There she had her dogs and garden and felt a union with nature.

It was while on Palm Island that she first discovered she had cancer but the treatment left her so sick she decided to discontinue it.

The Centre of Australia with its colorful landscapes still called to her and so she went to Alice Springs where she was absorbed with nature and the colors of the Centre. Now that was a place to struggle with a garden. It was there that last year she was again beset by the cancer.

Maria, practical and wise, decided to come to Melbourne where she has given us all a lesson in life and dying. She loved all life, her communion with all of nature evident in every place she lived. She loved having the time and space to take it all in and see God everywhere.

Her two most powerful influences on our province were her contemplative spirit embracing all of God's creation and her zest for color and the meaning of life.

When I last spoke with her she said "I can't wait to meet Jesus."

In these last months those who have accompanied Maria have had a wonderful lesson in how to live and how to die. Now her beloved Jesus has come and taken her home.

I thank the FMM community at Canterbury who accompanied her on this last part of her earthly journey and who faithfully carried out her wishes for care and for her passing.

She was delighted to be near her family and help them to understand that this was a grace moment for her when like a butterfly she would emerge into a New Life. Thank you to all of you who loved and supported her.

I also thank her doctor and the Epworth Palliative Care unit who support the community generously and compassionately.

Maria, Jesus has now welcomed you to share in the splendour and colour of the glory of God - all the life and colour that you ever dreamed of and I am sure you have entered into it with joy and love.

We your family, sisters and friends will miss your presence here with us but your life has enhanced ours and will always enrich our missionary endeavours to bring God's light to our world.

Dance now with joy in the splendour of God who is Love, Light and Life.

Carmel Bennett FMM
Province Leader, Australia
17th January 2014



From Blessed Mary of the Passion ...

Give me, Lord, the light to see Your divine will
and the love to accomplish it.

9th May 1883