IN THIS ISSUE

Newly-elected IHM Administration 2018-2023
IHMs serving Independence Mission Schools

Our mission: to evangelize, to catechize, and to teach

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
IMMACULATA, PENNSYLVANIA
As I was praying over what might be a topic for this issue of IHM Sisters – On Mission, a simple childhood memory came to mind. I recalled that we were all taught to STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN when crossing the street. I prayed with these words and it occurred to me that this could be a great spiritual practice. The summer seems like a good time to do this. Let’s look again at these three words and see how they might help us on our spiritual journey.

STOP: How often do we rush from one task, encounter or place to another without noticing anything? Why not stop for a moment or two and notice what you see? There is beauty to be seen everywhere if we only take the time. Stop and breathe in the air. Pause over your cup of coffee or tea or your meal just to appreciate what you are doing. When someone is speaking to you give him/her your full attention. Stop while praying and just Be with the One to whom you are speaking.

LOOK: Jesus said, “Have you eyes but no sight? Ears but no hearing?” (Mark 8:18). There is something to be seen all around us if we take the time to look. A park, a beach, a garden, a flower box and so many other places are filled with beauty if we just look. Look into the eyes of the people you encounter during the day. When you stop and look, it is amazing what you will see. I believe you will feel the calming effect of just attending to what you see.

LISTEN: Listening seems to be a lost art. We know that there is a vast difference between hearing and listening. The wind rustling the leaves on the trees, the different birds that visit during the summer with their individual songs, raindrops dancing on the roof – all these sounds form a symphony for the person who has ears to hear. We have all had the joy of speaking with a person who stopped, looked at us and listened with the ears of the heart to what we had to say. Sadly, we have had the other experience of feeling that the person to whom we were speaking was not listening to us.

We know that God is not in the past, God is not in the future, God is in the present moment. As we sharpen our skills of STOPPING, LOOKING AND LISTENING, we might find our God waiting for us in that moment with all the graces we need right there and right then.

Sister Virginia Therese Nolan IHM is a Congregational Liaison for the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a spiritual director and a member of the pastoral team at Camilla Hall.
With Easter Alleluias still filling the air and the new Paschal candle burning brightly, the delegation of 192 sisters convened on Monday afternoon April 2, 2018 to enter into four days of intense prayer, discussion and discernment before voting for the new Congregational leadership. The delegation had been preparing since May 2017 and were supported by the prayers of EVERY IHM – most especially those in Camilla - our Powerhouse of Prayer.

To begin this sacred time, Sister Lorraine McGrew, current General Superior, presented to the delegation the requisite reports which delineate the status of the Congregation and how the dreams and plans of Chapter 2012 had been brought to fruition. She concluded her remarks leading the delegation into the reality of their future-oriented task saying, “We link arms and walk steadily toward [a] future we cannot yet envision, confidently trusting in the Spirit who leads us, as we courageously accept the call to bring our IHM charism to emerging and existing needs of God’s people. . . .”

Sister Stephen Anne Rodriquez (r), First Councilor, links arms with Sister Donna Kelley.

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity (r), General Superior, receives congratulations from Sister Rita Doyle.

Sister Patricia McDermott
Sister Assistant

Sister Sharon K. Hedrick
Second Councilor

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Independence
HMH
Mission
Schools

Celebrating IHM sisters who serve in this new model of urban Catholic education

St. Barnabas School:  S. Catherine A. Clark, Principal
S. Jean Miriam Alfonsi, S. Hope Mary Costello, S. Rita Mazzotta

St. Cyril of Alexandria School:  S. Barbara Montague, Principal

St. Gabriel School:  S. Noreen James Friel, Principal
S. Santa Teresa Borzillo, S. Ann Michael Doyle, S. Eileen Gillespie, S. Regina Angeline Oberdick

St. Martin of Tours School:  S. Ellen Giardino, Principal
S. Agnes Andrew Logan

St. Rose of Lima School:  S. Rita James Murphy, Principal

St. Veronica School:  S. Eileen Buchanan, Principal
S. Stephen Frances Meyer, S. Francis Mary Murray
Founded in 1929 and staffed by the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Cyril of Alexandria, an Independence Mission School in East Lansdowne, PA, has faced the potential of closing three times, but like a phoenix, rose each time from the ashes. It thrives today, stronger than ever with 240 students and a dedicated staff who appreciate the individuality of each student and who work to integrate the spiritual and the academic as they teach the “whole child to be a contributing member of the global community.”

The Character Counts Program, used by many schools in the United States, has become an essential component of the school community at St. Cyril’s. According to the principal, Sister Barbara Montague, the teachers “form students spiritually, academically and socially. Character development is woven into every aspect of the school day.” Character Counts standards are incorporated into formal religious instruction and are also used to create a school-wide Positive Behavior Plan. The program at St. Cyril’s is so strong that the school has been recognized as a State School of Character by Character.org in Washington DC. It is one of 65 schools in the state to receive this award.

Sister Barbara stresses, “Teamwork makes the dream work,” therefore the students at St. Cyril’s pray together daily, get involved in service projects, and compete academically for school recognition; for example, achieving first place in science in the IMS Academic Challenge. To capture the spirit of St. Cyril’s, Sister Barbara says, “Our students are very respectful and know they are loved. We, as an IMS school, prepare them for life in this world and in eternity.”

Walking on the streets of Southwest Philadelphia, one might not expect to hear the sounds of violins emanating from an elementary school. At St. Barnabas, however, this would be a weekly occurrence. This Independence Mission School, which strives to “educate the whole child and promote the desire to become a lifelong learner” (website), offers many such opportunities to its 304 students to learn beyond the boundaries of the school day. Whether it is Tune-Up Philly which comes in twice weekly to offer violin lessons or the Irish Pub Foundation which supports a music club where students can learn how to become DJs, principal Sister Catherine Clark, teachers and staff work hard encouraging the students to strive for excellence in all areas including the arts.

The determination to excel has resulted in many honors for the school. In the IMS Academic Challenge, St. Barnabas achieved first place among the 15 schools in social studies. One of the fourth-grade students was published in Highlights Magazine. The second-grade students have been invited to participate in the painting of a mural at the VA Medical Center in Philadelphia.

The staff and students at St. Barnabas are proud of their cultural diversity and celebrate annually with a special Culture Day. On this day, the students come to school dressed in their native clothing and the entire student body shares the ethnic foods of their classmates. The many cultures are all proud of what makes them unique, but they also revel in the things they share. Their daily prayer and meaningful liturgies, their outreach to the missions and their determination to spread goodness throughout their communities binds this student body together and makes St. Barnabas School, founded in 1927, a great source of hope, even ninety years later, for the people of Southwest Philadelphia.
Today, more than 100 years since its founding in 1908, we uphold the traditions that make St. Gabriel School the BEST KEPT SECRET in South Philly” (website). These traditions, rooted in the Catholic faith, create a school community with a goal to grow together spiritually, academically and socially. All three aspects of this goal are evident in the daily life of St. Gabriel’s.

Here is a multi-cultural community that sees the value of every human being. Kindness, respect and tolerance are expected. Students pray together, celebrate Mass regularly and are taught that prayer must carry over into good works; thus, they are encouraged to participate in various outreach efforts such as providing donations to local food banks and collecting emergency supplies for hurricane victims.

Academically, students have merited many honors. Several eighth-grade students have received scholarships to area high schools. Students have also won district-level essay contests. The dedicated faculty and staff truly believe that “students come first” and they work to create “lasting memories through quality learning experiences while emphasizing strong Christian values.” Because the students know that they are loved, cared for and safe, they work well together and they play well together. For example, Sister Noreen Friel, principal, promised, “If the Eagles win, we will dance.” And they did! This careful balance of the spiritual, the academic and the social creates the family that is St. Gabe’s.

That family comprises not only the current students, but all the many generations of students who have attended St. Gabriel’s. The alums are extremely loyal and generously support the school. The annex would not be warm this winter if the alums had not replaced the heater. This family spirit is the pride of St. Gabriel’s.

The IHMs have been serving St. Martin of Tours School since its inception in 1925. Throughout the years, from a peak enrollment of 2,750 students in 1970 to the current enrollment of 520, the sisters have adjusted and served, creating a “child-centered, family-sensitive school community, unaware of the color of skin or language.” They are “Many people – One Family – Serving Christ” (website).

Present day St. Martin’s has many achievements that inspire pride: their active and devoted Alumni Network which provides financial support, the new STEM lab that was financed by a grant given in memory of an alum, and their strong Catholic identity which impels the school family to reach out to the community in many significant ways. The students have strong social awareness which leads them to raise funds for various charitable endeavors as well as performing hands-on kindnesses (cards, notes, flowers) for both parish shut-ins and the children at St. Christopher Hospital. The administration and parents are proud of their staff, who are dedicated to trauma pedagogy, striving always to be aware of student needs. Most of all they are proud of their students.

A banner hangs in the entrance of the school proclaiming, “St. Martin of Tours: Preparing Tomorrow’s Saints Today.” According to Sister Ellen Giardino, principal, this theme of sainthood permeates all facets of life at St. Martin’s, from the patron saints for each class to the eighth-grade presentation, Saints in Motion, which brings to life the lives of the saints. This concrete effort of the entire school community to imitate virtue gives St. Martin’s its special focus.
St. Rose of Lima School, opening in 1923 in Northwest Philadelphia, is a faith-based community which focuses on the development of the whole child. Sister Rita James Murphy, principal, is committed to building this unique community, so she begins each day with an assembly. All students gather to pray and to consider how to follow Christ’s example of caring for others. The community of St. Rose is committed to feeding the homeless and to supplying canned goods for local food pantries. According to the school’s mission statement, “While conscious of the need to prepare the children for success in a rapidly changing and technology-driven world, [the staff] recognize that “the soul of education is the education of the soul” (Pius XI).

St. Rose of Lima has many sources of pride, but its annex building which houses the PreK and kindergarten classes is perhaps one of its greatest assets. The early childhood program allows for the creation of a family environment that encourages frequent contact and communication with parents. According to Sister Rita, “When the students move to first grade, they come prepared with solid readiness skills, positive behavior habits and good manners.” This early learning center also provides service opportunities for the older students.

Many factors contribute to the building of community at St. Rose of Lima. The spirit of love and the dedication of the faculty create nurturing environments. The Advisory Board has gathered an amazing group of financial benefactors. The newly-formed Home and School Association organizes special events, strengthens school spirit and makes St. Rose a positive presence in the neighborhood. The 225 students who attend St. Rose of Lima School grow and excel because of the many people who have lovingly invested in their education.

If you are ever in the neighborhood, do visit. Our light is always shining,” says Sister Eileen Buchanan, principal of St. Veronica School. This school which has been in existence since 1894 offers a quality education based on Gospel values. It is the hope of faculty and staff that students growing in this faith-filled environment will become catalysts in creating a moral society.

St. Veronica students, most of whom are Hispanic and bi-lingual, have many academic achievements of which to be proud. Last year’s eighth-grade class was awarded $465,000 in high school scholarships. Most of the graduates continue on to Catholic high schools. The current class, whose pictures are all displayed in the entrance, are on target to meet or exceed last year’s accomplishments. St. Veronica’s participates in the First in Math Program and achieved first place in the “small school” category, ranking fifth overall. The school has also been involved in Healthy NewsWorks, a program that provides middle elementary students hands-on learning about writing, journalism and health. Everyone is very gratified by these achievements as well as the compliments they receive for the excellent behavior of the students in every setting.

The Police Youth Alliance has made a serious investment in the lives of St. Veronica students. They began a chess program at the school which started with one chess board with missing pieces. It has grown into an award-winning club with many participants. The police also sent an officer to the school to start a Drumline Corps. To celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, the St. Veronica Drumline Corps marched with the 25th Police District in the parade.

The Christian atmosphere, the Gospel values and the academic excellence truly do keep the light “always shining” at St. Veronica’s.
In the Spotlight

Our sisters on mission ~
a little background, the promptings of grace, and the spirit that keeps them moving.

Sister Emily Vincent Rebalsky
Director of Religious Education
Our Lady of Hope Parish, Coal Township, PA
St. Patrick Parish, Trevorton, PA

“I am a delayed vocation having worked full time for 19 years before I entered religious life,” says Sister Emily Vincent by way of a unique introduction. “I worked primarily as a secretary/executive assistant and also spent time in marketing.” Years in the work force have paid off for Sister Emily. Managing schedules, being organized, and promoting events have given her practical skills for her work as a Director of Religious Education (DRE).

PERFECT FIT

Having attended public school and the parish religious education program, Sister Emily sees her ministry as DRE a natural fit. She runs a full program for her students at Our Lady of Hope and St. Patrick’s. She coordinates the sacramental program for both parishes, a youth group, youth Mass, and family Bible movie night. She finds time to teach Religious Enrichment to students in grades 5-8 at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School, to provide RCIA instruction for children and teens, and to facilitate training for catechists. Summing it all up, she says, “I absolutely love what I do. I love the mix of working with both the public school and Catholic school students. It helps me to better know all of our parish families.”

According to Sister Emily, “the most rewarding part of my ministry comes from the saddest and most challenging part of my ministry. Sometimes the teens I work with decide not to receive the sacraments. I tell them there is an open door and that they are always welcome back. The rewarding part of my ministry is when they ask if they can return. It’s often these boys and
girls who become my best students because they truly want to be there.”

Sister Emily readily admits that she especially loves working with religious education students. She believes that they don’t have as many opportunities to learn about their faith and so they are often fascinated with anything spiritual. “When the Congregation asked me to take this assignment, I was thrilled! I had heard so many great things about our upstate missions and the wonderful people who have worked with our sisters. I, too, have found the people so loving, down-to-earth, and filled with genuine goodness.”

“Pray every day. Trust God. Make the works of mercy your bucket list. Read and pray the Gospels.”

THE LONG JOURNEY

Sister Emily was away from the Church during her entire adolescence returning at 19 and finally joining her grandmother’s parish. There she got to know the priests who encouraged her in her faith life and ultimately helped her to discern her vocation. In time, she found herself working for the Office for Clergy at the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Office. “I had gone to public school,” she says, “and worked in a secular environment so I wanted to see if people employed by the church were ‘real’ and to learn how I would do in this environment. The priests I worked for only inspired me all the more to take the leap into religious life.”

HEARING THE CALL

In her mid-thirties, Sister Emily wasn’t convinced, though, that she had a vocation. A friend suggested that she pray every night and ask God to reveal His will for her. Once she began praying seriously and deliberately, she was “running into” sisters everywhere -- the shoe store, the mall, Valley Forge Park. Seeing a Theology on Tap series advertised, she decided to attend. To her surprise, she saw four IHM sisters. “They all had this incredible, joyful glow to them,” she says. “I went up to one of them at break and asked what made her become a sister. We chatted a bit and agreed to meet once a month. I asked all sorts of questions. I was soon invited to an IHM Sisters’ Night. I got held up at work and arrived after the festivities. I walked into the room and saw all these IHM sisters of various ages, along with a group of young women, sitting in a circle ready to begin Night Prayer. I felt as if I were coming home!

Sister Emily knows the value of patience and tenacity. Her formula for staying on track is simple: “Pray every day. Trust God. Make the Works of Mercy your bucket list. Read and pray the Gospels.” Needless to say, it worked and continues to work for her.
Sister Emily found her way to the IHM Congregation in Philadelphia by way of California, being introduced to the IHM sisters at St. Simon Parish, Los Altos. Early on – second grade – Emily thought about being a sister but didn’t contact the Congregation until she was a junior in high school. Her goal was to enter after graduation, but she was encouraged to do a year of college. That one year stretched into four before entrance.

The thought of a religious vocation surfaced again when Emily became involved in the Newman community on campus and began praying seriously. She continues the story: “I visited many communities in California, but realized that what I was looking for in them was what I experienced with the IHM sisters in elementary and high school. I contacted the IHM vocation directress, writing on bright pink paper! I think she remembers that to this day! Soon I made the journey east. I have to say that the first time I prayed in Sacred Heart Chapel, I felt as if I had come home. I then spent a year doing my pre-entrance program long distance via phone and correspondence. I entered in September 1992.”

SOMETHING NEW

Recently, Emily felt it was time for a change from her years of classroom teaching. A good friend suggested that she consult the IHM Ministry Advisement Board and check out the job description posted by The Barry Robinson Center which provides behavioral health services for children and teens. A bit overwhelmed at first, Emily took some time to look closer at the application and then prayed with it for a while. Soon, interest and excitement grew, the Congregational leadership gave permission to apply, and after an interview and tour of the facility, she “fell in love” with the work. Now grateful for that friendly suggestion, she advises, “Listen to your close friends. They probably know you and your gifts more than you realize, and sometimes better than you do.”

EASING GOD IN

Sister Emily’s responsibilities are many and varied. “I conduct a Core Values and Mindfulness Group for each of the adolescent dorms; I have an after-school Faith Club where teens and children have an opportunity for prayer, Bible study, religious
activities, questions and answers. I plan and prepare the residents for the monthly prayer service as well as gathering the residents for informal prayer twice a month on Sunday evenings. I arrange with our chaplain to administer the sacrament of Reconciliation for the Catholic residents.” Emily responds to whatever the need is but she stresses that her main ministry is presence. “I listen to the cares and concerns of both residents and staff,” she says. “I am a neutral figure, not a therapist nor a residential counselor. I am there to listen, support, and pray with and for them. I just love what I do.”

GOD AT WORK

Emily was confirmed in her ministry when a teenage girl approached her and said that she wanted to be baptized. “I was a little taken aback,” she says, “but I worked with her to prepare her for the sacrament. She was baptized on the day of her discharge from the Center. Since then, the Spirit’s work within me and among the residents and staff has been clearly evident. The Lord has used this ministry to teach me humility, flexibility, and compassion.”

WELL AFFIRMED

There is no doubt that Sister Emily’s work is more than appreciated at the Center. “I cannot put into words the value Sister Emily has added to our organization and overall mission,” says Justin Hoover, Director of Operations at BRC. “We are so lucky to have her. She is great with the kids, great with the staff and always available. Bringing not only the spiritual program back to BRC, but bringing Sister Emily into the Center has been wonderful!”

A friend, Sister Meg Fleming, IHM, affirms the work that Emily does. “She loves her present ministry at BRC. Emily provides the spiritual component that is often missing from people’s fragile lives. Her own personal resilience has provided her with the skills and understanding to work with her young clients. Emily is providing prayer opportunities that will form a spiritual foundation for the people to whom she ministers.”

Sister Emily’s hom e parish is St. Simon, Los Altos, CA
She attended St. Simon Elementary School, St. Francis High School, CA, Sonoma State University, CA, Immaculata University, PA, Santa Clara University, CA. Emily entered the Congregation in 1992. She has been missioned at St. Matthew, Phila, SS. Philip & James, Exton, St. Simon, CA, St. Veronica, Phila, Holy Innocents, Phila, St. Martin of Tours, Phila, St. Pius X, VA.
All who minister here endeavor to serve the sisters and one another with respect, dignity and compassion in imitation of Jesus, the Divine Healer. Mission Statement

“T

These words from the above Camilla Hall Mission Statement are reflective of the team spirit and effort that is exhibited each and every day by the entire Camilla Hall staff,” says Sister Dolores Joseph, Superior of Camilla Hall. “What a great experience for me!” It is this spirit that has continued to motivate Sister Dolores for the last four years in her role as Superior to the nearly two hundred sisters who call Camilla their home. The days are full and maybe even some nights as well, but Sister Dolores remains approachable with an ever-ready smile and a helping hand.

CARE WORKS BOTH WAYS

Sister Dolores has a pastoral presence when it comes to spending time with the sisters. “Each day I try to visit the sisters, listening to and encouraging them and trying to be present and attentive to their needs,” she says.

“I am kept informed about their level of care and I communicate this to their families when necessary. I am privileged to bring comfort and consolation to our sisters’ family members in times of serious illness and death.”

Besides giving, she also receives. “A very rewarding part of my ministry is to see how graciously our sisters show prayerful support and a gentle, loving concern for...”
one another. They are truly an inspiration to me. To see their smiling faces despite their pain and suffering makes me appreciate more and more the great privilege I have in being with them each day. They have taught me so much -- especially that the most important things in life are not material things or what we can do, but who we are as IHMs.”

**BLESSINGS**

Sister’s IHM “life” began in many classrooms throughout the suburbs of Philadelphia. She considers her greatest blessing, though, to have been in Peru, Chile, and in the Coal Regions of upstate Pennsylvania. It was in Chile that sister had two ministries: teaching children and ministering to the sick and elderly in the pueblo. “To this day,” she says, “I continue to carry in my heart the beautiful memories of those beloved people.” But in Bolivia, it was Sister’s turn to be carried -- not in someone’s heart but over a wildly flowing river. Sister Dolores captures that moment: “I was in Bolivia studying at the Language Institute. In order to go into the jungle area to be with the people, I had to cross over a raging river while being strapped to a guide who used a hand pulley to take me to the opposite side. It was a wild, memorable adventure and lots of fun besides.”

**A NAME BY ANY OTHER NAME**

Just about everyone in the Congregation knows Sister Dolores by the name of Macy. But whether as Sister Dolores or Macy, she maintains that even disposition and joyful personality that welcomes visitors, engages in attentive listening, consoles the sick and sorrowful, and whizzes down the hall to support a sister in need. She adds, “As each day unfolds at Camilla Hall and ‘whatever happens, happens,’ everyone rises to the occasion.”

Sister Dolores’ final words say it all. “May we always hold in our hearts an ‘attitude of gratitude’ for the blessing and gift of our IHM Congregation and Camilla Hall.”

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*S. Maria Carmen Quiros always manages some clever quips and a few crazy antics at the receptionist’s desk. Sister Dolores “has her number” and is a perfect match for Sister Carmen’s wit and humor.*
Through the intercession of our deceased sisters, we pray for vocations.

S. Agnes Frances Slater  
3.28.18

Sister Marie Susan Bruno  
3.6.18

Sister Mary Laureen Discher  
2.28.18

Sister Mercita Marie Valentine  
2.21.18

Sister Charles Mary Hanlon  
2.5.18

Sister Anne Marie Meehan  
(S. Marita Bernard)  
1.29.18

Sister Mary D. Ellis  
1.17.18

Sister Marie St. Michael Moser  
1.12.18

Does God still call young women to religious life today? If you ask the sisters who work in IHM vocation ministry, the answer is an overwhelming “yes!” In our ministry of promoting vocations, Sister Rose Bernadette Mulligan and I have encountered countless young people who are earnestly seeking God’s will for their lives and who are open to considering a vocation to the consecrated life.

Seeds of a religious vocation are often planted in the hearts of young children. Recognizing the faithful witness of the sisters in our schools and parishes, we visit elementary and high school classrooms, parish PREP programs and youth groups. These visits are wonderful opportunities for students to learn the vocation story of IHM sisters, to hear about our life of prayer, community, and ministry, and to begin to understand that God has a special plan for their lives, too. With each visit, we lead the students in prayer, asking, “Dear Jesus, teach me what you want me to do with my life and I will do it.”

These seeds of vocation are nurtured through the IHM Junior Companions...
Dear Jesus,
Teach me what you want me to do with my life and I will do it.

In all our travels and activities, it is easy for us to resonate with the words of our founder, Fr. Gillet, “I desire to be everywhere!” We have seen God working in the lives of young people today. We sense their desire to embrace a life of holiness, and we are excited to invite them to consider giving their lives in praise, love, and thanksgiving to God as an IHM sister.

Hearing God’s Call

IHM vocation ministry really comes alive in the dynamism of youth and young adult conferences. Each year, we participate in events like Fan the Fire Youth Rally in York, PA, speaking about vocations to hundreds of teens in attendance; at Daylesford Abbey’s Abbeyfest, meeting thousands of young people at our vocation booth; at the national FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) Conference, joining over 8,000 young adults for a week of formation, fellowship and faith. We also participate in various diocesan youth conferences where hundreds of faith-filled young people come together to be inspired and enriched. All of these events are sure signs that God is touching the hearts and minds of young people today, calling them to grow in faith and holiness of life.

In all our travels and activities, it is easy for us to resonate with the words of our founder, Fr. Gillet, “I desire to be everywhere!” We have seen God working in the lives of young people today. We sense their desire to embrace a life of holiness, and we are excited to invite them to consider giving their lives in praise, love, and thanksgiving to God as an IHM sister.

groups, sponsored by our Vocation Office and led by sisters in many schools and parishes. As Junior Companions, girls in grades 3-8 meet regularly in school or in the convent to learn about our IHM charism, prayers, and traditions. Each spring, all are invited to share a day of faith and fun at our Motherhouse and to celebrate their IHM bonds with our sisters and with one another.
In the last issue, I introduced everyone to the history and work of our IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry. This organization’s spiritual foundation and prayer traditions are based on the Redemptorist founder, St. Alphonsus Liguori and shared with the IHMs by our Founder, Rev. Louis Gillet, a Redemptorist missionary.

INDUCTION CEREMONY

As members complete their first full year as Companions in a local group, they are inducted into our IHM Companions at the prayer service in Sacred Heart Chapel that concludes our fall gathering at Villa Maria House of Studies.

Each new Companion receives a copy of *Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament* written by Saint Alphonsus Liguori, an IHM Companions’ pin and Mother of Perpetual Help card with our Companions’ Mission Statement.

St. Alphonsus developed a month-long prayer journal of visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to our Blessed Mother to aid in developing a strong spiritual relationship with both Jesus and Mary. Companions are encouraged to set aside time each day for personal prayer and reflection using our IHM Congregational prayers. We, in turn, prayerfully remember and support our IHM Companions each and every day.

EXPANDING MINISTRY

Initially, IHM Companions were associated with our ministry of teaching. Now it has broadened into participation in their local parishes or neighborhood ministries.

Local groups of IHM Companions have taken it upon themselves to participate in varied ministries. For example, *Our Lady of Peace Companions* from St. Martin of Tours, Philadelphia, PA are paired with a sister resident at Camilla Hall whom they communicate with and pray for during the year.

Immaculata Companions from Somerville, NJ select a young sister in the Formation Program and pray for her and for religious vocations. *Theresa Maxis Companions* from Runneme, NJ pray for religious vocations and make meat and cheese sandwiches at the close of their monthly gathering for the needy in Camden. These Companions have made over 21,000 sandwiches during the past 15 years.

FIRST-TIME SUCCESS

In October, 2017, all local groups of IHM Companions were invited to staff a booth at our Camilla Hall fundraiser – Oktoberfest. The booth, GIFTS GALORE, was prepared by Companion volunteers and staffed by Companions who worked the booth for an hour or more during the day. Those who participated enjoyed one another and all the festivities. We raised $2,050 for this first-time collective venture!

For more information contact S. Francis Helen Murphy, IHM at Villa Maria House of Studies 610-647-2160, ext. 1925 or ihmcompanions@gmail.com
Mother Maria Alma Ryan, IHM
1944 - 1957

“May this Angelus gather each month a record of our labors, successes, sorrows, joys, hopes and prayers for our sharing.”
From the first issue of the Angelus, the monthly Congregational newsletter, March 1, 1945.
The Angelus continues to arrive monthly at each IHM convent.

Mother Maria Alma Ryan, tenth Mother Superior, was a tiny but towering leader! She was so gifted intellectually that her legacy of publications, community organization and papal approbation were to place the Congregation on a firm foundation for the future.

Born in Reading, Pennsylvania, Marie Ellen Ryan was raised by her grandmother, aunts, and an uncle since her mother died five months after her birth. Upon graduation from Villa Maria Academy, she was determined to become an IHM sister. Mother M. Joachim, Marie’s aunt, feared Marie was fascinated with, rather than called to religious life. However, Marie had developed a strength of character and self-confidence evident in the young when thrown on their own resources.

While residing at Immaculata College, Sister Maria Alma held several responsible positions: college bursar, registrar, professor, secretary and treasurer-general of the Congregation. Students honored her outstanding teaching ability with the Immaculata Almunea “Woman of the Year” award in 1956.

A prolific writer, Mother Maria Alma wrote two volumes of Congregational history; the life of its founder, Rev. Louis Florent Gillet, and another on its foundress, Mother Theresa Maxis. She encouraged others to “launch out into the deep” of publication: English, mathematics, catechetics, music, poetry in religious and secular journals.

As she herself would write, “The crowning achievement of those years was the pontifical approbation of the Congregation.” The lengthy, detailed process of obtaining the governmental and spiritual benefits of becoming a pontifical Congregation was begun in 1951. Finally, the long-awaited Decree of Praise was promulgated on January 21, 1956.

Mother retired to Gillet Hall where she died during the Thanksgiving holidays of 1971.

Burial: Immaculata Cemetery, Immaculata
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<th>SEVENTY YEARS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Maria Carmen Quiroz</td>
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<td>Sister Claudine M. Hagerty</td>
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<td>Sister M. Joseph Francis Stauffer</td>
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<td>Sister Joseph Marion Gallagher</td>
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<td>Sister M. Claire Hutchinson</td>
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<td>DIAMOND JUBILARIANS</td>
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<td>Sister Maureen Margaret Illescas Aicardi</td>
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<td>Sister Lucia Maria Vittorio</td>
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<td>Sister Suzanne Marie McRae</td>
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<td>Sister Vera M. Rocks</td>
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<td>SILVER JUBILARIANS</td>
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<td>Sister M. Teresa Cecelia Haug</td>
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<td>Sister Marianne Therese Lallone</td>
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Congratulations to Sister Margaret Rose Adams who was presented with the Lead, Learn, Proclaim Award by the National Catholic Educational Association. This award recognizes outstanding efforts, contributions, and achievements on behalf of Catholic school education. Each recognized leader must embrace Catholic identity and demonstrate Catholic values, work collaboratively toward continuous school improvement, and support rigorous academic programs that integrate the Catholic Faith across subject areas. Sister was nominated for this award by the faculty and students of Queen of Angels Regional School, Willow Grove, PA. Thank you, Sister Margaret Rose, for your enthusiastic leadership and your passion for the mission of Catholic education.

There are not enough hours in the day, days in the week, nor enough space at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Virginia Beach, VA, to accommodate all the activities, outreach programs and school events that make it one of the most active and busy parishes in the Tidewater area. Here, Sister Brenda Query addresses the RCIA class as she does every Sunday morning throughout the year. She is just one of many IHMs who minister in the Virginia Beach, Norfolk region. “The harvest is plentiful . . .” (Luke 10:2).

The real Independence Mission School, St. Rose of Lima, Philadelphia, is shown at the right. Mistakenly, in the winter edition of IHM Sisters – On Mission, we pictured St. Rose of Lima School in Eddystone, PA. Although an IHM sister serves at St. Rose of Lima in Eddystone and we are proud of that, we want to make sure Sister Rita James Murphy, principal, her teachers, staff, parents, and students have the pride of Wanamaker Street noted in this summer edition. The red doors can be seen, Sister Rita. Our apologies!
Contributors to this issue

S. Carolyn M. Dimick
Marie Gallagher
S. Marianne Lalone
S. Francis Helen Murphy
S. Virginia Therese Nolan
S. Jeannine M. Norton

FRONT COVER
IMS PRINCIPALS

Top Row:  S. Catherine Clark
          S. Eileen Buchanan
          S. Noreen James Friel
Bottom Row:  S. Barbara Montague
            S. Ellen Giardino
            S. Rita James Murphy

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… and thank you for your contribution!

Our database was developed internally from relatives, friends, former students, and associates of the IHM Congregation. The office neither buys nor sells lists of names; however, we are always happy to receive new names from you, our readers. Please feel free to send us the names of those who might enjoy receiving our publication three times a year.