St. Lucy School for Children with Visual Impairments
Archbishop Ryan School for the Deaf

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

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
IMMACULATA, PENNSYLVANIA
As spring gently transforms our earth into the full beauty of summer, I welcome you to this edition of *On Mission*.

The Easter season reminds us that transformation is at the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus transforms the mystery of suffering and death into the fullness of life and resurrection. In the tradition of St. Alphonsus Liguori, this transformation exhorts us as IHMs to be receptive in spirit and responsive in action to all we meet, calling us to be a transformative presence in the lives of others.

The story of the relationships formed by the partnering of St. Lucy School for the Blind, Archbishop Ryan School for the Deaf, and Holy Innocents School is a tangible testimony to being receptive in spirit and responsive in action. Sister Lisa Lettiere attributes “the love and respect demonstrated for each child” as an “unmistakable sign of the presence of God among us.”

Transformation is taking place in Sister Carolyn Braun’s “Flipped Classroom.” Engaging students in the wonders and mystery of becoming lifelong learners energizes her ultimate goal in helping them to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Her vocation story recounts how her discernment process “flipped” her dream of wanting to work for NASA into the unknown space of religious life.

Life within a correctional facility opens one to the redemptive mystery that we are all connected in some way. Sister Susan Born relates that her life has been transformed by her encounters with prisoners who are willing to share their spiritual searching with her and their fellow inmates. It is truly in seeing beyond appearances that we find how much we all have in common.

In the late 1990s, Camilla Hall, our IHM Nursing Home, opened its own pharmacy and changed the way pharmaceutical needs were delivered. The success of that decision opened the opportunity for Camilla to be established as a closed-door pharmacy. The respect, dignity, and compassion shown by the pharmacy staff to the residents of Camilla Hall transform a simple act of service into a larger sense of mission.

Sister John Evelyn DiTrolio, IHM Directresses of Novices, is well aware of the transformational graces that a young woman receives in discerning her vocation to religious life. The Novitiate experience allows time for a novice to embrace a life of prayer and to experience the joys and challenges of community life. It is during this time set apart that the novice deepens her own receptive spirit so that she can be responsive to the God who dwells in others.

The stories within these pages are just short glimpses into the transformation that takes place when one is receptive in spirit and responsive in action. Thank you for partnering with us in our mission to be a redeeming presence in the lives of others. We are ever so grateful for the love and support you show to our IHM initiatives. Truly, we have been transformed by your presence in our lives.

May you know abundant blessings,

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity IHM, General Superior
During the summer months along the Jersey Shore, in boats or at the bay, one can see fishermen casting fishing lines into the water in hopes of a catch. Fishermen/women have long been teased about “fish stories”—you know, “the one that got away!” But there is one fish story where NO ONE gets away! The Gospel of Luke (5: 1-11) presents a fish story that turns all common sense—and experience—upside down. In this fish tale, it is not the fish that gets “hooked” but the fisherman! It is the account of Peter and the great catch of fish. That day began as a failure for Peter and his fellow fishermen. After fishing all night Peter had nothing to show for his efforts. Jesus approached Peter and told him to “put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Can you imagine Peter’s reaction? “Seriously? Is he kidding?”

Jesus’ command to put out into deep water confronted Peter’s personal experience. Like us, what Jesus asked of Peter seemed impossible or useless. “I’ve prayed about this for years and nothing changes.” We can relate to Peter! Throughout our lifetimes, we often have had to leave something to move onto something else. We left home for college or marriage, changed jobs, stopped doing enjoyable things because of ill health. Did we recognize at that time that God was calling us to something new, maybe even something better? Our spiritual lives are like this. With a spark of an idea, a desire, a nudge we need to recognize that it might be God calling us to “put out into deeper water.”

No doubt about it, friends! God IS calling each of us to go deeper, to stretch into a new relationship with him. This going deeper is a journey inward, a spiritual journey. It’s traveling to those deep places in our heart that we don’t often visit.

Like us, Peter had a choice. He could have said, “No thanks!” He was tired, he had experienced failure. Why try again? Peter had every reason not to obey Jesus. But at Jesus’ word, he turned from his logic and obeyed him. It was a risk! Jimmy Carter once said, “Go out on a limb. That’s where the fruit is.” Jesus says, “Follow me. That’s where the people are.”

During these summer months, when you see fishermen casting their nets or lines into the water, remember Jesus’ command to Peter (and to us): “Put out into deep water.” Jesus will keep his promise: You will be fishers of men and women. Peter was “hooked.” Are you?
The Blind See and the Deaf Hear

(Below) Students in back row from St. Lucy School for Children with Visual Impairments using electronic Braille Notetakers and (right) students from Archbishop Ryan School for the Deaf utilizing American Sign Language integrate with ease among the students at Holy Innocents Catholic School.

St. Lucy School for Children with Visual Impairments (SLS) and Archbishop Ryan School for the Deaf (ARSD) are, according to principal Sister Lisa Lettiere, “an oasis!” “In this setting,” she says, “the students, despite their disabilities, can grow to their fullest potential in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance. There is no teasing, no bullying. Students are taught to change ‘What if?’ to ‘I can’!”

Only recently these two schools have come together under one
administrator in the same building. Archbishop Ryan, founded in 1912, was located on Vine Street. It then was moved to 35th and Spring Garden Streets and then, throughout the years was located in various Delaware County Parishes: St. Gabriel, Norwood; St. George, Glenolden, and St. Joseph, Collingdale. St. Lucy, founded in 1955, was located at St. Francis de Sales School. In 1990, the school was moved to St. Alice in Upper Darby and remained there until 2005 when it was established at its current home at Holy Innocents Catholic School in Juniata Park. In 2009, Archbishop Ryan joined St. Lucy’s and the two schools became one wonderful entity.

VALUE OF INTEGRATION

Sister Regina Mullen, principal of Holy Innocents, speaks of all of the advantages that flow to her students from sharing their campus with SLS/ARSD. Sister says, “The children attend many classes with the Holy Innocents students as well as lunch and playground times, assemblies and even some field trips.” Once the students with disabilities gain proficiency in Braille and/or American Sign Language, they can be mainstreamed into religion, science and social studies classes in Holy Innocents. This usually occurs by third grade. Sister Regina believes, “The traditional students at Holy Innocents grow in respect and acceptance through their connection with the mainstreamed students and learn an important lesson about working to potential.” Sister Lisa also appreciates the opportunities that the mainstreaming provides. She claims, “It gives all the children an opportunity to experience peers who may not have their disability or who have no apparent disability.” It is the goal of SLS/ARSD to follow the regular core curriculum of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, modified where necessary for students with visual or auditory impairments.
In addition to their core subjects, the visually-impaired students receive special instruction in Braille, Orientation, Mobility and Daily Living skills. They also receive training on special equipment. The older students carry electronic Braille Notetakers, specialized computers that allow them to take notes in braille during classes. They also have access to voice-over screen readers which is an accessibility option on Apple products. The screen reader converts all on-screen data (text, objects and controls) to speech or braille enabling a blind or partially-sighted student to use a Mac. The State of Pennsylvania provides braille textbooks (at great expense) for all the academic subjects except religion, but the staff at SLS are determined to make certain that the students are fully equipped. Sister Elaine George, using special software, creates braille textbooks for the students’ religion classes. Sister Lisa is proud to proclaim that St. Lucy’s is a braille-rich environment!

The students in Archbishop Ryan School for the Deaf have an opportunity to learn in a bilingual environment (spoken English and American Sign Language). Along with the core curriculum, the students learn language skills. They work to develop speech, reading and written language, which form the basis for a complete education. Like their counterparts in SLS, the students at ARSD are mainstreamed into classes at Holy Innocents. They are accompanied by an instructor who signs the material while they take notes and participate in the class.

“The love and respect demonstrated for each child is an unmistakable sign of the presence of God among us.”

Recently, Sister Lisa received the Blindness and Low Vision Alumna of the Year Award from Salus University. The plaque contains the following accolade, “[Sister Lisa] is a visionary who looks for partnerships and collaborations inside and outside of St. Lucy to provide quality services for the children and families she serves.” One example of this is Sister Lisa’s tradition of taking a St. Lucy student to a Catholic elementary school where the students are studying the Miracle...
to continue, but because the Catholic high schools do not have the support systems necessary to assure success at this time, they are hesitant to accept students with disabilities. Despite these difficulties, Sister Lisa loves her work with the children at SLS/ARSD. She says, “The love and respect demonstrated for each child in our program is an unmistakable sign of the presence of God among us.”

**CHALLENGES MOUNT**

Sister Lisa has also formed valuable partnerships with Salus University and the Lions’ Club which offer great support. When asked her greatest challenge, Sister Lisa says, “Funding!” Although the Catholic Charities Appeal supplies some funding, Sister Lisa must still charge tuition and have fundraisers to cover the $22,000 that it costs to educate each student in the program.

Another challenge that Sister Lisa faces is the recruitment of qualified teachers and aides. “Not enough teachers are being trained in these specialties,” she says. She is fortunate, however, to have hired Clare, a graduate of St. Lucy and Georgian Court University, who not only supports the students in their academic subjects through the use of braille and braille equipment, but also serves as a role model. Working with Clare, they learn that blindness need not stand in the way of accomplishing their goals.

The placement of eighth-grade students in Catholic high schools can be very challenging. Many who have been in Catholic school want Worker. The blind student speaks with the traditional students about what it is like to use braille and special devices to learn in school. The traditional students are amazed at the Braille Notetakers. Sister Lisa sees this visitation as extremely valuable for all involved. She says, “Seeing things from a different perspective is important for all students.” It is her hope that in the future, traditional students will not be afraid to interact with a child with a disability. For her own students, Sister Lisa says, “I hope they walk away knowing that there are people interested in them even though they are different.”

**MORE IHMs AT WORK**

Rounding out the SLS/ARSD IHM staff is (below left) Sister Amy Summers, (librarian/development) and Sister Noreen Friel, secretary. Team work makes it all happen.
In the Spotlight

Our sisters on mission --

a little background, the promptings of grace, and the spirit that keeps them moving

Sister Carolyn Elizabeth Braun

Eighth-Grade Teacher
St. James School, Savannah, GA

Some might say that Sister Carolyn has “flipped” out? Not exactly. But her preferred style of teaching math has given her the opportunity to use the “Flipped Classroom” method. In this unique way of disseminating knowledge, Sister “flips” what is traditionally done in the classroom, with what is done at home. What is done at home, “flips” with what is done in the classroom. She sets forth an example: “The students watch a math video on a specific topic for homework the night before. Next day, the students work with the teacher doing math problems in the classroom. The whole process is “flipped.”

NO TWO DAYS THE SAME

Teaching seventh and eighth-grade math and eighth-grade religion rounds out Carolyn’s teaching day. When asked what was unique about her ministry, there was little hesitation, “When it comes to seventh and eighth graders, everyday is a unique experience. You never know what will come your way working with 12-14 year olds. I love the interaction and connection to youth. Best of all, though, is walking with the eighth graders on their faith journey. Young adults are asking powerful questions. It is a privilege to prepare them for Confirmation and to watch them grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Sister Carolyn’s after-school days are quite active. She loves soccer and volleyball and currently coaches the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls’ volleyball teams. Add time for kayaking and running and her day is made.

Sister Carolyn loves her teaching experience. Looking back she admits, “Coming from a non-educational field, I didn’t feel equipped to guide students. My IHM Congregation has done an amazing job preparing me and coaching me for the ministry of Catholic education. The “seasoned”
sisters have been an incredible asset to my professional development. Some classroom techniques just work across space and time.”

**BACKSTORY**

Sister Carolyn attended St. Maria Goretti School in Hatfield, PA, was home schooled for high school and graduated from Rowan University in New Jersey with a degree in mechanical engineering. As an undergraduate, she worked with Engineers without Borders and helped to provide drinking water for the people of El Salvador. “However,” she says, “I grew up wanting to work for NASA. I wanted to travel into space. I am still willing to go if the opportunity presents itself!!”

**VOCA TION FRENZY**

Carolyn’s first thoughts about a religious vocation came in fifth grade – one brief shining moment! An IHM sister visited her classroom and sister made an impact, but Carolyn’s dream of traveling to space did not go away. “I loved the idea of discovering the unknown,” she says. “Space is filled with unknowns. It is exciting!” In 8th grade, she was invited to tour the convent – which never happened. Nonetheless, she was filled with questions: What did sisters do when they were not in school? Did they have hobbies? Question after question led her to search on Google (just coming on the scene.) Google didn’t know what nuns did either!

Then Carolyn discovered that the sister who was to give that special tour was actually at the IHM Motherhouse. “Around my junior year,” she says, “I had to get my questions answered. I called and the “tour” sister picked up the phone. YIKES! Now what do I do? I introduced myself. She remembered me, and invited me to come for a visit. (I was hoping all my questions would be answered on the phone and then I could go freely into space.)

Next came a series of invites – to Evening Prayer, to dinner, and then to the next Sisters’ Night and discernment retreats -- which I attended for six years!”

**DISCERNMENT WORKED**

It was during Sister Carolyn’s college years that she figured out something very important. God was bigger than space. She had to admit that even space wasn’t going to cure her curiosity problem. She wanted more. So when she graduated from college, she entered the IHM Congregation. She is still curious, but the questions are different now. She cautions, “You have to be comfortable living with the questions.”

**A GOD OF SURPRISES**

“When it comes to finding your vocation, don’t settle for second best. Engineering is a great career, but it wasn’t enough for me. It is important to find out what God is calling you to do. Religious life has been more than I could have ever imagined. Let God surprise you! Let Him show you all that He has planned for you. It might not be as complicated as you think.”

Coaching the St. James Girls’ Volleyball Teams is high on Sister Carolyn’s list of favorite things to do. Best part -- creating spirit and counting more wins than losses!
For me, there is a two-fold aspect of my ministry which is unique. First, the obvious aspect of prison work is the reality of the formidable institution itself, the Department of Corrections. Prison life is a horrible existence. It takes a conscious effort not to dwell on the proclivity for evil within,” Sister Susan says. “Second, is the overwhelming personal encounters. Each inmate has a sacred story. It is as humbling to listen to an inmate’s past as it is worthwhile to be part of his effort to attain a crime-free life in the future.”

It is here at the State Correctional Institution in Coal Township that Sister Susan Mary Born has found purpose and meaning in a very unique way. After 25 years of teaching 7th and 8th grade, Susan took a dramatic turn and “entered” the correctional system in 2013. Despite the many challenges, Sister Susan readily admits how much she likes what she does, how rewarding it is, and how without a doubt, prison ministry is an important arm of the church. Her experience has taught her that Faith formation of prisoners is a current and emerging need in the church today. She feels compelled to remind everyone, “Pope Francis validates this everywhere he travels when he visits prisons and washes the feet of felons.”

RIPE FOR EVANGELIZATION

Although many reforms have taken place and current legislation and lawsuits are pushing for prison reform, the overwhelming need to bring faith to men and women who live in an environment where there is no hope is necessary, satisfying, and is an honor. Sister Susan believes, “Inmates are fertile ground for evangelization. It is so worthwhile when, after a personal invitation by me or other inmates, ...
men who were baptized Catholic or went to Catholic school, begin attending Mass or classes again. It is not unlike the present efforts in parishes and dioceses today to bring back fallen-away Catholics.”

**BUSY BEHIND WALLS**

Life for Susan is busy behind the walls of the correctional facility. Besides preparing for weekly Masses and communion services, Susan arranges for reflection days and speakers, plans Holy Hours, and provides opportunities for rosary and Stations of the Cross. Then there are visiting times – the ten housing units or “blocks” as they are called, the medical unit, the psychiatric observation unit, the special needs unit, and the restricted housing unit, commonly know as solitary confinement. Finally, there are special times when she meets with men one-on-one in her office.

**WISDOM WITHIN WALLS**

Reflecting on prison life, Sister Susan has come to realize that it is the great equalizer. “It holds not only gang members and thugs,” she says, “but business men and lawyers as well. It matters not if they used a gun, or a knife, or if one is a Knight of Columbus or an Old Order Amish man. Whether they are sick, old, or mentally ill has no bearing either. For the most part they have “been down” (locked up) long enough to accept responsibility for their crimes and are resigned to their incarceration. Prison IS HOME to them. Many even possess a ‘jailhouse wisdom’ of their own. I have learned much about humanity and spirituality from a man who had been in solitary confinement for over 36 years.”

**IN SEARCH OF TOOLS AND WISDOM**

The men who participate in the Catholic activities and services actually want to be there. Many of them know that they need faith in their lives and that is what Susan tends to with great care. Kindly but persistently she tells them, “You simply cannot make it on the inside without a spiritual base. If you don’t make it on the inside, you will not make it on the outside.”

Some of the men are open to learning about God’s mercy because they are in a vulnerable enough position to be in need of it. “They are asking for ‘tools.’ They are looking for ‘witness’,” she says.

Sister Susan is happy that at least in one Pennsylvania prison the IHM Congregation’s visible presence, charism and gospel values are being shared in quiet work and acts of kindness which may lead men to actively participate in civil life and parish life when they are released.

Sister Susan’s advice is the wisdom of an inmate —

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I am a name, not just a number.
I have feelings, not just a record.
You think you know me; I think you don’t.
You know what I’ve done, but not where I’ve been.
If we were somewhere else together we’d likely see only how much we have in common.

J.H.
In 1990, under the directorship of pharmacist, Sister Jeanne Patricia Crowe IHM, Pharm. D., Camilla Hall opened its own pharmacy. Until then, pharmaceutical needs were purchased through a retail pharmacy in Malvern. However, as the number of residents grew this proved to be economically and logistically unproductive. Having an IHM who excelled in her studies at Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science was the answer to Camilla’s prayer and to Sister Jeanne’s! The foundation Sister Jeanne and Al Milewski laid allowed and encouraged change. The 1990 small location on the 2nd floor “worked” until 2005 when the pharmacy was relocated to the current 4th floor location. In 2006, continuing the growth and change, outsourcing pharmacy services was recommended, and by 2008, Achilles Inverso, Pharmacy Director, with his business focus, helped to establish Camilla as a closed-door pharmacy. (A closed-door pharmacy is one that offers pharmaceutical care only to a select group of patients; i.e. IHM sisters.)

The history of the pharmacy is the story of how caring hearts have continued to make this aspect of the IHM nursing home a resounding echo of the mission that all care offered at Camilla Hall is a ministry of healing. The caring hearts presently in the pharmacy include Director, Carolyn McWilliams R.Ph. and Lenore Kelley R.Ph. full-time pharmacists and per diem pharmacists Michael Kelly and Patrick Shaw. Full-time pharmacy technicians are Abigail Uwadiae and Ashley Dixon. Christina Swiger, a graduate student at St John University, lends a skilled hand during her college breaks. Students from Temple School of Pharmacy fulfill internship requirements at Camilla where learning and helping are exchanged. Rounding out the sense of IHM mission and ministry are Sisters Patricia Cabrey, Patricia Krage, Marie Eymard Skrocki, and Judith Trumbore. Their part-time work includes assisting with filing, labeling prescription refills and counting meds before all is checked by one of the pharmacists. Reflecting on the many hands that make the pharmacy flow, Lenore Kelley says, “All have their niche but all help one another. Carolyn sets a team environment and is the first to help wherever needed.”

How did the door to Camilla open to lead these dedicated professionals to serve with and for the IHMs?

Carolyn and Lenore were both taught by IHM sisters - Carolyn at
St. Michael in Annandale, VA and
Lenore at St. John Bosco in Hatboro,
PA. By 2002, Carolyn, a graduate
of Duquesne Pharmacy School,
wife and mom of three girls was
ready to step back into her career.
The part-time position at Camilla,
advertised in her church bulletin,
was perfect – until 2011 when she
decided she needed full-time work.
She sadly left Camilla and worked
in retail pharmacy until 2014. When
Al, the pharmacy director resigned,
Sister Anne Veronica reached out to
Carolyn to assess her interest in the
position. She applied immediately
for the job that she describes as “a
pharmacist’s paradise.”

However, her paradise is not cloud
sitting. She describes her duties in
these words. “Serve the sisters. Be
hospitable always. Fulfill needs.
Keep the pharmacy financially stable.
Modernize and better the service
in every way.” With the hiring of
Lenore in 2015, Carolyn’s joy is that
she is now able to be on the floor
with sisters. She and Lenore alternate
Fridays, counseling the sisters and
doing clinical reviews that round out
the full scope of a pharmacist’s role.

Lenore Kelley remembers coloring
placemats for Camilla sisters when
she was in school. Therefore, in
2015 when she saw a familiar
name on an online job
site, she applied for a
part-time position.
She feels it was
Spirit-led because
she was offered
the position
on December
8 – the IHM
feast. A graduate
of Rutgers
Pharmacy School and
mom to two sons and a daughter,
Lenore had worked in a mail-order
pharmacy. She remains grateful to the
administration for taking a chance on
her being successful in a new venue.
With Carolyn’s mentoring and some
online refresher courses, when a full-
time position opened in late 2016 she
was ready! She affirms, “The best
part of my job is my colleagues and
the sisters.” You could say she is still
“coloring” Camilla with care!

Abbey, a lawyer in her native
Nigeria, came to the United States
in 2012. Through a friend working
in Camilla, she learned of an open
position, applied and was hired
as an aide in February 2014, but
by November she was offered the
position of pharmacy technician. She
says her favorite people are nuns and
so she loves her work environment.
However, as the mother of twins she
is now studying to obtain her law
degree and license to resume her
original profession. And will this be
unrelated to her work at Camilla?
No! She is majoring in health law,
compliance and regulations. It seems
the door of Camilla opened for her in
2014 AND for her future as well.

Ashley Dixon, the newest member of
the pharmacy team, having worked
in a retail pharmacy chain, is amazed
since starting in February how
nice everyone is, how
calm the atmosphere
is, AND “I actually
get a lunch break!”
she says. The
work hours are
also ideal for this
mother of three
young girls.

Together with the prescriptions
being picked up, loving care is also
openly dispensed “at the pharmacy
window.” The sister “customers”
describe the pharmacy staff as patient
and pleasant, knowledgeable and
interested in each sister. “They take
time to explain everything clearly
so we feel comfortable asking them
questions before we even ask the
doctor.”

The Mission Statement of Camilla
Hall proclaims “All who minister
here, religious and lay, endeavor to
serve the Sisters and one another with
respect, dignity and compassion…..”
By all accounts, the closed-door
pharmacy at Camilla has opened
many eyes to see how that mission is
lived.

The four sisters
who work in the

pharmacy describe it as a busy,
pleasant environment where they feel
privileged to be of service. They see
their work not as filing or counting
but as a ministry helping to ease
pain and suffering. Moreover, they
are gratefully aware that doing it in
such a caring, happy atmosphere is a
bonus!

Pharmacy technicians Abigail Uwadiae (back)
and Ashley Dixon are indispensable to the “maintenance” of the pharmacy.
Novitiate is a time when novices develop their deep roots of prayer, their commitment to community life, their personal and intimate union with Christ, and a deeper understanding of the IHM charism of Love, Creative Hope and Fidelity. The IHM novices have a two-year Novitiate. The first year is called the Canonical year. The goal during this year is to learn, live and grow to love the IHM Rule of life by studying and practicing the charism and apostolic spirit in classes and mission outreach experiences. Enhanced by personal, physical, spiritual and emotional development, this Canonical year is an indispensable time for the novices to develop their spirit of joyful service in community.

During the Canonical year the novices do not take ‘academic’ classes per se. Classes are concentrated on the development of holiness and wholeness; for example, Non-Violent Communication – learning strategies on how to better communicate with each other and other sisters; 19th Annotation – based on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises this class focuses on scripture, prayer life and continual growth in relationship with God; In-Search – an inter-congregational program for men and women in formation. Topics include scripture, community life, and other aspects of the call to religious life. Community History – learning about our Congregation’s foundation, our founders and the many ways our missions and ministries have grown and changed throughout the years – always responding to the needs of God’s people.

Each Wednesday the novices are able to serve at a food pantry in Norristown based at St. Patrick’s Parish. They make a big difference in the small acts of love they complete, from organizing food deliveries, stocking the pantry shelves, sorting and moving loads of donations into storage bins and helping to keep the area clean.

One of the favorite days of service is Monday, when they go to Camilla Hall to serve the sisters. Always working on “whatever needs to be done”, the novices enjoy greeting, chatting, and having fun with the sisters! It fills the novices with a lot of joy and it is a real shot in the arm for the sisters. Another highlight of this novitiate year is being able to participate in Vocation Days! These are days that a school will host and invite a sister to speak formally or informally about vocations to their students. Sister Jennifer and Sister Rachael are thrilled to go out and meet young people and encourage them in their search for God’s plan for their lives. It is exciting for the young girls to hear their vocation story and invigorating for the novices to tell their story again and again – reaffirming and reigniting the joy and fervor of their initial call to religious life!

Sister Jennifer and Sister Rachael look forward to what lies ahead as they continue to prepare for their second year of novitiate! Each day they recall the graces of their Reception Day and reiterate, “I can do all things in Him who strengthens me!”

On August 10, 2018, Sister Jennifer Maria and Sister Rachael Elizabeth were received as novices and formally began religious life in the IHM Congregation.
Companions in Prayer and Ministry

by Sister Francis Helen Murphy

In Their Own Words

“Embracing the IHM Companions in Prayer has kept me centered in my faith. I have met others with whom I can share my spiritual life and follow our mission statement, which is to seek a deeper union with God and His Mother.”

Pat A. (20 yrs.)

“Since being invited to join the IHM Companions five years ago, I have found I am a better listener to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of my daily life. I continue to grow in my trust of God’s plan for me, giving me courage and an increased desire to share His love and teachings with others.”

Ellie T. (5 yrs.)

“Being an IHM Companion has allowed me to verbalize my faith-life, increase my knowledge of virtues and saints as well as given me time for silent prayer and reflection.”

Christopher R. (7 yrs.)

“As a recently included member of IHM Companions, I am impressed with the welcoming spirit and deep faith sharing that takes place at each session. Learning new forms of prayer, embracing silence in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament instead of rattling on about my needs and petitions, has certainly enriched my personal prayer life. Thank you to each IHM Sister whose prayerful example transforms us for the better, in the eyes of God and our Blessed Mother.”

Diane M. (1 yr.)

“Coming to Companions each month provides a setting for discussion of the particular book selected by the group and makes me read spiritually. Listening to the varied insights of others allows for increased understanding of my faith so to, hopefully, put it into practice.”

Pete S. (27 yrs.)

“I became an IHM Companion years ago as a teacher in an IHM school. As the years have passed, IHM Sisters have shared their home, time and spirituality with us on a regular basis, all with different aspects of spirituality and devotion. I cannot thank the sisters enough for their prayerful example, faith knowledge and welcoming hospitality.”

Helene S. (27 yrs.)

Interested in becoming a Companion in Prayer and Ministry?
Contact S. Francis Helen Murphy at Villa Maria House of Studies, Malvern, PA 610-647-2160 Ext. 1925 or ihmcompanions@gmail.com
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The IHM Story today…

We Walk on Their Shoulders

Mother M. Claudia Honsberger, IHM
1968-1981

Within the Congregation there is a powerful force alive – a vibrant force that heartens me and fills me with hope. I see among us a great desire to be what God wants us to be. I see much longing for Him in prayer.”

Mary Elizabeth Honsberger was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, the oldest of ten children. Early in life, seeds of deep love for youth resulted in her work as a summer playground instructor, a moderator of Camp Fire girls and a lifetime of dedicated service to Catholic education.

Mary Elizabeth entered the West Chester novitiate in 1933. After profession, she began a mission log of many years as music teacher, superior, principal, and catechetical instructor in Virginia. She was an inveterate reader and loved to write her thoughts on paper. All were gifts she shared generously in her vision of ministry. Whether it was the family of the Church, her IHM family or the families of the children she taught, Christ and His message were the all-encompassing focus of her life.

Mother was elected Mother General during the turbulent post-Vatican II period with its dramatic effects on religious life. She stood firm on the basic principles of religious life. Her aim: to preserve her Congregation and its charism during years of uncertainty and change. She served on Perfectae Caritatis, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Institute of Religious Life. In 1973, she was appointed to the International Union of Superiors General.

At home, Mother encouraged the sisters’ involvement in Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes and summer apostolates in other dioceses. Schools in South America expanded and sisters earned graduate degrees in universities throughout the United States and Europe. In 1979 Villa Maria Academy Lower School was transferred from Green Tree, Malvern, to the former postulate wing of the Motherhouse.

It was to her beloved Virginia that she returned after two terms in office. In 1991, failing health caused Mother to retire to Camilla Hall where she joined her sick and aging sisters in daily prayer and social activities. Mother died on June 12, 1993, the vigil of Corpus Christi, her favorite feast.

Burial: Immaculata Cemetery, Immaculata

Content taken from We Walk on Their Shoulders by Sister Maria Corona Crumback, IHM
SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS
Sister Mary Rachel Torieri

SEVENTY YEARS
Sister Maria Clemens Baronett
Sister Maria Patris Hogan
Sister Maria Prudens Wright
Sister Incarnata Maria DiPilla
Sister Mary P. McKinley
Sister M. Agnes Hughes

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS
Sister Maryann Chappetto
Sister Marian Gregory Mazzotta
Sister M. Kathleen Theresa Maguire
Sister Jude Mary O’Donnell

GOLDEN JUBILARIANS
Sister Mary Ann Besitka
Sister M. Barbara Burnett
Sister Geraldine M. Cantwell
Sister Marlene Daltwas
Sister M. Linda Filipponi
Sister M. Patricia Flanigan
Sister M. Eileen Therese Gillespie
Sister M. Linda Uhrin
Sister Mary Lorraine Holzman
Sister Thais M. Margiotta
Sister Marie Christine McKenna
Sister Kathleen Marie Metz
Sister M. Barbara Ann Montague
Sister M. Kathleen Nuckols
Sister M. Janice Owens
Sister M. Silvana Vega
Sister M. Rose Patrice Kuhn
Sister Marjorie M. McCall
Sister M. Constance Therese Meck
Sister M. Patricia Micklos
Sister M. Michael Raymond Moore
Sister Mary P. O’Connor
Sister M. Helen Teresa Smuthe
Sister Rose Mary Walsh

Recognize a name? Would you like to send a congratulatory note? Send your message to IHM Mission Advancement + 230 IHM Drive + Malvern, PA 19355 or missionadv@ihmimmaculata.org
St. Monica Early Learning Center is proud to celebrate 100 years of Nurturing Children and Fostering a Love for Learning.

Begun in 1919 following World War I and the flu epidemic, the center offered day care for many one-parent families affected by both events. The Great Depression followed. Beating the odds, the day-care center was able to remain open and serve the needs of the people of St. Monica Parish and beyond.

More about St. Monica Early Learning Center in our Winter 2020 Magazine.
Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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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. We welcome the names of those who might enjoy receiving our publication three times a year.