



On *Mission*

IHM Sisters

A publication of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Malvern, PA
Our Mission: to evangelize, to catechize, and to teach



Sister Theresa Talbot reads an Easter/Resurrection story to first-grade students in religious enrichment class at St. Ephrem School.

In This Issue

AS YOU GO 3

A summer Psalm
The Good Shepherd

FEATURE ARTICLE 4-6

The Ministry of Religious
Enrichment

UNITING AT THE BORDER 7-9

Three Congregations uniting to
serve

SPOTLIGHT 10-13

Sister Paula Marie Buley
President, Rivier University
Following her call to higher
education

Sister Sarah Ellen McGuire
Robotics Teacher
St. Aloysius Academy for Boys
Combining her love for teaching
with technology

CAMILLA HALL 14-15

Soaring on wings of gratitude!

COMPANIONS IN PRAYER AND MINISTRY 16

Annual Spring Retreat 2023

JUBILARIANS 17

Celebrating milestones

IHM SNAPSHOTS 18

Sharing what's new!

DWELLING NOW IN LIGHT 19

In memoriam

Our IHM Congregation derives its spirituality from the life and writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori. St. Alphonsus exhorts us to “Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and love, as to the dearest and most loving of friends.” One of the greatest joys of the sisters is to help others develop a life of prayer and friendship with God.

In this issue, you will meet many sisters who are engaged in the Ministry of Religious Enrichment. Working in partnership with their lay colleagues, the sisters aid students in experiencing the beauty of Catholic rituals and devotions. In addition, the children learn contemplative reflection so that as they mature in their faith, they have learned the value of sitting in silence to listen for the voice of God in their own lives. In this digital era, the children experience the peace that comes from disconnecting from devices to strengthen their connection with God.

Sister Sarah Ellen, using technology as a tool at St. Aloysius Academy, builds on the students’ awareness that God’s love is to be shared. Engaging the students to solve real world problems through technology allows students to use their imagination and critical thinking skills to work cooperatively in helping others.

As President of Rivier University in Nashua NH, Sister Paula Buley supports her students and staff to search for truth through the dialogue between faith and reason. Sister empowers students and staff to acknowledge the indwelling presence of God in everyone recognizing that this comes from the depths of what St. Alphonsus calls friendship with God.

While St. Alphonsus has taught us the efficacy of prayer, our founders, Father Louis Gillet and Mother Theresa Maxis, manifested this friendship with God through joyful service and with tremendous confidence in God’s loving Providence. Serving our brothers and sisters at the US/Southern border has allowed Sister Rose Patrice and our IHM sisters from Monroe, MI and Scranton, PA to serve with a listening ear and a listening heart.

Trust in Divine Providence is revealed in so many tangible ways. With the help of the organization called Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!), the IHM Congregation has been able to enhance many ministries and take care of our aging members.

Prayer, joyful service, and trust in Divine Providence are hallmarks of the IHM charism. Thank you for your joyful service and for your prayer, presence, and generous support.

With much gratitude,



Sister Mary Ellen Tenny, IHM
General Superior



Take the Word of God with You

As You Go

A SUMMER PSALM

Psalm 23: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul. He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage. You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

Recurrent patterns signal the regular seasonal changes of every year. Each season unveils glimpses of the enduring and creative glory of our God. We witness the rush of falling leaves, chill of wintry barrenness and the newness of springtime. Summer comes radiant and welcome after the urgencies and variabilities of the year.

The changes in nature often match the ongoing transformations in personal experience. My personal awakenings and joys, autumn-like bursts, and unwanted diminishment, biting wintry emptiness as well as hope-filled awakenings parallel nature's autumn to spring experiences. I am refreshed by warm summer sands beside cool water.

Christ knew the rush of days yet followed Sabbath prescriptions for rest. Again and again the Good Shepherd has guided my spirit into a summerlike sense of repose after attending to the rush and necessities of life. His gentle presence is my regenerative balm. He advises me and invites you to come apart and rest with him as well.

The long warm days of summer reflect God's intense longing to reveal his authority and ways. As strong as the summer sun he beckons us to follow him. The Shepherd, the Lord God Almighty, longs for us to enjoy his company, that summer-like comfort of goodness and mercy.

The Good Shepherd's presence of summer-like stillness is his ongoing invitation throughout every one of our days. These may include seasons of personal awakenings, joys, diminishment, chilled over hopes, doubts, and failings. We are invited to follow and abide with this infinitely Good Shepherd – no matter the circumstance – to his awaiting peace.

As predictable as the rays of summer, God is present to lead us through every physical, mental, moral, emotional, and spiritual path. With the summer psalmist we can confidently proclaim, *"The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need."*



**Sister M. Susan Ambroch
Camilla Hall**

Enriching Students' Love For the Lord



Sister Mary Anne Sweeney helps a second-grade student practice going to Confession.



“It is such a joy and privilege to partner with my lay colleagues in preparing our students to receive the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation.”

If you visit Villa Maria Academy Lower School in Malvern, PA, you will find Sister Marie Renee Murphy in her happy place – the classroom – teaching religion class to students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Sister Renee is just one of many IHM sisters who are spending their “retirement” years spreading the Gospel through the Ministry of Religious Enrichment.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Sisters involved in this important ministry assist and support lay teachers by supplementing what is taught in religion class. This is called the Ministry of Religious Enrichment. The sisters delve into the rituals and the beauty of the Catholic faith such as the parts of the Mass, the Liturgical Calendar, feast days, and the lives of the saints. They highlight the importance of devotions, praying the rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and contemplative prayer. The sisters creatively share their love of the Catholic faith while helping students build a foundation for a life of prayer and greater connection to God.

“I work closely with the teachers,” says Sister Renee. “They might suggest a topic they are teaching and request that I give a lesson on that topic to enhance what they have taught.”

For Sister Mary Anne Sweeney, who assists with kindergarten through Grade 8 at St. Aloysius Academy in Bryn Mawr, helping teachers prepare students to receive the sacraments is one of her roles in religious enrichment. She says, “It is such a joy and privilege to partner with my lay colleagues in preparing our students to receive the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation.”

MINISTERING TO ALL AGES

Sisters provide religious enrichment for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Others such as Sister Mary Filan at St. Gregory the Great in Virginia Beach, VA and Sister Rita Marie Lenihan at Blessed Virgin Mary School in Darby teach pre-K classes too. The amount of time spent in the classroom and the frequency varies. Generally, a sister will teach anywhere from

“I work closely with the teachers.

They might suggest a topic they are teaching and request that I give a lesson on that topic to enhance what they have taught.”

– Sister Marie Renee Murphy

30 to 50 minutes. Some will teach once a week while others are in the classroom every day. Many provide instruction in one school while others minister in multiple schools.

A CREATIVE APPROACH

Each sister brings her own unique approach to religious enrichment. For example, in Sister Theresa John Talbot’s classes at St. Ephrem School

in Bensalem students lead the class in prayer, role play a scene from a parable, or discuss the virtue of the month. Sister finds creative ways to keep the students “fully engaged in the lesson” through activities such as Q & A sessions and by rewarding students with religious items from the “prize box.”

Sister Jeanne Baker highlights the “Super Saint of the Month” as she teaches Grades 1 through 4 at St. Teresa Regional Catholic School in Runnemede, NJ. Sister plans her lessons on a monthly schedule following the Liturgical Calendar and incorporates the Gospels, feast days, and apparitions.

Music is an integral part of Sister Kathleen Metz’s interaction with the students at Queen of Angels Regional Catholic School in Willow Grove. “Sharing prayer and music with the children is a great inspiration to me,” she says. Sister Kathleen prepares students in all grades for their school liturgies so you will often find them singing songs and learning the responses for Mass.

Sister Barbara Ann Montague at St. Norbert School in Paoli chooses a student to be the “prayer person” of the day. This student is given a special cross to wear in honor of his or her role. The students then pray together using the Pope Francis Five Finger Prayer – prayers for those we love, for teachers, for leaders, for those who have no one to pray for them, and for ourselves. They conclude their prayer time with a decade of the rosary.

Sister Rita Lenihan teaches pre-K through fourth grade at Blessed Virgin Mary School in Darby. Her lessons focus on the saints, liturgical feasts and seasons, devotions, sacred



Sister Renee Murphy talks to the fifth-grade students about the seasons of the Church year and how they reveal something about Jesus.

vessels, and sacramentals with the goal of “helping the children get in touch with God on a personal, more conversational level.” She also helps students prepare for the sacraments. Sister says that she learns as much from her students as they do from her. “They teach me through their simplicity and sincerity to respond like them with an open heart. It has changed and deepened my own prayer life.”

Sister Mary Glackin incorporates contemplative prayer to help students slow down and draw closer to God. Sister teaches students in kindergarten through Grade 6 at St. Jerome Regional School in Tamaqua and kindergarten to Grade 8 at Assumption BVM Regional School in Pottsville. “I use a three-minute contemplative prayer as part of each class. It gives me the opportunity and privilege to experience how God speaks to the students and how receptive they are to be still and listen,” says Sister Mary. “If the importance and need of contemplative prayer in their lives is the only thing the students remember and put into practice from our weekly classes, then the purpose of my ministry is fulfilled.”

A COMMON MISSION

The sisters consider it a privilege to support the teachers by sharing their love of the Catholic faith with each student. “I love my students,” says Sister Mary Filan. “I feel as if I learn as much from them as they do from me. There is a refreshment and beauty in the little souls. They respond with such honesty and sincerity.”

There is a common mission among all sisters who participate in the Ministry of Religious Enrichment – for each child to know how much God loves them and to impact the prayer life of every student they teach.

“I believe the most important thing about religious enrichment is that it can lead the students to a closer relationship with God,” says Sister Renee. “This is the real purpose of evangelization, and I am so happy to be a part of it.”

Sister Mary Glackin agrees. “Each week as I plan my lessons, I ask the Lord to help me decide what the students need to grow closer to him and follow his plan. My hope is to enrich the faith life of everyone I meet in my ministry.”

“Teaching the students to pray is the most rewarding part of my ministry,” adds Sister Barbara. “I feel they will need this prayer time throughout their entire lives.”

Sister Rita says, “Having taught high school students (primarily business subjects) for most of my teaching days, it is my greatest joy to provide dedicated “God time” for the children. My approach in teaching religious enrichment is to move from head knowledge to heart knowledge of the faith that inspires children to follow God more closely.”

Sister Theresa concludes, “To become the best version of themselves, students must learn who they are and what plan God has for them. I often tell the children that God made them to know him, love him, and serve him in this world so they can be happy with him in heaven. Is there a more enriching and rewarding ministry than bringing the little children to Jesus?”



Sister Mary Glackin incorporates contemplative prayer helping students to be still and listen for God's voice.



Sister Rita Lenihan talks with second-grade students about St. Teresa of Calcutta.

United in Service at the Border



“I cannot help expressing to you my satisfaction on hearing that it is among the poor we are called, for it is exactly what we like.”
– Mother Theresa Maxis (July 26, 1858)

In the summer of 2021, sisters from the three IHM Congregations came together to minister at the border on a temporary basis in El Centro, CA and San Antonio, TX. The sisters were a loving presence as they met the needs of immigrant children and families who were seeking residence in the US.

In 2022, several sisters united to serve at the border once again this time on a more permanent basis. Through a collaborative effort of the three IHM Congregations (Malvern, PA, Scranton, PA, and Monroe, MI), and the Oblate Sisters of Providence, a permanent residence was established in McAllen, TX – only 20 minutes away from the US/Mexican border.

A GROWING NEED

The need for clothing, food, medical, and spiritual assistance for those crossing the border continues. Thanks to the generosity of a private donor through a national organization known as SOAR!® (Support Our Aging Religious), the three IHM Congregations were able to investigate housing options near the border. Four IHM Sisters, Sisters Rose Patrice Kuhn (Malvern, PA), Mary Elaine Anderson (Scranton, PA), Carmen Armenta Lara (Monroe, LA) and Elvia Mata Ortega (Scranton, PA), now reside in McAllen, TX – an area of great need. The IHM sisters have come together to live at the *Mary*

Comfort of Migrants Convent, named for one of the titles bestowed on the Blessed Mother by Pope Francis. This “core” group of IHM sisters is serving a three-year commitment at the southern border. They support other religious organizations/ Congregations in assisting migrants making their journey to the US. “As a Congregation, we asked ourselves, ‘Where can we serve? With whom? And how can we



From left to right: Sister Mary Elaine Anderson, Sister Rose Patrice Kuhn, Sister Carmen Armenta Lara, and Sister Elvia Mata Ortega minister at the border.

collaborate with others?” says Sister Rose Patrice Kuhn. “We want people to see us as one Congregation working together and supporting one another. It has been a graced experience. We share the same founders, charism, and love for the migrants. We are also enriched by differences in community living and prayer.”

MAKING THE JOURNEY

Crossing the border into the US can be dangerous. “For some people, it can take five years to leave their country to come here, if they make it all,” says Sister Elvia Mata Ortega. Most travel on foot; others travel by freight trains. Many run the risk of being detained. It’s not uncommon for sisters to hear of families walking over 60 miles through the rough terrain of the rainforest. Many family members get separated from one another along the way. “We don’t ask people about their journey, we just pray with them, talk to them, and let them share what they want to share,” adds Sister Elvia.

CALLED TO SERVE

Each week, the sisters cross the border to serve in Reynosa, Mexico where many migrants live in undesirable conditions as they wait to learn of their immigration status.

In Reynosa, the sisters minister at Casa Del Migrante run by the Daughters of Charity. This shelter serves the most vulnerable including pregnant women and children. “We meet with the children and play with them,” says Sister Elvia. “We sit with the women and are present to them. We can often hear the trauma in their voices.” The sisters are part of a “team” that ministers at Casa Del Migrante; the team includes the Sisters of Mercy and Franciscan Sisters, as well as Jesuit

priests all working together to show unconditional love to everyone they meet.

"I love sitting and talking with people," says Sister Rose. "They are so receptive and happy to be treated as real people with dignity. We serve with a listening ear but also with a listening heart, loving each person with their unique personalities, sharing in their sufferings and vulnerabilities, and their hopes and fears for the future. It is the person-to-person contact that is the real gift."

The sisters also serve at Senda De Vida 2, located in Reynosa, a center meeting the needs of over 1,800 immigrants. At Senda De Vida 2, the sisters minister to individuals who are waiting to enter the US. They also assist with food donations.

At their home base in McAllen, TX the sisters serve at the Humanitarian Respite Center. Operated by Catholic Charities, the center is only ten minutes away from the border and is a place of respite for travelers. At the center, the sisters minister to asylum seekers who have just crossed the border. Many are sick and all are trying to connect with their families and are making travel arrangements to move forward on their journey. The sisters prepare bags of food, snacks, and water that are distributed to families before boarding a plane to their final destination.

Because of the donations of many religious sisters, the sisters at the border have been able to support the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen and the shelters in Reynosa. Donations are used to purchase canned goods, clothing, personal supplies, medicines, and supplies for activities with the children.

REACHING OUT

One of the advantages of a permanent residence at the border is the opportunity to reach out to sisters and associates from the four religious Congregations and invite them to come to McAllen and serve. "Our sisters bring a work ethic, skill set, and spirituality that is shaped by their experiences," says Sister Mary Elaine Anderson. Many of the sisters have served in Central and South America and therefore can communicate in Spanish and are able to provide comfort and assistance to those in need.

*"We serve with
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- Sister Rose Patrice Kuhn

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity (Malvern), Sister Katie Clauss (Scranton), and Sister Jane Herb (Monroe), the leaders of the three IHM Congregations, have already come to the border to minister. Others, like Sister Camille Brouillard (Monroe), volunteered by teaching Haitian Creole to the sisters so they could communicate with Haitian refugees. The sisters also welcomed as volunteers students and teachers from Marywood University in Scranton, PA and Holy Name Academy in Tampa, FL.

A LASTING IMPACT

The challenges of crossing the border have had a lasting impact on the sisters as they witness the struggles many immigrants face.

"It breaks my heart to learn the rules of who can come into the US and who cannot," says Sister Mary Elaine. "You can be dying of hunger but that's not a reason to enter."

Sister Rose adds, "I find it hard traveling to Mexico and seeing people in the street in tents, lying on the ground while we are driving in a car passing them by."

"Its very hard to see people getting here and trying to go across the border," says Sister Carmen Armenta Lara. "They have high hopes and wait for months, sometimes years, to get across. It is a long time to wait and to have their lives put on hold. They are people. They feel. They are human beings just like us. We are all one."

HOLDING ONTO HOPE

Through their ministry, the sisters know the importance of holding onto hope for their mission and for those making the journey to the US. Sister Rose says, "We believe that God is inviting us to hold asylum seekers and immigrants in our collective hearts as we join with others at the border and proclaim God's unconditional love for all especially the most vulnerable."

**For more information on SOAR!, see the article "Soaring on Wings of Gratitude," page 14.*



Sister Spotlight

*Sister Paula Marie Buley, President,
Rivier University, Nashua, NH*



"The sisters at Immaculata certainly had a powerful influence on my vocation. Their engagement in mission and community life was an inspiration."

Little did Sister Paula Marie Buley know that her time as a student at Immaculata University in Malvern, PA would change the course of her life forever. Following God's call to Immaculata and developing a connection with the IHMs paved the way for a life of service in the field of higher education.

IMMACULATA CONNECTION

Sister Paula, along with her siblings – two sisters and one brother – grew up in Drexel Hill, PA surrounded by the love and support of her family. Sister says, "My parents were always involved in church activities and there was a spirit of faith and Divine Providence in our home."

After attending Upper Darby High School, Sister Paula went on to pursue a degree in history and economics from Immaculata University. It was there that she discovered her interest in finance and admiration for the IHMs. "The sisters at Immaculata certainly had a powerful influence on my vocation," says Sister Paula. "Their engagement in mission and community life was an inspiration. They were tireless in their availability to students and their willingness to do anything to move Immaculata forward."

As a first-year college student, Sister also became an Immaculata employee. "My first experience working in a college office was in Immaculata's Evening Division," she recalls. "Immaculata was very innovative in reaching out to adult learners. In this office, you could see how the pieces of curriculum, marketing, and enrollment fit together." Although this was Sister Paula's first experience working in a college setting, it would not be her last.

A CALL TO EDUCATION

Sister Paula graduated from Immaculata University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and economics and a post-Baccalaureate degree in theology. After a year working as a claims adjuster for an insurance company, she entered the IHM Congregation. The years of formation provided the opportunity to learn more about the apostolate of teaching. "My seven years of teaching 7th and 8th grade and learning on a local mission was great. After profession, the IHM leadership asked if I would pursue an MBA in preparation for a position focusing on finance and administration," says Sister Paula.

Sister Paula gladly accepted the invitation to further her education and

went on to earn a Master of Business Administration degree from Villanova University, a Doctorate Degree in Higher Education from University of Pennsylvania, and a Masters in Catholic Studies from Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Sister's calling to serve in higher education has led to executive positions in finance and administration at Immaculata University, Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, MD, and Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ. In her current role, Sister Paula serves as President of Rivier University in Nashua, NH. Founded by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, Rivier is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year.

RIVIER'S MISSION

In her role as President serving over 2,300 students, Sister Paula works to "support the faculty and staff in fulfilling the mission of Rivier University: *Transforming Hearts and Minds to Serve the World*," through the University's commitment to the faith heritage, intellectual tradition, and social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

At Rivier University, each student is challenged to search for truth through the dialogue between faith and reason. For example, a student attended the Nashua Holocaust Memorial Service with his classmates at a local synagogue. Through this experience, the student shared with Sister Paula that he had a better understanding of his grandparents and their suffering during the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia. These unique stories are what Sister finds most rewarding about her ministry. She says, "To have a second-generation Cambodian student at a Catholic university attending a memorial service at a Jewish synagogue leading him to understand his own unique family history is remarkable."

It is through engaging with a diverse body of students while seeking to understand each person intellectually, socially, culturally, morally, and spiritually that helps Sister Paula bring Rivier's mission to life. "We all need to fulfill the Gospel mandate to ask and answer the question – Who is my neighbor? We need to acknowledge the indwelling presence of God in everyone we meet."

A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE

Despite the daily demands of leading a university, Sister is grateful for the experience that each day brings. "Each day is unique and gives me the opportunity to engage with the administration, staff, students, and the broader New Hampshire community." Whether it's partnering with the city of Nashua to build an



Sister Paula cheers on Rivier's ice hockey team.

ice arena for the school's ice hockey team or launching a Behavioral Health Professions Training and Simulation Center, Sister enjoys the strategic planning process and the joy of seeing these projects come to life.

"There are a variety of opportunities for me to connect with students, donors, and community organizations," Sister adds. "I am grateful to have had the opportunity to travel to Rome, India, China, Japan, and Jordan while collaborating on University projects."

EVERYDAY LIFE

Many people may not know that in her personal life, Sister Paula was once a lifeguard and a guitar teacher. Today, in her spare time you may find her watching college football, reading about pilgrimages, or walking. Whatever she does, whether working in the field of higher education, or living out her vocational calling, Sister Paula says, "When you combine mission and opportunity, God will do the rest."



Sister Paula celebrates with a Rivier graduate.

Sister Sarah Ellen McGuire *Robotics Teacher* *St. Aloysius Academy for Boys* *Bryn Mawr, PA*

When the bell rings at St. Aloysius Academy and class has ended, Sister Sarah McGuire often has to coax her students out of the classroom. What's her secret? Robotics and an infectious love for education and technology.

“My ministry is unique because I get to teach robotics every day!” exclaims Sister Sarah McGuire with a smile. “Not too many elementary school teachers have that privilege.” Since 2019, Sister Sarah has taught robotics in grades kindergarten through eight at St. Aloysius Academy for Boys in Bryn Mawr, PA. Sister Sarah’s dream of becoming a teacher, combined with her love of all things “techy,” is a winning combination for her students in the classroom and those whom she mentors as a coach with FIRST LEGO League (FLL).

MANY CALLINGS

Sister Sarah grew up surrounded by a supportive and loving family. Early on, she felt a call to religious life and to teaching. “I always knew that being a sister was a possibility,”

she says. “Growing up, I planned my dream wedding like others while also imagining myself as a sister. I was blessed with a family who would support whatever path I chose.”

Sister attended St. Philomena School in Lansdowne and says, “I knew from a very young age that I wanted to be a teacher, but it was not until the eighth grade that I knew what kind of teacher I wanted to be.” She credits her eighth-grade teacher, Ms. Kelly McKenna, with challenging her academically and professionally.

Following grade school, Sister Sarah attended Archbishop Prendergast High School for Girls where her call to religious life slowly unfolded. It began with morning visits to the school chapel on the days her mom drove her to school. Arriving early, she quietly did her homework in the chapel until classes began. “Over the years, the calm, peacefulness, and beauty of that space helped to open my heart and ears to the presence of God in my life. I began to do my homework at home so I could have prayer time in the chapel. By junior



year, I was sure that I was being called to be a sister,” she says. Her desire to be a sister was no surprise to her family. “When I told my mom I felt called to be a sister, she said she already knew! She was just waiting for me to realize it.” Soon after, Sister Sarah sought out the IHMs. “I knew of other congregations but the IHMs felt like home.” Sister Sarah attended college at Immaculata University and entered the IHM Congregation in September of her senior year.

TECH TALK

Sister’s present apostolate as robotics teacher at St. Aloysius combines her love of teaching and technology. “Tech is my wheelhouse,” Sister says. “Even when I taught first and second grade, I had coding as a daily center activity for my students.” Her interest in technology caught the attention of Principal Sister Margaret Fagan who announced the establishment of a robotics class for the school. She approached Sister Sarah about teaching the class and coaching a competitive robotics team. Sister says, “I practically jumped out of my seat with excitement!”

ROAMING ROBOTS

Today, the Robotics Lab is a space filled with learning and excitement. Most students are “tech-savvy,” but in the Robotics Lab, students are taking their love of technology



to another level. "I have the privilege of seeing first-hand the impact that educational robotics has on students," Sister remarks. "Using robots as an educational tool provides an umbrella under which the current trend of STREAM (Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Art, and Math) can be more effectively taught." It's common to see robotics classes offered at high schools and universities, however, more educators are recognizing the value of robotics classes at the elementary level. For example, Sister Sarah's first-grade students participate in Robotics Readers Theater where they build and code robots representing characters from a story. They create scenery and costumes and invite an audience to watch their robots act out the story as it is read. Fourth-grade students are assigned a real-world problem and gather in groups to research and design a working prototype which is presented to classmates and guests. This past year, grades five through eight competed to research, document, build, code, and present a working hand prosthetic. "Robotics are part of this generations' future," says Sister Sarah. "When working with robotics, students are using physics, math, engineering, literature, art – and much more. As it says outside the Robotics Lab, *In this classroom, the possibilities are endless!*"

AWARD WINNERS

Sister Sarah is also a coach/mentor with FIRST LEGO League (FLL) where students gather each year to design, build, and compete in a themed challenge. Each August, a new FLL challenge is announced. Two teams, Wild Bots Blue and Wild Bots White, comprised of students from grades six through eight, competed in the FLL 2022 "SuperPowered" challenge focusing on improving the energy journey in

a community. Both teams designed a robot and worked to solve an energy problem through research, communicating with professionals in the field, and presenting their solution to a panel of judges at the competition.

"The young men met once a week to research, build, code, and have fun," says Sister Sarah. "They also organized a food drive for Mother of Mercy House as an outreach to support FLL's Core Values of Inclusion, Discover, Teamwork, Impact, and Fun." On January 7, 2023, Wild Bots Blue took home the Engineering Excellence Award; Wild Bots White won the coveted Champion's Award and advanced to the Mid-Atlantic Championships.

FINAL THOUGHTS

"I LOVE what I do!" says Sister Sarah. It can be challenging teaching eighth grade one period and first grade the next, but the variety keeps me on my toes and organized to the hilt. I don't feel that I come to "work" each day. I am blessed to come to teach."

It's rewarding when Sister sees the influence that robotics has on her students. "Many are swayed to specific high schools because of the robotics programs the schools offer. Teachers share essays students have written in other classes about robotics or their desire to be an engineer when they grow up. We are paving the way for students' futures, laying the groundwork for the roads they will build." As for her own life, Sister Sarah says a quote from Robert Frost has been her constant companion. It says, *"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference."*



"With robotics, the opportunity to learn from our mistakes and failures is immediate and tangible. The hesitancy to fail lessens and the motivation to learn and discover grows. More is learned through failure than instant success."

"Students learn how to communicate effectively as they build and rebuild their robots. Through trial and error, students learn the "why" and the "how" instead of being handed the answer."

Powerhouse Presence

CAMILLA HALL

Soaring on Wings of Gratitude

Since Camilla Hall opened in 1960, it has had a foundation of trust in Divine Providence and dependence on those who support the mission and ministry of the sister residents and the medical and support staff. While every donation is gratefully received, in this article, we are highlighting a national organization, Support Our Aging Religious (commonly known as SOAR!), which has provided amazing support for the needs of Camilla over the years.

ABOUT SOAR!

Just as amazing as their financial support is the fact that SOAR! was founded in 1986 by a group of lay people who read an article in the Wall Street Journal that exposed the severity of the health care crisis for retired religious sisters, brothers, and priests.



That group proceeded to ask themselves a question that would take ingenuity, business acumen and commitment to answer because the crisis has its source in a few factors:

- In the past, religious received only modest stipends or no compensation and thus many

religious communities were not financially able to provide for retirement.

- Some congregations were able to enroll in Social Security but with small incomes as a base, many could not. The average benefit for religious is \$7,326, while the average for a lay person is \$19,896.
- The median age of religious men and women is rising, and the projection is that by 2030, 70% of religious will be over 70. Therefore, fewer religious are able to be engaged in active ministry to receive any compensation to offset the cost for the retired members.
- The cost of health care has risen so dramatically that even communities with provision for retirement cannot meet all the needs of the majority of their membership.

This lay group did not read, regret, and forget; they asked themselves the hard question “What can we do about it?” They were graced with the wisdom and care to create the answer. Subsequently, the question “How can we afford to...” that arises often in Camilla (as well as in many other Congregations) has found an answer in the generosity of SOAR! Thanks to 37 years of dedicated commitment, SOAR! has provided assistance throughout the United States and Puerto Rico with such

projects as accessibility renovations, physical therapy and medical equipment, hospital beds, fire alarms, sprinklers and nursing call systems.

HELPING CAMILLA

From 1999 until the present, grant applications to SOAR! have been repeatedly fulfilled to meet needs in Camilla Hall. Because of the foresight and care of the Camilla staff, the question posed behind each application was not “What shall we do?” but “How can we do what we know would help the sisters?” With Camilla receiving over \$200,000 in grants, SOAR! has answered these questions. Their touch of caring and generosity is felt (though maybe not seen) on the following items throughout Camilla Hall:

- A much-needed new phone system was installed in 1999 to the delight of all.
- A century tub was installed in 2013 which allows sisters to be mechanically lifted into a specifically designed tub for maximum safety.
- New medication carts were purchased in 2016 to replace the twenty-year old ones.
- New and more effective care/floor lifts were bought in 2018 to move a sister from bed to chair with maximum safety and minimal discomfort.



Wheelchairs, along with other assist devices, can be easily sanitized thanks to the new wheelchair washing machine.

- A wheelchair washing machine was installed in 2020 to ensure that wheelchairs, walkers, and all assist devices are cleaned and sanitized to the highest standard.
- In 2020 and 2021 (for pandemic needs), a new EKG machine, additional mobile vital sign monitors, infrared thermometers, and PPE materials were purchased and a 15-year-old host server was replaced to support tech devices.
- In 2021, the Wander Guard system was upgraded to assure safety for sisters with cognitive decline.
- In 2022, new desktop and laptop computers, monitors, printers, iPad covers and needed peripheral cables and connectors replaced devices that were from seven to 17 years old.
- In 2023, with confidence in the dedicated responses of the SOAR! organization, Camilla looks forward to being able to purchase new food service equipment.

GRATEFUL HEARTS

The gratitude for each gift of funding is collective in the prayers of the Camilla community but it is also very personal and individual as comments attest. Appreciating the floor/care lifts, Sister Regina Marion said, “The lift is very important. I love being with people and this allows me to do that.”

After the wheelchair washer was installed, Chris Chalmers, Director of Facilities, expressed gratitude from his perspective, “The requirements for usage are not prohibitive.” Sister Anna Marie said, “I will say what the kids say, ‘It is awesome.’ But I need to say something to the donors – we are so thankful words cannot express it.” Jane Robinson, RN appreciates the improved Wander Guard system, as she says, “It has helped me to supervise the sisters’ whereabouts with less worry and without the need for as many corrective directives.” Using a new laptop on a med cart, Sister John Joseph, LPN said, “It enables me to chart protocols and administer medications much more easily. Thank you for making my work efficient and error free.” Appreciation for the new tech

devices is best summed up by Kathleen Santana, Director of Technology, who said, “I wish you could hear the comments of joy and delight when laptops and desktops are installed. They remind me of my children on Christmas Day.”

FUTURE ENDEAVORS

Food service items from the newest grant application are not yet confirmed for funding. But with confidence in SOAR!, we anticipate a roll-in refrigerator and mobile refrigerator cabinet will replace ancient ones and two bussing stations will be welcome additions for the dining room. If you listen closely over the summer “air waves” you may hear 200+ comments of “WOW! How Blessed We Are!” What’s the next need and question Camilla will pose? We don’t know but we do know that SOAR! and God’s good people will help supply an answer. Next time you are “soaring” through Camilla Hall as a visitor, a volunteer, or a Mass attendee, please take a moment to stand in prayerful awe and hold in your hearts the gratitude we feel daily for this special benefactor and for all who gift the Powerhouse of Prayer so generously.



Nurses at Camilla tend to a sister using a new EKG machine obtained through the generosity of SOAR!



Companions in Prayer and Ministry

ANNUAL SPRING RETREAT *Seeking Mary's Protection for our World*



Each spring, the IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry are invited to Villa Maria House of Studies for a day of companionship, prayer, reflection, and Liturgy for their Annual Retreat.

Over the years, topics have included Women Mystics, Manuscript Illumination with Prayer, Anima Christi Reflection, History of Redemptorist Spirituality, Holy Darkness, and Living Light.

This year's theme, Seeking Mary's Protection for our World, is taken from Pope Francis' January worldwide intention of placing our lives under the protection of the Blessed Mother.

As the Companions arrived, they enjoyed time for fellowship followed by Morning Prayer, setting the tone for a day of reflection on Mary, our Mother. Sister Ruth Bolarte, IHM shared an inspiring reflection of the history and meaning of the symbols of the icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help and how this devotion is connected to the IHM's Redemptorist Spirituality.

The morning conference was followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacred Heart Chapel. After the Blessed Sacrament was reposed, the group prayed the Divine Praises and Regina Caeli. Companions then enjoyed dinner, fellowship, and even some prizes!

The afternoon session began with Rev. Michael Callaghan, CM, a Vincentian priest and a chaplain for Camilla Hall. Father Callaghan's presentation on the history and his reflection on the Miraculous Medal, its symbols, the life of St. Catherine Labouré and devotions at the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Germantown, Philadelphia, generated much discussion.

The day concluded with the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist celebrated by Father Callaghan with the Mass intention being offered for all IHM Companions, near and far.

*For more information about
Companions in Prayer and
Ministry contact*

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610-647-2160, Ext. 1925
ihmcompanions@gmail.com

Congratulations 2023 Jubilarians!

SEVENTY YEARS

Sister Celeste Marie Kambic
Sister Mary Christi Spellman
Sister Marie Theresa Jones
Sister Regina Edward Flanigan
Sister Mary K. Lydon
Sister Marita Christi Blinebury
Sister M. Catarin P. Conjar
Sister M. C. Noreen Mangan
Sister Andrew Marie Cavanaugh
Sister Dolores Jean Dowling
Sister Mary Elizabeth Condon
Sister Miriam D. Scully
Sister Odette J. Dalfo

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS

Sister M. Jo Anna Ralph
Sister M. Theresa Duffy
Sister M. Margaret F. Gerner
Sister Georgiana Marie Connell
Sister M. Helen Richard Snyder
Sister Mary Gough
Sister M. Kathleen E. Doyle
Sister M. Patricia Healey
Sister M. Rose Veronica Robinson
Sister M. Kathleen McLaughlin
Sister M. Rita A. Doyle
Sister M. Noreen James Friel
Sister M. Catherine Anne Kaporch
Sister Rita Marian Angelilli
Sister Maryanne R. Winterberg
Sister M. James Anne Feerick
Sister M. Elenore Joseph Ertel
Sister Anne M. Lafferty
Sister Alice M. Hess
Sister M. Judith Anne Kreipe
Sister M. Barbara Bussinger
Sister Honora Marie Johnston
Sister Mary Ann Fazakerley

GOLDEN JUBILARIANS

Sister Maria Teresa Scudellari
Sister Jane Mary Carr
Sister M. Elizabeth Monica Acri
Sister M. Kathleen Patricia Eagan
Sister Mary Ann Spaetti
Sister Dolores Michelle Sabisky
Sister Regina Mullen
Sister M. Patricia Scanlon
Sister Margaret M. Langer

*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@ihmimm.org*

Chapter 2023 Update

In the fall of 2022, IHM sisters in North and South America began preparatory work for Chapter 2023 – a sacred time when the IHM Congregation elects members of the General Administration, decides matters of major importance, and plans for new directions in answer to continually recurring challenges. The Chapter calls and challenges each sister to bring to group discussion and personal dialogue an open mind (to see with fresh eyes), an open heart (to walk in the shoes of another), and an open will (to let go of fear and trust that something new will come). The Congregation gathered in March and April for pre-Chapter meetings. The Chapter of Affairs will convene in late June followed by the Chapter of Elections when a General Superior and four council members will be elected to serve a term of five years.



Sippin' for the Sisters

Thank you to everyone who joined us on March 19 for the second annual *Sippin' for the Sisters* tea fundraiser. There was a record turnout of over 140 people! Guests enjoyed a variety of teas, scones, scrumptious tea sandwiches, and desserts. Singer Katherine Daly and the band Manouche 5 provided the entertainment as everyone enjoyed food, fellowship, and some fabulous prizes. Most important, all proceeds benefitted Camilla Hall.

We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

A New Addition to Mission Advancement

The Mission Advancement office welcomes Terri Gamble as the new event coordinator. Terri previously worked for the Sisters of St. Francis and the National Museum of American Jewish history. In addition, Terri has experience in the financial field and as a recruiter and trainer for new employees. Terri has been busy organizing events including a holiday gathering at St. Joseph Villa to thank the many priests who have supported the IHMs, the successful second annual *Sippin' for the Sisters* tea fundraiser, and assisting with the 2023 Nun Run. As a BVM Darby and Prendie grad, Terri met the IHMs long ago and is thrilled to be sharing in our mission. Terri has jumped in with both feet and with a giving heart. We are grateful for the skills and experience she brings to Mission Advancement.



Dwelling now in light, yet ever near



S. St. Elizabeth Kowleski
4.1.23



S. Mary Estelle Covins
4.25.23



S. Eleanor Marie Conlan
3.16.23
(*S. Maureen Robert*)



S. Jacinta Marie Potochney
3.24.23



S. Marie Shaun McShane
3.29.23



S. Michael Maureen McArdle
3.10.23



S. Judith Mary Steckclair
3.15.23



S. Karen Marie Corcoran
3.16.23



S. Thaddeus Marie Del Ricci
2.3.23



S. Marie Elaine Farabaugh
2.23.23



S. Jane Dolores Biddle
3.8.23

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Mission Statement

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Immaculata, Pennsylvania, proclaim the Gospel message in the spirit of Jesus the Redeemer.

Strengthened by a life of vowed consecration, nurtured by prayer and the Eucharist, and sustained by community living, we radiate joyful service and promote Gospel values, offering compassion to all God's people through our mission to evangelize, to catechize, and to teach.

IHM Sisters – On Mission Magazine

Publication Coordinator
Suzanne Misciagna

Editors
Sister Carolyn M. Dimick
Sister Jeannine M. Norton



Camilla Hall Oktoberfest
Outdoor and in-person!
Mark your calendar for
Saturday, October 7, 2023



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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 publications three times a year.