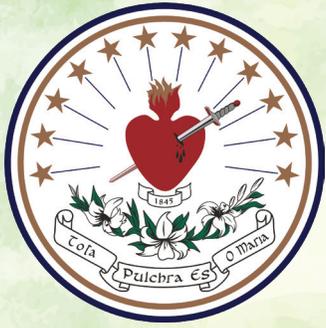
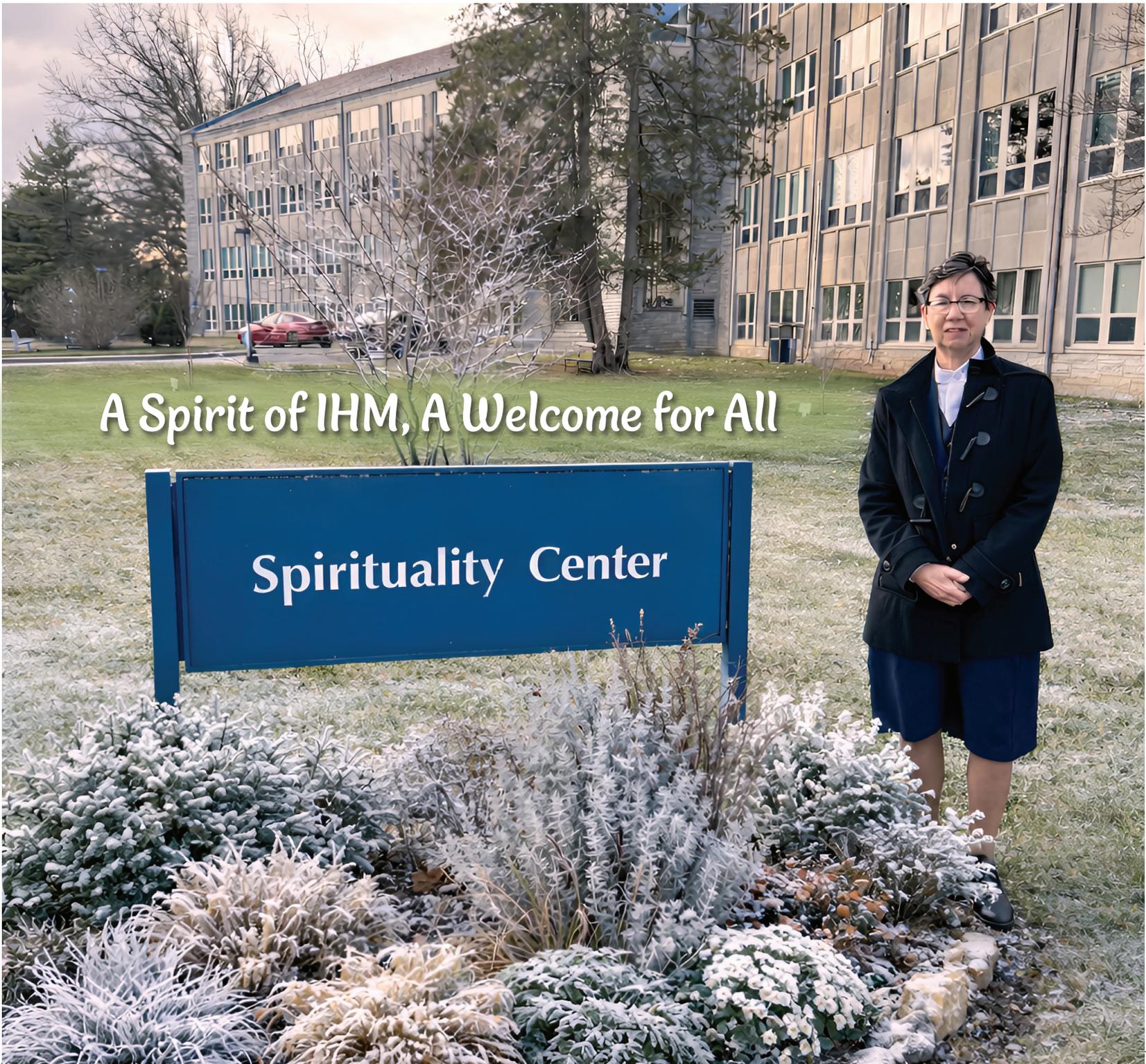


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# On IHM Sisters Mission

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



A Spirit of IHM, A Welcome for All

Spirituality Center

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Dear Friends in Mission,

At the start of every new year the IHM Congregation safeguards a day set aside to reflect and pray on the Alphonsian charism of being sent on mission. On this day, we gather as one body to remember that missioning is not simply something we do – it is who we are. Missioning flows from a contemplative attentiveness to God's presence and a courageous response to the needs of the world. Inspired by the Gospel and guided by the example of Mary, we are called to stand with those on the margins, to educate, to heal, and to serve with fidelity of heart (*fideli corde*).



Missioning in the IHM tradition is communal and relational. It is shaped by listening to God, to one another, and to the cries of our time. It calls us to be adaptable and responsive, trusting that the Spirit leads us into new expressions of the same enduring love. Whether through education, prayer, advocacy, or accompaniment, IHM missioning seeks to reveal God's compassion and justice in concrete ways.

The IHM Spirituality Center stands as a vital expression of this mission. It is a place of welcome, reflection, and renewal, where seekers from many walks of life come to deepen their relationship with God and discern how they, too, are called to mission. Through retreats, spiritual direction, and communal prayer, the Center nurtures hearts for service and sustains those already engaged in mission.

Lay members of the IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry are also partners in our mission. Under the guidance of Sister Francis Helen, participants share in the spirituality and legacy of the Congregation and strive to live out the charism in their families, workplaces, and communities, reminding us that the mission is greater than any one role and enriched when it is shared.

Missioning takes many forms, and Sister Jude Mary, whom you will read about in this issue, understood that being missioned was not about assuming a role but about deepening God's work in her life.

In a special way, Sister Jude's legacy resonates in the lives of the *Fideli Corde* recipients whose witness affirms that the IHM charism is alive and active in our communities.

As you read these pages, may you be encouraged by the stories of faith, service, and hope. With grateful hearts, we thank you for being part of the IHM mission. May we continue to go forward together, trusting in God's Providence and serving with fidelity of heart.

In the spirit of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Mary Ellen". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity,  
IHM General Superior

# Take the Word of God with You

## *As You Go*

*Jesus makes it clear in the Gospels, that belonging to a community is central to the Kingdom of God.*



**Sister Stephanie Gabriel Tracy**

*Director of Evangelization and  
Religious Education  
St. James the Less Catholic Church  
Savannah, GA*

### **LENT AND THE CALL TO WELCOME**

Every year on Ash Wednesday, we engage in the most visible expression of our belonging to the Church. We fill the pews to receive a once-a-year mark of our salvation – ashes. Those ashes make a statement, but they are also community builders, and reminders of our identity as people always in the process of conversion. For that one day, we wear the sign of our salvation on our foreheads – in the same place where the baptismal water was poured and the chrism was placed at confirmation. Ash Wednesday always makes me more mindful of belonging. And Jesus makes it clear in the Gospels that belonging to a community is central to the Kingdom of God.

Throughout the early days of Lent, the readings call us to examine our lives to determine whether we are living by kingdom expectations. Are we mindful of the needs of others? Are we keeping the Lord in first place? Are we responding to the Lord's invitation to build the kingdom? We hear these questions and apply them to our own hearts, often seeking self-improvement, but perhaps we miss the call to invite and include others in the kingdom.

Jesus collected people throughout his ministry. His words, actions, and personality simply drew people. Those words and actions started out quite ordinary – walking between villages, sharing a meal, praying in the synagogue, participating in the holy days. And yet crowds formed around him! Certainly, there were people who heard of his miracles and came in hopes of healing. But surely there were also those who were simply curious, those who heard he welcomed people like them, and people seeking belonging. And Jesus met each of them with a welcome and a smile and an invitation to belong.

In my ministry with those discerning entrance into the Catholic Church, some of the most profound experiences come from times of prayer and fellowship with other parishioners. A smile. An invitation. A small effort at conversation. That's all it takes.

What if our Lenten practices led us to create space to offer a similar welcome? Yes, a welcome for the poor and marginalized, and, yes, a space for those with whom we need to be reconciled. But what about creating space for the person we sit next to at Mass every Sunday but whose name we don't know? What about the stranger in line at the store who seems a little overwhelmed? What about the young person who spends a lot of time on a cell phone? What if we allowed those ashes to invite us to belong and invite others to belong with us?

*Rooted in the IHM Charism,  
OPEN TO ALL...  
The IHM Spirituality Center*



*Sister Anne Marie Stegmaier, Director*

**N**estled on the peaceful grounds of Villa Maria House of Studies is the IHM Spirituality Center, a place of quiet refuge and renewal where one can experience the presence of God. Rooted in the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity, the Center embodies the mission of the Congregation offering an atmosphere of peace and hospitality for all who enter.

For Sister Anne Marie Stegmaier who has been serving as Director of the IHM Spirituality Center since July 2023, this ministry was both a surprise and a long-awaited blessing. “Thirty years ago, when the Spirituality Center was first

opening, I hoped to be assigned here,” she reflects. “At that time, I had just received a master’s degree in pastoral counseling and thought this would be a perfect fit.” But that wasn’t part of God’s plan then. In 1972, Sister began her IHM career teaching middle school students for 25 years and then serving another two decades in pastoral ministry meeting the needs of parishes within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia. Only then did God lead her to the Spirituality Center where all those other experiences came to fruition. Today, Sister Anne Marie calls the IHM Motherhouse “home” – a place where she not only resides, but where

she joyfully serves in the Spirituality Center, living out her call to meet people where they are and to help them find spiritual fulfillment.

### MISSION FOCUSED

In describing the mission of the IHM Spirituality Center, Sister Anne Marie highlights the IHM Congregation's Charism Prayer as its guiding foundation:

*God of boundless love, we pray for a passionate spirit to live the virtues of love, creative hope, and fidelity. Give us the grace to proclaim the Gospel message in the spirit of Jesus, the Redeemer. Inspire us to radiate joyful service with compassion for God's people. Amen.*

The IHM Charism Prayer comes to life in every aspect of the Spirituality Center – from the sisters who serve with compassion and joy, to the spiritual programs that nurture growth, to the welcoming atmosphere that invites all who enter to encounter God more deeply.

“During a visitor's stay at the Center, some need us to listen; others ask us to pray with or for them,” says Sister Anne Marie. “No matter the reason for their visit, our hope is that they always feel welcomed here,” she adds.

### TEAM EFFORT

As director, Sister Anne Marie oversees every aspect of the Center's operation, from facilitating retreats to coordinating reservations for outside groups who use the space. Throughout the year, Sister works diligently to promote the Center and advertise its offerings, manage the Center's finances, coordinate maintenance and improvement efforts, answer emails and phone calls, plan summer retreats for the sisters in the Congregation, and most important, offer a welcoming space for those who desire to grow closer to God.

“It's not about me,” Sister Anne Marie says simply. “It's about how God is trying to reach each person who walks through our doors. I only hope to be a conduit God uses to reach these individuals.”

Sister is grateful for the fellow sisters who serve with her – Sisters Julia Ann Walsh, Carolyn Ann Bennett, and Pamela Bressi – who assist with housekeeping, meal serving, and hospitality. Additional sisters also help with hospitality and housekeeping during the summer months. “Our staff and volunteers are very important to us,” says Sister Anne Marie. “We also receive support from Immaculata University and Villa Maria Academy High School students who assist with light housekeeping duties at the Center during the school year,” she adds.



*The Spirituality Center staff - Back row, left to right: S. Anne Marie Stegmaier, S. Pamela Bressi; Front row, left to right: S. Carolyn Ann Bennett and S. Julia Ann Walsh.*

### OFFERINGS

Retreats are offered to the public at the IHM Spirituality Center during the months of September through May. Evening, half day, full day, and weekend retreats are available along with occasional week-long offerings. Retreats on a variety of spiritual topics are planned throughout the year, including weekly prayer groups and

monthly mornings of quiet prayer. At the end of May through the beginning of August, the Center is reserved for the religious sisters to make their annual retreat, including not only IHM sisters but those from other congregations as well. Sisters who are spiritual directors also come to the Center to offer spiritual direction during the summer retreats and may offer day or weekend programs for both sisters and laity during the year.

When discerning what retreat topics to offer, Sister Anne Marie relies on the prayerful guidance of the retreat presenters. She also listens to input from others and draws from her own spiritual life. Among the most popular retreat topics are prayer, the Eucharist, the saints, and the charisms (gifts) we receive at Baptism. “In general, people are looking for ways to grow in their faith and spiritual life,” she explains.

“All are welcome to use the Spirituality Center for their personal and group needs,” Sister adds. Individuals come for their own private retreats; groups reserve the Spirituality Center for weekend or weeklong retreats. With single-room accommodations for 38 to 40 overnight guests, the Center is well-suited for extended stays. Small community groups often reserve the space for leadership meetings or Board of Directors gatherings. Larger groups take advantage of the state-of-the-art presentation room which seats 125 comfortably in theater-style seating and is fully equipped with the latest technology.

“By joyfully serving God through those we encounter in our ministry, placing our confidence in God's loving Providence, and being faithful to our vocation and our mission in the Church, we hope to model for all who come through our door that living a spiritual life in right relationship with God and others is possible,” Sister Anne Marie says proudly.

## IHM TRADITION

What makes the IHM Spirituality Center unique is that it is deeply rooted in the IHM tradition. “Because we are part of Villa Maria House of Studies (the IHM Motherhouse), we are intentional about sharing with everyone the beauty and heritage of the IHM Congregation. We enjoy showing visitors Sacred Heart Chapel where we invite them to pray, especially during daily Eucharistic Adoration. We also offer them the opportunity to tour the IHM Heritage Room to learn more about the rich history of the IHM Congregation,” explains Sister Anne Marie.

The Eucharist is central to every spiritual offering. “We provide the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in both the Spirituality Center Chapel and Sacred Heart Chapel,” Sister shares. “When planning retreats, we encourage participation in Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the Stations of the Cross (both indoors and outdoors), and we have rosaries available for those who wish to participate in this devotion.”

Located within the IHM Motherhouse, the Spirituality Center shares its sacred environment with the sisters who live and minister there, as well as with visitors who come to the Center. “Because we are part of the Motherhouse, which is home to over 50 sisters, there is a natural quiet that permeates everything,” Sister Anne Marie explains. The chapel, the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and the peaceful grounds for walking or praying create a spirit of reverence and peace. “We try to respect everyone’s need for quiet and silence so they can hear God’s voice in their lives,” she adds.

In addition to the Center’s serene environment, guests consistently praise the Spirituality Center for

its comfortable rooms, cleanliness, and delicious meals accommodating special dietary needs.

## REWARDS

Though the work of running the IHM Spirituality Center can be challenging at times, it is accompanied by many blessings. “I have experienced

*Did you know that you can designate your donation to the IHM Congregation in support of the IHM Spirituality Center? Scan the QR Code to donate or visit the IHM website at [www.ihmimmaculata.org](http://www.ihmimmaculata.org), click on the “Donate” button at the top of the page and select the Spirituality Center under the “Apply My Gift To” category.*



God’s redeeming love not only in my private prayer life but through connections with our retreatants,” shares Sister Anne Marie. Sometimes the impact of these encounters is profound. For example, Sister recalls the healing transformations she witnesses, especially during the Rachel’s Vineyard retreats for post-abortion healing. “We see such deep change and grace,” she says. “People come burdened and leave renewed.” She also remembers one participant who shared that during an all-night

adoration vigil, he decided to propose to his girlfriend when he returned home. “He did – and she said yes,” Sister smiles. “I even attended their wedding.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

As the Center continues to grow, Sister and her team are finding new ways to reach people who are seeking spiritual fulfillment. With more retreat houses closing in recent years, the IHM Spirituality Center has become a spiritual home for many groups seeking a welcoming environment for prayer and reflection. Through a growing database, Sister stays in touch with retreat participants to keep them informed about upcoming programs. The Center also hosted its first weekend retreat which was open to the public and met with great success.

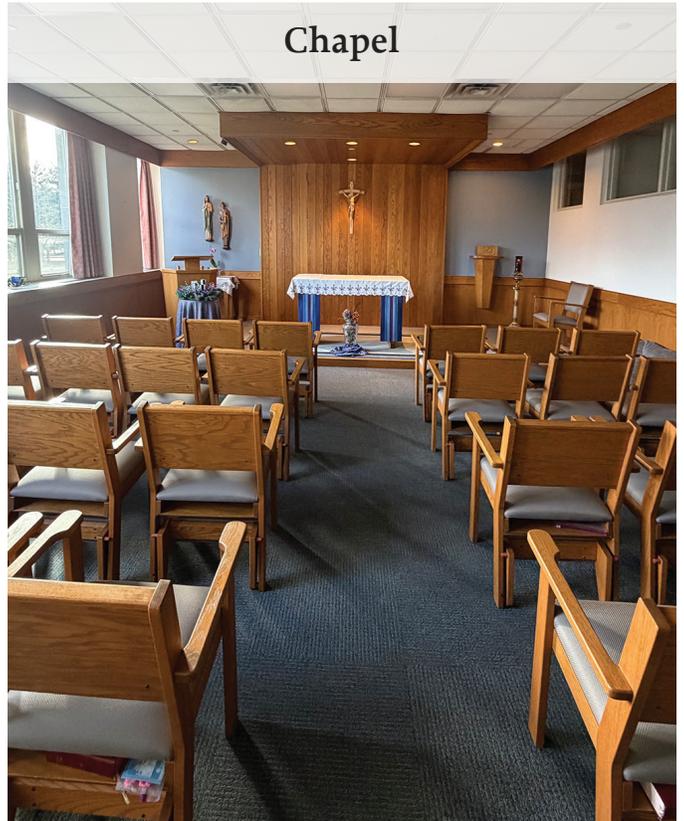
At the heart of every program and encounter is the same mission: helping others experience God’s redeeming love. Sister Ann Marie hopes that people leave the Center as “better disciples” – healed, drawn closer to God, and more prayerful and peaceful. “Every individual is unique,” she adds. “At the Center, we aim to provide the space and time each needs to find the enrichment each person is seeking.”

*To learn more about the IHM Spirituality Center, visit the IHM website at [www.ihmimmaculata.org](http://www.ihmimmaculata.org), click on the “Prayer/Retreat Opportunities” menu, and scroll down to the Spirituality Center listing, or contact Sister Anne Marie Stegmaier at [ihmspcenter@gmail.com](mailto:ihmspcenter@gmail.com) or at (610) 647-4136.*

Dining Facilities



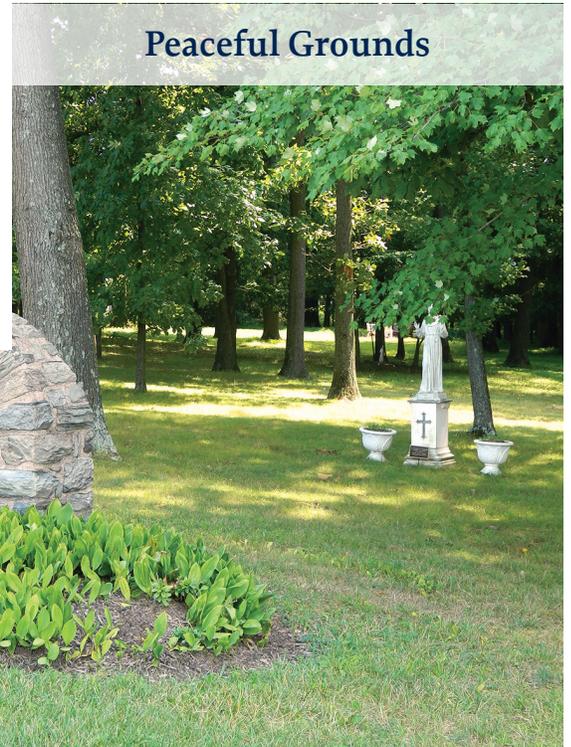
Chapel



Guest Room



Peaceful Grounds



Gathering Room



Presentation Room



# IHM Spotlights

## Sister Jude Mary O'Donnell

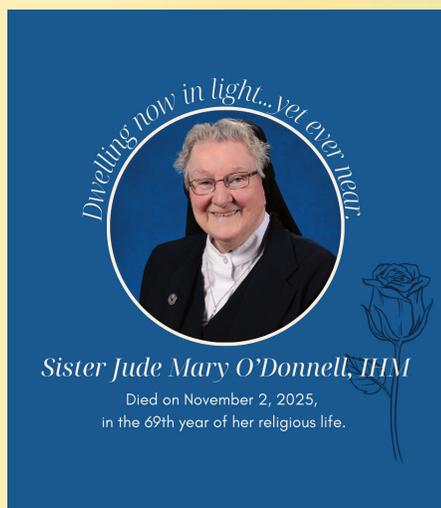
*Apostolate of Prayer*

*Camilla Hall*

*Malvern, PA*



*Sister Jude Mary O'Donnell faithfully served God and others throughout her life with joy, humility, and a steadfast spirit of prayer. Sister has now gone home to be with the Lord. The following article, written before her passing, reflects on her life and ministry, a testament to her unwavering faith and loving service.*



**F**or the past 14 years, Sister Jude Mary O'Donnell was the warm and welcoming presence in the IHM Office of Mission Advancement at Villa Maria House of Studies (the IHM Motherhouse). As part of a dedicated team, Sister Jude worked tirelessly in the busy development office, providing administrative support for donor relations and fundraising efforts. Sister Jude was also one of the “faces” of the Congregation as she served on portress greeting visitors with her warm smile and answering the phone with her joyful, positive attitude. This past summer, Sister Jude began a new chapter as a resident of the IHM’s “Powerhouse of Prayer” – Camilla Hall. Although her ministry took a new direction, her lively spirit, ‘can do’ attitude, and steadfast faith continued to inspire everyone who knew her.

### **LONGEST MINISTRY**

Serving in the same ministry for over a decade may seem ordinary but for Sister Jude every task was a labor of love. Each morning, Sister arrived in the Mission Advancement Office bright and early to open and sort the mail and be ready for whatever the day might hold. On any given occasion you would find Sister cataloging donor donations, assisting with a large mailing for the

Congregation’s donor base, ordering plaques of recognition to be placed throughout the Motherhouse, or manning the raffle table at the Congregation’s annual Sippin’ for the Sisters tea fundraiser. “I was a Girl Friday,” Sister Jude said proudly. “Whatever needed to be done, I did.”

### **MANY ROLES**

In addition to her longstanding service in Mission Advancement, Sister Jude had served faithfully in many schools and parishes in various roles, including teacher, principal, director of religious education, administrative assistant, and house superior. Her assignments took her near and far from Seven Dolors School in Wyndmoor; St. Mary’s School in Lincoln, Nebraska; St. Aloysius Academy in Bryn Mawr; St. Martin of Tours in Philadelphia; St. Rose of Lima in Miami; St. Monica in Philadelphia; and St. Theresa in Hellertown.

“I loved all of my mission assignments,” she said with a smile, “but I really enjoyed working at the Motherhouse. There were so many wonderful people I had the opportunity to meet and get to know from the kitchen, maintenance, and housekeeping staff to all the lay employees. I have nice memories of them all.”

## EARLY CALLING

Sister Jude's call to religious life began early, shaped by many meaningful experiences of faith. She recalled being just five years old and ill with pneumonia when a priest came to pray over her, a moment she remembers as deeply spiritual. Later, her first-grade teacher taught her how to pray a novena to St. Jude, sparking a lifelong devotion that would one day inspire her to take his name in religious life. By the time she reached third grade she said, "I knew I wanted to be a religious sister."

Sister Jude was no stranger to the IHM Congregation since her first cousin was an IHM. "She had a great influence on me but always encouraged me to make my own decision to enter religious life," Sister added. At Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, she truly felt God speaking to her about committing to her vocational calling. She recalled how a priest led a novena to St. Jude and afterwards he said to the Congregation, "If you expect the Lord to come down and tap you on the shoulder, forget about it, because he's not!" Sister Jude laughed and said, "That was my wakeup call – God's way of saying, 'Yes, I want you to be a sister.'"

Her entrance into the IHM Congregation came in February of 1957 at the age of 24, much later than



*Sister Jude was a cheerful presence and always willing to lend a helping hand at the annual Sippin' for the Sisters tea fundraiser to benefit Camilla Hall.*

most girls at that time who entered right out of high school. "My vocation was delayed because my father suffered from an accident that injured his eye and my mother relied on me to help her take care of my siblings," she shared.

## FAMILY TIES

Sister Jude's strong Irish Catholic upbringing laid a solid foundation for her life as a religious sister. Born and raised in West Philadelphia, she grew up in a close-knit Irish Catholic family, the oldest of six children. Her parents, immigrants from County Donegal, Ireland, built a home grounded in faith. "I grew up in a typical Irish family with a very strong faith. My siblings and I attended Catholic schools, and we said the Rosary every night as a family." This upbringing deeply influenced her

own spiritual life and prepared her well for her new ministry as part of the IHM "Powerhouse of Prayer" at Camilla Hall.

## NEW CHAPTER

On August 1, 2025, Sister Jude began a new chapter at Camilla where she continued to live out her deep faith through the ministry of prayer and presence — visiting resident sisters in need and spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, lifting her own intentions and those entrusted to her. Much like her ministry in Mission Advancement, Sister Jude said, "I am happy to work wherever I am needed."

Her devotion to the Eucharist remained at the center of her daily life at Camilla Hall. She found comfort in turning on the chapel broadcast on the television in her room, where the monstrance was visible throughout the day. "I watch it morning and night," Sister said. "It's comforting to know Jesus is always so close. It's a visible reminder of His presence."

Gratitude and service have always been at the heart of Sister Jude's life. She shared that she had recently read a devotional from Pope Francis that said, "If you woke up today, the Lord still has something for you to do." With a gentle smile and a twinkle in her eye, she added, "I'm not finished — whatever the Lord has in store for me, I'm ready."



*Many hands make light work. Sister Jude faithfully assisted with many donor mailings in the Mission Advancement Office. Every envelope was always sent with care.*

**Sister Francis Helen Murphy**  
*Coordinator*  
*IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry*  
*Malvern, PA*



**F**or the past 14 years, Sister Francis Helen Murphy has served as Coordinator of the IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry, a group that invites lay men and women to share in the spirituality and mission of the IHM Congregation. Through this ministry, participants can deepen their faith, nurture their prayer life, and grow in the spirit and mission of the Congregation.

The first time Sister Francis Helen met an IHM sister was when she was a fourth grader at St. Agnes School in West Chester. The IHM sisters she encountered there and throughout her remaining school years radiated joy, prayerfulness, and a deep love of teaching. “They were wonderful educators and prayerful, joyful religious women who had a profound

influence on me and my vocation,” she says. That witness planted a seed that would grow into a lifelong call to religious life.

After entering the IHM Congregation in 1965, Sister Francis Helen earned her bachelor’s degree from Immaculata University and completed additional studies in special education. She began her ministry as a primary grade teacher and then as a high school and special education teacher. After spending years in the classroom, she brought her experience to the field of educational publishing, developing mathematics and language arts materials for William H. Sadlier, Inc. Sister has also served in parish ministry and in the finance office at Camilla Hall. Reflecting on her

ministry assignments, she says, “Being involved in the faith life of those to whom I have ministered, whether in education, publishing, or parish ministry, has always been my greatest joy.”

**SHARING THE IHM SPIRIT**

The Companions in Prayer and Ministry apostolate began in 1990 with a Day of Reflection at Villa Maria House of Studies (the IHM Motherhouse) led by a group of IHM sisters who desired to share the spirituality and history of the IHM Congregation with the lay community. From that experience grew a heartfelt desire among participants to continue gathering in small groups with the sisters to pray, learn, and grow together. Today there are 20 Companion groups with over 240 members (men, women, and college students) who meet monthly, coming together in companionship with one another to share their faith, explore spiritual prayer practices, and learn more about the spirituality and legacy of the IHM Congregation.

As coordinator, Sister facilitates nine local groups of IHM Companions on a monthly basis and visits groups facilitated by other IHM sisters in different areas. Through the generosity of a benefactor, she provides participants with spiritual reading and prayer materials throughout the year. Sister Francis Helen also plans the Companions annual fall reflection afternoon and the Companions initiation ceremony for new members. In the spring, she



*Sister Francis Helen accompanies Companion members during their weekend retreat at Villa Maria by the Sea, an IHM retreat center in Stone Harbor, NJ.*

organizes a full-day retreat at Villa Maria House of Studies.

## FAITHFUL GATHERINGS

When the Companions gather together, their meetings begin and end with prayer. Members often reflect on the IHM Congregation's monthly virtue or a theme connected to the liturgical season. "Members are exposed to various types of prayer, such as centering prayer, scripture meditation, the Rosary, the lives of the saints, journaling, contemplation, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the IHM charism, IHM Heritage Prayers and other treasured traditions, and the spirituality of St. Alphonsus, one of the IHM patrons," explains Sister Francis Helen. Participants are also encouraged to share their prayer intentions with the group offering one another support in joy and suffering. "The Companions group has also helped to clarify misconceptions about faith and prayer and support participants in developing a deeper love for the Catholic faith." With each faithful gathering, Sister says, "There is always laughter, companionship, and sincere faith sharing."

In addition to growing their faith, participants also enjoy learning more about what it means to be an IHM. "They are informed about our founders, history, spirituality and our various ministries," Sister shares. "We also give them the opportunity to be partnered with a sister in our Formation Community or with a senior sister in Camilla Hall."

*"Being involved in the faith life of those to whom I have ministered, whether in education, publishing, or parish ministry, has always been my greatest joy."*



*Rooted in a spirit of service, Companions faithfully support Camilla Hall each year by volunteering their time at Camilla's Oktoberfest and Craft Fair.*

## SERVICE

Another component of the Companions in Prayer and Ministry is the call to serve others. "Faith development and spirituality lead to service," Sister explains. Each Companion member is encouraged to "give back" to their parish or community. For instance, some Companions visit shut-ins, volunteer in parish programs, or help at local outreach centers. Others play bingo at Camilla Hall, make sandwiches for the hungry, organize food drives, or engage in parish activities such as singing in the church choir. "Prayer and faith sharing naturally flow into ministry," Sister adds.

## LIFE EXPERIENCES

The Companions in Prayer and Ministry is as much of a blessing for Sister Francis Helen as it is for the participants. "Through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I find the power of prayer, faith sharing, and the intimate support of each Companion to be humbling and fruitful," she says. "The laity are so thirsty for spiritual direction and support. Giving them a platform to express their spiritual life is the true gift of this ministry."

Beyond her ministry, Sister Francis Helen is grateful for quiet moments of reflection and for personal time to read, sketch, watercolor paint, and enjoy nature. She also admits how much she enjoys keeping a collection of cards and notes she's received

over the years. "I reread them when I need an uplift – they're little 'God moments,' reminders that someone was thinking of me," she says with a smile.

Through all her ministries, Sister Francis Helen has learned to recognize grace in everyday experiences. "Life experiences are graced moments that call us to use our God-given talents and gifts so that the Kingdom may come a little closer each day." Sister continues to live out that call, forming communities of prayer and friendship in which the laity and sisters walk together as true companions on the journey of faith.

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**For more information on  
joining an IHM  
Companions in Prayer and Ministry  
group near you, contact  
Sister Francis Helen Murphy at  
610-647-2160, Ext. 1925 or at  
ihmcompanions@gmail.com.**

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*\*Turn to page 17 to read the latest  
Companion news.*

# Powerhouse Presence

## CAMILLA HALL

### *Dedicated Hands, Caring Hearts:* The Maintenance Team at Camilla Hall

**B**ehind the rhythm of daily life at Camilla Hall, the convent home and healthcare center of the IHM Congregation, stands a dedicated group of individuals whose work ensures that the sisters in residence live in comfort and safety. This close-knit group is the Maintenance Department of Camilla Hall. Each day, the sisters see teamwork in action as the maintenance staff work diligently to address needs – both large and small – with the shared goal of making Camilla a safe and comfortable place for all.

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

“Camilla Hall is not simply a building, it is a home,” says Tom Hartney, Director of Facilities at Camilla. “Care and responsibility are the guiding principles of our department.” That philosophy guides the work of the Camilla maintenance team consisting of Tom Bullock, Marcus and Timothy Grove, Christopher Guardino, Jesus Verdin, and volunteer Cai Fitzpatrick each who bring his unique skills and dedication to every task.

Tom began serving the IHM Congregation in 2021 as Assistant to the Director of Operations at Villa Maria House of Studies. As time went on, this position evolved into supporting maintenance efforts at Camilla Hall. In January of 2025, Tom assumed the role of Director of Facilities for Camilla. Today, he and his team are focused on whatever they can do to make life better for the sisters.



*Meet the Maintenance team at Camilla Hall - Pictured from left to right: Marcus Grove, Tim Grove, Jesus Verdin, Tom Hartney, Chris Guardino, volunteer Cai Fitzpatrick, and Tom Bullock.*

#### **PROJECTS LARGE AND SMALL**

Camilla is a spacious and vibrant facility. Keeping it safe and comfortable requires ongoing renovation projects. A major focus is the upgrade of resident bathroom suites on the fourth floor (independent living), where bathtubs are being replaced with step-in showers offering seating and dual wand fixtures. These updates make bathing easier for the sisters and help reduce the risk of slips and falls. Additional improvements on the fourth floor include fresh paint in resident rooms, new flooring, electrical upgrades, and updated window treatments.

On the third floor (for those with skilled nursing care and long and

short-term memory care needs), the hallways have been refinished to provide a safer, slip-resistant surface for both sisters and staff. “One of our ongoing goals is to install slip-resistant coatings in rooms and hallways on most of the second and third floors,” explains Tom. In addition, bathtubs in both second and third-floor bathing suite rooms will be replaced with nursing tubs that offer side-entry access for safer bathing. “These nursing tubs also feature built-in disinfectant systems, helping ensure proper sanitation and the highest level of care for our sisters during bath time.” Similarly, renovations on the second floor (dedicated to skilled nursing care/memory care) will mirror those on the third floor ensuring safety

and accessibility for sisters with skilled nursing care needs.

Renovations at Camilla extend beyond resident rooms and hallways. Several laundry facilities have been remodeled, new flooring has been installed in the Pharmacy area, and viewing rooms (used as gathering spaces during visitation hours for a deceased sister) have been updated with fresh paint, new rugs, and newly fashioned slipcovers. Technological advances have also been made including upgrading the power systems in the sisters' rooms to support specialized equipment such as new sit-to-stand recliner chairs and "staff-assist" patient beds. The new recliners help the sisters move more easily from sitting to standing, while the adjustable beds provide greater comfort for the sisters and easier accessibility for the staff.

In addition to safety, security is top priority. Facial recognition cameras have been installed at all entrances and exits to keep the sisters safe and the building secure.

### MOVING PARTS

Renovation projects at Camilla often involve collaboration across multiple departments. Tom notes that managing the many "moving parts" of renovations and facility upgrades has become second nature for him

and his team. While certain projects advance with ease, others take additional time, skill, and thoughtful coordination. In every project, the team remains mindful of the sisters' care needs, carefully coordinating their work to ensure safety and efficiency while minimizing any disruption to daily routines.

### FUTURE PROJECTS

With more sisters living at Camilla and their care needs evolving, the work of renovating and updating will continue for the foreseeable future. This year, the maintenance staff will continue updating resident rooms on each floor with fresh paint, LED lighting, electrical enhancements, and plumbing work. An innovative project in the planning stages on the Camilla campus for 2026 is the installation of a solar farm behind Pacis Hall. "I'm serving on the committee for this project which will be instrumental in helping Camilla generate additional on-site power," says Tom proudly. Construction on the solar farm is expected to begin this spring.

### SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE

From simple repairs to major renovations, the sisters are grateful for the maintenance team's unwavering commitment to their safety and well-being. They say that the new step-in showers mean, "No more slips



*Newly updated resident bathrooms at Camilla Hall provide a more comfortable and accessible space for daily care.*

or falls!" and updates to the viewing rooms convey a greater sense of "IHM welcome." The sisters care about everything here," says Tom, "but so does the entire staff." The spirit of care and responsibility, service and gratitude, are alive and well at Camilla Hall.



*A newly updated resident room at Camilla Hall features new flooring, window treatments, and an electric chair designed for comfort and accessibility.*

To make a donation in support of Camilla Hall, scan the QR code or visit [www.ihmimmaculata.org](http://www.ihmimmaculata.org) and click on the "Donate" button at the top of the page and select "Sisters in Camilla Hall" from the "Apply My Gift To" category. You may also contact Maureen Cislo, Director of IHM Mission Advancement, at 610-647-2160, Ext. 1926 or at [maureen.cislo@ihmimm.org](mailto:maureen.cislo@ihmimm.org).



2025

## *Fideli Corde and Servientes Corde Award Recipients*

*The IHM Congregation honored the recipients of the Fideli Corde ("Faithful Heart") and Servientes Corde ("Servant Heart") Awards on November 9, 2025 with a special Mass and luncheon.*

*These honorees were recognized for embodying the IHM Charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity through their generous and selfless service to others.*

### ***Fideli Corde Award Recipients***



#### ***Dr. Bonnie Ashby***

Dr. Bonnie Ashby's connection with the IHM Congregation began many years ago when she started playing the flute with the Camilla Hall choir. In 2009, the leadership team at Camilla Hall invited her to serve as the facility's official Medical Director, a position she still holds today.

As an infectious disease specialist, Dr. Ashby's expertise and steadfast presence have proven to be an extraordinary blessing, especially during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more than 25 years, Dr. Ashby has embodied the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity through her compassionate care for the sisters in Camilla Hall. Along with maintaining her own medical practice, she has always made herself available — day or night — to attend to the sisters' needs. Over the years, she has also become a valued benefactor to the IHM community, generously offering her time and service to Camilla Hall. Her professional expertise, steadfast dedication, and quiet generosity have earned the deep respect and admiration of the Camilla Hall leadership, nursing staff, and the sisters she so faithfully serves.



#### ***Alexis Connors***

With her over 20-year history with the IHMs, Alexis Connors has embraced the spirit and charism of the Congregation and lives it out daily. Her Christ-centered spirituality shines through her work as Medical Benefits Coordinator for the

Congregation where she carries out her responsibilities

with professionalism, prudence, patience, confidentiality, and above all, kindness. In addition to managing the extensive paperwork and medical records inherent in her role, Alexis handles frequent interruptions from phone calls to emails with grace, always ready to listen, offer counsel, and find solutions. Her care for the Congregation extends beyond her job. Alexis also cultivates meaningful friendships with the sisters at Camilla Hall. She also serves on the Camilla Hall Oktoberfest Committee, enlisting her family's help on the big day to serve wherever needed, and she volunteers at the IHM Nun Run. Alexis Connors is truly a treasured member of the IHM family.



#### ***Pam Heid***

Pam Heid has dedicated over four decades to passing on the faith at St. James Parish in Falls Church, Virginia. After teaching second grade and CCD for several years before taking time off to raise her three children, she returned to the parish's religious education program in 1983 and is now in her 42nd year of service. In this vital ministry, Pam maintains meticulous birth and sacramental records for every child in the program. When the parish updated its data system, Pam undertook the complex task of transferring all records into the new system. Through her knowledge and expertise, she is an invaluable resource in the parish office. Pam's cheerful and caring nature extends beyond her professional responsibilities. She shows great love and loyalty to the sisters she serves including knowing the sisters' favorite sweets and frequently delivering them to the convent. Pam is always ready to help and has been a long-time friend and trusted coworker to many of the sisters.



### ***Elen Polselli***

Elen Polselli’s ministry to the IHM sisters beautifully reflects Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s words: “We cannot all do great things, but we can all do small things with great love.” During her 17 years of service in Gillet Hall, the IHM convent home at Immaculata University, Elen became one

in mind and heart with the mission and charism of the IHMs. Elen was deeply aware that the graced charism of hospitality is a hallmark of the IHM Congregation, and her authentic spirit of welcome began with the sisters themselves. Whether through acts of kindness, listening with empathy or offering encouragement, Elen cared for each sister, fostering a sense of belonging and community. She would extend that same spirit of hospitality to each guest who visited Gillet. Elen was a “cheerleader” for all the major events that took place on campus especially Camilla Hall’s Oktoberfest. When the sisters of Gillet Hall generously agreed to give up their convent home to meet the University’s need for more student housing, Elen delayed her retirement, choosing instead to stay with the sisters for another year until the convent closed. Elen is a “faithful witness” whose friendship and dedication have made a lasting impact on all who have been privileged to know her.



### ***Eileen Rocks***

Eileen Rocks has served as the third-grade teacher at St. Matthew School in Philadelphia for the past 25 years. Her belief that the school and parish are extensions of your family is evident in all that she does. Her witness to the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity is reflected in

her steadfast faith, dedicated service, and collaborative spirit with the IHM sisters in both school and parish ministries. For many years, Eileen has also served as a catechist in the parish religious education program and has been an active member of the parish Respect Life team. In addition to being an exceptional teacher who supports the success of every student, Eileen has initiated numerous programs that help her students learn to live their faith in action. These include the annual Third Grade Flea Market and Bake Sale to benefit Camilla Hall; Christmas for Seniors, a project in which students fill stockings with requested items and deliver them to area nursing home residents; and the Jr. Respect Life Club, which encourages students to engage in Respect Life activities appropriate to their grade level. Eileen’s impact on the entire St. Matthew community – from students and parents to faculty and staff – is truly immeasurable.

## ***Servientes Corde Award Recipient***

### ***East Whiteland Township Administration Office, Police Department, and Fire and Emergency Services Department***



Founded in 1704, East Whiteland Township now spans 7,000 acres and is home to more than 15,000 residents, thriving businesses, and respected institutions like Immaculata University. Public safety lies at the core of East Whiteland Township’s commitment to its residents. Around the clock, police officers, firefighters, and emergency responders along with dedicated volunteers respond to a wide range of emergencies with skill, compassion, and unwavering dedication. Many IHM sisters at Villa Maria House of Studies, Camilla Hall, and Immaculata University have personally experienced their care in moments of greatest need. In every instance, these men and women demonstrate that their work is more than a duty, it is a matter of the heart. Their kindness, respect, and compassion bring comfort and offer hope to all they serve.

***Congratulations  
to all the recipients!***

*May God bless them for sharing  
their gifts in the spirit of faith  
and service, and may their example  
continue to inspire others to bring  
Christ’s love to the world.*

*In the Formation Wing . . .*

## Welcome Postulants, Mary Steinbicker and Amanda Bielat

On September 7, 2025, Mary Steinbicker and Amanda Bielat entered the IHM Congregation as Postulants, answering God’s call to religious life.

### MARY STEINBICKER

Mary grew up near St. James Catholic Church in Falls Church, VA, where she first met the IHM sisters as a kindergartener. She sensed a call to religious life from an early age but admits that she wrestled with that desire throughout her middle school years. Her vocation became clearer during her time at Immaculata University, strengthened by her continued connection with the IHMs and a transformative service experience. While at Immaculata, Mary served at Bethlehem Farm in Alderson, WV, a Catholic community that supports the Appalachian population through building projects and sustainable agriculture. “Bethlehem Farm set me free in so many ways,” she recalls. “I walked away from my time there challenged, supported, and encouraged. The result was a deep-seated, God-given peace.”

When discerning which religious community to enter, Mary says “a thousand tiny moments” led her to the IHMs. “I grew up treasuring every moment I spent with the sisters and wanted to know everything about them. My ‘yes’ felt like finally honoring the truth and coming home.” Mary also credits her step-grandfather, who passed away when she was in sixth grade, as a significant spiritual influence. “In remembering him, I am prompted to share my love for others – to love unapologetically, without condition or limit, and to work quietly and humbly just as he did,” she says.

Since entering the Congregation, Mary has completed her teaching assignment at Villa Maria Academy Lower School, where she taught middle school science. “Teaching has been a dream come true, especially in an IHM school,” she shares. Her transition to religious life has been filled with gratitude: “The rhythm of daily life feels so natural. I have found so much joy in ordinary moments.”



*Pictured from left to right: Amanda Bielat, Sister Mary Ann Spaetti (Directress of Postulants), and Mary Steinbicker*

### AMANDA BIELAT

Amanda’s journey with the IHM Sisters began as a student at Queen of Peace Elementary School in Ardsley, PA, with the sisters as her teachers and role models. Later, while earning her undergraduate degree at Marywood University, she was surrounded by the Scranton branch of the IHMs and learned about the IHM charism. Her connection deepened further while working as Assistant Director of Campus Ministry at Immaculata University, where the IHMs once more became part of her daily life.

Amanda first discerned a call to religious life shortly after her college graduation, during a year of service with Capuchin Youth and Family Ministries in Hudson Valley, NY. “I lived in community and led retreats, youth groups, and service trips which helped me grow in my faith, learn ministry skills, and discern a vocation to ministry in the Church,” she says. She describes her call to religious life as a “quiet but unmistakable tug” that occurred during her time in Adoration while serving and remained with her thereafter.

During her time in campus ministry at Immaculata, Amanda connected with the IHMs on a more personal level. “The IHM charism resonated with my passion for service, accompaniment, and social justice,” she says. During this time of ministry, the tug grew stronger and Amanda began to take her discernment more seriously. “As I grew closer to the IHM sisters I worked alongside, I was struck by their joy, compassion, and the authentic way they lived their charism.” Their witness ultimately led her to reach out to the IHM vocation office. “Looking back, I can see how God was patiently walking with me through each step and preparing my heart,” she adds.

Now as a Postulant, she spends her days praying with the community, learning more about religious life, and taking classes at Villanova University. She is grateful for this new chapter. “What drew me in was the joy of the sisters,” Amanda shares. “Their generosity and deep love for the people they serve reflect the kind of religious life I felt called to enter.”



# Companions in Prayer and Ministry

## Prayer, Presence, and Companionship by the Sea

**I**n the fall of 2025, the IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry visited Villa Maria by the Sea, the IHM retreat center in Stone Harbor, NJ, for two special retreat weekends. Over 40 members gathered for a weekend of companionship, contemplation, and prayer.

Companions were invited to choose from two distinct retreat experiences. The October retreat, *The Sisterhood of Martha and Mary*, was led by Sister Clare D'Auria, OSF. Through music, art, poetry, and Scripture, participants entered deeply into the lives of these two beloved sisters from St. Luke and St. John's Gospels. The group discussed the dynamic between contemplation and action and explored how God weaves both into the fabric of our daily faith journey. In November, a second group gathered for *Do Small Things with Great Love*, led by Sister Antoine Therese Lawlor, IHM. Inspired by the well-known words of St. Teresa of Calcutta, retreatants considered how simple acts rooted in love can transform ordinary moments. Through prayer, nature, music, and acts of kindness, they discovered new ways to infuse daily life with compassion and grace.



*A second group of Companions gathered at Villa Maria by the Sea in November for companionship, contemplation, and prayer.*



*IHM Companions gathered in October 2025 for their first weekend retreat at Villa Maria by the Sea, the IHM retreat center in Stone Harbor, NJ.*

Mother Nature seemed to bless both weekends, offering warm shore breezes and bright skies. Companions enjoyed quiet walks along the beach, peaceful moments outside on the porch, and time for personal prayer and Adoration in the chapel.

Mass intentions at both retreats were offered for all IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry members – living and deceased – lifting the entire community in gratitude and prayer.

*To join an IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry group near you, contact Sister Francis Helen, at 610-647-2160, Ext, 1925 or at [ihmcompanions@gmail.com](mailto:ihmcompanions@gmail.com).*



## Camilla Hall Oktoberfest 2025 Highlights

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2025 Camilla Hall Oktoberfest and Craft Fair held on Saturday, October 4. The event was one for the record books, filled with sunny skies, crafts, food, raffles, games, and fun for the entire family! All proceeds supported the sisters residing at Camilla Hall. We look forward to seeing you again this year. Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 10, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



## New Addition to Mission Advancement Office

Dan O'Neill has joined the Office of Mission Advancement at Villa Maria House of Studies as Mission Advancement Coordinator. In his new role, Dan will coordinate new fundraising strategies, continue to build strong relationships with new and existing donors, and seek additional funding to advance the mission of the Congregation. Dan has a bachelor's degree from Temple University and a master's degree from Neumann University. In his previous roles, he worked as a journalist and was part of the mission advancement team at Drexel Neumann Academy in Chester, PA. We welcome Dan to the IHM family!

## Giving Safely and Confidently

We are grateful for our generous donors! As you support the IHM Congregation or any organization close to your heart, remember that generosity should never put you at risk. Scammers often target well-intentioned donors, so take a moment to ensure your gift is going exactly where you intend using the following guidelines:

- **Be Informed:** Verify the organization's official website and nonprofit status.
- **Give Securely:** Use a credit card or trusted online platform in lieu of sending cash, using wire transfers, or gift cards.
- **Stay Alert:** Watch out for tactics pressuring you to donate, a lack of transparency about how the funds are used, or suspicious emails or links that don't match the charity's domain name. Always check the name of the organization carefully as scammers often use lookalike names.
- **Check Tax Status:** If you want a tax-deductible contribution, confirm that the organization qualifies and save your receipts and emails for your records.
- **Protect Your Data:** Donate only through secure sites (look for https and a padlock icon); avoid clicking donation links in unsolicited emails or through social media posts; set up recurring donations only with organizations you trust.

*(Source: Fidelity Investments)*

With a little vigilance, you can give confidently, knowing that your donation will truly help those who need it most.



# Dwelling now in light, yet ever near



*S. M. Cheryl Ann Murphy*  
1.10.26



*S. Andrew Marie Cavanaugh*  
1.8.26



*S. Janice Marie Firn*  
12.17.25



*S. Miriam D. Scully*  
(*S. Patricia Miriam*)  
12.10.25



*S. M. Margaret Peter Carolli*  
11.20.25



*S. Jude Mary O'Donnell*  
11.2.25



*S. M. Theresa John Talbot*  
10.6.25



*S. Mary Rene Wentzel*  
10.5.25



*S. Marita Christi Blinebury*  
10.4.25



*S. Marita Rose Donnelly*  
10.1.25



*S. Celeste Marie Kambic*  
9.25.25

Congregation of the Sisters,  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### 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

**Suzanne Misciagna**  
*Development & Content Specialist*

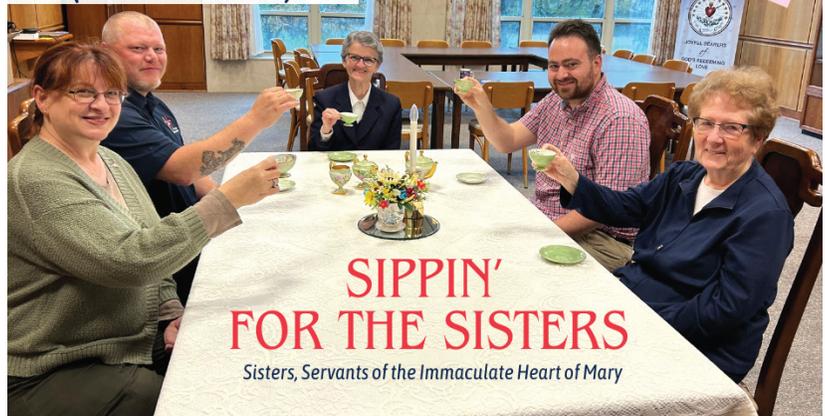
**Maureen Cislo**  
*Editor*  
*Director of Mission Advancement*

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### DOUBLE EVENT! SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026 SAVE THE DATES!

**Sunday, March 15, 2026  
1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Dining Room at  
Villa Maria House of Studies  
(IHM Motherhouse)**



### SIPPIN' FOR THE SISTERS

*Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY CONCERT



Internationally  
renowned Tenor

**MARK  
FORREST**



Irish Music Concert  
March 15, 2026  
4PM-6PM

Come and be inspired!  
Online tickets: \$30 each  
\$40 each at the door

Villa Maria House of Studies  
Sacred Heart Chapel

1 Our Lady Circle | Malvern, PA 19355



The building is accessible.



*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 by calling (610) 647-2160, Ext. 1926.*