

Winter 2024 • Volume 23, No. 1



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



Villa Maria by the Sea

Come away by yourself . . . and rest a while

— Mark 6:31

In This Issue

AS YOU GO 3

Be the change you would like to see in the world

FEATURE ARTICLE 4-7

Villa Maria by the Sea, a place for spiritual renewal

SPOTLIGHT 8-11

Sister Laretta Linsalata

Living out her passion for music and the arts in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Sister Donna Kelley

Teaching and working in the field of psychology

CAMILLA HALL 12-13

Meet Administrator, Julie Kozak

2023 FIDELI CORDE AWARD RECIPIENTS 14-15

Honoring the faithful hearts of those who live out the IHM charism in their communities

POSTULANT 16

Samantha Rintoul's journey to religious life

COMPANIONS IN PRAYER AND MINISTRY 17

Celebrating Oktoberfest!

IHM SNAPSHOTS 18

Sharing what's new

DWELLING NOW IN LIGHT 19

In memoriam

"Be still and know that I am God."

These words found in Psalm 46 are so familiar to every IHM sister as she balances the duties and concerns of her apostolic life with her communal and personal prayer life. Our IHM retreat center, Villa Maria by the Sea, provides each sister the opportunity to intensify her relationship with God by offering a sacred space for physical and spiritual renewal. With the construction of the new Villa Maria by the Sea, we are now able to offer year-round programs that offer many opportunities for an even wider audience to come apart and to *"be still."*

Julie Kozak, administrator of Camilla Hall, knows the importance of creating an environment that allows our sisters to continue to find the necessary balance that nourishes a desire to be of service and to be prayerfully attuned to the stirrings of the work of God in her life. Working closely with her team of sisters and lay colleagues, Julie assures each resident sister that in addition to the quality of health care received, Camilla Hall will always remain the IHM "powerhouse of prayer."

Keeping that life balance of *being still* and finding God in all life circumstances also comes from an inner stillness amidst day-to-day life events. Sister Donna Kelley, in her work as director of the Doctor of Psychology Program at Immaculata University, is teaching a future generation of psychologists to be healing agents for others to discover their God-given goodness. Instilling a love of beauty in music and the arts, Sister Laretta Linsalata leads the younger generation at Archbishop Ryan High School to understand their role in appreciating and creating beauty so others can feel the beauty of God in their lives.

Our Fidei Corde award winners and our IHM Companions continue to inspire us with their ability to nurture their spiritual lives which fosters their tremendous sense of outreach. We are grateful for their role in strengthening our IHM charism.

Samantha Rintoul, our newest IHM member, as part of her program in Initial Formation, is carefully learning what it means to *"be still."* Her days are spent learning that life balance of putting her relationship with God first in service to God's people.

Be still and know that I am God. May you find within these pages a quiet moment to reflect on your own goodness and the stirrings of God in your heart.

With gratitude,



Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, IHM
General Superior



Take the Word of God with You *As You Go*

BE THE CHANGE

There is a pillow on my bed which reads, “*Be the change you would like to see in the world.*” Viewing the world today, I see a picture that is overwhelming and incomprehensible with all that is happening ... the war in Ukraine, the demonic evil of Hamas, daily loss of life through gun violence, the disrespect and chaos shown in our government, human suffering by climate change, etc.

How can I change the world? What can I do to bring peace to our planet?

First, I can change the world by knowing who I am. I am a child of God, and in knowing that, I can strive to live as that child. St. Paul gives us good advice on this matter when he states in Philippians 4:

Let your gentleness be evident to all. Guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Think about whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable and anything that is excellent or praiseworthy. Whatever you have heard or received from me or seen in me, put into practice and the God of peace will be with you.

Simply put, *be the change you would like to see in the world* by taking St. Paul’s words to heart and living them in your world.

Second, nourish your soul through the reception of the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Eucharist empowers us by enabling us to become what we consume. Reconciliation strengthens us through God’s gift of forgiveness whereby our sins are rooted out by grace.

As for the bigger picture of the planet, we can follow the example of Jesus and go to the mountain of prayer. Here we can ask the Father to heal world wounds, to change world hearts, to forgive world sins, and convert world souls.

May we never forget who we are. May we feed our souls through scripture and the sacraments. May we live as children of God. And, finally, through the grace of God, may we *be the change we would like to see in the world* where we live.



Sister M. Elizabeth Woodward

*Staff Member
IHM Conference Center*



A Sacred Space By the Sea

***IN MARK 6:31, JESUS SAYS,
“COME AWAY BY YOURSELVES TO A REMOTE PLACE
AND REST AWHILE.”***

Each of us, at some point in our lives, has felt the call to leave behind the demands of daily life and go to a place where we can recharge physically and spiritually.

Villa Maria by the Sea, the new IHM retreat center in Stone Harbor, NJ, is a place to do just that. The center, built a stone's throw away from the peace and tranquility of the ocean, has become a sacred space for religious as well as laypersons to find rest and relaxation and to connect with the Lord.



In May of 2023, Villa Maria by the Sea opened its doors to serve not only the IHM sisters but all those wishing to come for spiritual renewal.

“The purpose of a retreat is to have time away with the Lord,” says Sister Margaret Mary McCullough, executive director of Villa Maria by the Sea and one of five IHM sisters who live and serve at the new retreat center. Each year, all IHM sisters take a pause from their ministry and embark on a retreat to focus on their spiritual life. The sisters’ retreats usually take place in the summer for a total of 10 days – six days for spiritual renewal and a few extra days to relax. “This time apart rejuvenates our sisters as most of them return home to prepare for a new year in ministry.”

IN THE BEGINNING

The IHM sisters have been coming to the NJ seashore as a place of spiritual respite since 1913 when the sisters purchased a house on Cape May Point, NJ in a building formerly known as the Carlton Hotel. This retreat house served the sisters for almost 20 years until 1936 when severe beach erosion led to its closure. In 1937, Mother M. Kostka, the General Superior, went to Stone Harbor, NJ to look for land to build a new retreat center. Four and a half acres of land located on 111th Street in Stone Harbor were purchased, and

in June of 1937, after only 119 days, a three-story retreat center was built accommodating 250 sisters.

The IHMs were only able to enjoy the retreat center during the summer months since there was no heat in the building during the winter. Funds to keep the center up and running were provided by the Congregation along with the help of many benefactors. In 1996, a local

family festival, the Nuns’ Beach (the nickname for the beach area near the retreat center) Surf Invitational and Family Fest became a major source of income for the center. For over 23 years, proceeds from this annual event helped fund the center and provided an opportunity for the sisters and the Stone Harbor community to come together for a fun-filled day.

A NEW DIRECTION

The retreat center served the sisters well for many years; however, as time went on, the Congregation considered a new direction. “The building itself was aging and more and more repairs were needed,” says Sister Margaret. “With the decline in vocations, we no longer needed a large house to accommodate our sisters. In 2019, it was decided that we would sell the land we were not using and use that money to build a new retreat center with a new ministry in mind. The plan was for the new center to be smaller in size, more energy efficient, open year-round, and able to be used by more people than just the IHMs.”



Serving by the sea ... (Pictured from left to right) Sister Jane Mary Carr, Sister Andrew Marie Cavanaugh, Sister Emily Vincent Rebalsky, Sister James Dolores Rodgers, and Sister Margaret McCullough.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

On September 27, 2021, the Congregation broke ground for a new retreat center retaining its original name, Villa Maria by the Sea. Two years later, on May 15, 2023, a dedication ceremony was held and the doors were officially opened.

"The new retreat center is on the same footprint as the original house, but it is built much differently. The new retreat house is 14,000 square feet and rests on approximately two acres of our original property," says Sister Margaret. Villa Maria by the Sea accommodates 45 guests and offers 25 private suites, four quads (four bedrooms), and two doubles (two bedrooms) equipped with a bathroom, kitchenette, sitting area and access to laundry facilities. Sister Margaret shares her excitement for the new retreat center as she says, "The private rooms are much larger, each with a bathroom. There are multiple laundries for retreatants to use. There are more outside areas for sitting and enjoying the beauty of the ocean, and there is also a pool!" Other enhancements include a parking lot with ample space to

accommodate guests as well as air conditioning and heat for the comfort of the retreatants and the five sisters who reside in the convent area of the house year-round.

REPURPOSING THE OLD

The sisters were mindful about keeping items from the old retreat center and using them in the new one. "We were able to salvage many items from the old house," says Sister Margaret. "The new chapel has only three new items; everything else such as the lights, stations of the cross, statues, altar, organ etc. are all from the old retreat center." The sisters made sure that nothing went to waste. Serving dishes and dinnerware from the former center have found a new home in Villa Maria by the Sea. Chairs used in the former dining room were repurposed for use in the bedrooms. The beds in each room were from the former house and were originally taken from the Novitiate in Malvern. Even the statues which adorned the outside of the former retreat house were placed on the new grounds.

During construction, the sisters were amazed by an unexpected

"The plan was for the new center to be smaller in size, more energy efficient, open year-round, and able to be used by more people than just the IHMs."

find. "In October 2022, while construction workers were digging up the ground for drainage pipes, a statue of the Sacred Heart was found," explains Sister Margaret. "The statue was buried seven feet underground. We have no idea where it came from and have been unable to find out how this statue got here." Carved on the side of the statue was "Robert Rautenberg 1909" indicating that the statue was present long before the IHM sisters settled in Stone Harbor. Thanks to the careful work of the excavators, the statue was removed with little damage and now sits in the center of the outdoor Stations of the Cross. "The statue is a reminder to all of us that the Lord intended this place to be a sacred space."

SERVING BY THE SEA

Sister Margaret is grateful for the support of her fellow sisters – Sister Emily Vincent Rebalsky, Sister Jane Mary Carr, Sister James Dolores Rodgers, and Sister Andrew Marie Cavanaugh – who serve with her at the center.

As Executive Director, Sister Margaret oversees all outside services including food, maintenance, and housekeeping and



Sister Rose Adams welcomes participants to the first retreat offered to the lay community in the new facility.

is committed to making sure that the needs of each retreatant are met.

Program Director, Sister Emily Vincent, plans all the programs and retreats offered throughout the year. She is the local superior of the convent and offers the ministry of spiritual direction.

As Financial Director, Sister Jane Mary knows that keeping the retreat center up and running is “more than paying the bills.” One of Sister’s main responsibilities is to connect with outside groups who want to use the retreat center for meetings or gatherings thereby providing an additional source of income for the center. Sister Jane also has been known to “work her magic” as she is tasked with planning the yearly calendar and completing room assignments for each retreat.

Sister James Dolores and Sister Andrew have worked together for three decades to keep the IHM presence alive and well in the Stone Harbor community. “Sister James Dolores took care of the old retreat house for more than 30 years,” reflects Sister Margaret. “When the house was closed during the winter months, she took great care of it by painting bedrooms and renovating bathrooms among many other projects.” Sister James and Sister Andrew continue to support the center with the selling of popular Nuns’ Beach merchandise. Today, the sisters sell their wares from a “garage” which has become their new storefront at Villa Maria by the Sea. The line of merchandise has expanded from t-shirts and sweatshirts to beach towels, wine glasses, and mugs which now sport the new Villa Maria by the Sea logo.

“During the past 30-plus years, Sister James Dolores and Sister Andrew have built many relationships with the Stone Harbor community,”



The sisters were able to use many of the items from the previous chapel in the newly designed chapel at Villa Maria by the Sea.

says Sister Margaret. “At one point, people would joke that if Sister James’ name was on the ballot, she would have no trouble being elected mayor of Stone Harbor!” The sisters have also been there for the community in times of need or sorrow. “Over the years, Sisters James Dolores and Andrew have received calls from people in the community asking them to come and be with someone who is dying.”

REACHING OUT

Through the new Villa Maria by the Sea, the IHMs can extend their outreach to the local community. One of the most exciting changes is the ability to offer retreats to lay people. “The center is open to the public. Now that we are a 12-month facility, we can offer retreats for the laity as well as for religious and priests from other communities. At Villa Maria by the Sea, this is a new aspect of our ministry and one that we are happy to offer to the community,” Sister Margaret says proudly.

Although the center is primarily reserved for the sisters during the summer months, there truly is something for everyone. Day, weekend, and week-long retreats are available. The center offers retreats that are guided, preached, directed, and private. The sisters hope that Villa Maria by the Sea will become a place people can call home; a sacred space to get away and experience the peace and tranquility of spending time in the presence of God.

**For more information,
visit**

www.vmbythesea.com

or call 609-964-7700.

***Villa Maria By the Sea
Retreat Center
101 111th St.***

Stone Harbor, NJ 08247

Sister Spotlight

Sister Laretta Linsalata

*Music Teacher, Archbishop Ryan High School,
Philadelphia, PA*

*Chair, Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum
Committee for Archdiocesan High Schools*



Sister Laretta celebrates receiving the PMEA award with Nazareth Academy High School music teachers David Zagorski, instrumental director, and Katherine Chmelko, choral director.

Anyone who knows Sister Laretta Linsalata will tell you that music and the arts hold a special place in her heart. Just ask the students and teachers at Archbishop Ryan High School in Philadelphia where Sister teaches music, oversees the school's entire music program, and assists with school liturgies. But Sister Laretta's musical expertise goes beyond the halls of Archbishop Ryan. Her knowledge of music and the arts is a gift to all the high schools throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

LIVING OUT HER PASSION

"In seventh grade I felt the calling to be a sister," says Sister Laretta. "I admired the sisters who taught me at Sacred Heart School. They always seemed happy. In high school, I was taught by the Holy Child sisters, but as wonderful as they were, I always felt called to be an IHM."

Sister Laretta entered the convent in 1958 and began teaching in schools throughout Pennsylvania. Eventually she was able to combine her love of teaching with music and the arts. She taught music classes at Archbishop Prendergast High

School in Upper Darby, PA as well as Little Flower High School and Archbishop Ryan High School in Philadelphia. Sister also became involved with the archdiocesan high schools' fine arts program.

Today, Sister is living out her passion for music by teaching music classes at Archbishop Ryan and acting as Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Committee for the archdiocesan high schools. She says, "I am privileged to work with and assist all of the dedicated, hardworking art and music teachers in our Catholic high schools."

AN UNCONVENTIONAL START

Sister Laretta shares that her involvement in the fine arts program came about in an unconventional way when a friend asked if she would join her for dinner. "My friend, Sister Joyce Bell, was on the Elementary Science Curriculum Committee," says Sister Laretta. "She asked me to join the Fine Arts Curriculum Committee so I could accompany her to a dinner at Father Judge High School. I agreed and the next thing I knew, I received a message from then Superintendent

Richard McCarron asking me to become the committee chairperson, all because I wanted a free dinner!" The rest she says, "is history." Sister has been dedicated to her position of Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Committee for the archdiocese for the past 35 years. She works with music and art teachers in the archdiocesan high schools, holds regular committee meetings, and oversees the Archdiocesan Student Art Exhibition and the All Catholic Music Ensembles. "It's a very rewarding ministry," she says.

ALL ABOUT THE ARTS

The annual Archdiocesan Student Art Exhibition, which Sister oversees with the support of her committee members, is a popular event and one that is open to all Catholic high school students in the archdiocese. Students compete in categories such as drawing, illustration, design, printmaking, computer-aided art/photography, mixed media, three-dimensional art, and ceramics. Art teachers from each Catholic high school are invited to send eight pieces of artwork created by their students. The artwork is displayed at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia and judged by three local artists.

MAKING MUSIC

In addition to the visual arts, Sister Lauretta enjoys her work with students who participate in the All Catholic Music Ensembles. Some of her fondest memories are of the All Catholic Jazz Band who perform at

the State Capitol building each year. "It's exciting to see the legislators, clerks, and all the people who work at the Capitol stop and listen to the music," Sister says.

She reminisces about the time when the All Catholic Orchestra played a selection of lively Irish music. "At the final rehearsal, the guest conductor asked if any member of the orchestra was an Irish dancer," she recalls. "Two girls raised their hands. They rehearsed the number with the orchestra and performed the dance at the concert. The audience gave the orchestra and the girls a standing ovation."



Sister Lauretta enjoys sharing her love of music with students in the chorus at Archbishop Ryan High School.

At Archbishop Ryan High School, Sister is also the moderator of the Tri-M Music Honor Society. Students must do well in their studies and be dedicated members of the music program at Archbishop Ryan. Sister says, "By working with students on various projects, I hope that I am helping them to become confident leaders."

RECEIVING RECOGNITION

In April of 2023, Sister Lauretta received some recognition of her own when she was inducted into the Pennsylvania Music Educators

Association (PMEA) Hall of Fame at the PMEA Conference. Established in 2008, the Hall of Fame Awards honors music educators who are recognized as the most highly regarded professional leaders in music education by the state of Pennsylvania.

"In my ministry, I love working with the teachers, and I am always inspired and energized by the enthusiasm of the art and music students," Sister remarks. "Each year, I think, 'Is this getting old?' and then I get a message from a student, teacher, or parent asking for solos and requirements for next year's Catholic concert, band, chorus, or orchestra auditions, and I'm ready to start again."

MANY THANKS

Sister Lauretta gives thanks to her parents who encouraged her love for music, her fellow sisters whom she says "are always interested in what I am doing," and her sponsor, Sister Helene Marie Flynn, who taught her well. She says her friend, Sister Joyce Bell, "is like a mentor to me and tells me if some of my crazy ideas will work."

Sister is also grateful for her students. "Working with the students and watching them learn and progress is one of the most rewarding experiences a teacher can have," she says. She recalls something that one of the guest conductors said to the All Catholic Chorus students – *I get to do something beautiful every day. I teach music.* Sister Lauretta says that she couldn't agree more.

Sister Donna Marie Kelley

Professor and Director of the Doctor of Psychology
(Psy.D.) Program at Immaculata University,
Malvern, PA

Private Practice, Paoli, PA



Kee God first and follow the longings of your heart. This has been the guiding principle Sister Donna Kelley has followed throughout her life and one that has served her well as an IHM sister.

FOLLOWING GOD'S LEAD

"I wanted to be a sister since I was three years old," says Sister Donna. "I remember the first time I saw a group of sisters walking into church on a Sunday morning as I sat in the pew with my family. I thought to myself, 'I want to be one of them.'" Her desire to enter religious life continued as she moved through her grade school and high school years. "I felt called to a contemplative life because I thought I could do a greater good for the world through prayer."

After graduating from Cardinal O'Hara High School in Springfield, PA, she entered the Sisters of the Visitation in Wilmington, DE and professed her vows in 1977. "I thought I would spend the rest of my life there," says Sister Donna, "but God had other plans for me." The influence of the IHMs during her time at Cardinal O'Hara led her to make a change which she describes as "the best decision" she ever made. "I was taught by the IHM sisters at O'Hara and I loved them," recalls Sister Donna. So, in 1989, she transferred from the Visitation Sisters to the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Like most IHMs, Sister Donna's ministry involved teaching. She taught at several Catholic schools: Sacred Heart School in Havertown,

St. Mark School in Bristol, St. Agnes School in West Chester, and our Lady of Lourdes Regional High School in Coal Township.

ANOTHER DESIRE

Aside from her love of teaching, one of Sister's greatest desires was to minister in an area that interested her – the field of psychology. Sister received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Immaculata University and went on to earn her master and doctoral degrees from Loyola University in Maryland. Today she is a full-time faculty member at Immaculata University and the director of Immaculata's Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) Program. She also has a private psychology practice in Paoli, PA where she offers individual therapy, therapeutic assessments, and candidacy psychological evaluations for those applying to religious life and/or the seminary. When asked how she feels about these ministries, Sister is quick to say, "I love them!"

Sister's days at Immaculata are busy as she teaches, schedules courses, addresses student/faculty concerns, and performs other administrative responsibilities. "Our students at Immaculata are amazing," she says. "They are intelligent, gifted, and good people who are so much fun to teach. I think the best part of my ministry is that I get to teach others



Sister Donna shares her expertise with students enrolled in Immaculata's Psy.D. Program.

what I love to do in a fun-filled way. I try to let that come across in the classroom as well as how I care for each of my students." Sister knows first-hand that the road to obtaining a doctoral degree in psychology can be a challenging one. "The Psy.D. program is long and arduous," she says. "Life happens and there are times when students need extra support and care. I try to extend that to them, and they are grateful for it."

A BALANCING ACT

Sister Donna balances her teaching ministry with seeing clients in her private practice. "To train students to be future psychologists, it is very helpful to work in the field. Having my own practice makes it possible to work my clinical hours around my ministry at Immaculata," Sister adds. "My experience working as a therapist and an assessor enhances my teaching. I can put into practice the courses I teach which makes the material come alive in the classroom."

SACRED WORK

What Sister finds most rewarding about her ministry is that it allows her to live out the IHM mission of offering compassion to others and to evangelize, catechize, and teach in a unique way. "To walk with people in their pain is sacred," she says. "I am humbled by my clients' stories and the trust they place in me. While it can be heart wrenching, it is also inspiring to see their strength and the difficult inner work they are willing to do."

Throughout her ministry, Sister Donna goes back to her guiding principle of putting God first. "I put my trust in God and allow him to work through me. I am just an instrument of healing for my clients. They do all the work. It is powerful to see a person come to

appreciate their own goodness, learn to love themselves, and find God in all of it." Sister feels equally blessed to be living out the mission of Immaculata University. "The mission of IU is to educate the whole person for service and leadership," she says. "I try to live out that mission by guiding my students to become compassionate and skilled psychologists." Sister admits that she learns as much as her students do. "The combination of practicing and teaching clinical psychology allows me to continue to hone my clinical skills and stay on top of the latest developments in this field. I am energized by my ministry and enriched by the people I serve."

She is also grateful for those who have influenced her life along the way. "Sister Agnes Hughes was a wonderful mentor to me," she says. "She believed in me and was a strong supporter. She was someone I could always turn to for advice, a stimulating conversation, or a good laugh." She adds, "In high school, Sister Maureen Winifred Kelly and Sister Therese Immaculee Mullin also took a special interest in me. I was one of 4,000 students but they always remembered me by name."

ON A PERSONAL LEVEL

When not teaching in the classroom or meeting with clients, Sister Donna can be found watching her favorite Philadelphia sports teams. "The sisters in my local community have turned me into a Phillies and Eagles fan," she says. "I never thought that would happen!"

When asked what advice she would give to others, it's the principle she has lived by all her life – to keep God first and follow the longings of your heart. "It's also important," says Sister, "to do what you love and love what you do."



Sister Donna balances her teaching responsibilities at Immaculata with her private counseling practice.

"My experience working as a therapist and an assessor enhances my teaching. I can put into practice the courses I teach which makes the material come alive in the classroom."

Powerhouse Presence

CAMILLA HALL

Julie Kozak, Administrator

From Volunteer to Administrator



Julie Kozak has found her home as the new administrator of Camilla Hall thanks to the encouragement of her daughter, Paige, a student at Villa Maria Lower School and a junior volunteer at Camilla.

On February 27, 2023, Mrs. Juliet (De Mola) Kozak assumed the role of administrator of Camilla Hall Nursing Home. Although new to this role, the halls of Camilla were familiar ground. In fact, one might say that she had been “interning” for such a role since her years at Villa Maria Academy High School.

A CALL TO VOLUNTEER

During her high school years, Julie recalls her volunteer experience at Camilla Hall. “Every week, a group of us would head to Camilla Hall.

We would take the trays from the food cart and deliver them to the sisters in their rooms for the evening meal. I would always spend a few minutes talking about my day and our Villa experience with the sisters and I loved it! At the end of my four years at Villa I knew that I wanted to help the elderly in some capacity. This was my calling! My passion for the senior population began at Villa Maria and was largely due to my volunteer experience at Camilla.”

SERVING THE SENIOR POPULATION

After graduation, Julie continued to foster that passion with a degree in sociology and human services while continuing to volunteer in nursing homes. This solidified her calling, and she went on to become a social worker for senior citizens, working for Chester County Department of Aging and then for two nursing homes for 10 and 13 years respectively. In 2010, she returned to Camilla once again as a volunteer but this time to serve her first term as a member of the Camilla Hall Advisory Board.

THE ROAD TO CAMILLA HALL

In 2018, always one to learn more and be better able to serve, she

earned her administrator’s license and advanced another step in her journey to Camilla Hall. In her role as administrator, Julie says, “I oversee the lay staff with their day-to-day operations. I offer support to all the directors in managing the 200-plus staff members to ensure the sisters’ needs are being met. This includes housekeeping, laundry, nursing, IT, recreation, central supply, education, and dining. I also work closely with financial services to ensure we are following and managing the budget.”

Amid these daunting administrative tasks, is her passion still there? You bet! She says, “I love connecting with the sisters and the staff. Seeing my management team come together and work well with each other to ensure life is a little easier for the sisters is such a wonderful accomplishment. When someone tells me the staff at Camilla did a great job with a sister or with a situation, that truly just lights me up.”

No amount of passion is without challenges. As Julie notes, “When you have 200 staff members and 200 sisters, there are bound to be some challenges, but every challenge can be solved. As the leader of this team, my approach is not reactive. It’s calm, cool, and a lot of listening!”

FAMILY TIES

With such a rich background in long-term elderly care and a history with the IHMs and Camilla, you might think Julie thought her application for this job would be simple and easy. But instead, she admits that she was nervous for the second interview with the Congregational leadership and the Camilla superiors. With a loving smile she shares, "My daughter, then a second grader at Villa Maria Lower School, asked to come with me. She told me that the sisters loved her, and she could help me get the job. I ended up telling the story in the interview and she was right. She helped me get the job!" That daughter is now a junior volunteer at Camilla! *Wonder where she got that idea?*

ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

An old song highlighted traveling Route 66 but for Julie and the IHMs Route 30 is the one to be cherished. From elementary years in SS. Philip and James (on Rte 30), to Villa Maria High School (on Rte 30), to Villa Maria Lower Academy for her daughter (on Rte 30) and now back to Camilla on, you guessed it, Rte 30), Julie's car must know the route on its own!



Julie enjoys the opportunity to visit with staff members from all departments such as Annette White, Director of Environmental Services.

The IHMs and especially those in Camilla have more than 30 reasons to rejoice that Julie's caring heart and expertise have traveled back to where it all started.

A WARM WELCOME

The reasons the sisters and staff at Camilla have welcomed Julie with open arms may not add to 30 but that's because only seven of the hundreds of sisters and staff with which Julie daily interacts were interviewed.

Sisters Ann Raymond, Christina Joseph, and Anne Francine, the Camilla Hall superiors, had no hesitancy in saying, "Julie possesses so many of our IHM qualities manifested in the way she relates to our sisters and staff members. She understands that our health care center is also our convent home, and she respectfully nourishes the spiritual as well as the medical, and social aspects of the sisters' daily living. Her leadership style includes a team approach which brings out the best talents and skill sets of each staff member. We love being in partnership with her!"

Sister Anne Marie Burton, a Camilla resident and the coordinator of volunteers, is amazed that Julie takes the time and effort to know the people she works with and serves. Sister Anne shared, "Julie serves with a personal touch. She knows what each person does and expresses gratitude."

Sisters John Christi and Rosemary Walsh spend their days with accounts receivable and payable in the business office. But when asked about Julie, the compliments



Julie says hello to Camilla resident, Sister Mary Praskac, who greets visitors over the phone and in person at Camilla Hall.

continued to grow! "Julie's love of the sisters is shown though her care given with a joyful spirit and tender heart." They added that she is seen as "fair and just," a sentiment that was also echoed by Dietitian, Carla DiProspero who said, "Julie is a firm but loving administrator."

In short, the three superiors sum up what everyone seems to know when they say, "We are so blessed here at Camilla Hall to have Julie as our administrator."

"I love connecting with the sisters and the staff. Seeing my management team come together and work well with each other to ensure life is a little easier for the sisters is such a wonderful accomplishment."

2023 Award Recipients

Fideli Corde



On November 12, 2023, the IHM Congregation recognized five extraordinary individuals who live out the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity in their everyday lives. These individuals embody the spirit of the Fidele Corde (Faithful Heart) award through their tireless service to others.



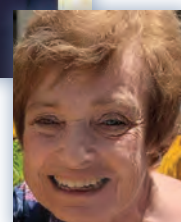
Joseph Aquilante
Wayne, PA

For the past 25 years, Joe Aquilante has taught theology at Bishop Shanahan High School in Downingtown, PA. Joe also serves as department chair and has worn many hats at Shanahan throughout his long-standing career. He has served as moderator of the student council for 22 years, the Respect Life club for 22 years, and Charity Day for 23 years. The longevity of his service is testament to his dedication and fidelity to God's people and to his deep commitment to his faith. Joe is also involved in his home parish, St. Isaac Jogues, in Wayne, PA, where he serves as youth minister. As one of 16 children, Joe caught the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity in his youth from the example of his parents who opened their home to many IHM sisters while running their catering business and raising their children. Joe has always had a heart for service and a devotion to his faith, family, those he serves in ministry, and to the IHM Congregation.



Pamela Dufrain
Savannah, GA

Teacher, assistant principal, principal, volunteer, and friend are some of the roles Pam has fulfilled in Catholic education over the past 37 years. Pam has many years of dedicated service at St. James School in Savannah, GA. Upon the sudden and unexpected death of an IHM sister who served as principal, Pam stepped in willingly with a deep sense of loyalty to the school and assumed leadership of St. James School for the remainder of the school year. She served for the next five years as assistant principal before retiring. Pam has been described by her friends and colleagues as a woman of faith and integrity. With a heart for service, Pam returned to St. James School as a volunteer in the library, as a mentor for new teachers, and as a science fair judge. Pam has spent time ministering to family, students, colleagues, and those who call her friend. Her most treasured title for those who know her is "Friend in Christ."





Barbara Inforzato
Philadelphia, PA

Barbara is a woman who lives a daily life of faith, hope, and love in service to others. She is a faithful presence at her home parish, St. Thomas Aquinas, in Philadelphia, PA. Barbara spent most of her teaching career with the IHMs at St. Edmund School in Philadelphia, SS. Simon and Jude in West Chester, and Saint Monica School in Philadelphia. During this time, she also served as religious education teacher for more than 25 years in the parishes affiliated with these schools. Barbara's plan was to retire in 2014, but when a principal was needed to complete the school year at St. Monica, she faithfully answered the call. After serving a year as principal, Barbara served for six more years as assistant principal before retiring in 2021. Today, Barbara continues to volunteer at St. Thomas Aquinas parish. She is a member of the parish council, a mentor for new lectors, a Eucharistic minister, liturgy planner, and assistant for all parish events. For the past 55-plus years, Barbara has served the people of God with love and fidelity.



Joseph Maccolini
Norristown, PA

Joe has been described as a faithful servant to the abandoned poor. After graduating from college, Joe began his teaching career at St. Patrick School in Norristown, PA where he demonstrated exemplary dedication to his students and was a faithful presence during their formative years. It was qualities such as these that led Joe to be hired for a new position within the parish. From 1982-2020, Joe served as the first director of the newly-formed Patrician Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the work of caring for those in need. In this role, Joe extended a welcoming hospitality and joyful service to all who arrived at the door of St. Patrick Parish. He has been vital in uniting culturally diverse communities within the parish and he continues to discover ways to reach out to the underserved. Joe established a food bank and invited volunteers to collaborate in this effort. He also wrote and obtained grants and donations for many years to ensure that the needs of the poor in the neighboring areas of Norristown, Montgomery County were met. After 38 years as director, Joe stepped down and immediately joined the Patrician Society as a volunteer where he continues to serve with humility, generosity, and charity.



Donald Walton
Malvern, PA

Don has been a quiet, faithful presence serving the IHM Congregation for over three decades. Don began his long journey with the IHMs in 1980 working in the kitchen at Immaculata University for 13 years serving students, lay faculty, and sisters. Don has worn many hats during his time with the IHMs including housekeeping duties at Camilla Hall, maintenance work at Villa Maria Academy Lower School, and eventually moving full-time to his current position in food service at Villa Maria House of Studies. The longevity of Don's time with the IHMs points to his faithful service but also to his faithful heart as one who is always willing to provide for the needs of others.

Ministering Through Music

Samantha Rintoul, Postulant

One never knows where our passions in life will take us. For Samantha Rintoul, it was her love of the Catholic faith and her passion for music that led her to religious life. Today, Samantha is in formation to become an IHM sister and hopes to use her background and experience in music therapy to help others.

STONG CATHOLIC ROOTS

Born as the seventh child in a family of 10 children, Samantha was raised by loving, devout Catholic parents in Minot, ND where she and her family worshipped at St. Therese of the Little Flower Parish. She describes her parents as being “highly influential in handing down the Catholic faith.” She says, “I watched both of them engage in charitable service as well as taking us to Sunday Mass.”

She says her vocational calling unfolded gradually throughout her life and started in kindergarten when a religious brother came to her school to talk about vocations. “Since that time, I began pondering my own vocation and wrestled with different ideas about what God wanted me to do as I grew up. It took a long time for my heart, mind, and spirit to be truly open to God’s call,” she adds.

LOVE OF MUSIC

Throughout her life, Samantha felt most “at home” when she was surrounded by music. As a music lover from a young age, Samantha played trombone in fifth grade, playing off and on throughout high school, and has been singing as long as she can remember. “My mom always sang to us at night and sometimes I would sing with her in the church choir as a child.” In her

teenage years, she wondered how she could use her love of music to help others. “I thought deeply about what I enjoyed and wanted to give to the world. I realized I wanted to help children with music. I didn’t know if such a field existed but that was where my desires led me.”

Samantha studied at the University of St. Thomas in MN taking general education and theology classes before learning about the field of music therapy from a family friend. Because the University of St. Thomas didn’t have a music therapy program, Samantha transferred to the



University of North Dakota to study music therapy. Little did Samantha know that her time at the University of North Dakota would be short-lived when the university phased out the program. Although Samantha was disappointed, she says, “I was in a period of discernment placing the inevitable decision in God’s hands. I felt called to look for a Catholic college that offered music therapy which eventually led me to Immaculata University.” At Immaculata, Samantha met the IHMs and began the process of discerning

her religious vocation. She says, “While it took a few years to discern religious life, the IHM sisters always felt close to my heart.”

WORK EXPERIENCE

After graduating college and prior to entering the IHM Congregation, Samantha worked as a board-certified music therapist assisting hospice patients in Duluth, MN. “This experience filled me with joy as I used my clinical skills in music therapy to help my patients live life to the fullest in their final days. It was a beautiful experience walking with others on their journey and helping them find acceptance with death as a natural, although difficult, part of life,” she says.

FORMATION PROCESS

These days, Samantha is busy attending classes for formation in religious life and spending time in ministry. Two days a week, Samantha ministers to students at St. Lucy’s School in Philadelphia for Children with Visual Impairments. “This has been a wonderful experience as the students are so thoughtful and kind to each other,” she says. Samantha also makes weekly visits to Camilla Hall to visit the IHM sisters where she says, “The sisters share their wisdom, struggles, and joys about religious life.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Samantha looks forward to each step in becoming an IHM Sister. When asked how she feels about her time spent so far with the IHMs, she says, “It is truly a blessing to be here. I am so grateful to experience the beautiful legacy of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary!”



Companions in Prayer and Ministry

OKTOBERFEST

For several years, members of the IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry have staffed the *Gifts Galore* booth at Camilla Hall's annual Oktoberfest. Each year, Companions graciously donate their time in preparation for the big event. Many hands are involved in making sure the booth is a success.

Weeks in advance of the event, Companions sorted through new items that were donated for the *Gifts Galore* booth including household goods, holiday gifts, religious

articles, personal care items, purses, wallets, stationery, jewelry, candles, personalized ornaments and much more. Each item was priced and boxed for the big day. Every year, the Companions look forward to this time of fellowship as they gather in support of the sisters in Camilla Hall.

On the day of the event, Companions arrived early to set up the booth and provided staffing throughout the day. Despite the cold and rainy weather this year,

they warmly greeted each guest who stopped by to see an array of amazing items.

At the end of the day, true "companionship" was created as members spent time with one another, the large gathering of IHM sisters, and the many guests who attended Oktoberfest. The charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity was alive and well as members worked together to support this wonderful event.



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

S. Francis Helen Murphy, IHM
1 Our Lady Circle
Malvern, PA 19355
610-647-2160, Ext. 1925
ihmcompanions@gmail.com



100th Anniversary of Colegio Villa Maria



In 2023, the IHM Congregation celebrated the 100th anniversary of Colegio Villa Maria in La Planicie, Peru. In 1922, the Archbishop of Lima made a request to Cardinal Dennis Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, asking the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to consider forming an English-speaking Catholic school in Peru. The Congregation accepted the invitation and in 1923 Colegio Villa Maria was founded.

In the 1960s, as the number of students continued to grow, the sisters built a new school on land acquired in La Planicie. Today, six IHM sisters serve at Colegio Villa Maria teaching over 1,100 girls enrolled in preschool through 12th grade.

On November 23, 2023, at the close of Colegio Villa Maria's school year, Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, General Superior, and Sister Mary Sue Carwile, Council member, represented the IHM Congregation and joined the staff and students to celebrate the 100th anniversary. A special mass was held with Auxiliary Bishop Guillermo Elias of Lima, celebrant, and Archbishop Salvadore Pinero of Ayacucho, homilist. Following Mass, parents and alumni gathered at a reception to celebrate and give thanks for the sisters' commitment to education in South America for the past 100 years. May the Lord continue to bless the Colegio Villa Maria community!

New Event Coordinator Joins Mission Advancement

Marianne Plucienik has joined the Mission Advancement office as event coordinator. In her new role, Marianne is responsible for planning and organizing many events hosted by Mission Advancement including a donor luncheon, a holiday gathering at St. Joseph Villa for retired priests, and the annual Sippin' for the Sisters tea fundraiser. Marianne also assists with Camilla Hall's annual Oktoberfest celebration and the popular Nun Run held each June. Marianne is no stranger to the IHM Congregation. She met the IHM sisters during her years at Bishop McDevitt High School and her two sons were also taught by the sisters during their time at Bishop Shanahan High School. Marianne has a bachelor's degree from Temple University and a master's degree from West Chester University. In her previous roles, she served as business manager at Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health and accountant at Teva Pharmaceuticals. Marianne has always had a passion for event planning. She was involved in planning various events for her sons' school and sports programs. We are grateful for the experience and dedication Marianne brings to the Mission Advancement office.



Dwelling now in light, yet ever near



*S. Virginia Catherine Varallo
(S. Virginia Concepta)
12.19.23*



*S. Geraldine M. Cantwell
(S. M. Hugh Margaret)
11.13.23*



*S. Mary Angela Menna
11.12.23*



*S. Mary Elizabeth Maguire
(S. Elizabeth Maureen)
11.5.23*



*S. M. John Joseph Schuyler
11.2.23*



*S. M. Patricia Ann Wolfe
(S. Mark Marie)
10.26.23*



*S. Maureen James Lilly
10.20.23*



*S. Ann Marie Harrison
(S. Gerald Mary)
10.5.23*



*S. Marita Jean McCormick
9.30.23*



*S. M. Susan Joseph Porvaznik
9.25.23*



*S. Josephine Kase
(S. Marie Raymond)
9.19.23*



*S. Joan Marie Ames
(S. Maura Thomas)
9.10.23*

Congregation of the Sisters,
Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Office of Mission Advancement
230 IHM Drive
Malvern, PA 19355
(610) 647-2160 Ext. 1926

missionadv@ihmimm.org
www.ihmimmaculata.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Southeastern, PA
Permit No. 8105

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



Be a member of the
Alphonsus Liguori Legacy Society
through a future gift to the
Sisters, Servants of the
Immaculate Heart of Mary.

To request a brochure, contact
missionadv@ihmimm.org

Go Green – Go Online

SIMPLY

... type in the url address: www.ihmimmaculata.org

CLICK ... the *DONATE* button (top of homepage)

IT'S THAT EASY!

... and *thank you for your contribution!*

The following donor has supported the IHM Congregation through
the Mission Advancement Office and was inadvertently omitted
from the 2022-2023 Annual Report:

Mark Gindele, PA
(Mother of Perpetual Help/Caring Hearts Giving Level)

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.