



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



*Spiritual
Direction
Spirituality for
all Seasons*



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The spiritual writer Henri Nouwen explains that living a discerning life is “hearing a deeper sound beneath the noise of ordinary life and seeing through appearances to the interconnectedness of all things, to gain a vision of how things hang together in our lives and in the world.” These words speak to the heart of each IHM sister as she prays daily to discover God’s presence in her daily life and how she can manifest that presence to others.



As a spiritual director for over 25 years, Sister Patricia McDermott knows the process of discernment so well. Yet, she will be the first to tell you that in this sacred ministry she has learned that God’s presence is manifested differently in each individual’s life. As a spiritual director, Sister Pat reverences the sacredness of these encounters with her directees and guides them in their efforts to see their unfolding relationship with their God.

Noticing a Nuns Beach sweatshirt led Sister Laura Downing to recognize God’s presence in the life of Megan Capurso, our IHM postulant. That relationship aided Megan in discerning the longing in her heart to enter the IHM Congregation.

As you become familiar with our IHM colleagues whom we celebrated recently for their personal expression of the IHM charism, you will see that discerning God’s will for themselves as IHM partners has truly strengthened our mission and has fostered our charism in the lives of so many. We are truly blessed by their passion for the mission and their understanding of God’s presence in their lives.

December 12th marked the 100th Anniversary of IHM presence in Peru. The relationships formed by our Peruvian sisters and our North American sisters who have ministered in Peru have blessed the Congregation in countless ways. Our spirited Peruvian colleagues have brought a new facet to our spiritual and ministerial lives.

As we continue to discern God’s presence in our lives and the interconnectedness of all things, we are filled with gratitude for the blessings we have received from our Provident God.

May we continue to hear a deeper sound beneath the noise of ordinary life so that we can recognize the face of God in all those we meet.

Many blessings,

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, IHM
General Superior

Take the Word of God with You

As You Go

As I was preparing to write this, I sat pondering Scripture, and many verses that I love floated into my mind's eye. Some of these readings were comforting, others challenging, many bringing peace to the heart. However, there is one Scripture verse that has impacted and changed my heart forever. It is from the prophet Zephaniah 3:14-17:

“Shout for joy O daughter Zion; sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart! The LORD has removed the judgement against you. The Lord God is in your midst. He will rejoice over you with gladness and renew you in His love.”

This scripture verse gives me great hope because, day in and day out, as hard as I try, I fail to love the Lord to the best of my ability. Some days human weakness gets the best of me, and I fail to be that loving, caring person Jesus calls me to be. Maybe you feel the same way, and we might wonder how could God love us? Yet, we know He does and always will despite our failings.

One way of experiencing this love of God is through the sacrament of Reconciliation. Going to the sacrament of Reconciliation was not something I looked forward to until I really heard those words. When we come to the sacrament with humility and sorrow, we truly know the power of forgiveness. What joy there is in knowing that this sacred encounter causes the Lord to rejoice over us and renews us in His love.

For many years, I was privileged to prepare children for this beautiful sacrament. Teaching them about God's mercy and forgiveness only increased my own desire to experience the joy of this sacrament for myself.

In February, we enter into the sacred season of Lent. This may be a time to ask ourselves, “Does the Lord rejoice over me?” Then listen to the Lord speaking in your heart. He wants us to draw ever closer to Him and Lent provides us with that space and time. Is He calling us to take advantage of meeting Him through the sacrament of Reconciliation? This is a powerful gift, and when we take advantage of it, we will know the Lord loves us and rejoices over us. So together, let us journey through Lent, knowing in our hearts that we are dearly loved and cared for by our God.



Sister Elizabeth Bailey
Camilla Hall



Going Deeper with *Spiritual Direction*

"Spiritual direction is a ministry which fosters an individual's personal, intimate relationship with God. The purpose of spiritual direction is to help one draw closer to God and to see the presence of God in the experiences of everyday life."

– Sister Patricia McDermott, IHM

HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT DECISION
BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN?

DO YOU WONDER WHAT YOUR PURPOSE
OR CALLING IN LIFE MIGHT BE?

IS THERE A LONGING INSIDE OF YOU FOR A DEEPER
PRAYER LIFE AND CONNECTION WITH GOD?

For over 25 years, Sister Patricia McDermott has been involved in spiritual direction serving as a director and working at various retreat centers offering this ministry. Sister Pat answers some common questions about spiritual direction and offers insight on how others may benefit from this important ministry.

What is Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual direction is a ministry which fosters an individual's personal, intimate relationship with God. The purpose of spiritual direction is to help one draw closer to God and to see the presence of God in the experiences of everyday life. Just as we rely on a GPS to guide us on the right road to our destination, one enters spiritual direction with the assistance of a faith-filled guide to help us discover God's loving presence in our lives.

Why do people seek spiritual direction and what do they talk about?

People turn to spiritual direction for many reasons. Some seek spiritual direction to reflect on what is happening in their life or on a specific area of their life. Many come to spiritual direction when they are trying to discern an important decision or when they

need guidance with relationships among family members or friends. Others want to deepen their prayer life or want to grow in their relationship with God. Sometimes people seek out spiritual direction simply because they want to share something with another person of faith. There is a longing for God in all of us that is not always expressed. Spiritual direction can help us uncover how this longing for God is connected to us in our everyday life.

What is the role of a spiritual director?

A spiritual director is a contemplative listener, a prayerful presence at the service of the

directee to help him or her grow in relationship with God. The role of a spiritual director is to be fully present and open to what the directee has to say, listening without judgement or trying to solve a problem. The focus is on helping the person see God in every experience of life.

How is spiritual direction different from counseling?

Generally, counseling deals with specific life issues that a therapist tries to help a person solve. This is not the case with spiritual direction which focuses on the directee's personal relationship with God and how that unfolds in the ordinary experiences of life.



Sister Pat enjoys speaking with a directee.

"The purpose of spiritual direction is to help one draw closer to God and to see the presence of God in the experiences of everyday life."

When and where does one meet for spiritual direction?

When I first see someone for spiritual direction, I prefer to meet with them once a month so that I can establish a rapport with them. As time goes on, the sessions may occur every six weeks or every two months depending upon the directee's availability. Sessions take place in a confidential and comfortable setting such as a private office or quiet room or even a Zoom room. In addition to conversation, there may be prayer and time for silence. The goal is to create a contemplative space – an unhurried place for honest reflection and attentive listening. A typical session lasts an hour.

Is there a fee for spiritual direction?

Most retreat centers or spirituality centers set a suggested fee for spiritual direction with a sliding scale. Some parishes may offer this service as part of their ministry to parishioners. Others engaged in this ministry might suggest a donation if possible.

Who can become a spiritual director and what training is required?

Anyone (lay or religious) can be a spiritual director if trained through a recognized Formation Program from a university, retreat center, spirituality center, or seminary. The requirements, length, and process vary depending upon the institution offering the program. All spiritual directors abide by the *Code of Ethical Guidelines* created by Spiritual Directors International, a global educational nonprofit committed to supporting and growing access to spiritual direction. Ongoing training for spiritual direction is offered by universities, spirituality and retreat centers. Most spiritual directors meet monthly with their supervisors and have a spiritual director of their own. This keeps spiritual directors centered, freeing them from their own concerns so that they can be focused on the person seeking direction.

How does one find a spiritual director and what should be considered when choosing one?

An individual can find a spiritual director from a listing of spiritual directors often published in retreat

centers, spirituality centers, universities, seminaries, and parishes. When looking for a spiritual director, look for someone who is officially trained in the ministry. Consider whether a lay person or a member of a religious community is best for you or whether you prefer a male or female director. Ask for recommendations from those you trust who have sought out spiritual direction. And, above all, go with someone with whom you feel comfortable sharing. If you meet with a spiritual director and it's not the right fit, seek out another spiritual director who best fits your needs.

Sister Pat has over 25 years of experience in spiritual direction. She has also served in elementary, high school, pastoral, and adult education in the U.S. and in Chile. Sister Pat has worked at retreat centers including five years at St. Pius X Retreat Center in Blackwood, NJ and 16 years at the Loyola Retreat Center in Faulkner, MD, five of which she served as Executive Director. Sister currently serves on the Leadership Team for the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

To make an appointment with an IHM spiritual director, contact Sister Patricia McDermott at

610-647-2160, Ext. 1955

s.patricia.mcdermott@ihmimm.org

For more information, visit Spiritual Directors International at www.sdicompanions.org for a comprehensive listing of over 66,000 trained spiritual directors worldwide.

In the Formation Wing ...

From *Beach House* to *Motherhouse*

Megan Capurso, Postulant

God's call to religious life is unique for each person. Some respond after reading a book; some after a retreat experience; others while developing a relationship with a religious person and still others while praying daily to ask the Lord to "show them the way." But for Megan Capurso, it was while wearing a sweatshirt purchased at "Nuns Beach" in Stone Harbor, NJ.

It was the IHM Nun's Beach sweatshirt that attracted the attention of Sister Laura Downing who was attending the same orientation gathering as Megan at Boston College. After seeing the sweatshirt, Sister Laura immediately called out, "Nun's Beach! My community owns it!" Megan is quick to point out, "Unofficially, I have known the IHMs my whole life. My family has vacationed at Stone Harbor, NJ since I was nine months old. Every year we would stop by Nun's Beach and purchase some gear." With all that "connection," Sister and Megan soon became fast friends with Sister Laura eventually inviting Megan to the Oktoberfest celebration at Camilla Hall, and finally by walking Megan in the front doors of the IHM Motherhouse on September 12, 2022.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Megan and her family (mom, dad, and younger brother) belong to

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Shrub Oak, NY (the family lives in Mahopac, NY). After receiving a BA in interdisciplinary studies from Mount Saint Mary College in NY, Megan devoted a year of service with the Capuchin Franciscans running retreats, 84 to be exact, for teenagers and young adults.



She then went on to earn a Masters of Divinity degree from Boston College and eventually found her way to Worcester, MA to work as a high school campus minister and theology teacher.

DISCERNMENT

Megan had a long discernment process before taking the final step. "The first time I encountered men and women religious was in college," says Megan. "They were so genuine, funny, and loving. I

was intrigued by religious life, saw beauty in it, but was also scared of it. Over the next few years, I kept thinking about what it would be like to enter. Academically and professionally, I immersed myself in ministry and experienced peace and joy. After a few more years, I still found myself wondering 'what if' regarding religious life. I eventually knew that I would never find an answer or be able to satisfy the intrigue and excitement I felt unless I discerned at a new and deeper level."

KEEPING BUSY

Upon entering the Congregation, Megan began ministry at Villa Maria Academy High School in Malvern, PA. She continues to strengthen her Spanish skills with the help of the on-line language tool Babel and has immersed herself in classes on Liturgy. Currently, Megan assists in campus ministry at Our Lady of Lourdes Regional School in Coal Township, PA.

When asked if anything "surprised" her about living in community, Megan looked at it another way. "I wouldn't say surprised as much as *struck*. Since entering I have been *struck* by the graciousness with which the sisters show and share love and the thoughtful and intentional ways they help make me feel welcome by cards, lovely messages, prayers, and by simply checking in."

Sister Spotlight

*Sister Ana Cristina, IHM Treasurer,
Lima, Peru*



**“The IHMs
have always
felt like
family.”**

Anyone who knew Sister Ana Cristina Devoto Crosby would not have been surprised by her decision over 40 years ago to enter religious life. She and her mother were both taught by the IHMs and developed close ties to many of the sisters. This closeness is what led Sister Ana Cristina to join the IHM Congregation in North America, leaving her family and friends far behind in her native country of Peru.

KNOWING THE IHMs

“I knew the IHM sisters before I entered school,” says Sister Ana Cristina. Her mom attended Villa Maria Miraflores a private, Catholic school for girls in Lima, Peru. “My mom was a “Villamarian” and had a great love of the IHMs. After her wedding ceremony, she went to the convent to leave her bridal bouquet in Villa Maria Chapel where she prayed to the Blessed Mother to be faithful to all the teachings and examples of the sisters.”

Sister Ana Cristina followed suit by attending Villa Maria and bonding with the sisters both in and out of the classroom. “I loved religion classes and all of the sisters who taught me,” says Sister Ana Cristina. “I not only got to know the sisters at school, but I also helped them in doing work after school and on Saturdays.”

Following high school, Sister went on to college. She earned a degree in education from the Monterrico National Pedagogical Institute in Peru where she was taught by another religious community. Although grateful for their influence, she still longed for the IHMs. She later traveled to the U.S. to enter the Congregation at Villa Maria House of Studies and to also receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Pedagogical Education from Immaculata University. “My heart was with the sisters of Immaculata. They always felt like family,” Sister adds.

A DIFFICULT DECISION

Sister Ana Cristina made the difficult decision to leave her family and her country behind to join the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Immaculata, (now Malvern) Pennsylvania. Sister describes the experience as “a hard decision knowing that I would not be able to visit Peru or have my family visit in the U.S. for a long time.”

She entered the convent in the U.S. in 1980 and did her student teaching at Our Lady of Grace School in Somerdale, NJ teaching second grade. Her first mission was at Incarnation School in Philadelphia, PA where she taught fourth grade. She went back to Peru in 1986 and remained there for several years before returning to the U.S. in 1994. In 2001, her ministry led her home to teach in Peru once again, and she has remained in her native country ever since.

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Sister's present ministry is that of treasurer, assisting the Congregation's Regional Superior in South America with financial matters, a position she has held since 2013. In this role, her duties include accounting, banking, insurance, and processing paperwork. These were new skills which Sister had to learn from the ground up as they were so vastly different from her years as a teacher.

Although she is not currently ministering in the classroom, Sister is grateful for the ties she still has to the Villa Maria community. "Even though I now work in an office by myself, I still see the girls in school and participate in activities," says Sister. "It brings back wonderful memories of assemblies, processions, and Masses with the girls in Villa Maria Miraflores. I have the opportunity to see the teachers and the workers, and I feel as though I am a part of the Villa Maria community." She considers it a blessing when former students reach out to her remembering the good times they shared. When she hears from ones who may have struggled, she takes comfort in "knowing that the teachings of the sisters are embedded in their lives."

MANY INFLUENCES

Sister recalls the influence of her family, especially her mother and grandmother, on her call to religious life. "We prayed the rosary together as a family with my grandmother and that is when I felt the call to be a teacher and later a call to be fully dedicated to Christ and to religious life."

Sister Ana Cristina also felt the influence of the IHM Sisters very deeply in her own life. She remembers Sister Marian Gregory who was affectionally called "Chiquita." "Sister Marian was so short, but she used to play with us at recess and stand on a bench to teach religion so that we could all see her and look at her flash cards." She refers to another sister, Sister Marie Hugh, as her "dear sponsor who taught me math in high school and guided me in the process of entering the Congregation." Although Sister Hugh passed away when Sister Ana Cristina was a postulant in the U.S., she said she knows that "she was a saint and was ready to go to heaven."

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Sister admits that religious life, especially in the beginning, is not easy, particularly, if you come from another country and speak another language. She remembers a particular experience she had as a postulant and the difficulty of understanding the idioms of the English language. She recalls the time she was told by Sister Loretta Therese Swirk that everybody has a "skeleton in her closet." Sister Anna Cristina laughs and says, "I seriously thought that in our closets we had some kind of bones or relic,

so I told her that I did not want the skeleton, and I asked if she could please take it out of my closet!"

Despite the challenges, Sister is quick to add that "we all come from the same faith and spirit, and it is in the ups and downs of life that you learn to be a better person for yourself and others."

100 YEARS IN PERU

When asked about her thoughts on the IHMs serving in Peru for 100 years, Sister says, "I cannot believe that so many years have gone by! The spirit of the first sisters and their stories are still here. Many of our beloved sisters are no longer with us, but we know that we have all those angels guiding us in heaven. I am always grateful for all their hard work and dedication."

When reflecting on her life as a whole and on her current ministry in her native country of Peru, Sister says, "I am honored to be a part of the IHM family."



Sister Ana Cristina and her young friend are all smiles at a school event.

Sister Kathleen Touey, Principal, St. Pius X, Broomall, PA

If you ask Sister Kathleen Touey what the secret is to joyfully living out her religious vocation, she will tell you it's all about "presence." "I begin each day in quiet prayer, spending time in the presence of God, and receiving the Eucharist. This enables me to bring that presence into my ministry." Since entering the convent in 1968, Sister Kate has relied on experiencing the presence of God to help her use her gifts to serve others while inspiring others to do the same.

A LOVE OF TEACHING

Sister Kate has spent most of her religious life in the classroom teaching students at various Catholic schools throughout Pennsylvania. "I loved teaching, and I valued being a part of a school community," Sister says. For the past 37 years, Sister Kate has served as principal beginning at Good Shepherd School, Harrisburg, followed by Sacred Heart School, Havertown, St. Matthew School, Philadelphia, and most recently St. Pius X School, Broomall.

"Although I have been a principal for 37 years, I still feel energized by it," says Sister Kate. "I am amazed by what our teachers do,

and I love seeing the smiling faces of the children. It brings such joy and happiness into my life." Sister emphasizes that being an "encouraging presence" to the faculty, students, and parents is the most important aspect of her position. "It is important for faculty, students, and parents to know that I am their greatest cheerleader."

Sister's joyful spirit clearly touches everyone in the St. Pius X school community. Walking into the school, you can feel the presence of God from the smiling faces of the children to the calming presence of the teachers. "We work as a team," explains Sister Kate, "which makes for a vibrant, Christ-centered environment."

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Sister and her staff ensure that each of the 400 plus students who call St. Pius their home feel loved and accepted from the moment they walk in the door. "I spend the first 20 minutes of the day with the students," adds Sister Kate. Sister greets the students in the cafeteria each morning as they get off the bus or get dropped off for school. Around mid-day, Sister



meets with the students once again during lunch. "I know each student and how they fit in here," she says.

Many people know that Sister Kate is an avid sports fan having played basketball for West Catholic Girls High School in Philadelphia. This has helped her connect with her students. "I know about sports so I can talk with the students and be able to show an interest in their activities outside of the classroom," Sister adds. More often than not, Sister Kate can be seen on the sidelines cheering on her students at their sporting events.

Sister Kate considers the most rewarding aspect of being principal as "seeing the confidence grow within a student and seeing that student succeed." She adds, "Our students look to us for reassurance and confidence. They want to know that we care about them." Because Sister knows each student personally, when she sees the parent of a child in or out of the classroom, she is quick to recall something good about the student to share with them. "People want to hear positive things about their child. It means the world to them," says Sister. "It's so important that we build each other up and encourage one another."



EMPOWERING STAFF

While it's important to know her students, it's equally important for Sister Kate to personally know her staff. Sister considers one of her greatest gifts to "know the gifts of others and empower them to use these gifts." She takes great care in finding the "right" person to fill the right position within the school. "This gift that God has given me in being able to see the gifts of others has been one of my greatest strengths as a school leader." She finds it rewarding to see the confidence, joy, and happiness among her faculty and considers it "a blessing to see the individual faculty members grow in their teaching profession."

Sister also takes time to invest in the lives of her faculty and their families. For example, when one of her fourth-grade teachers got engaged, she arranged for her students to throw the teacher a bridal shower. Sister also recognizes each teacher's birthday with a special celebration. "It is my job to create the culture of the school," says Sister Kate. "Christ is the center of everything we do. Our personnel love the culture of our school. They love being here and they want to stay."

A FAITHFUL FOUNDATION

Sister Kate's close-knit, faith-filled family laid the foundation for her religious vocation. "My family was a wonderful role model for living out their faith. My parents stressed the value of having God as the focus of our lives," Sister adds. Even though Sister Kate is the 11th of 12 children, she says, "my parents loved each one of us as though we were the only child. They loved us unconditionally and I was blessed to grow up in a happy environment." Growing up in a large family taught Sister Kate about the "give and take" of life and learning to adapt in any situation. In addition to her family, Sister Kate says she learned a great deal from her fellow IHM sisters especially her mentor, Sister Elizabeth Seton, and Sister Irene Loretta and Sister Vincent Mary who taught her about life and about being a part of a religious community.

FINDING JOY

The students and faculty at St. Pius X find joy in many fun-filled activities held throughout the school year. There is a constant hustle and bustle as the children participate in events such as the annual Halloween Dance-A-Thon (the school's largest fundraiser), the Christmas pageant, field day, the talent show, the annual May procession, and the celebration of the founding of the IHM Congregation.

Outside of school, Sister Kate enjoys cooking and watching sports especially basketball and baseball. She also considers it a joy to spend time with her extended family which includes 170 nieces and nephews!

"I feel blessed that I can still do a lot of things with vigor and be fully alive to what God is calling me to do," At the end of the day, Sister says going home to a community of sisters who support her and her ministry is the icing on the cake.

*"It's important
for faculty,
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Sister Kate shares a special bond with her staff especially Art teacher, Evelyn Timothy, who met sister as a 7th grade student at Good Shepherd School in Camp Hill where Sister Kate was principal.

Powerhouse Presence

CAMILLA HALL

Engaged in the IHM Mission

Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, General Superior, firmly believes that all who work with the IHM sisters are participants in the Congregational mission and charism. Knowing that our lay colleagues must know and experience the mission in order to incorporate it in their work, she asked **Sister Eileen Buchanan** to accept the role as first **Director of Mission Engagement** in Camilla Hall. Thus began a new endeavor for Sister Eileen and a way of expanding the influence of the IHM charism into more hearts and hands.

A NEW ENDEAVOR

Beginning this new endeavor in August 2019, Sister Eileen mapped a way to accomplish the goals of her position. She explains, “After my orientation to the many aspects of Camilla Hall and visiting with individual sisters, I began by having conversations with the nursing aides individually. I quickly learned of their dedication and their vision of the work environment.”

Sister Eileen then drew on her many years in the field of education and planned to meet regularly with the aides to assure that they understood the IHM mission and charism and how to implement that mission in their daily tasks. In that way, they would serve with a mission-centered mindset, which changes a job into

a ministry. However, Sister soon realized that gathering the aides for such “instruction” time was not possible because they were not able to leave the floor and be far from the “call bell” and the needs of the sisters.



Pictured from left to right: Fatima Caravez, Pam Plevyak, Sister Eileen Buchanan, Brianna Granados.

TEACHING THE MISSION

Since a hallmark of IHM mission and charism is the ability to respond to emerging needs, Sister Eileen changed her original plan, but not the goal of engaging the aides in the IHM mission. What had to change was the method of sharing the mission.

This is now accomplished in various ways. During initial training periods, Sister meets with nursing assistants to tell them about the Congregation, answer any questions, and set a standard for what is expected in order to mirror the IHM mission as they serve the sisters. Sharon Boyd, Director of Care, says, “Sister Eileen has laid the groundwork for our being able to successfully employ many staff who genuinely love and care for the sisters.”

To help them serve with loving care, Sister Eileen suggests to the aides that they read the brief bio posted outside each sister’s room. This provides them with interesting facts they can use to engage a sister in conversation on a personal level. More important, it helps engender a sense of respect for these religious women who now may not be able to exhibit the expanse of their wisdom and skill but, as a treasured IHM, deserve the greatest respect.

Sharon Boyd notes another impactful way Sister “teaches” the mission. Sharon says, “When Sister Eileen’s schedule allows, she has been able to assist me with hands-on training, always helping the nursing assistants to understand how the sisters might be feeling when being given care.” Sister Eileen explains this aspect with great humor as she says, “I am



Pictured from left to right: Sister Eileen Buchanan, Maria Diaz, Tambra Lavis, Damilatou Sow, Sister Marie Hirsh (center).

the guinea pig for new hires as they move me from bed to chair and back again!”

LEARNING TO ADAPT

COVID presented yet another emerging need and subsequent change in plan but living the mission continued. Minimal staffing became a reality and because sisters could not come together for meals, hundreds of trays had to be delivered to rooms. Sister Eileen stepped in to help with tray delivery and assist the sisters, caring for those who could not feed themselves such as Sister Marita Donald. “Almost every day for two years, Sister Marita told me she was having lunch with her mother. I agreed and kept feeding her.” Rather than feel she was being pulled from her “job,” Sister says, “I grew to love that time. Sometimes lunch became challenging, but we grew together in finding ways with a little psychology and a piece of chocolate to make that meal a family time.” Able to be with Sister Marita when she was dying, Sister Eileen says with utter gratitude, “I held her hand until she was in

God’s presence and whispered into her ear, ‘Today you are really having lunch with your mother.’”

SHARING THE MISSION

Sister Eileen shared not just meals with Sister Marita but the heart of the IHM mission with love, creative hope and fidelity that she has lived throughout her educational ministries in North and South America. The oldest of four Buchanan children, she entered the IHM Sisters after graduating from Bishop McDevitt High School in 1964. She began ministry giving loving care to first graders in Cherry Hill, NJ, and in Philadelphia and Chester, PA before departing to share the language of Gospel love and service in Spanish for 30 years in Peru and Chile. Now her command of the Spanish language is yet one more way she builds a relationship with the aides, especially those whose first language is Spanish, to serve the sisters in the manner of IHM charism.

Sister affirms that working with the aides remains her baseline ministry

but “its reality has opened to nurses, housekeeping, maintenance, and kitchen personnel.” Sometimes her ability to translate or help provide some basic vocabulary for the work environment is a gift shared, but always it is the example of being a joyful bearer of God’s redeeming love that bespeaks the true sense of IHM mission. As she is so fully *engaged* in the loving service of God’s people how could many not catch that IHM spirit?

"Sister Eileen helped me from the moment I came to Camilla.

She has helped all of us Spanish-speaking girls with filling out paperwork and understanding how insurance works in the U.S. She made us a list of words and phrases we need to know as nursing assistants, and she is our translator whenever we need her. She encourages us to learn English, to speak out in meetings, and to work together. She has helped us recognize the dignity of each sister and all people. She is our friend... nuestra amiga."

*Adrianna Gonzalez
Nursing Assistant, Camilla Hall*

2022 *Fideli Corde* Award Recipients



The IHM Congregation joyfully paid tribute to six special individuals who have demonstrated the spirit of *Fideli Corde*, a faithful heart, by living the IHM charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity. This celebration took place on November 10, 2022, on the 177th anniversary of the founding of the IHM Congregation.



Diana de Souza Ferreira Barclay
*Principal, Colegio Villa Maria
Lima, Peru*

Diana began her professional career with the IHMs as a kindergarten teacher at Colegio Villa Maria, Miraflores in Peru in 1988. Her commitment and dedication to the students, the school, and the IHM charism was evident from the start. Three years later, Diana was asked by the Congregation to become the first lay principal of Villa Maria following 93 years of IHM leadership. She responded with incredible generosity and faith and assumed the role in a spirit of service and collaboration. Diana's personal commitment and dedication to her ministry is rooted in her deep faith in God and her love for the Eucharist.



Eileen Campbell
*Development Director
St. Laurence School
Upper Darby, PA*

Eileen has worn many hats at St. Laurence School in Upper Darby where she began teaching in 1986. While teaching full time and raising her daughter, Eileen simultaneously taught in the Parish Religious Education Program for 14 years and supervised children in the aftercare program for 20 years. In addition, she worked for 26 years in the Drexel Program at Merion Mercy Academy each Saturday preparing 6th, 7th, and 8th grade girls for acceptance into Catholic high schools. In 2019, Eileen joined the Development Office at St. Laurence School where she has worked tirelessly to build enrollment, help students with scholarship opportunities, and welcome the growing number of students from the surrounding Hispanic communities. Eileen has been a faithful friend and companion of the IHMs for over 36 years.



Gail Chambers
Food Service Employee
Camilla Hall
Malvern, PA

A humble woman who personifies love, selfless giving, thoughtfulness and compassion, Gail has been an invaluable employee in the Food Service Department at Camilla Hall for over 30 years. She greets each sister by name, knows the sisters' dietary needs, and is always there to lend a helping hand. She has come to work on her days off and has spent the night at Camilla when there was a threat of bad weather so she could be present at her job the next day. Gail is a living example of the IHM charism by her dedication to her ministry and through the reverence, respect, and service she shows to the sisters every day.



Theresa Jackson
Retired Teacher; Volunteer
St. Peter School
Reading, PA

Theresa has been serving at St. Peter School in Reading for 50

years! Although she retired from teaching in 2018, Theresa continues to substitute in the classrooms, fill in for the school secretary, and monitor the cafeteria during lunch. For 40 years, Theresa has volunteered as the parish CYO representative, organizing numerous sports and cultural events. Armed with love, expertise, and experience, she has served as a mentor for new teachers joining St. Peter School. She has also influenced many young people in considering the teaching profession including her two daughters who followed in their mother's footsteps. Theresa has served St. Peter School and Parish through changing times and changing populations but what has not changed is her faithful heart.



Ann Maxwell-Menna
Former Director,
Office of Catechetical Formation
Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

For the past 49 years, Ann has devoted herself to faith formation. She served as an elementary, high school, and university classroom teacher and then as a youth and campus minister before assuming her role in adult faith formation in 2004. Ann's burning love for the Lord and the church, as well as her roots in the IHM charism since high school, led her to her role as Director of the Office of Catechetical Formation for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Ann

has partnered with the IHMs in many initiatives and has invited many IHMs to join her in assuming leadership roles in faith formation. Despite the demands of her ministry, Ann is a devoted wife to her husband of 44 years, a devoted mother to her four children, and a doting grandmother of five. She is a faithful friend, devoted leader, and a living example of the IHM charism.



Alvin Q. Rensbarger
ESL Teacher,
IHM Center for Literacy
Philadelphia, PA

For over 20 years, Alvin has spent his evenings each week at the IHM Literacy Center at St. Francis de Sales teaching English to the immigrant population in West Philadelphia. Alvin calls it a "privilege and honor to do the will of God and to help immigrants who are trying to integrate into society." His reward is the joy and pride of seeing the hopes and dreams of his adult language learners become a reality. During the pandemic, Alvin adapted to teaching via Zoom and when in-person learning returned, he was up and running once again. As a Knight of Peter Claver, Alvin assists the sick and disabled. He also ministers beside the IHMs during the Thanksgiving and Christmas outreach programs of St. Francis de Sales Parish. With his wife, Pat, by his side, Alvin warmly mirrors God's love for his people.



Celebrating 100 Years of Service



Sister Martha Maria Chuta-Yamamoto (left) and Sister Osue Teresa Chuta-Yamamoto (right), enjoy the U.S. festivities celebrating 100 years of service.

It was a celebration worthy of 100 years! On August 27, 2022, the IHM Congregation from near and far gathered at the Motherhouse in Malvern, PA to celebrate 100 years of ministry in Peru. As the sisters processed into the chapel, the names of the schools, parishes, and outreach programs in Peru where hundreds of IHMs have served since 1922 were announced. Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, General Superior, welcomed everyone and delivered a spirited address to the Congregation amidst a chapel adorned with the vibrant color of red roses.

THE LITURGY

The festivities began with a liturgy, livestreamed for all, and celebrated in Spanish by Father Joseph Shields, a friend of the IHM Congregation and fellow Peruvian minister. During his homily, Father

Shields spoke of the blessings of sharing and working with another culture and recognized the IHM sisters for their service to the Peruvian people. Father invited all Peruvian sisters to stand, followed by those who had been missioned in Peru, as well as those who supported the Congregation in their South American efforts. What a moving scene to witness so many people standing in recognition of the IHMs presence in Peru! The liturgy was enhanced by the melodic voices of the choir and the musical talents of the sisters from North and South America as they played the organ, flute, and guitar.

A CELEBRATORY LUNCH

Following the liturgy, everyone gathered in the festively decorated dining room to enjoy a delicious lunch of Peruvian fare including chicha morada (a Peruvian beverage), aji da gallino (a Peruvian chicken stew), and alfrahores (a Peruvian cookie) for dessert. The sisters had a wonderful time eating, catching up with friends, and singing Somos Libres (Peru's national anthem).

PERUVIAN ENTERTAINMENT

The celebration continued as the sisters sang a medley of Spanish songs and listened to an informative presentation about the IHMs service in South America. One of

the highlights of the entertainment was Sister Elizabeth Polanco as she performed a lively rendition of the marinera (Peru's national dance).

Sister Mary Ellen kept the excitement going as she announced the names of four sisters who had previously ministered in Peru and won the "lottery." The prize? A trip to Peru in December!

At the conclusion of the celebration, Sister Joanne Ralph recognized Sister Mary Smith, general chair of the North American centennial celebration, all committee chair members, and all members of the Congregation who made the event so special.

It was a perfect ending to a perfect day. Everyone agreed that it was a day to remember for at least 100 more years!



Sister Elizabeth Polanco performs a lively Peruvian dance.

¡Viva el Peru!



A joyful celebration! Archbishop Salvador Piñeiro and members of the IHM Congregation gather together after a special Mass commemorating 100 years of IHM service in Peru.

The IHMs have a long history of ministering in Peru. In 1922, Cardinal Dennis Dougherty from Philadelphia asked for a group of sisters to go to Peru to establish Catholic schools in the country. The IHMs made history when their sisters arrived in Peru on December 12, 1922, the Feast of our Lady of Guadalupe, marking the first time a religious congregation sent sisters from North America to South America to engage in ministry. In December 2022, the IHMs celebrated 100 years of serving the Peruvian people.

A PERUVIAN CELEBRATION

In addition to celebrations in the U.S., the IHMs planned festivities in Peru to mark this special occasion. The Peruvian celebration officially began in December of 2021 and continued through October of 2022 with special activities planned for the four Peruvian schools owned and staffed by the IHM Congregation. On each campus, students, faculty, and staff participated in Mass, enjoyed special treats, and took part in fun activities.

As the actual 100-year anniversary approached in December, 10 sisters from North America, including Sister Mary Ellen Tennity, General Superior, and members of the IHM Administration, traveled to Peru for a week-long celebration. The festivities began with a lovely brunch by the Pacific Ocean attended by sisters missioned in Peru, sisters from North America, and lay colleagues from Chile. The sisters enjoyed food and fellowship as they reflected on the legacy of IHM service.

The highlight of the celebration was a special Mass held on December 11, 2022, at the chapel of Colegio Villa Maria Miraflores, a Catholic private elementary school for girls pre-k through 4th grade. The procession included laity carrying 15 candles, each one representing the 15 missions the IHM Congregation had established in the country. The sisters processed into the chapel preceded by the carrying of flags representing each school, the U.S., Peru, and the Vatican. The chapel was filled with the smiling faces of sisters, students, families, and past and present staff members as they listened to an inspiring homily delivered

by celebrant Archbishop Salvador Piñeiro, a long-time supporter of the Congregation. At the conclusion of Mass, Archbishop Piñeiro distributed yellow roses to each sister in recognition of her service. Guests were invited to a reception complete with Peruvian food, music, and dancing.

IHM CHARISM AT WORK

During the week-long festivities, the sisters witnessed the IHM charism at work as they attended the blessing of the new pre-k and kindergarten building at Colegio Immaculado Corazon in Lima and the blessing of the new wing of Colegio Villa Maria in La Planicie. They also visited Colegio San Pablo in Manchay, Peru, a school located in one of the poorest areas of the country. The IHM Congregation in North and South America continues to donate funds to help support the school, the students, and their families.

According to Sister Christine Virginia O'Donnell, Regional Superior in Peru, the celebration of 100 years of IHM service in the country, "is a time for gratitude, reflection, renewal, and recommitment. We owe so much to the first sisters who arrived here – for their courage in times of uncertainty and for their willingness to always move forward in faith. Along the way, many sisters have joined us in our mission of sharing the IHM charism to help build a better country."





Companions in Prayer and Ministry

NEWS from PERU



The IHM Companions in Prayer and Ministry in Peru, *Immaculado Corazon*, joyfully gathered in person for the first time in December of 2021 after two years of meeting virtually due to the pandemic. According to Sister Maria Teresa Scudellari, Companions leader, “I cannot tell you how joyful it was to actually see each other in person and to share our experiences of what we learned in our time of confinement and restrictions during COVID.”

The Companion members enjoyed their annual Pollyanna gift exchange. They also participated in a special collection in support of the ministry of Dr. Tony Lazzara, a retired pediatrician from Florida

who resides in Peru and cares for poor and orphaned children in his home called Villa LaPaz or “House of Peace.” Dr. Tony and his staff provide round the clock medical care for children who live in remote parts of the Andes who are very ill. Many are either born with severe birth defects, suffer from anemia or malnutrition, or need pre and post operative care. Dr. Tony cares for the children before and after their surgery until they are well enough to return to their homes.

Each companion placed a donation for Dr. Tony’s ministry at the foot of the statue of the Blessed Mother placing the children and their needs under the protective care of Our Lady. The money was used to

purchase diapers, fortified milk, and other supplies.

In collaboration with the IHM Companions in Peru, the IHM Companions in the United States also sent a generous donation as well as their prayers for Dr. Tony’s mission of providing medical assistance to children in need.

The Companions wrapped up their meeting and festive celebration with the drawing of the Courts of the King, an IHM Community Christmas custom. Each member of the group selected a card based on the nativity scene. Each card had a spiritual question to ponder which the members could reflect upon throughout the year. A wonderful time was had by all!

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

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Dwelling now in light, yet ever near



Sister M. Jane Frances Rearden
1.19.23
(S. Marie Dorothy)



S. Mary A. Leonard
1.15.23
(S. M. Margaret James)



S. M. Anne W. Kelly
12.30.22
(S. Dennis Maureen)



S. Marita Immaculate Buckley
12.17.22



S. M. Anna L. Bradbury
12.7.22
(S. Albert Marie)



S. M. Agnes Hughes
12.5.22
(S. Eileen Dolores)



S. Clare Mary Butterhof
11.29.22



S. Maria Prudens Wright
11.16.22



S. Helen Maureen Campbell
11.9.22



S. Theresa Marian McCormick
10.4.22



S. Genevieve Mary Simons
9.28.22



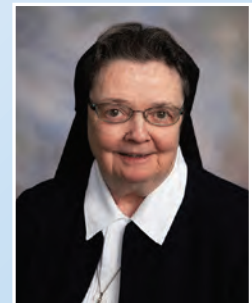
S. Mary Louise E. Gallagher
8.25.22
(S. Marie Eloise)



S. Mary Shaun Conroy
8.17.22



S. Marie Peter Conboy
7.26.22



S. Barbara J. Troutman
7.25.22
(S. M. Paul Catherine)

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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.*

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