

Mary Notes



Sisters of Mary of the Presentation
Maryvale Convent, Valley City, ND

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Let Go — Let God by Sister Carol Jean Kuntz



Autumn is here! With it we feel the cool weather approaching, the children are back in school, the leaves are dropping off the trees and we feel the sadness of letting go. Many challenging things have happened over the summer months. My family members and our

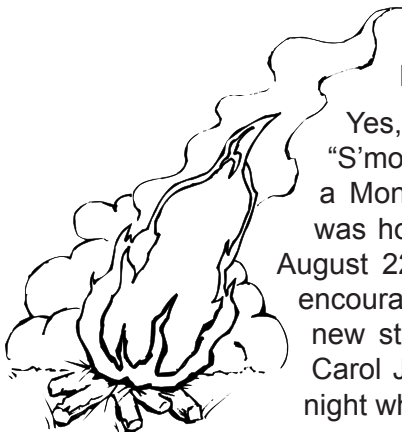
Sisters are aging and have needed hospital and nursing home care. Two of our Sisters have died as you will read in this issue of Marynotes. Some of my family members have lost their homes to the flood in Minot. Our Sisters in Bottineau have moved to Harvey and thus we no longer have any Sisters of Mary of the Presentation living and

working at St. Andrew's Health Center, though we continue to sponsor this ministry of 98 years. St. Andrew's, Bottineau, is where I first met our Sisters in my first "real" job after high school as a dietary aide so I have fond memories of our Sisters who have lived there throughout the years. All these experiences invite me to let go.

Despite all these challenges I know that God is present with us. I know that just as nature cycles from autumn "letting go" to winter "death," spring time *always* comes. With Spring I think of the Resurrection scene. Mary Magdelene was so pleased to see Jesus that she clung to Him. Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me." (Jn 20:17) I hear Jesus saying the same to me, the same to us... "Do not cling to the past. Let it come and go "for I make all things new." (Rev. 21:5) Giving back to God that which we want to cling to, will enable us to be open to newness. Let us be ready for the new things, the new graces that Jesus is giving us today.

Fire! Fire! Fire at Maryvale — Bonfire

By Sr. Dorothy Bunce



Yes, a bonfire with marshmallows to roast and all the rest needed to make "S'mores. The Newman Group from VCSU has been coming to Maryvale for a Monday night bonfire for many years, but usually in the month of October. It was hoped that having the event at the beginning of the academic year, Monday, August 22, would acquaint students with this uniquely Catholic campus group and encourage people to attend. In all, nine people were present and that included four new students, the student president, the youth minister from St. Catherine's, Sr. Carol Jean, Sr. Marlyss, and Sr. Dorothy. Yes, we had a bonfire at Maryvale on a night when the temperature was 80!!



Sister Marilyn Orchard and Sister Jean Ersfeld

Totally Given To God

by Sister Dorothy Bunce

On the second day of our Community gathering this summer, Thursday, July 21, 2011, we engaged in communal reflection on our vow of Consecrated Chastity. Sister Jean Ersfeld and Sister Marilyn Orchard, both School Sisters of Notre Dame, gave theological and spiritual presentations throughout the day and provided points for personal prayer and small group dialogue.

Consecrated Chastity is a charism, a gift, from God, as is the vocation to marriage. To live the consecrated chaste life is to be called to love in a non-exclusive way, and is the vow which is foundational to the whole meaning of religious life because it calls us to love focused only on God, lived in Community and in service to others.

This day provided time to pray and reflect on scripture passages and various elements of our Way of Life which emphasize that unselfish love of Christ to which we are vowed. The day was also a means to further the goal of one of our Needs Statements "To study and clarify the meaning of our vows as the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation, making a deeper commitment to our counter-cultural witness in today's world."

Thank You, Thank You,

by Wanda Lubeck, Associate

As most of you know, I was on the sick list all last winter. I want to thank everyone who was able to come visit me and all the Sisters, Associates, friends and relatives for sending all those cards, prayers and letters. They were greatly appreciated as they brought sunshine into my life in the nursing home.

I especially want to thank the Provincial Team for being there with me in times of need. You'll never know how much that meant to me.

Also thanks to Deacon Jim and Sister Mary Ann Schmitz for making sure that I got to church on time.

A special thanks to Sister Annick for stopping by to see me while she was visiting at Villa Maria. I really missed being with her at Maryvale and I missed making crepes with her.

For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to visit Villa Maria, I just want you to know that it was a great place to be. They took excellent care of me, were very kind and considerate and made it very easy for me to put my care into their hands. As a matter of fact, I got a little spoiled there!

God bless all of you for your many prayers. God was with me throughout my ordeal. I am almost healed. I am walking again and regaining the use of my hand and arm little by little. Thank you!

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Email: carol.kuntz@fargodiocese.org

Farewell Celebration in Bottineau

by Sister Miriam Braun



On June 29, 2011, a farewell party was held for Sister Miriam Braun and Sister Mary Jane Pulskamp. After 98 years of service, the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation will no longer be a visible presence in the Bottineau community. As of July 31, 2011, Sister Mary Jane and Sister Miriam were relocated to Harvey, ND where Sister Miriam does pastoral ministry in the parish of St. Cecilia's and Sister Mary Jane is assistant chaplain at St. Aloisius Medical Center. The Sisters of Mary of the Presentation remain as sponsors of St. Andrew Health Center in the role of governance and policy and continue to be members of the hospital Board of Directors. It was with great sadness that the Sisters leave but they have great confidence that the administration, staff and employees will carry on the mission of the healing presence of Jesus to those in need. The Sisters say a big thank you to the Bottineau community for its tremendous support, love and concern through the years. May God bless you.

St. Margaret's Recognized by City of Spring Valley, Illinois

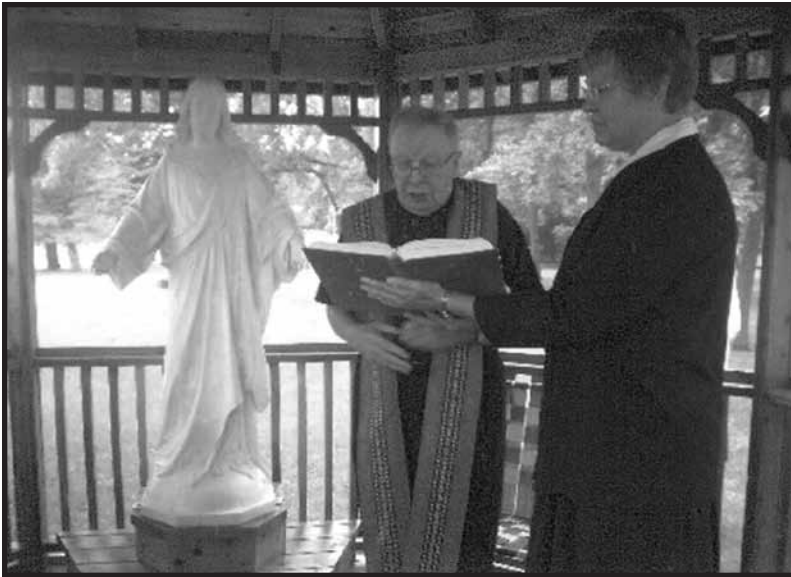
St. Margaret's Health was recognized by the City of Spring Valley at their 125th Anniversary Appreciation Dinner. The dinner was to celebrate the importance of the industrial, service, and business communities of Spring Valley throughout its 125-year history. City official presented St. Margaret's with a certificate to commemorate our 107 years in business. Sister Dorothy Bertsch accepted the certificate on behalf of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation and the hospital. St. Margaret's ranks second in longevity behind Thompson Drugs, which has been in business since before Spring Valley was actually a city.



Maryvale Fatima Shrine

Sister Carol Jean's great-niece, Lucia Campani from California, was delighted to know that one of the children from Fatima was named Lucia. She knelt beside her and said a prayer. "Let the little children come to me."





The “Gazebo”...a Place of Worship

By Sister Rose Therese Sevigny

A wish fulfilled! Several years ago Sister Marguerite Guarneri expressed the wish that we have a statue of the Sacred Heart enshrined on our grounds, preferably in the grove on the right, at the turn of the road leading out of Maryvale. In 2010, part of this wish was beginning to be fulfilled. St. Margaret Hospital had given us a beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart that we decided to enshrine on our grounds. It would be placed in a beautiful gazebo that we had built to protect it and also to provide a quiet and peaceful place of prayer. In that summer, a gazebo was purchased, fully cut and put together as a puzzle, by our maintenance crew. It was great fun watching them assemble it together, piece by piece. But it needed a way of reaching it, so a boardwalk was built with style, decorated with its own flower bed. By the end of the summer we saw the statue being placed outside in it. It resided there till fall. However, when we took it into the house, as planned, for the winter, we realized that it was already showing signs of great deterioration. We could not continue to display it outdoors. The statue was old and had been dedicated to Peter Hollerich, who served as a doctor from 1846-1924, in Spring Valley, IL. So in the spring of 2011, a search was begun to find an outdoor statue that would survive cold North Dakota winters. Finally, a suitable one was purchased. It came in June of this year and was erected in the gazebo. At a summer meeting when the Sisters were home, Father Claude Seeberger blessed this beautiful statue and gazebo. It would provide a quiet and prayerful place for all who wish to enjoy warm summer days, without the North Dakota mosquitoes that are our constant visitors on warm nights. The gazebo is in memorial of all of our Sisters and friends who have died within the last years. It also has a special dedication to our Associates and some priests who gave donations to pay for the statue. Thank you, Associates and priests.

Mosquitoes of North Dakota, praise the Lord!



New Friends

By Sister Marie Leona Dostaler

Maryvale has been blessed with two friends from Open Door. Cassie Colwell, a client of Open Door and Constance (Connie) Swift, who is the direct support for Cassie and acts as her job coach. Cassie's family is from Hope, her father owns "Hope Electric" and her mother works at the "Colgate Pasta Plant."

For the past three months Cassie and Connie have been coming every Monday and Wednesday. They have been doing a variety of tasks at Maryvale under the guide of our cook Jean Swenson, who designates what tasks are to be done. The two of them have been enjoying the work of setting tables for our Hospitality groups, dishwashing and baking biscuits, cakes, cookies and muffins and cleaning vegetables. Cassie, with the help of Connie, is learning many things and is building up her self confidence. They enjoy the variety of tasks and especially visiting with the Sisters. It is delightful to see Cassie's smile each time she comes to Maryvale.

Open Door is an organization who works with people of all ages with disabilities.



Sisters Celebrate Jubilees at Maryvale on July 24

By Sister Rose Therese Sevigny

Five Sisters, **Sister Helen Backes**, **Sister Eloise Marie Pulskamp**, **Sister Mary Ann Schmitz**, **Sister Dorothy Bertsch**, and **Sister Frances Marie Voigt** celebrated Jubilees for a total of 340 years of dedication to the Lord with the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. Many family members were present to celebrate with the Sisters. Reverend Claude Seeberger, OSB celebrated the Mass.

Sister Helen Backes celebrated 80 years of Religious Profession. She was born and raised in Foxholm, ND where she received her elementary education in country schools. She went to Willow City, ND, for high school. She joined the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in 1929. She made her religious training in France. After her return to the United States she earned an R.N. degree from St. Margaret's School of Nursing and later a post-graduate degree in Obstetrics in Peoria, IL. She worked in hospitals owned by the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation for 40 years. Following this she went to Maryvale as night nurse for the elderly retired sisters. Now she continues to be of service to her Sisters as she wheels her cart around smiling and chuckling as she explains "I do this because I like to run around."

Sister Eloise Marie Pulskamp celebrated 70 years and is also retired at Maryvale. Sister Eloise Marie was born at Hillsboro, ND and received her elementary education in the country schools of the area. She entered the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in 1938. After her profession she stayed in France and worked in a school there. From there she was taken by the Germans to a prison camp for American Citizens. She returned to the States in 1944. She obtained a Bachelors Degree in Washington, DC and taught in the primary schools of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation for most of her religious life. In 2004 she retired to Maryvale. In April she returned to Princeton, IL to accompany Sr. Elaine Lange for three months. She was delighted to see all the old friends she had made there. Sister keeps herself busy by crocheting prayer shawls for our Long Term Care facilities. She has made many of them now and they are always very beautiful with many interesting patterns and colors.

Sister Mary Ann Schmitz celebrated 65 years of service. Sister Mary Ann was born in Harvey, ND. She attended the country schools for her elementary education. High school education was received at Notre Dame Academy in Willow City, ND. She received her B.A. degree from the College of Great Falls, MT and her Masters in Education from St. Louis University. Many years were spent in the classrooms of the



Sr. Dorothy Bertsch, Sr. Eloise Marie Pulskamp, Sr. Frances Marie Voigt, Sr. Helen Backes, and Sr. Mary Ann Schmitz

schools of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. She was Principal in Washington, IL for many years. After retiring from the teaching profession she went to Fargo where she now visits the residents at Rosewood on Broadway and Villa Maria. She has become a very good companion to the residents she visits. She has always found satisfaction in listening and speaking to them.

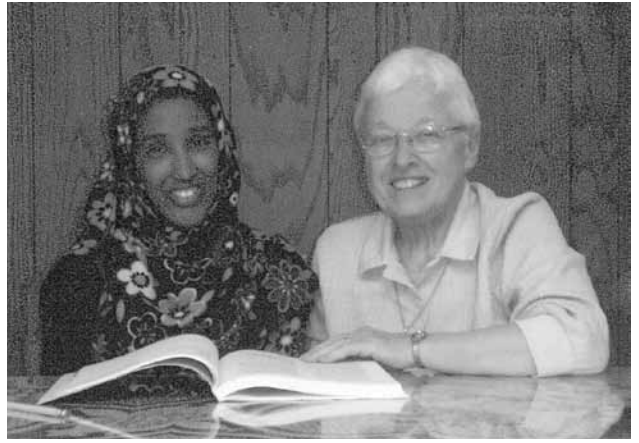
Sister Dorothy Bertsch also celebrated her 65th anniversary. Sister Dorothy was born in Harvey, ND, and attended grade school there. Her high school was at St. Cecilia in Harvey and St. Aloysius in Oakwood, ND. She obtained a BA degree in Great Falls, MT and a MA in Education administration at St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO. She taught in most of the schools owned by the sisters in ND and then became a principal in Illinois schools. Sister concluded her teaching profession in Rockford, IL where she administered the parish's Religious Education Program. Sister is now very busy as a volunteer in the surgical waiting room at St Margaret's Health in Spring Valley, IL. Each day she spends hours ministering to the surgery patients by guiding and directing them and their families to the proper places they need for service.

Sister Frances Marie Voigt celebrated 60 years of profession. Sister Frances Marie was born in Elbowoods, ND, on the Fort Berthold Reservation and attended grade school there. Her high school was with the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation in Willow City, ND. Her BA degree was earned at Great Falls College and her Masters in Ministry was at Creighton University at Omaha, NE. After 37 years of teaching in the schools sponsored by the Sisters, she began pastoral ministry in 1988. Much of this was spent on the reservations of ND where she served First Nation people. Sister is now living at Maryvale serving the Sisters wherever she can. Sister delights in the outdoors and finds beauty in God's creation.

Nimo Hussein from Somalia, Africa

By Sister Marlyss Dionne, SMP

In April 2011, we were contacted by a woman in Moorhead, Minnesota who had been assisting Nimo Hussein with reading and comprehension of the English language. Nimo moved from Moorhead to Valley City. Elizabeth Clark from Moorhead called Maryvale requesting the help of a Sister who could continue assisting Nimo in her comprehension and speaking of the English language. Sister Carol Jean, Provincial asked me if I would be willing to share in this ministry. I agreed, and Nimo began coming to Maryvale once or twice a week for this assistance. Her goal is to pass the GED (equivalent of a high school diploma) tests and be able to attend college following her achievement. Private lessons began on April 7. Nimo is a lovely young woman in her thirties. She has a daughter, Hannah who is nearly six years old and will be entering first grade this fall. Thirteen years ago, Nimo came from Somalia, Africa to live in the United States.



During the flood here at Maryvale, the last three weeks of April, she was unable to come to Maryvale because our road was covered with deep water. So we had only two sessions before the waters appeared. We resumed our sessions on May 5 and she has been coming ever since that time. In June of 2011, Nimo became a United States citizen and was very proud to tell me about it the next time we had class. During the summer she brings her young daughter with her and has her coloring or looking at pictures while we are busy with our lessons.

We have had 17 sessions so far. In order to complete the studies to get GED certification, she must pass tests in all major subject areas. She was excited when she passed her English test in early June. Now, we are working on the Social Studies area which is somewhat more complicated.

Working with Nimo has enhanced my knowledge of another culture. She is eager to learn to speak English well and to know more about her new country.

Working with Nimo has enhanced my knowledge of another culture. She is eager to learn to speak English well and to know more about her new country.

Spring Valley Holds 125th Celebration

Spring Valley, Illinois held its 125th celebration on July 24, 2011. One of the entries in the parade was by St. Margaret Health. The "first Sisters" were featured riding horse and buggy carrying with them a basket containing a rooster and a hen!

The seven "Sisters" were:

Linda Burt, VP of Marketing and Community Services
Mary Vega (Mattes), VP Nursing
Michele Stanmar, Manager of Midtown Health Care
Sheila Sweetland, Manager of Family Health Care
Deb Feeney, Supervisor of Durable Medical Equipment & Supplies
Holly Pinter, Marketing Specialist
Mary Martin, Medical Records Clerk

They were followed by about thirty employees and kids from Healthy Kids Camp who passed out hand held fans and candy to parade participants.

The Sister of Mary of the Presentation first arrived in Spring Valley in 1903.



The Act of Abandonment of Pope John Paul II to the Divine Mercy

Submitted by Sister Marguerite Guarneri

*Lord, You have given me the inestimable gift of life,
And from my birth,
You have not ceased to shower me with your grace
and infinite love.*

*In all these years great joys were interspersed with
trials, successes, failures, sickness, and deaths;
All these touch the lives of everyone.
With your grace and help, I have been able to overcome
These obstacles and keep on my way to You.*

*Today, I find myself rich from these experiences and
from the great consolation to have been the object of
Your love.
My soul sings its gratitude to you.*

*Each day, however, I find among the many people I meet,
Elderly men and women who are sorely tried with
paralysis, handicaps, infirmities and
so often without the strength to pray.
Others have lost the use of their mental faculties
And can no longer reach You through their unreal world.
I see how these people react, and I say to myself;
“If it were I?”*

*Then, Lord, this very day while I still enjoy the use of
My faculties both physical and mental,
I accept beforehand your Holy Will, and from this
very moment,
If one or other of these trials should strike me,
May it be for Your glory and the salvation of souls.
From this moment, I ask You to give the grace to all those
persons who will have the ungrateful task of taking
care of me.*

*If one day some sickness should envelope my brain and
block out all intelligence,
At this moment, Lord, my submission is before you
and it will keep on in silent adoration.*

*If one day I fall into a state of prolonged unconsciousness
before death overtakes me, I want that each passing
hours I still have to live out,
be an uninterrupted act of thanksgiving.
And my last breath a breath of **LOVE**.*

*My soul, guided at this moment by the hand of Mary,
Will come before You to sing your praises for all
ETERNITY. AMEN.*

Let Us Give Thanks

Once again our glad thankgivings
Rise before our Fathers's throne,
As we try to count the blessings
Of the year so swiftly flown

As we trace the wondrous workings of
His wisdom, power, and love,
And unite our “Holy, Holy!”
With the seraphim above.

He has blessed our favored country
With a free and bounteous hand;
Peace and plenty in our borders,
Liberty through all our land.

And although our sins and follies,
Oft provoked Him to His face,
Mercy still restrains His judgements,
And prolongs our day of grace.

As we gather round our firesides
On this new Thanksgiving Day,
Time would fail to count the blessings,
They have followed all our way.

Grace sufficient, help and healing,
Prayer oft answered at our call;
and the best of all our blessings,
Christ Himself, our all in all.

While we love to “count the blessings,”
Grateful for the year that's gone,
Faith would sweep a wider vision,
Hope would gaze yet further on.

For the signals all around us
Seem with one accord to say,
“Christ is coming soon to bring us
Earth's last, best Thanksgiving Day!”

~ A.B.Simpson ~

Magnificat by Sister Anne Germaine Picard

I have and continue to reflect, remember and share experiences of the three months Sister Suzanne and I spent with our Sisters in Cameroon, Africa. The memories and blessings keep unfolding in so many ways like the waves of the sea. Taking each letter of "Cameroon" I share an experience that begins with that letter in order to express my gratitude to our Sisters and for the experience of these last three months.

- C Charism** of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation is alive and visible, as our Sisters, consecrated to Christ live community life rooted in prayer and relationships that support them for mission.
- A Announcing** the Presence of Christ by their dedicated services in schools, health clinics, hospitals, prisons and parishes – especially the most vulnerable and those who come to their door.
- M Mary** our patron and model of virtue daily directs them through prayer and inspiration so they can hear the Word of God and act on it as they serve the poor.
- E Eucharistic Christ** is the center of their lives as they daily attend early morning Mass and as a Region every Sister in each Mission gather for adoration on Sunday evenings from 6:00 - 7:00. All of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation are sitting at the feet of the Lord.
- R Resignation** to the present moment in solidarity with others who are poor, and who at times are deprived of electricity, water, good roads, etc. The Sisters silently go about their lives and ministry in silent resignation living their lives in simplicity and poverty.
- O Obedient** to go where there is need of them in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, our Sisters put their talents and gifts of mind and body at the service of all, especially the poor.
- O Opportunities** are not lacking to serve those in need. Our Sisters embrace the constant challenge and the demands of justice and the cries of the poor. (C.19) Our Sisters are visible signs of love and are respected for their integrity.
- N Nothing** stops these women in the service of the poor. The Sisters live their religious vows to the fullest and are vivid signs of hope and joy which empowers them together and individually to follow Jesus who came into the world not to be served but to serve.

Cameroon, Africa

By Sister Suzanne Stahl

A call from God to travel to and live, pray and work with our Sisters from our Region of Cameroon. What an offer! Like Mary I said, "Yes, Lord with your guidance!" Again like Mary, I pondered what Jesus was calling me to do, how it would unfold, what the demands and living situation would be.

From the beginning there were obstacles. Working with the Cameroon government proved challenging. It was the first taste of a different way of life – different pace, work ethic, values, and beliefs. Slowly over the course of three months I began to better understand the reasons why they have a different pace, work ethic, values and beliefs. I began to see things through the eyes of a native Camerooneese and began to understand rather than judge. I believe that was one of the biggest gifts God gave me aside from getting to meet and come to know our Sisters of Mary of the Presentation living in Yaoundé, Batouri, Diang, Kentzou, Yokadouma and Salapoumbe.

Our Sisters welcomed us warmly and watched out for us in many ways. They tried to cook food that we might prefer, reminded us to not work or walk too much in the hot sun, purified our drinking water and more.

We were able to offer service in a variety of ways. Sister Anne Germaine taught English to the Sisters and primary school children. She led our singing with the children and Sisters. She scrubbed and cleaned and sorted things in many places especially at Hospital Catholic Salapoumbe. She also assisted with ironing and sewing to name just a few things.

I for my part taught a few of the Sisters how to play guitar. I also learned more about music from them. Music is truly the language of community, love and worship in this section of the south east of Cameroon. I taught our Sisters and some of the primary school teachers how to use the computer. I was able to do some secretarial work for their Region. Sister Anne Germaine and I were able to write up two Conrad Hilton grant reports as they needed to be in English. Together we also taught the doctor and nurses at Salapoumbe Hospital how to use their new Hot Air Sterilizer. When we had the opportunity

we gave bread to the hungry and listened to the poor around us. We aided the Sisters in their daily chores and washed lots of clothes by hand. We prayed with the Sisters at least three times per day – morning and evening prayer and Mass. They chant the office with lovely melodies and during the Easter season with drum and types of maracas.

How have I changed from this experience? I am so much more grateful for the running and clean water we have here. I love the clothes washer and dryer. I appreciate having continuous electricity and more moderate temperatures. What do I miss? I miss the Sisters with their youth and example of dedication in the presence of huge difficulties. I miss the beautiful tall trees and lush vegetation. The sunshine and opportunity to be outdoors most of the time was lovely. But it is also good to be home.

Now I hope to share this trip with all who are interested in listening. To share the situation of these people of Cameroon is my passion. To strive to build bridges between our people and our Sisters and the people of Cameroon is my desire. To support them in any way is the call from God. If any group of any size or type would like to have any length of presentation I would be happy to receive their invitation and schedule a time with them. If the presentation is in the Illinois area Sister Anne Germaine is also available. at 815-915-8035. To reach me just call 701-845-2864.



Sister Genevieve with a Baka baby and mother.



Above: Srs. Felicite, Suzanne, Annie and Anne Germaine at youth retreat at Bogogo near Batouri April 2011.



Left: Baka women wait to have vaccinations for their babies in Salapoumbe June 2011.



Above: Baptism of 11 students at high school in Diang.



Left: At Salapoumbe Novice Judith, Srs. Simone Henry, Suzanne, Postulant Angelique, Srs. Anne Marie and Chantal with local Baka children.



Right: Sr. Anne Germaine gives teachers donated rosaries.

Reflections

by Sister Carol Jean Kuntz, Provincial

Sister Susan Delbaere

1922 - 2011



Sister Susan was born on April 26, 1922 in Rouen, France to Silvere and Suzanne (Richard) Delbaere. She was the eldest of four girls. The family moved to Belgium in 1923 where Sister Susan had her schooling in Maasmechelen and Gent. Once again the family moved, this time to France from 1928 to 1933 before Sister Susan went to a Convent school on the Island of Jersey until 1940. During the German Occupation from 1940 to 1945, she worked at Summerland Textile Department Channel Island Knitwear. At the age of 24, in October, 1945, she received assistance from the Jesuit priests to take a boat to Broons, France where she spent two years at the Novitiate. Because communication between Jersey and France was not yet opened, she traveled in a small fishing boat. Sister Susan professed her vows as a Sister of Mary of the Presentation on September 8, 1947 in Broons France.

Sister Susan received her certificate of "Modern Infant Teaching Methods" in London, England and taught primary grades at Les Cotils, Guernsey from 1947 to 1963. From 1963 to 1982, she worked in a hospital in Les Cotils doing domestic work and in the purchasing department. In 1982, she made a request to the Superior General, that she be transferred from the French Province to the United States Province. Her request was granted and she moved to the United States in 1982. She worked with the hospitality staff at Maryvale from 1982 until 1996. She also spent some summers working with the migrant workers at Grafton, ND. On October 16, 1992, she fulfilled her dream of becoming a United States citizen. She was very proud to be an American. She said, "I was very excited and enthusiastic to become a citizen of the United States. Being a citizen of such a wonderful country has added beauty to my life."

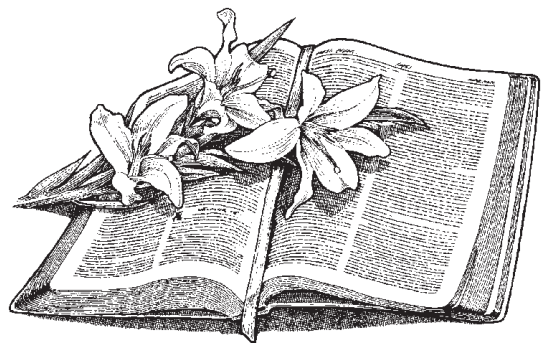
Sister Susan loved to visit people, she was always interested in the guests who would come to Maryvale and many times kept in contact with them by letter

writing. For many years, her sisters at Jersey Island were very faithful to call her by phone the first Sunday of every month. She would say that this was their responsibility because she was the eldest!

Sister Susan liked to talk of her Mummy and Daddy. She would tell about how she worked in her Daddy's pastry shop and how her mother would often tell her what a spoiled and stubborn child she was. Her Mother was right in many cases for if Sister Susan didn't want to do something, it was very difficult for her to change her mind. Sister Susan admitted to this and she said that she entered Religious Life because the Sisters were so nice and she wanted to be nice like them. Although, she could be stubborn, I was edified by her humbleness when she was asked to stay at the Nursing Home in Harvey rather than return to Maryvale because of her declining health condition. She simply said, "If you want me to stay, I will stay." I was moved to tears.

In her younger days, Sister Susan liked to create things for entertainment. She was an excellent actress! She was very good at whistling and at times would oblige the Sisters by whistling some lively tunes when asked. Sister Susan loved to watch it snow and loved to experience a good storm. However, she could never be forced to go out in the cold and snow, so it was easy to love it. The Sisters would get upset with her when she prayed for snow and many times we threatened to put her out in a snow bank!

Sister Susan died on a feast of Mary, the feast of the Visitation, May 31, 2011 at St. Aloisius Medical Center in Harvey, ND. Just as Mary and Elizabeth greeted one another in joy, we can imagine the joyful greetings that took place in heaven when Sister Susan met her family members and other Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. God bless you, Sister Susan, we love you and will miss you, rest in peace. Sister Susan is survived by her Religious Community, the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation and her two sisters, Marie Louise Delbaere and Debbie Matson who both live on the Island of Jersey.



Sister Barbara Marie Pfeifer

1930 - 2011



Sister Barbara Marie was born on March 24, 1930 to Carl and Rose (Kelly) Pfeifer in Oakes, ND. She attended high school at St. Joseph's School in Wild Rice, ND. She professed her vows as a Sister of Mary of the Presentation on August 26, 1952 in Spring Valley, IL. After her vows, she attended college at the North Dakota School of Forestry, Bottineau, ND; College of Great Falls, Great Falls, MT; and St. Bede College in Peru, IL.

She taught 5th and 6th grades in St. Boniface School in Walhalla and at St. Cecelia School in Harvey, ND.

From 1958 to 1965, she served at St. Andrew Medical Center in Bottineau, ND in Central Supply, as Medical Records Clerk, and Personnel Director. From 1965 to 1982, she served as the secretary and receptionist at Maryvale Convent in Valley City, ND. In 1982, she moved to Princeton, IL and served at St. Louis School as Kindergarten and first grade teacher's aide and as librarian. In 1986, she moved to Harvey, ND where she served as a secretary to the SMP Prairieland Home Health Agency. She retired to Maryvale Convent in 1994, and in December, 2003, due to health issues was transferred to our long term care unit at St. Aloisius Medical Center in Harvey, ND.

She is survived by her Religious Community, one brother, Louis (JoAnn) Pfeifer of Zimmerman, MN; one sister, Cathy Fabre of Sunnyvale, CA; and five sisters-in-law, Annie Pfeifer, Fargo, ND; Lillian Pfeifer, Valley City, ND; Janet Pfeifer, Oakes, ND; Esther Huber, Oakes, ND and LaVonne Pfeifer from Wahpeton, ND.

Sister Barbara Marie and I lived together in Princeton, IL and we had a lot of fun together – she loved to tell jokes and we loved to play tricks on one another. I was teaching third grade and she was the librarian in the school and she would often send notes to my classroom throughout the day – sometimes they might be a cartoon or some little newsy tidbit, but they always made my day. She had contact with every student in the school as the librarian and the students absolutely loved her and she was so good to them.

Sister Barbara was so kind and encouraging with students who especially had learning disabilities or poor home situations. She would take these children under

her wing and make them feel good about themselves. She really had a way of boosting their self-confidence. She would also pass out many holy cards to the students and she never passed up an opportunity to teach them about Jesus. Many times too, she would go to the second hand store and buy little stuffed animals or something of that sort and she would clean them up and use them as little motivations or prizes for the students who read a certain number of books. She had my third graders very motivated to read! She was a very positive influence on many children and their families.

Sister Barbara Marie was also a fantastic cook. I would always be trying to find out what she was making for dinner and she would get mad at me because sometimes she wanted it to be a surprise. One time she had gotten some deer steaks from one of her brothers and she wanted to make them. She took the meat out of the freezer to thaw and she hid it in the basement so I wouldn't know what we were having. Later that day we were invited out to dinner and so that meant Sister Barbara didn't have to cook. She had forgotten all about the fact that she had taken out some meat and a few days later, there was this horrible smell in the basement that we couldn't figure out or find until Barbara realized it was the deer steaks that she had hidden.

Sister Barbara Marie truly loved her family and they were very important to her. She loved to get pictures of her nieces and nephews and she would display them in her room. Whenever I went to see her, she would tell me "who was who". As I was going through her file, this is something she wrote about family. "Our family was blessed with a cheerful outlook on life in spite of or because of dire poverty. We've often thanked God for our loyalty to one another and our sense of humor. We prayed much, especially the rosary as a family. Contrary to many large families, we've never had any rifts among us. Our family ties were and are very strong."

May you rest in peace, Sister Barbara Marie, we love you and we will miss you.



Aaron and Jan Alton Travel to Motherhouse in Broons, France

by Aaron & Jan Alton

In December 2009, I celebrated 25 years of service with the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation Health System. The Sisters gifted me and my wife, Jan, with two round-trip airline tickets to the Motherhouse in Broons, France. Jan and I travelled to France on Wednesday, June 1, 2011. From Minneapolis, we flew to Paris, France and connected to Rennes. There we were warmly greeted by Sr. Annick Geffrelot and Sr. Marie-Joseph Guivarch. We then were driven to the Maison Generalise in Broons, France. We enjoyed the beautiful countryside on the way there.



Sr. Madeleine Bignon, Sr. Annick Geffrelot, Aaron Alton and wife, Jan, Sr. Monique Maulet, and Sr. Jacqueline Josse visiting at Motherhouse in Broons, France.

After settling into our very comfortable room, complete with fresh roses, we enjoyed afternoon tea with the Generalate team: Sr. Annick, Sr. Jacqueline, Sr. Monique and Sr. Madeleine, as well as Sr. Marie-Jo. Sr. Annick and Sr. Marie-Jo, who both spoke English, showed us a quick tour of the chapel and the beautiful grounds. We then enjoyed dinner with the entire community of Sisters. We learned that the Sisters have 19 communities in France and we would travel to four of those communities during our visit.

Each morning we enjoyed breakfast in our own dining room with fresh fruit, baguettes and coffee which, we were advised, is Sr. Carol Jean's favorite breakfast. On Friday, after breakfast, we toured the Motherhouse grounds more thoroughly and enjoyed learning about the history of the beginning of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation. The architecture, statuary and gardens were amazing. The cemetery confirmed the deep rich history of founding Sisters Laurence and Louise and all the Sisters who have gone before us. The Motherhouse is a very peaceful and spiritual place to visit.

After the tour, we met with Mr. Del Moral, Director of the Nursing Home and Hospitality Department. We talked about the difference between the two health systems and he gave us a tour of the 100-bed nursing home. One thing that stood out was the difference in staffing compared to the United States. The nursing home is staffed by half the staff we have in the US. We also learned that retirement age is mandatory at 60.

Sr. Annick and Sr. Marie-Jo made sure we wore good walking shoes because we were going "mountain climbing". We travelled to Dinan to visit the newest community of three Sisters headed by Sr. Helene Bertheu. Once again, we were greeted warmly by the Sisters and treated to a very special 5-course "lunch" prepared by them. Never before have Jan and I eaten such a lunch! The Sisters explained that the noon meal is always the largest meal of the day. I had the opportunity to share with the Sisters about our Health System in the United States.

Accompanied by Sr. Helene, we

traveled to Mont St. Michele, a fortress along the seacoast which dates back to 708. It is now an historic monument with communities of 12 Sisters and eight Benedictine monks. We climbed many steps to get to the top to see a beautiful view of the sea which totally surrounds the fortress at high tide. On the way back down, Sr. Annick explained the different areas of the fortress and chapel. It was incredible to see this amazing structure which had been built centuries ago.

In the evening, we went to Sr. Helene's favorite restaurant, Le Creperie. Brittany is known for the delicate crepes. We enjoyed delicious savory crepes as well as dessert crepes. We returned to the Motherhouse ready for a good night's rest.

After breakfast on Saturday morning, we had the opportunity to attend Mass with the Community. Sr. Marie-Jo kindly printed the Mass readings in English for us so we could follow along. Following Mass, we drove to Perros-Guirec to visit the Sisters of Perros Community

whose community leader is Sr. Therese Bedel. There are 12 Sisters in the Community and Sr. Annick had previously been in Community here. Sr. Therese greeted us, translation book in hand, "How are you?" We were very touched by her efforts to communicate with us. We enjoyed another extraordinary lunch with the Sisters and I was given the opportunity to talk with the Sisters about our mission in the United States.

Next, we travelled along the seacoast to see the beautiful rose granite formations. It was amazing to see the different rocks along the coast and those simply jutting out in the middle of a field. God's handiwork is truly astonishing. We completed our walk to Saint Guirec's cover where we saw the statue of Saint Guirec, patron saint of Perros as well as the chapel of Notre Dame de la Clarte. Sr. Annick and Sr. Marie-Jo shared with us the history of a sailor who, when caught in a terrible storm, promised the Blessed Virgin Mary he would build a chapel to her honor if she gave him safe passage home.

The Sisters were hoping to show us the Cosmopolis Radome Pleumer Bodou, a museum which is the site for the first telecommunication between America and France in 1962. This site was closed so we went to Le Village Gaulois, a Renaissance village where we enjoyed crepes and viewing games and buildings of the past. We returned to the Sisters of Perros Community for a delicious evening meal. Before leaving, the Community gifted us with a beautiful embroidered tablecloth from Brittany, their pride and joy. It is a generous and wonderful gift.



After breakfast on Sunday morning, we travelled to Saint Briec. We had the opportunity to attend Mass at the Cedre, the nursing home for the diocesan priests. It was very moving to see approximately 20 retired

priests celebrating the Mass with beautiful music. Sr. Madeleine Jacob, Cedre Community leader, gave us a tour of the nursing home facilities and we were given the opportunity to visit with two of the priests, very knowledgeable men. We then visited the Sisters' quarters and two more Sisters of the Community.



Accompanied by Sr. Madeleine, we drove to the seacoast to enjoy a delicious meal overlooking the sea. The Sisters shared stories of holidays they had in the past enjoying the seashore. After lunch we drove to see the Saint Briec Cathedral with Sr. Annick driving and Sr. Madeleine navigating. There was some confusion with directions because when we entered a roundabout we must have circled five times before we found the right street. When we finally arrived at Saint Briec Cathedral, the priest shared with us the history of the Cathedral which began before the French Revolution. His historical knowledge was impressive.

We made our final community visit to the Leo Lagrange Community of five Sisters led by Sr. Marie Claire Laot. Here we enjoyed tea and learning of the Sisters' work with the Church and community. I had the opportunity to share about our mission in the United States. Upon returning to the Motherhouse, we enjoyed our final evening meal with the entire community of Sisters. During our entire visit we enjoyed wonderful food, wine, singing, prayer and great joy from everyone.

Early on Monday morning, Sr. Marie-Jo and Sr. Annick drove us to Rennes to catch our flight to Paris. It was sad to say goodbye. We will be forever grateful for the opportunity we have been given to experience the wonderful hospitality of the Sisters of Mary of the Presentation and to learn of the rich history of Brittany, France.



*"It is not possible to live
and grow in the faith without
the support of a group, of a
Christian community.
It is here that you will learn together
to build a better world."*



BL: Pope John Paul II

SMP and Associate Actions for Peace and Justice

Associates' Report

Margaret Vaine, Associate SMP from Prescott, Arizona, and her husband Paul, are active together in a variety of ways helping others. They are members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) through their home parish of Sacred Heart.

SVDP provides for a variety of needs including help with rent, utilities and food. Margaret and Paul take their turn making up boxes of food to distribute to people coming to the food pantry, which is open Monday through Friday from 9-2.

Every year Paul starts growing his white beard in August in preparation for playing "Santa" (very appropriate too, since he was born on Christmas day!) for the SVDP teen group when they host a party for about 150 needy children. Margaret played Mrs. Claus last year and enjoyed assisting in the fun. (see photo) What an inspiration for these children to see other young people reaching out to them!

The Vaine's also participated in the "40 Days for Life" campaign by praying in front of Planned Parenthood. She reports that next to the Planned Parenthood office is a house dedicated to counseling pregnant women to carry their babies.

Another outreach is to the state sponsored Prescott Home for Retired Miners which also houses people who have lived in Arizona for 50 years or more. Margaret and Paul schedule the prayer service and Eucharistic ministry there every Sunday. they also sub for EM at the Yavapi Regional Medical Center. Thank you for sharing how you are the face, hands, feet and heart of Jesus in your community! Anytime we are in solidarity with the needy and forgotten, we are doing justice.

Dorothy and Gene Klein of Valley City are also active in their Society of St. Vincent de Paul. They also send support money to a number of other charitable organizations. They have been long time recyclers. They visit shut-ins in the parish and take Communion to those who request it. Each of us can serve and share as we are able.

A number of SMP Associates as well as Sr. Anne Germaine and Sr. Elaine are members of St. Louis School and Parish in Princeton. At the last Associate meeting in Illinois, they shared some of what was going on with regard to social outreach there. The children collected over 1000 pounds of canned goods for a food drive. In the third grade, there is a unit on missions in religion class. The children decided to have a "Store for the Poor" during the Lenten season. They sold toys and had raffle items to raise about

\$300. They voted to send the money to children in Haiti as they are so needy. Some of the other school children brought "Kits for Haiti" after learning about the terrible earthquake there.

One of our Associates, Bill Phalen, has been going to Haiti with a mission group for many years but recently had to stop due to health concerns. He is still in touch with those who go so he helps keep the parish informed on what is happening there. We went on to discuss what people can do for social justice when they have physical limitations. Barbara Lies from Fargo told us she has some limitations and does not drive. But, she prays, sews a little, bakes and offers friendship and encouragement to others. Being faithful to the gospel through prayer keeps us rooted in Christ. We might write letters to our local officials or state and federal legislators when issues of concern arise. It is also important to reach out to the people we know who have limitations. If we are unable to go to them for a visit or to take them out, we can at least phone them to let them know we care. We can all make choices keeping in mind the dignity of persons and caring for the environment in whatever we do. We can ask questions with regard to our purchases. Is this cheap price meaning it might be manufactured under oppressive conditions? Do I really need this item? Can I reduce, reuse, and recycle?



Left: Paul and Margaret Vaine playing Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Bottom: Sister Elaine Lange and third graders in their "Store for the Poor".



Upcoming Retreat Events

2011 Events

November 18-20: (Friday - Sunday):

The Ignatian retreat will be held at Maryvale Spiritual Life Center, Valley City. It is based on the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola and is steeped in the gospels. This is a silent retreat where one is able to meet Jesus in the experiences of His own life. Conferences and individual direction with the retreat director are an important part of the retreat.

Suggested donation is \$60 and one must register by Nov. 11.

2012 Events

March 16-18 (Friday-Sunday):

The annual Women's Retreat will be held at Maryvale Spiritual Life Center, Valley City. The theme of the sea and all the images surrounding the sea provide material for reflection and prayer. Jesus spent much of his time at the sea. "Come to the Water; Answers to Life's Conflicts" is a retreat in which you may encounter Jesus in a most profound way. Come to be with him at the sea.

Suggested donation is \$85.

April 27-29 (Friday-Sunday):



The Ignatian retreat will be held at Maryvale Spiritual Life Center, Valley City. It is based on the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola and is steeped in the gospels. This is a silent retreat where one is able to meet Jesus in the experiences of His own life. Conferences and individual direction with the retreat director are an important part of the retreat.

Suggested donation is \$60 and one must register by Apr. 20.

June 15-17 (Friday-Sunday):

Maryvale Spiritual Life Center, Valley City, will host a Mother-Daughter retreat. The retreat is devoted to bringing mothers and daughters together through mutual experiences of prayer and sharing. Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and scriptural prayer will be part of these days together. There will be conferences on spiritual topics. Leisure and recreational activities will also be enjoyed. The retreat begins at 7 p.m. on Friday and ends at 12 p.m. on Sunday. Daughters must be 12 years and older.

Suggested donation is \$60 per person and one must register by June 7.



***For scheduling or more information
on any of the above retreats please contact:***

***Sister Dorothy Bunce
dorothy.bunce@fargodiocese.org
or call (701) 845-2864***



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carol.kuntz@fargodiocese.org

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Sr. Carol Jean Kuntz:
11550 River Rd
Valley City, ND 58072
701-845-2864

