

Presentation News

A Newsletter from the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, New Windsor, NY

Spring 2020

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"Not Words But Deeds" in a Pandemic



"I am close with prayers to people suffering from the current coronavirus epidemic and to all those who care for them."

"In the present situation, in which we find ourselves living more or less isolated, we are invited to rediscover and deepen the value of the communion that unites all the members of the church."

"United to Christ we are never alone, we form one body, of which he is the head. It is a union that is nourished with prayer, and also with spiritual communion in the Eucharist, a practice that is much recommended when it is not possible to receive the sacrament. I say this to everyone, and especially to those living alone."

~Pope Francis

A Letter from Leadership



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Spring, 2020

Dear Friends,

Immaculée Ilibagiza, a 24-year-old woman hid in a tiny bathroom with seven other women for 91 days to escape the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that killed her entire family except one brother who was studying out of the country at the time. She said she never felt safe but she was at peace because of her constant recitation of the rosary. We can draw that same strength from the rosary and our faith during this pandemic.



Included in this issue are the reflections, prayers and actions that some of our Sisters have undertaken during this most difficult of times. The Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary have always relied on prayer, especially the rosary, to maintain our peace.

Venerable Nano Nagle, who founded the Presentation Sisters in 1775 lived in a time of great peril including starvation and disease. Yet, she lit her lantern and went deep into the night to visit and help those who needed it wherever she found them. In the midst of all of that darkness, she started schools so children would have a better future. She was a person whose peace came from her faith and prayer in spite of the terrible time in which she lived.

We are praying for you, your loved ones, and our world during this defining moment in history. We are so grateful to you for all of your support throughout the years to the Sisters of the Presentation who strive always to follow in the footsteps of Jesus through Nano's example. We wish you the peace that only God can give us!

In God's peace,

Sr. Patricia Anastasio PBVM
President

“Not Words But Deeds” in a Pandemic

“Social
Solidarity”
Sr. Chris Leigey,



All of us have had events in our life when the pause button has been pushed for us. I am reminded of the death of my brother Mark in 1975 at age 33 with a 5-year-old at home. I think of being diagnosed with cancer in 1992 and my subsequent recovery. I remember the death of my brother Peter on a Monday and my brother Brendan on a Thursday of the same week in 1995. One was on the East Coast and one on the West coast. And, of course, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 caused all of us to pause. The current COVID-19 brought news that my nephew John is fighting the virus which caused me to pause once again.

A plane takes into the wind to build resistance so that it can stabilize. I watched TV for hours and hours. Was that my way to stabilize? What service was being asked of me at this time? I woke up one morning knowing what I could do. I began to think about how to get around this social distancing. What about social solidarity? I can do that!

So my phone ministry began. I called all of our Sisters in the nursing home. I was received with surprise, delight, and gratitude. I called all the Sisters who live

alone. Finally, I called the elderly from my parish. My conversations were wonderful and uplifting. I spoke to Sisters I didn't know that well. In my youth, I was never sent to NYC or the Bronx houses in the large convents to minister. I have ministered in NJ since 1970. I heard people who were very much burdened and were relieved that someone called to talk to them.

I heard stories of people truly worried and afraid. I listened to many who were learning how to be innovative. Often, there were people who simply needed me to pray with them. My phone ministry has been a blessing to me.

During this dark time, I have been given extra time for prayer and spiritual nourishment. I have been listening to the Creighton University online ministries. I can make a retreat and not have to pay for it! I do this sometimes at five-thirty in the morning in my pajamas and the Lord loves it!

This has been a time to ponder the many gifts given to me:

- From God
- From my parents
- From sisters in my community
- From the many ministries, I am involved in.

Bridges are built to places hard to get to! Let us continue to build social solidarity during this time of social distancing knowing I AM with you.

I am Sr. Eleanor
Joyce, Teacher
at Nora Cronin
Presentation
Academy.



Due to COVID-19 school has been closed since March 16th. We have been doing online long distance instruction and learning via Google Classroom and Gmail.

We begin each day with Google Homeroom in which I greet the 5th graders and ask that they respond with a simple greeting. This is for the purpose of attendance. I then send religion assignments to grades 5-8 and math to grades 5 and 6 requesting answers. Classes run from 9 to 3. This has been a challenge for our students and teachers and yet a learning experience for all of us.

I miss my girls and seeing their smiling and inquisitive faces. I can only hope that we will get back to school in as reasonable a time as possible. I pray God's blessing on them and their families, my colleagues and all of us impacted by this pandemic.



“Not Words But Deeds” in a Pandemic

COVID-19 at
Hudson Valley
Hospice and
Beyond
Sr. Maria Lopez,
Hospice
Chaplain



I have been a Hospice Chaplain for 20 years. Chaplain visits to patients and families were always face to face - comforting presence, active listening, holding a hand, saying a prayer. The gift of human presence was indispensable.

Until a week ago it was unimaginable that when a Hospice family requested a Chaplain visit, a chaplain would not be able to visit. But COVID-19 has made that a reality today in Ulster and Dutchess counties

Patients and families can only receive "phone visits" from everyone except RNs who continue regular visits. This is because there is not enough personal protective equipment for everyone. This reality is jarring to all staff. All team and patient-care meetings have been transformed into ZOOM calls because of social distancing. And everyone's living room has become their office space. We are required to take our temperature daily and report a temperature 99 and over to our supervisor. Countless COVID-19 education videos and podcasts have suddenly appeared on our "tasks" list. Through all this, I am grateful for the amazing self-giving, dedicated and caring women and men I work with and minister to.

The uncertainty, isolation and fear generated by COVID-19 has resulted in widespread anxiety and spiritual distress for many of our patients and their family members as well as staff and their families. This is, of course, a reflection of the experience of our own families and neighbors as well as, perhaps, ourselves.

As I reflect on this strange "new normal" we have been thrown into, I'm struck by the importance of fully living today while holding a vision of tomorrow. As Christy Lane sings, "Tomorrow may never be mine." Everything can change in a single day! What am I holding off doing until tomorrow? What dreams have I put on hold until "one of these days?" Who do I need to reach out to today? Who needs my help today?

At the same time a vision for tomorrow is what carried us onward. We certainly cannot downplay the sorrow and suffering that exists today but we know tomorrow will be better. A great song for today is "Tomorrow Will be Kinder" by Secret Sister"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAwWR73pofE>

For me, what remains unchanging through all my yesterdays and todays is my belief that our gracious God showers us with gratuitous love, embraces us with compassion and kindness and invites us to share these gifts with others. May we continue to do this with or without COVID-19.

Sr. Mary Lusk
(90 years old)



To personally handle my "isolate in place," I set myself two long range goals:

- To teach myself how to play chess (compliments of my nephew, Kevin)
- Also to view a set of DVDs entitled, The Crown (a Christmas gift from my niece, Loretta)

My hope for humanity is great. It can only be based on truth. Look what we are doing now! Mother Nature threw us a "mighty curve." As soon as we assessed the truth of the situation, we jumped into action: Informed the general public, made educated decisions, adjusted as new information was gained. Wow! What a team! Made in the image of God.



The managers of each business/store were personally given a thank-you card by Sr. Mary Byrnes.

Sr. Mary Eileen Troy,
Sr. Margaret Murphy and
Sr. Mary Byrnes

Sister Barbara Muldoon in the Spotlight



Sr. Barbara Muldoon (formerly known as Sr. Mary Aquin) received her call to become a Presentation Sister when she was 18 years old. She was planning to attend St. Rose's College in upstate New York. Yet she was "having a feeling that God was calling her to something else." This led to a life-changing decision to discuss it with a Presentation Sister who advised her that "if the Lord is calling you, you should answer."

In September 1965, Sr. Barbara entered the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She earned a B.S. degree in English at Our Lady of Good Counsel in White Plains, NY. She eventually earned an MA in English from Brooklyn College and an MA in Public Relations/Communications from Fordham University. She made her first profession of vows in August 1968 and her final profession in April 1974.

From 1968 until 1981, Sr. Barbara taught at St. Andrew, Clifton, NJ, St. Rose of Lima, Rockaway Beach, and St. David's in New Orleans which she especially loved.

After four years, she returned to New York to teach high school at St. Michael's in Manhattan which she considers the most rewarding of her teaching career, citing particularly the school spirit among both students and faculty.

Sr. Barbara's leadership skills became apparent to the Presentation Community and she was asked to serve in congregational service. She was elected to the post of Ministry Coordinator from 1984 to 1991 and Second Councilor from 1997 to 2003, and cites those years as a councilor as a very special time for her, since the (now former) congregations of Fitchburg, MA and New Windsor, NY had just completed the Unity Project, forming the present New Windsor Congregation, and giving her the opportunity of being in on the "ground floor" as the growth into a sense of oneness took place. In later years she also coordinated funding sources for the Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center in the Bronx.

Sr. Barbara particularly loved the Post Vatican II spirit that drew her into the life of the parish community beyond the schools she served in, and the opportunity to work with the parish council and church committees, as in St. Rose of Lima in Rockaway, New York, and to experience the spirit of the South at St. David's in New Orleans. Life in that



beautiful city presented also a special opportunity to enter into a deeper relationship with her sister companions since they were all such a distance from the rest of the congregation. Those years remain a very special community experience.

Sr. Barbara's MA in Public Relations/Communications led her to serve as Communications Director from 2003-2005. She loved writing the newsletter and chatting with donors. She found it touching when the donors asked for prayers and also shared their experiences with the Presentation Sisters. She felt that when they were asking for prayers, she felt a strong responsibility to respond to their requests. She was impressed with how much trust they placed in the Sisters.

Sr. Barbara has found an unexpected but special ministry now that she is a resident in a nursing home removed from her beloved community of sisters. As such she feels that she relies on prayer more than ever before. She feels more in touch with the world at large because of the relationships she has

built with the aides, nurses and other residents. She said to hear their troubles, the difficulties some of the young women have as single mothers and how they ask for her prayers, is humbling. She feels a great responsibility to pray for so many and she hopes that God will particularly hear these prayers because of the trust so many place in her.

Sr. Barbara looks for opportunities for ministry that she wouldn't have otherwise. Sometimes when people are dying or are near death, the family members or nurses will ask her to go and sit with the resident and pray with them as they prepare to meet the Lord. She finds those times to be very moving experiences knowing that they want some sort of religious presence there. She feels she is standing in for a priest as the person prepares to pass. It is, according to Sr. Barbara, a very beautiful experience especially since she was never in any type of health ministry before. A completely new ministry opened up to her because she lives there. She wants people to know that there is life after entering a nursing home even though it is quite different there. It isn't something she would have wanted but there are certainly opportunities for ministering to others.

Finally, when speaking of the future of religious life in general, Sr. Barbara feels that there is one. "There are always going to be people who feel that call from God for some kind of consecrated service to God. It is certainly going to be smaller than we have been in the past. I think we will be doing types of ministry that might be completely different than we have done before. Certainly, laypeople can do as well as the Sisters. I think we are all wondering what will happen as we continue to age and worry about the future. I have confidence that somehow God will work it out. There will be a future."

Celebrating our Jubilarians

Sr. Mary O'Neill (Sr. Mary Nathanael) 70 years



After completing St. Michael's High School in Manhattan, NY

Sister entered the Presentation Sisters in September, 1950. Sr. Mary's artistic skills were recognized early in her life and were an asset not only in her convent life but all through her teaching career. Her early teaching career was spent in the lower grades at St. John's in Goshen and Our Lady of Solace in the Bronx, NY. For several years, Sr. Mary's Middle School students excelled under her guidance at St. Andrew's in Clifton, NJ and St. Mary's in Pompton Lakes, NJ and St. Paul's in Yonkers, NY. She also brought leadership to her position as school principal. In 1984, her concern for the poor brought her to work for Catholic Charities in Marlboro, NY and later as a volunteer for Newburgh Ministries. In her retirement, Sr. Mary has an active prayer ministry at her home in New Windsor, NY.

Sr. Noreen Perelli (Sr. Mary Richard) 70 years

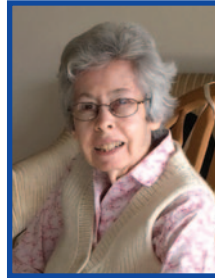


Sister entered the Presentation Sisters in September, 1950 after graduating from St. Michael's

Academy in Manhattan, NY. From 1953 to 1983, Sr. Noreen taught in several schools including St. Andrew's in Clifton, NJ, Holy Rosary, St. Frances of Rome and Our Lady of Solace in the Bronx, NY and St. Mary's in Fishkill, NY. Sr. Noreen's familiarity with the Bronx served her well when she ministered as pastoral

minister for Immaculate Conception Parish in the Bronx until 2011. In her retirement years Sister served as IPA short-term representative at the UN and continues as a pastoral visitor in the parishes of the Wakefield section of the Bronx, NY.

Sr. Sarah Ryan (Sr. Mary Consilia) 70 years



Sr. Sarah graduated from Mount St. Ursula in the Bronx, NY in 1950 and entered the Presentation Sisters in Newburgh that same year. Sr. Sarah was a versatile educator during her long teaching career. Her career began at St. Andrew's in Clifton, NJ and continued at St. Jude's in Manhattan. In 1965, Sister's focus changed to Burke High School in Goshen, NY, Cathedral High School in Manhattan, NY, Cathedral Prep Seminary in Brooklyn, NY, and St. Michael's Academy in Manhattan, NY. Her diverse skills brought Sr. Sarah to Ascension School and Notre Dame School, both in New York City where she filled roles as vice principal, Religion Department Chair and librarian. Since 2015, Sr. Sarah has contributed to various projects, most recently, tutoring a young foreign student enabling him to make up serious gaps in his education.

Sister Grace Gately (Sr. Mary Vincent) 75 years



When young Grace Gately was pursuing her interest in religious life, she surprisingly entered into conversation with her gym teacher, who suggested she contact the sisters at another school she was

affiliated with, the Presentation Sisters at St. Michael's High School in Manhattan. She did, and eventually made that choice, and entered the community on February 2, 1945. Upon her reception, in August of that year, she was given the name Mary Vincent. She made a profession of vows in August of 1947. Sister's long career in teaching began in Our Lady of Solace in Bronx, New York and continued in other schools in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. For several years Sr. Grace coordinated religious education programs in these areas, and was dedicated to pastoral services in St. Paul Parish, Corona, New York. At present she volunteers her services in The Newburgh Ministry in that city in New York, looking back with gratitude on all these experiences as well as on the love and support of the sisters.

Sister Marie Sullivan (Sr. Mary Mercita) 75 years



Sr. Marie Sullivan entered the Sisters of the Presentation in Fitchburg, Massachusetts on September 25, 1945, and received the name Mary Mercita the following year at her reception. She made a profession of vows in August 1948. Sister taught and also served as a librarian for several years in Dioceses of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Her work as a librarian also took her to the Red Cloud Indian High School in South Dakota. Back in Fitchburg, she served as a music instructor at St. Anthony School and later volunteered her services in preparing children for the sacraments and working as a literacy instructor. At present, she lives in Framingham, Massachusetts.

In Memoriam

"The souls of the just are in the hand of God." (Wisdom 3:1-9)

Sr. Enid Storey

(Sr. Mary Noel), passed away on December 4, 2019 at St. Luke's Hospital in Newburgh. She was 78 years old.

Sr. Enid was born in Corona, NY and entered the

Sisters of the Presentation in 1959. She professed her final vows in 1967. Sister earned an MS from SUNY New Paltz and an MS in Nursing from Pace University.

Sr. Enid served as a teacher in New York in Manhattan, the Bronx, Yonkers, and Clifton, NJ and as principal in Rockaway Beach, NY. After serving in the field of education, Sister responded to the congregation's invitation to study nursing. Her gifts of compassion and service would grow due to her

generous response. She worked in the congregation's infirmary and in several hospitals. She then worked in St. Clare's Parish in the Bronx where she visited the homebound. Sr. Enid served on the congregation's leadership team from 1993-1997.

After her time in leadership, Sr. Enid worked for eight years at The Dwelling Place, a shelter for homeless women near Times Square in New York City. Her respect and care of each woman was deeply appreciated by the women and staff and prepared her for her next ministry.

In 2005, Sr. Enid responded to an invitation from the Conference of Presentation Sisters to participate in a collaborative project with other Presentation Sisters from North America. Five sisters, including Sr. Enid, decided to minister in New Orleans, Louisiana among the poor. They had no sooner arrived when the city was struck by Hurricane Katrina. Like so many others, the sisters were homeless and forced to find new

housing. In the midst of their own struggle, they ministered by driving through the streets of New Orleans offering hot coffee and snacks to the homeless. Their work became known as the Lantern Light and it soon expanded into a collaborative effort with the Vincentian and Jesuit Fathers. Hundreds were cared for daily.

Sr. Enid served in New Orleans for 11 years, returning to New Windsor in June 2016 and in 2017 was appointed congregational archivist. Her creativity and joy delighted the staff in the administration center. Her sudden death on December 5, 2019 came as a terrible shock to all.

Sister was a person who loved life. Her great love for the poor overshadowed all she did and all she shared with her Presentation Congregation, her family and her friends. Her life, indeed, was a "Storey" and she is greatly missed.

Sr. Helen Marie Raynor

(Sr. Mary Ruth), passed away on Thursday, April 23, 2020 at the age of 81, at Sapphire Nursing and Rehab Center in Goshen

Sr. Helen Marie was born on August 8, 1938 in Manhattan, New York City and entered the Sisters of the Presentation on September 8, 1956. She professed first vows on April 29, 1959 and final vows on April 29, 1962. She graduated from St. Michael High

School, Manhattan, earned a BS degree from Fordham University and an MS degree from St. Mary of the Woods in Indiana.

During her ministry, Sr. Helen Marie taught at St. Raphael and St. Rose of Lima, Queens; St. Frances of Rome and Our Lady of Solace, Bronx; St. Jude, Manhattan. Sister did mission work in Caracas, Venezuela and also served in Hispanic Ministry in St. Rose of Lima Parish, Manhattan, Sullivan County and St. Patrick's Parish in Newburgh.

Sr. Helen Marie was a strong woman, a woman of principle yet gentle and welcoming. She was so joyous, so playful and so engaging as well as a woman of love, energy and

compassion. Her arms embraced all, especially her family, the poor and all of creation.

Helen's gift of music brought smiles to many faces—the young and the aged. She touched the hearts of those she engaged, especially during the final days of her life—the Health Care Staff at Sapphire Nursing home who sang and prayed with her in her final moments. We do miss Sr. Helen Marie. She leaves us with many precious moments of blessings and joy. Most of all, she leaves us with her passion for all of creation and the poor. May she continue to sing and play in the presence of her God whom she so loved.



“Not Words But Deeds”

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Presentation Sisters Northeast

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Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inspired by our foundress, Nano Nagle, commit ourselves to the Gospel values of hope, justice, freedom, and human dignity. In union with one another, we pledge ourselves to act for and with the poor and oppressed of our world, and to care for the earth.

Prayer Association

Our Sisters are mindful in their daily prayers of the intentions and prayer requests of our friends and benefactors. Masses are offered on the first Wednesday and the third Thursday of each month for all who have asked for prayerful support in the various aspects of their lives. Giving one of our attractively designed cards lets people know that you are remembering them in a unique way during a special time in their lives. The usual donation is \$5.00 to be sent after you have used the card.

If you would like any of our beautiful prayer cards for Birthdays, Healing, Special Occasion, Thinking of You or Sympathy you may send your email requests to missionadvancement@sistersofthepresentation.org or you may write to Mission Advancement Office, 84 Presentation Way, New Windsor, NY 12553.

