



Sharings

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary USA Province
Volume 45 No. 4 Fall 2015



Make my heart
and that of the
Institute
a living flame
that enkindles
the earth.

EDITORS' NOTES

The highlights of Pope Francis' visit to the United States continue to impact persons of all beliefs or even of no religious beliefs. Often as we encounter persons at a meeting or even when shopping they comment on how much they like and appreciate Pope Francis. Mary Motte, in this issue of Sharings sums up the reasons that Pope Francis is so much appreciated. "Francis, the present Pope, is deeply appreciated for his warm and open ecumenical sense of relations, his simplicity of expression, his commitment to the Poor, his determination to be a Church of the Poor. Truly, the gospel of the marginalized is where our credibility is at stake, is discovered and is revealed!"

Another event of note is the Synod on the Family. Pope Francis clarifies the intent of the Synod. "Certainly, the Synod was not about settling all the issue having to do with the family, but rather attempting to see them in the light of the Gospel and the Church's tradition and two thousand-year history, bringing the joy of hope without falling into a facile repetition of what is obvious or already been said." (Excerpt from Pope Francis' discourse at the conclusion of the Synod of Bishops on the Family.)

October 31st at Holy Family Chapel, Fruit Hill, RI, the transfer of Province Leadership was celebrated. See pages 14-16.

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Rosemarie Higgins, fmm, Maryann Alukonis, fmm & Anne Turbiní, fmm

Contents

Our deceased 3
 Thanks, Sr. Amalia, Rights 7
 El Paso, Tree Stewards 8
 Stickney, IL 9
 Mission 10
 Fruit Hill 11
 Dominican Sisters 12
 Call to Leadership 14

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NEXT ISSUE: WINTER

Our Deceased Sisters



Caterina Isonni, fmm
(Giovita di Gesu)

Entered into the fullness of life:
July 15, 2015

Barbara Anne Hogan, fmm
(Andrew Avellino)

Entered into the fullness of life:
July 30, 2015



Mary Elizabeth Cook, fmm
(M. of St. John Cantius)

Entered into the fullness of life:
August 12, 2015



Claire Jacqueline Napoleon, fmm
(M. Claire of St. Francis)

Entered into the fullness of life:
August 19, 2015

Our Deceased Relatives

Michelle Gardner, niece of Claudette Simard, fmm

Quang Dinh, father of Chi Dinh, fmm

Joan Higgins, sister-in-law of Rosemarie Higgins, fmm

Simon-Pierre Gobeil, grandnephew of Marie Paule Gobel, fmm

Ted Gavrituk, brother-in-law of Joyce Gardella, fmm

Cheryl Kavin, Joyce Gardella nephew's mother-in-law

EULOGIES for ...

Caterina Isonni, fmm

Fifty-one years ago in 1964 I met Sr. Caterina when I began to volunteer at the former Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Brighton, MA. She was the second FMM I met and she had a great influence on my life that has brought me to be standing here today. I did not volunteer in her unit but our paths crossed and we became friends and more so, when I entered the FMM's, she was a mentor for/to me. During all these years I have seen her reach out, in her quiet way, to others, to those who most needed not only a listening ear but also a listening and loving heart. As she cultivated and tended flowers in the garden is how she tended those who came into her life—nurturing, encouraging, bringing them to bloom to their fullest potential—showing their inner beauty to the world. Our dear Caterina exemplifies these words of our foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion who wrote: "Every missionary should be a forerunner of Jesus. ...A missionary who is really faithful, is the joy of heaven and earth; she prepares the way of the Lord; her virtue draws many souls to her, and by her to Jesus. In fervent imitation of the Forerunner, a faithful missionary will ascribe to God all the glory and give to Him every heart. ...By her whole life she will repeat these words: 'Jesus must increase and I must decrease.'" (MD:403)

In Caterina's file I found a copy of her 1996 Golden Jubilee Liturgy booklet. On the back cover she had verse 2 from the second chapter of the Song of Songs which says, "My beloved is mine and I am His." This is what I saw in Caterina and what helped me in my decision to enter the FMMs—her witness to me and to others of her deep love for the God to whom she

belonged. This Scripture verse also reflects the following words of Blessed Mary of the Passion and Caterina's life. This quote is from our Foundresses' meditation on the Gospel of John 16:23-30. "...To be one with Jesus, to come forth from Jesus, is to be the Gospel in practice. The prayers of one who lives by the Gospel, by Jesus, by the Trinity, by love, by God, and who walks girded with this unique cord are truly not refused. ...It seemed to me that my prayer, the prayer of one crucified, was pleasing to my God. I hope that if I lead this evangelical life, in the end, I will obtain this dear triumph which I see." (NS:65)

Most of Caterina's sixty-nine years of religious life were lived ministering to children with Special Needs. She cared for them in a thoughtful, sensitive and loving manner assuring that they received quality care and attention. She had the uncanny knack of recognizing and understanding a child's functional level and encouraged the child to reach his or her full potential. Once again, like the flowers in her garden, she helped the children achieve a richer, more beautiful and meaningful life.

On a 1969 Information Sheet Caterina's answer to the question "What are your special interests" was "To be a good Franciscan Missionary of Mary." Her life reflected this thought of Blessed Mary of the Passion: "Sia fatta volonta di Dio." (May God's will be done.) I firmly believe, that, for me, holiness lies therein: to accomplish it perfectly and to desire it for all." (NS:53) I dare say that our dear Caterina accomplished this—par excellence. She lived her life to the full, always concerned about others, bringing God's love to all who came into her life. I firmly believe that we can all say that we are far better persons for having known Caterina.

Ciao cara Caterina. Enjoy your well-earned and deserved peace in the flowering garden of God.

Lois Pereira, fmm



Barbara Hogan, fmm

Our dear Barbara lived most of her religious life in Japan. She was missioned there just before her twenty-third birthday and returned to the US Province just after her seventy-ninth birthday having spent most of her missionary life in her beloved province of Japan. With the exception of a few months to learn the Japanese language in order to pass her nursing exam to practice as a registered nurse in Japan, Barbara's missionary life was in the Seibo Hospital and Clinic in Tokyo.

This holy woman's goodness, kindness and warm, listening heart welcomed an unknown number of religious and lay people who came into her life. Each person was greeted and cared for in Barbara's loving, gentle, caring and empathetic way. These words of our Foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion, seem to epitomize Barbara: "A Franciscan must be kind to all but she should remember that the Divine Master and Francis, His faithful servant, were especially tender to the poor and lowly. ...Meditate on this invitation of Jesus, 'Come to me all you who are burdened and I will refresh you.' " (MD:139) Another quote from our foundress also reflects how Barbara lived her life which was a life of humility and self-forgetfulness. "If we abandon ourselves to love, to follow Jesus on the way to Calvary, we also shall attain the entire detachment from self which alone makes it possible for us to do good to others and which widens our sympathies and our activities. It is essential, if our work is to bear fruit, that we should be free from all glory or self-interest, and that we should find our refuge in the mystery of the Cross, and the love of Mary... Only by this practical detachment shall we be able in our works of mercy to give souls to God." (MD:224)

Barbara's entire religious life was one of caring for others. When it became necessary for Barbara to leave her beloved Japan to return to the US to help care for her sister Grace she did so. She knew that her life of caring for others included her family. One can only imagine what was going on in Barbara's mind and heart as she prepared to leave her home of nearly fifty-two years to return to her land of birth. She returned to a world so new to her and at times overwhelming for her. In one of her reflections written not long after she returned Barbara wrote, "What does it mean for today? ...All I can do is " WAIT and TRUST. This is where I throw myself into the arms of the mercy of my loving God. This is to teach me that God is about to become very real. Some call this

'God's Waiting Room.' As a new stage in my life, the Lord is telling me, 'Don't worry about adjustment, community, prayer life, cooking or health. God knows all this so I should not worry about tomorrow.'

Upon her return to the US Province many sisters met Barbara for the first time and others renewed old friendships with her. Many of us enjoyed and appreciated her keen sense of humor. I used to tease her that having lived out of the country for so many years she had not lost her distinguished accent that identified her as a "Bostonian."

Little by little she adapted herself to life here in the US. She became and active, vital member of Our Lady of Hope community in Brighton an in our Province. In her own unique and humble way she endeared herself to us.

Right up to the end Barbara was alert and interested in what was going on around her. During our Provincial Chapter in June Barbara opted to be an observer because she felt her energy level dwindling. She was very involved in helping others during the Chapter to make sure we were well fortified with snacks and beverages ensuring that we accomplished all our tasks during the meeting.

Barbara's deep faith and trust in God helped her to accept her final days. Not so long ago she wrote, "Trust in God's plan. Surrender to it." In the early morning of July 30 Barbara surrendered to God's plan—to be with Him for eternity."

Thank you dear Barbara for being a part of our lives. May you now rest in peace.

Lois Pereira, fmm

Mary Eliza-



beth Cook, fmm

Our dear sister, Mary Elizabeth Cook, sometimes fondly called "Cookie" was a small woman with a very big and generous heart. As I began this reflection I came across the following words in the writings of our foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion, which to me, fit our dear Mary: "All should bring to the feet of Jesus in the Eucharist a heart that is simple and overflowing with love. ...Let each one cling to whatever may attract her and lead her to Jesus, and let her follow in peace and humility the way which is

most suitable for her." (MD: 3)

After volunteering at Divine Providence Shelter for Children in Manhattan and working as a counselor at Camp St. Helene in Palenville, NY Mary's devotion to the Eucharist deepened and she felt called to our Franciscan Missionary of Mary way of life. Perhaps these words of Mary of the Passion resonated with our Mary's love of the Eucharist: "A vision of the Eucharist was given to me, an image of heaven and of the degree of glory that is tasted there. The Eucharist is earth's heaven; all, if they approach, are in God's presence. But all find joy in the Eucharist according to the degree of charity in their hearts." (NS: 183)

One of Mary's greatest gifts was her charity. Mary was always ready to give of herself to help others. She had a great knack for making everything look beautiful and appealing. She wanted only what was best for others. Kindness and generosity were also high among Mary's gifts and talents. She loved to help arrange, organize and decorate rooms for our sisters, for guests and for different celebrations. If any of you are familiar with the programs on HGTV you will agree that Mary would be highly ranked among the program's interior decorators.

Mary's years of overseas mission and mission here in the US brought much joy, love and peace to those with whom she lived and ministered. Her mission was always one of giving of self. This is reflected in these words of Mary of the Passion: "I am offering myself, it seems to me, as never before perhaps, and small and fresh like a child, in order to refuse nothing to my God." (NS: 269). Mary, throughout her life, whether in Goa or Bombay or the US, was continually giving of herself to others, making sure that everyone had what was needed, that rooms were in order, visitors were warmly greeted and cared for—no stone was left unturned when it came to helping others.

Her life of service was not without suffering as we all witnessed especially these past few months. Her life of victimhood, which we profess in our vows with these words: "I offer my life for the Church and for the salvation of souls." (FMM Formula for Perpetual Profession) became a lived reality. Mary of the Passion tells us: "If we are to be victims who will persuade God to grant immense graces to His Church, we cannot be sham religious, but true serious religious, very pious, living a life of love, prayer and sacrifice. This is what I am going to ask Our Lord; that my daughters may help me to obtain this grace by being very faithful and by inspiring others with this same fidelity." (CR/2: 191)

I can only believe Mary's suffering these last few months brought salvation somewhere in our world. I am sure that through her suffering Mary sanctified herself and surely has contributed to the coming of God's Kingdom.

Dear Mary, may you now rest in the peace that you so rightly earned and deserve.

Lois Pereira, fmm



Claire Jacqueline Napoleon, fmm

On an Institute Information sheet Claire's response to the question - What are your special interests? - was social service - working with the underprivileged. Her life certainly radiated that response. After her high school graduation Claire worked but found time to volunteer at McMahon Children's Services in Manhattan. Like many of us who volunteered with our sisters at different health or child care sites, God spoke to Claire through the children but even more so when one of our sisters asked Claire if she had ever thought of entering religious life. Thus began Claire's journey of service as a Franciscan Missionary of Mary to many, many underprivileged persons - men, women and children of diverse cultural backgrounds-in various area of our country.

On September 15, 1960 Claire entered the FMM's here at Fruit Hill and for nearly fifty-five years dedicated her life in service to others. Our foundress, Blessed Mary of the Passion wrote: "Let us nourish our charity at the same sources, and when we find great spiritual or physical misery in our neighbor, let us love him and give him of our best." (MD: 670). Claire exemplified these words during her life - always giving of her best to those who came to her in their time of need. Claire also gave tremendous service to our sisters when she served the province as Provincial Councilor and served her community as local treasurer - once again always at the service of others.

Though Claire's mission experiences were here in the US she had the privilege of visiting the refugee camps in Thailand where she witnessed first-hand the sufferings Cambodians went through before coming to Rhode Island as refugees. Claire's five year ministry with the Catholic Social Services Office in the Diocese of Providence was a challenging but at the same time a rewarding ministry. Because of her lived experience in an international religious community she was more ready to reach out to those coming to a new culture.

She drew on her community experiences, her experience at an international session in Rome with our sisters and her social work background to help the teen-agers adjust to a new way of life.

In other social service organizations Claire worked tirelessly to help with the placement of children in foster homes, counseling those wishing to adopt children, coordinating family visits and reuniting families. These words of Mary of the Passion might express what Claire experienced in her various missions: "Lord, grant that I may see! I ask my God to give me His light for the work I have to do. I feel quite incapable of doing it yet I am at peace, for I feel that I desire all that He desires. I remain in contemplation before this God, to whose good pleasure I earnestly wish to be more and more closely united." (NS: 206).

In her ministries Claire learned to wait, to be a listening presence with an open heart. She learned not to have expectations of others based on her own cultural experiences. She was able to do more than she thought possible because of her trust and dependence on her loving God. Perhaps these words of Mary of the Passion say what Claire was experiencing: "...it is not upon my own strength that I rely but in the help of the Lord." (MD: 259).

Her background as a social worker opened Claire's eyes to the reality of the situations around her and beyond. It was a cross for her to no longer be able to be "out and about". As Claire's health deteriorated and she required more assistance she was missioned to Ein Karim community with residence at Saint Antoine Residence. In the early morning of August 18, the Feast of St. Helen, Claire responded peacefully to God's final call to mission - to be with Him for eternity.

Dear Claire, may you now enjoy your new life in the arms of your loving God.

Lois Pereira, fmm



Thank You!

Dear Sisters,

Thank you for all your prayers for my niece, Michelle Gardner, throughout her five years of intense suffering. Your loving thoughts and prayers were a constant force that gave Michelle strength and courage to face her illness without complaining or discouraging, but she always had great hope. Our dear Lord suddenly surprised all of us, the family, when He called Michelle to come with Him as He had a room prepared for her in Heaven. Your prayers also helped Sarah her daughter, Sue, Michelle's mother, to believe and write:

Michelle is with the Lord
She has gained strength,
She is soaring like an eagle
Walks and is not tired
Sees and is not weary.

Love never leaves,
It lives within our hearts.

Thank you, dear Sisters, for all your prayers and support.

Love and prayers,
Claudette, fmm



Sr. Amalia Gandarillas 97th Birthday



Sister's special day began with our daily Mass and special greetings on her birthday. A small get-together with resident FMMs and other Fmms from Fruit Hill joined together for a party with all the trimmings. Needless to say Sr. Amalia was delighted. She read

her many cards and prayerful wishes, enjoyed her little gifts and flowers. Sr. Amalia wishes to send her deep appreciation to each and all for their kindness remembering her birthday. She assures all that she holds them in her daily prayers, and is grateful for their thoughtfulness.

Emilie Duchaney, fmm

RIGHTS



It seems today that everyone has rights. We are constantly reminded of this in conversations, television, news media, tweets, Facebook and email. A right to housing, a right to food, a right to water, a right to privacy, a right to worship etc. etc. etc. NGO's worked for 3 or 4 years to have the word "clean" water inserted

in UN documents. Take a minute and think what the difference means between a right to water and a right to clean water. These things are important on the local and international scene. However, it seems that there never is a discussion that for every right, there is a responsibility.

John D Rockefeller once said, "Every right implies a responsibility, Every opportunity, an obligation, Every possession, a duty." These days we trumpet out rights to free WiFi, cell phones, instant access to everything, and never consider the difference between needs and want. A right to possess a gun and to use it whenever and however we want seems to be the latest concern.

During one month in Chicago, Illinois, 62 people died from the use of guns. The number of firearms produced every minute in the US is 8, the number of firearms in the US is 223 million. The number of deaths due to firearms in over 13,000 a year. Whose rights? Whose responsibilities?

Edmund Burke once said, "all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men (and women) to do nothing."

Mary T. Plante, fmmfmm



Michael O'Malley, nephew of Sr. Noreen O'Malley, fmm, came to visit the gravesite of Sr. Noreen. He is from Ireland and was in New York for a visit and so traveled to Fruit Hill, RI.

El Paso, TX

Friends of the FMMs

A while back one of our friends asked if we had an Associate Program here in the U.S. She really wanted to be part of our Order as a lay person. Some time after that, Sr. Margaret Culloty came to visit us here in El Paso and she told us about the "Friends of the FMMs" which they have in Ireland. This program is in some ways similar to an Associate Program. I then asked Sr. Lois if we could begin one here to which she said "yes." We finally began this program on the feast of St. Francis 2015!

The group consists of our "friends" here. We started with 5 women who love the spirit of St. Francis. There are others who are interested who will join us for the next meeting, but these 5 were the core group consisting of Gladys, Carmen, Karen, Gloria and Angela.

We began with an Evening Prayer Service in honor of St. Francis. A meal followed where everyone brought

something. We then explained the purpose of this group. We will have meetings every other month. We will have time to pray together ... to have a short Adoration...to share fellowship with a meal ... followed by some input about St. Francis, St. Clare, Bl. Mary of the Passion, Bl. Assunta and our Saintly Martyrs taking a different one at each meeting, as well as other items as the words of Pope Francis. We also want to share with them articles from the "Meeting Place" as well as "Sharings."

At this first meeting, we spoke about our Charism and some of the sayings of Bl. Mary of the Passion. We also asked them for their ideas. Immediately they asked to share in our outreach to the poor, especially at Christmas time...to provide a meal for a family and deliver Christmas gifts.

They were all excited about their new adventure and so were we! We ask for your prayers that it will truly bring the joy of St. Francis and our Bl. Mary of the Passion in their hearts.

Marie Cinotti, fmm & Betty Keegan, fmm



Tree Stewards

This fall at Fruit Hill, the tree foliage has been spectacular. Trees that were planted these past 10 year of the Tree Program have grown in height and in leaf spread. Our warm weather has been extended so that flowers and vegetable are starting to grow again. Who can doubt "climate change?"

Two of our faithful FMM Tree Stewards Anne Dundin and Mari Garesche are out every day, weather permitting, beautifying and tidying the land and shrines.



Anne Dundin, fmm
clearing St. Michael's
Shrine.



Mari Garesche, fmm
clearing leaves and
invasive Ivy.

Stickney, IL

It was a busy summer for us here in Stickney. It began with preparing for and attending the Provincial Chapter, which was a joy for all of us. We returned to our community for just a week before five of us set out again for our annual retreat in the wonderful woods of the Portiuncula Retreat Center run by the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart in Frankfort IL. The retreat was on the *Cosmic Christ and the Fruits of the Spirit* given by Br. Michael Crosby, OFM Cap.

Our return from retreat overlapped with the arrival of two young women and two young men - one a seminarian - coming to our parish to run the summer Totus Tuus program initiated by Pope John Paul II. Totus Tuus is a six-week summer program in which young people gather together for input and training and are then sent out in groups of four to run six-day catechetical camps of spiritual input and games at successive parishes throughout a diocese or region. We housed the two young women, Caroline and Claire. They inspired us with the dedication and energy they poured into their work with the children and teens in the parish.

While the rest of the community was tending to our visitors, Margaret and I took a road trip to the University of Notre Dame, IN to participate in a vocations event for young adults serving as ACE volunteers. ACE (Alliance for Catholic Education) is a program where young people volunteer to teach in disadvantaged schools throughout the country while gaining a master's in education from the University of Notre Dame. It is generally a two-year commitment and is geared toward young adults who do not have a background in teaching and might be looking for something more fulfilling to do with their lives.



Margaret and Sheila with
Religious Sisters at Notre Dame

We were invited to represent the missionary form of religious life, together with those representing apostolic, monastic and cloistered communities. After brief introductions, the young women were invited in two 10-minute periods to sit at table with the presenters of their choice for deeper sharing. The event was very well organized and even included a progressive dinner where the young people moved to a new table with each course in order to talk to more sisters.

Visiting Notre Dame fulfilled a long-standing wish of Margaret. And she was not disappointed. Although we took pictures of the dome and enjoyed the 4-star accommodations, the outstanding feature of the campus was the amazing grotto to Our Lady tucked around the corner from the church and overlooking one of the lakes. The grotto was large and well-heated by the hundreds of candles burning at all hours, adding to the prayers of the ever-present faithful.

Another wonderful fruit of the weekend was that we reconnected with Katie, a young woman who had visited our community during a nun run 2 years previous. As she had a week available before returning to her teaching assignment in New Orleans and would be in Chicago, she asked if she could come and stay with us for a few days of discernment. We happily welcomed her to our community a week later, just as the Totus Tuus women were leaving us.

The remainder of our summer included a lot of community events and outings, but now we are settled back into the activities of fall and a new school year. Kim Anh and Minh Huong have returned to Benedictine University and are with us each weekend. They are now taking some university classes while keeping up with their ESL (English as a Second Language) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) studies. Margaret has begun her year-long residency in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Rush University Medical Center. Alicia continues to work as business manager at St. Donatus parish in Blue Island. Bea is volunteering at a hospital and nursing home and keeping us in touch with our neighbors through an exchange of gardening fruits and baked goods. I continue to work part-time at Huntington Learning Center while ministering to young adults at the University of Chicago and St. Francis University in Joliet. Finally, we ask your prayers for Rosario, Katie, and Natasha - who participated in this year's nun run who is currently teaching in Palestine. Many thanks and blessings as we journey together toward God's Kingdom.

Sheila Lehmkuhle, fmm

"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among the nations." (Psalm 67)



The School of World Mission, now the School of Intercultural Studies of Fuller University celebrated its fiftieth anniversary October 21 -24. Many who teach there then and now have made and continue to make major contributions to the theological study and practice of Mission around the world. With Catholic and Conciliar Protestants, these Pentecostal and Evangelical women and men have been creating a new missionary dynamic. The planners for this event Professors Amos Yong, Scott Sundquist, and Charles Van Engen included representatives from the different continents, different Christian traditions, including the Roman Catholic, to explore how this is happening.

Psalm 67 enfolded the meaning of the seminar, enlivened by song, instruments and Lectio Divina. The image of Francis singing the Praises of God unexpectedly rose to mind. The plan for the seminar was rooted in the past and launched into the future of the next 50 years. The preliminary session Tribal Stories consisted in oral history from some of those who knew the early figures at Fuller. Presentations during the following days opened our thinking towards the future:

- ✦ Fuller's vision of God's Mission and Theological Education in the New Context of Global Christianity, Wonsuk Ma – Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, London;
- ✦ Seeing with Church Growth Eyes: The Global impact of SWM/SIS on the Development of the Indigenous Church Movement, Sarita Gallagher – George Fox University, Oregon;
- ✦ Who is Our Cornelius? Learning from Fruitful Encounter at the Boundaries of Mission, Pascal Bazzell – Humboldt University, Berlin;
- ✦ Innovation at the Margins, Jayakumlar Christian – World Vision International, Chennai;
- ✦ Eschatology and Mission: A Latin American Perspective, Pablo Deiros – Vice-President of the International Baptist Seminary, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- ✦ What Does Rome have to Do with Pasadena? Connecting Roman Catholic Missiology with SWM/SIS

Innovations, Stephen Bevans, svd – Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

- ✦ Revisiting Mission in, To, and From Europe through Contemporary Image-Formation: A Missiological Manifesto, Anne-Marie Kool – Evangelical Theological Seminary Osijek, Croatia
- ✦ Declaring the Wonders of God in our own Tongues? Africa, Mission and the Making of World Christianity, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu – Trinity Theological Seminary, Accra, Ghana
- ✦ Rethinking the nature of Christian Mission: A South Korean Perspective, Moonjang Lee – Full time pastor in South Korea
- ✦ Mission in the Islamic World: Making, John Azuma – Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia
- ✦ Emergence of New Paths: The Future of Mission in Roman Catholicism, Mary Motte, fmm – Mission Resource Center Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, North Providence, RI
- ✦ Mission Trajectories in the 21st Century Pluralistic World: Interfaith Roads Best Graveled, Terry Muck – Louisville Institute, Louisville, Kentucky

Friendships were renewed and new friends affirmed in the midst of serious listening and energetic conversations. Now the organizers will be working with the presenters to prepare all the texts for publication. As one friend from Latin America said to me, we are all travelling along diverse paths, but they all lead to the same end. Oh, and I should mention, Francis, the present Pope, is deeply appreciated for his warm and open ecumenical sense of relations, his simplicity of expression, his commitment to the Poor, his determination to be a Church of the Poor. "Truly, ... the gospel of the marginalized is where our credibility is at stake, is discovered and is revealed!" (Pope Francis, February 2015)

Mary Motte, fmm



Laudato Si Inspires a Story about Fruit Hill Day Program



At the dawn of Pope Francis' visit to the United States the Catholic Sisters network – "The Nuns on the Bus" put a request for different life stories depicting the urgency for the Government not to cut back on the programs that support the poor. In his latest encyclical - *Laudato Si*, the Pope speaks of the abandonment of the elderly which inspired me to write three stories about our Fruit Hill Day Center (FHDSE) participants. In our mission at FHDSE we respect the dignity of every person as a Gift from God, and enriched by their gifts, we minister to their needs. Received assistance to small programs like ours enables so many elderly to maintain their value and dignity to the end.

These women and men, now suffering the effects of age, have spent their lives for others - families and neighbors, church and society.

Jack was a recognized football coach whose health was declining due to brain injuries he suffered as a younger man. He was diagnosed with a progressive degenerative dementia that claimed his cognitive and physical functions. His wife asked us to help to care for him at the Center during the day. As his condition worsened, Jack's anxiety increased and his behavior became unpredictable. One day we were preparing to hold religious services at the Center. I was unsure if Jack would be able to participate and shared this concern with his wife. She smiled and said: "Sister, it is very easy, tell Jack he is an altar boy today and see what will happen". She was right. When I told Jack that today he would be an altar boy, he immediately folded his hands in prayer and remained that way throughout the Mass. At that moment I became aware that this memory had touched something deep within Jack – a

memory became alive that broke through all the barriers and communicated a deep peace and dignity to me.

If you wish to read more FHDSE stories please go to: nunsonthebus.net

Barbara Dopierala, fmm



Providence ISP



The Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) has come to Rhode Island. Providence ISP retreats are being held at the Bethany Renewal Center operated by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in North Providence. Sister Yvette Hubert, FMM is the retreat center director.

Each ISP retreat will involve about 10 retreatants and 3 retreat coordinators. The first men's ISP retreat was held the weekend of September 12 & 13. The first ISP women's retreat was held the weekend of September 26 & 27. All the men on the first retreat enjoyed the retreat very much citing particularly the open sharing of faith, interior life, and significant personal experiences. At the conclusion of the first men's retreat Sister Yvette said she could see that the men were different when they departed than when they arrived.

ISP began in 1998 when friends, Ed Shurna, a long-time community organizer and Bill Creed, SJ, a renowned spiritual director, came together in the hopes of creating an experience to help build community, hope and transformation among those experiencing homelessness. Bill and Ed found that the spiritual life was a source of hope amid deep discouragement. They developed a retreat that drew upon the 500 year old tradition of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola in the contemporary language of the 12-step recovery movement. The ISP network has grown to almost 30 cities across the US and Canada and includes over 800 volunteers serving over 2,000 retreatants a year through over 200 retreats.

Providence is the newest startup in the ISP network. Providence ISP was launched July 1, 2015. Bill Waters and Colette Cook, who met each other through the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) of New England, are the ISP Co-Coordinators. Men and women who have experienced homelessness and who are in recovery from alcohol and/or drug addiction are recruited from local service providers such as Anchor Recovery Center,

Crossroads, and McAuley House. The two day retreats at Bethany Renewal Center will be supplemented with half day Reunion Retreats and monthly prayer groups at St. Patrick's Church on Smith Hill in Providence.



Two Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary will be staying with our Sisters in the Bronx for 3-4 years while studying at the College of New Rochelle. They wrote to introduce themselves.

Dear Sisters,



I would like to introduce myself. I am Sr. Teresa Duong Thi Bach Mai and I am a member of the Congregation of the Dominican sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary in Phu Cuong Diocese in Vietnam.

I grew up in a happy family. I have seven siblings and I am the sixth. I have three brothers, two older sisters and a younger sister. All of them are married. So, I have many nephews and nieces. My mother died 8 years ago when I began the Pre-novitiate. I had a good mother. Her love still affects my thinking very much. I miss my mother and pray for her every day. My father is old and in bad health. I usually call him and ask about his health. I feel happy when I think about my family.

When I was young, I wanted to be a sister. I have been in my congregation for fifteen years. I made my first vows in 2009. I studied Theology from 2009 to 2011. After that I was missioned to our Orphanage. I took care of 28 orphans. I loved my orphans so much. While I was working there, my Superior General called me to go the U.S. (Maybe she wants to test my loyalty to my religious life when I have an opportunity to live in the country called "heaven.") I did not have enough time to prepare myself with knowledge about the US, English, and psychology, so I was worried about my abilities and everything in the new environment. However, I deeply feel the abundant blessings of God that poured upon me through the hospitality and kindness of all sisters of the congregation of the Charity of the Incarnate Word, the Vietnamese families, friends, the groups of Formation Support for Vietnam, and all people I met in the U.S. Especially, I thank God because I have a new family at Myriam Community with the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

I came to the U.S. one year and nine months ago. Before coming to New York I studied English in Houston Community College and lived with sisters C.C.V.I. In Houston, I did not have a scholarship for the ESL studies. I finished the ESL program there. Fr. Peter Bao Quoc Nguyen, who is the leader of FSVN, obtained a scholarship for me at The College of New Rochelle. I will study Social Work. When I finish my studies at this college, I will go back to Vietnam to serve.

Thank you so much for giving me a chance to live at the Myriam Community, for your kindness, generosity, and sympathy towards my poor English.

I wish all of you good health, happiness and abundant blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

United in prayer,

Teresa Duong Mai



Bronx, October, 2015

Dear Sisters,

I want to say “ Hello” to all the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.



I am Sister Mary Diem Pham. I belong to the Congregation of Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary in Phu Cuong diocese, Vietnam. My congregation has nearly 200 sisters and we are working in pastoral ministry, teaching in the kindergarten, serving the orphans, and doing social work for the street children from poor families.

I have two younger brothers, three younger sisters, a sister-in-law and two nephews. I am the only one who is a religious. My parents are very glad because I am devoting my life to God. They are always praying and encouraging me to live forever with God. I entered my congregation in 1997, and I took first vows on August 1st, 2005. Afterwards, I studied theology for three years at the Inter-Congregational Dominican Institute of Saint Thomas in Vietnam. I professed my final vows on August 6th, 2011. When I was in Vietnam, I taught catechism to children, participated in teaching free class for illiterate children coming from poor families. I was very happy and peaceful with my ministry.

Religious vocations in Vietnam are increasing, especially in the women’s religious congregations. My general superior recognized the need for our sisters to have advanced education. Thus she assigned Sister Theresa Duong Mai and me to further studies so that we may better serve the Church and our congregation when we return to Vietnam. We came to the US on December 29th, 2013. We lived with the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston, Texas. I spent nearly 2 years studying ESL (English as a second language) at Houston Community College. In the beginning it was a hard time because everything was new for me, i.e. English language, foods and Western culture. I felt the biggest challenge was the English language. I tried my best to study English and adjust to a new environment. I finished my ESL studies on May 15th, 2015. I came to New York on August 11th, 2015 because I have a scholarship from The College of New Rochelle. I am living in the Miriam Community in the Bronx. I am a freshman of The College of New Rochelle, and I am studying psychology. Before moving to the New York, I was fretting about things like what I would study, who would I live with, and where I would live. But this

feeling is gone now since I came to live with the FMM’s. I feel peaceful, warm and happy as if I were living in my own congregation. It is a delight to see a loving community interact and enjoy each other’s company. They are willing to help us to improve our English skills, love and care about our studying and our lives. I really love supertime because we share news, our daily life, and how our studying is coming along. All the sisters have funny stories to share, and I really love this moment. I realize that the real lives of the sisters are examples of faith in action. This is a great role model for me to follow in my spiritual journey. They have offered me the opportunity not only to have the best environment to enrich my knowledge but also to strengthen my personal experience, courage and desire in the service of other for “ the greater glory of God.” I feel that I am so lucky and happy because I here.

Thank you so much for everything that you have done for us. No words can express how much I appreciate your generosity and your kindness. May God’s grace fill your heart with joy, peace, good health and happiness. May God bless the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in your works for the Church.

Your kindness and caring are a reflection of God’s love. I look forward to meeting many of you while we are here in the US you. Kindest regards,

Sister Mary Diem Pham

Korea

Sr. Mary

Dalton, Aka “Bunny”, shared an event with photos.

During an unexpected vacation Mary and Sr. Regina, who was on home visit, spent time walking at a beach.



Trinity Community Scarfs for Shelter a Team Effort



Agnes Begley, fmm shows Veronica, fmm some of the scarfs she has knitted this past year. It was a team effort. Agnes knits the scarf; Zanna, staff, does the fringe; Veronica knits the hats. The Sisters hope that they help to keep some less fortunate friends warm this winter.



Call to Leadership



At the Service of Unity

United States Province
October 31, 2015

At Holy Family Chapel, Fruit Hill, we celebrated in prayer the transfer of provincial leadership from Lois Pereira, fmm to Noreen Murray, fmm. Our

prayer service began in song ... "Gather us, O God, body spirit, soul and mind, Gather us, O God, one in union now with you."



The entrance procession included the Paschal candle, our Constitutions and Province Plan, candle and oil for anointing followed by new and old leadership teams.

At the end of our Psalm we prayed

Glory to you, God of Hope!
Glory to you, Jesus who is our Hope
Glory to you, Holy Spirit, who enables us to hope.
Oh, yes. Affirm the work that we do! (Psalm 90)

Readings for our service were taken from our FMM Scriptures -

The spirit of our missionary vocation is to bring the whole world to Jesus Christ. (MD, 800)

Our hearts should overflow with the mercy which assists, which excuses, and which even forgives.... (MD, 382)

"Courage – confidence!" (Mother St. Agnes)

Journeying together we can strengthen each other with this hope-filled greeting. (Maura O'Connor)

Mary of Nazareth, our sister on our journey, will show us how to ponder all things in our hearts and to be open to receive the blessings that God wants to grant to us, so as to continue God's mission of Love for the world.

(Suzanne Philips)

Sr. Lois invited Noreen to come forward to anoint her.



Lois: Noreen, you have been called to the service of provincial in the United States province. Eight years ago I was called to the service of the United States province. I have tried to do the work of God, and to be faithful to where Christ led us at that moment of history. With trust and confidence I pass this service on to you, Noreen.



Receive this light, Noreen. Be yourself a flame that enkindles the earth. Walk with your God and be without fear. "Let our gardener, God, landscape you with the Word, making a salvation-garden of your life." (James 1:21)

Noreen: Counting on God's Faithfulness and Love, and on the love and fidelity of the sisters God has given me, I accept the service of provincial as together we walk the firm path which we know to be the work of God.

And we responded -

Noreen, we welcome you as our provincial. We will collaborate with you in the mission confided to us as Franciscan Missionaries of Mary here in the United

States. We will walk with you through the days ahead in the Gospel service for the Kingdom to which we have been called. We pray the Holy Spirit to guide you in this service you so generously undertake; we pray the Holy Spirit to guide us in genuine co-responsibility.

What joy as the Sisters welcomed Noreen ...



Our blessing prayer of thanks and welcome for Lois and Noreen





Noreen thanks Lois & her council ...

anoints new councilors ...

presents each a candle ...
signifying her YES to this
ministry of service.

We pray -

Blessed are you, loving God, who has gifted us to be Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.
Make our hearts and that of the Institute living flames to enkindle the earth.



Newly Elected Provincial Council 2015

L-R: Pauline Gilmore, fmm, Sheila Lehmkuhle, fmm,
Noreen Murray, fmm, provincial, Barbara Dopierala, fmm , Betty Keegan, fmm