

REFLECTIONS

# & *Connections*

AUGUST 2017



2017 CSA ASSOCIATE AND SISTER JUBILARIANS



For names and years of our 2017 Jubilarians, please see page 2.

## STORIES OF MISSION & MINISTRY



### CSA

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
Promoting Justice, Building Community

# Dear Friends,



The harvest season is upon us. It is a time to enjoy the fruits, vegetables, flowers and crops of this fecund time of year. Farmers, gardeners, and planters have sown seeds, and the bounty of the earth brings forth riches to be enjoyed and shared by all God's people.

The bounty of God is reaped not only in the fruits of the earth. This bounty also comes through the graciousness with which we approach one another in the ups-and-downs of life as well as how we respond to the needs of those we encounter in the course of our daily living. We have come to recognize that some form of the golden rule – to do unto others as we would have them do to us – is part of every faith tradition. Following this rule by all of us has the potential to lead to a richness of life beyond what any material realities can provide. The greatest gifts – faith, hope, and love – flow from the graciousness of our God who does not hold back on creation. Everything that God has made, and continues to hold in being, is good.

All people are invited to participate in the mission of God. This mission shared with each of us invites us to love one another as God has loved us. The invitation resounds in the words of a contemporary hymn, "The harvest is plenty and laborers are few. Come with me into the fields. Your arms may grow weary, your shoes will wear thin. Come with me into the fields."

Come, let us join one another in the bountiful fields of life!

In the peace and love of Christ,

Sister Jean Steffes, CSA  
General Superior

## On the Cover

### St. Agnes Jubilarians Honored

*Thirty-five members of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes celebrated anniversaries of their religious profession on June 25 at Holy Family Catholic Church. In addition, four associates were recognized for their years of commitment to CSA.*

#### 75 Years ~ top left photo

*L to R: Sisters Clare Haman and Rachel Doerfler*

#### 70 Years ~ top middle photo

*L to R: Sisters Mary Neff, Bertha Ann Miller, Bertha Bumann Back: Sister Mary Alice Walters*

#### 60 Years ~ top right photo

*Front Row L to R: Sisters Stella Marie Karls, Rose Andre Miller, Mary Hornung, Ann McKean*

*Back Row L to R: Sisters Esperanza Rico, Anne Jude Van Lanen, Grace Buckreis, Wilhelmina Schoch, Dianne Bergant, Vivian Kleinsorge, Laverne Miller, Carla Crave, Marcus Gmeinder, Mary Ann Bogosoff*

#### 50 Years ~ bottom left photo

*Front Row L to R: Sisters Mary Rose Obholz, Marilyn Bever, Mary Menke, Guadalupe Ortiz, Kathleen Cook, Rita Kramer*

*Middle Row L to R: Sisters Mary Noel Brown, Judith Vander Grinten, Jean Steffes, Rhea Emmer*

*Back Row L to R: Susan Kolb, Patricia Hayes, Kathleen Schweih, Joleen Retzer*

#### 15 Years ~ bottom middle photo

*Sister Dulce María Rodríguez*

#### 15 & 25 Years ~ Associate Jubilarians ~ bottom right photo

*L to R: Associates Ann Palm, Mary Jagdfeld, Ellen Swan, Carol Knight*

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# Archives Intern at *St. Agnes Convent*

BY JENNY LUKOMSKI, CSA ARCHIVIST

In the spring of 2017, Jennifer Lukomski, archivist at St. Agnes Convent, mentored Marian University senior, Cyndi Trent, in an internship through Marian's new public history program. Cyndi had previously worked as an intern at the Wade House in Greenbush, Wisconsin. Because she enjoys the organizational aspect of archival work, she was eager to round out her education through experience in actual archives.

A native of Texas, Cyndi moved north and received her degree at UW-Fond du Lac while also working at the Fond du Lac Children's Museum. Because of her interest in history, she knew that someday she would like to work at a history museum. Her fiancé, Jeramie, also a student at Marian, encouraged her to follow her dream. She enrolled at Marian as a history major with a concentration in public history.

During her internship at St. Agnes Convent, Cyndi worked on three projects: organizing the congregation's sponsorship records, beginning an inventory of artwork and artifacts stored at the convent, and putting together a new exhibit for the motherhouse display case. Her favorite part of the experience was working on the art and artifact inventory and hearing about the history of the different pieces. She also enjoyed learning the terminology and procedures for properly cataloging the items.

Cyndi is grateful for the internship opportunity at CSA. "It's very empowering working with the sisters. As a woman, being immersed in the history of the women who did so much for the growth of Fond du Lac was a great learning experience." She is currently looking forward to beginning her new position on the museum staff at the Wade House.



Intern Cyndi Trent



Sister Mary Rose Obholz shown with Georgina González and Oraldo Rodríguez Flores who are in the process of applying for U.S. citizenship.

# Mexico Border, CSA Presence

Sister Marilyn Bever teaching a citizenship class in Douglas, AZ to a group of "Lawful Permanent Residency" holders.



BY VALERIE GRACZYK,  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

For the past thirty years, Sisters of St. Agnes have been a missionary presence in the Mexican border towns of Naco, Douglas, and Bisbee, in Southeast Cochise County, Arizona. Today, surrounded by majestic mountains and within site of the border wall, five CSA members live and minister, each using her particular gifts, each one attracted to the beauty of such a desolate area.

Sister Kathy Cook, Sister Susan Kolb and Sister Christi Ann Laudolff, all former teachers, live on a ranch near Bisbee. Creating a labyrinth to walk while meditating and praying is one way Sister Kathy serves. "We welcome anyone to stop by and walk the labyrinth," shared Sister Kathy. "I grew up on a farm and learned to fix

equipment. I enjoy gardening, cutting the grass, and working with the land. It is very satisfying to keep our home running smoothly," said this retired educator.

"The Congregation has always been involved in human rights issues. We are committed to respect the dignity of all people and what better place to protect people's rights than here on the border," said Sister Susan. "In 2002, I passed the law exam and became a lawyer working on legal issues involving immigration," continued Sister Susan. "My work covered a three-county area for Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc. I handled hundreds of cases, particularly preparing applications for permanent residency. When I retired in 2013, I began a pro bono nonprofit called "We Are One Family Immigration Project."

Currently, I have 60 clients. Completing hundreds of different forms would be impossible without the help of Sister Christi Ann. She is invaluable to me in this work.”

Sister Mary Rose Obholz and Sister Marilyn Bever live in Bisbee, Arizona, just seven miles from Naco. Both are teachers for English Language Learning Classes and Citizenship classes. “We have about twenty-five students with permanent residency status and all the rights of a U.S. citizen except the right to vote. We prepare them to take the test necessary to become citizens,” shared Sister Marilyn.

Occasionally, Sister Mary Rose crosses the Mexican border into Naco Sonora. “I know several families who live across the border and I have been able to support them as they moved through the process to apply for U.S. citizenship. One couple, Georgina González and Oraldo Rodríguez Flores, have lived in Naco Sonora all their lives. “I am a middle school teacher and my husband is a retired science teacher,” smiled Georgina. “Two of our three sons and four of our grandchildren are U.S. citizens. Because we have visas, we can cross the border for weekend visits with them. We ourselves are in the process of applying for citizenship.”

The five members of CSA experience the deep appreciation of the people they have supported in the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams to become U.S. citizens.



Sister Susan Kolb (center) attending a Naturalization Ceremony in Tucson with clients.

## *In Memoriam...* Walking with God



Sister Mary Mollison, CSA  
June 30, 2017

Sister Mary Mollison was born on November 2, 1946, in Niles, Michigan.

She made first profession of vows in CSA on August 15, 1969. Sister Mary received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Marian College in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Later she earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as a Master of Arts in Theology from Felician University in New Jersey.

Sister Mary was CSA Corporate Director of Sponsorship for eleven years. She was elected to leadership for the congregation first as general vicar, then as general superior of CSA. Following her service as general superior of CSA, Sister Mary continued to have an integral role in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and international organizations which promoted the mission of women religious into the future and those which addressed urgent issues for Catholic healthcare.

*For full obituaries go to [www.csasisters.org](http://www.csasisters.org). Memorials can be sent to the CSA Development Office or through the website.*



Sister Deb and Hanley

# Teamwork

## Sister Deborah and Hanley

Hanley meets a patient.

BY SISTER ANITA HENNING, CSA  
GENERAL COUNCILOR

**D**o you ever have difficulties putting into words what is in your heart? That's exactly what often happens when young people go to counseling. Sister Deborah Walter is a counselor at both Marian University in Fond du Lac, and Church Health Services in Beaver Dam, WI. Her counseling will soon include a dog.

Sister Deb says, "Having the opportunity to work with an Animal Assisted Therapy Dog is an experience of connecting on a deeper level without pumping clients with intrusive questions. Experiences of having a dog present in the counseling room taught me a new way to reach clients. One of those times was with a teenager who had written a suicide letter. Her social worker gave me the letter before I entered my office. As I entered, there sat Thunder, a dog who is a certified good citizen, right next to her like Velcro. He sensed her sadness before we started talking. The girl opened up about the letter and found it easier to express her feelings while petting the dog. These experiences and more moved me to commit to the training process of Hanley."

Hanley came into Sister Deb's life on March 17. He is a playful puppy and brings joy into the lives of the people he meets. He has started his 20-week training to become a therapy dog and by October will be ready for full-time work. Besides classes Hanley spends time each week with Sister Deb at Church Health Services.

Thea O'Connor, Executive Director of Church Health Services, says, "In the mental health area, therapy dogs have proven very useful as a therapeutic tool, especially with children. We are so excited to have Deb and Hanley as part of our team. Hanley comes to work two days a week and has an immediate impact on the people who are in the building, not just the mental health patients! Our staff can't wait for him to come in so they can get their therapy, a hug and kiss from Hanley! As he gets older and more trained, there are many areas in which he can be useful: individual therapy sessions, therapy groups, mental health programs in schools, and as a comfort dog for our nervous dental patients."

Much has been published recently about the great need for mental health providers, and the lack of available services. Sister Deborah and Hanley provide services to those who need it, regardless of ability to pay. Obviously, Hanley has job security!

# Renew and Recommit to Care for Earth

BY SISTER SALLY ANN BRICKNER, OSF COORDINATOR OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Abundant sunshine greeted the fifty-five attendees at the 2nd annual Earth Fair held in Founders Hall at the CSA motherhouse on April 22. Marsh marigolds added color to the flowing springs and songbirds caroled their welcoming notes: Happy Earth Day!



Michael Vickerman gives his presentation.

A dozen exhibitors exemplified varied ways to protect Earth. Clean Waters & Lake Winnebago Quality Improvement Association demonstrated how rain barrels conserve water and reduce flows to storm sewers. St. Mary Springs Academy's photo exhibit highlighted the beauty of the ledge "waking up to spring." Wisconsin Green Muslims and Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light promoted the moral imperative of care for Earth. Agnesian HealthCare explained its composting and recycling programs, and the Open Circle Unitarian Universalists addressed the importance of reducing food waste and the advocacy of the Citizens Climate Lobby.

Michael Vickerman from Renew Wisconsin, informed an attentive audience that clean energy is becoming mainstream in Wisconsin. Solar installations are increasingly evident on rooftops or in fields as costs plummet. Tribal governments, city and county officials, schools and churches are pursuing solar projects while neighborhood cooperatives explore financing opportunities. Through this year's Earth Fair, CSA encouraged others to join them in their quest to renew and recommit to care for Earth.

Exhibitors speak with attendees.



# Sisters' Oral History Preserved

BY SISTER EDIE CREWS, CSA  
CSA VOCATION DIRECTOR

SisterStory is an on-going program of National Catholic Sisters Week. Sponsored by St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, through a grant from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, SisterStory seeks to broaden awareness of the lives of Catholic sisters



L to R: Sister Judith Schmidt and Alonna Heller

in the United States. For the third year, students from Marian University and the Sisters of St. Agnes have participated in this unique program of oral history of the lives of religious sisters. In the initial phase of the program, each student is paired with a sister with whom she meets regularly over several months to learn the stories of the sister's life and ministry.

As a culminating project, each student has produced, in her own voice, a video recording recounting the shared stories of the sister's life. These videos will be kept in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Not only will the project contribute to a permanent oral history of religious sisters' lives for posterity, but it has also promoted warm and lasting relationships between the sisters and students.

This year's SisterStory participants were: Alonna Heller with Sister Judith Schmidt; Brianna Hettenhaus with Sister Emily Schug; Natalie Mullendore with Sister Deborah Golias; and Katie Schwarzbauer with Sister Collean Walsh.

L to R front row: Sisters Deborah Golias, Collean Walsh, Emily Schug, (Sister Judith absent)

L to R back row: Natalie Mullendore, Katie Schwarzbauer, Brianna Hettenhaus, Alonna Heller





# CSA

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## Ways to connect with CSA:

CSA web site:

<http://www.csasisters.org/>

Adelante Mujer/Advance Woman

<http://www.womanadvance.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation

<http://justicepeacecsa.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)

Streams 'N Stirrings

<http://csa-vocations.blogspot.com/>

(in the front page of our web site)



<http://www.facebook.com/sasisters?sk=wall>

(in the front page of our web site)



[http://www.youtube.com/user/](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCSAChannel1)

**TheCSAChannel1**

(in the front page of our web site)

# Celebrating 50 Years

## of Catholic Education in Rosita, Nicaragua

BY VALERIE GRACZYK,  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

For the past 50 years, the Sisters of St. Agnes have provided Catholic education at Santa Rosa de Lima School in Rosita, Nicaragua. When Sister Mary Ann Scherer, a regional coordinator for sisters in the US, returned from the three-day celebration, she said, "It was a delight to be part of such a joyful occasion. I felt a deep pride in being part of this historical event. I met students, alumni, and faculty who have known our sisters over the past fifty years. Not only was I touched by the commitment of our sisters, but also by the generosity and kindness of the people. Even though I was new to the people, I was welcomed with hugs and kisses and treated as if I had been teaching at the school."

The three-day celebration included a parade led by the school marching band. Students, dressed in their school uniform, carried a banner as they followed the band through the streets. Then came a talent show with music and dancing in an outdoor auditorium. Finally, certificates of recognition were given to members of CSA who continue to teach at the school. Among those receiving recognition were the principal,

Sister Francis Sánchez, and Sisters Marise Meis and Guadalupe Aguilar who teach catechism on Saturdays. The Sunday Mass was another experience of student participation as they brought the offertory gifts to the altar. Along with the bread and wine, they carried symbols of education such as books, paper, and pencils.

Santa Rosa Lima School has an enrollment of 640 students, preschool through high school. In her remarks, Sister Francis said, "This was a very special celebration for all of us, but particularly for the sisters who came before us. We remember Sister Dolores Taddy and Sister Rosa Inés Silva who taught here 50 years ago. It is an honor to be the principal of this school with such a long history of CSA's commitment to the education of the youth of Rosita."



Sister Francis Sánchez opening the door to the school.