

REFLECTIONS & *Connections*

FEBRUARY 2021

STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY



CSA

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

Dear Friends,



How often have we heard that we live in unprecedented times? While I can indeed affirm that, I also know that the on-going concerns of “ordinary” time remain and require my attention. The need for social distancing, masking, and limited gatherings means that our daily tasks and encounters are no longer carried out in the usual manner. Distractions, such as leisurely shopping, eating out with a friend, and gatherings with extended family and friends are minimal or even non-existent. New ways of engaging have caught on such as spending more time on social media, exercising, or finding ways to enjoy the outdoors (cold weather in northern climes notwithstanding).

More alone time and restrictions on gatherings have led some, myself included, to take stock of how I really wish to spend my precious gift of time. I can allow the time to weigh heavily on my hands or I can find ways of filling it with meaningful or even frivolous yet necessary activities. The pandemic and all the social unrest currently roiling society have presented us with opportunities for choosing since we cannot be about the “same old, same old” mode of operation.

In words from Kayla Oakes, “Because the sureties of our past lives have been steadily stripped away, what remains is our ability to live in the present moment.” If I can accept that, my choice to mask up and curtail my freedom of movement are new ways of showing my love of neighbor and my commitment to the common good. New awareness awaits if only I pay attention now, in this moment, to what is going on within me, around me and in my world. What is happening is not just about me or those in my bubble. It is both beyond and within our comprehension. “‘For lack of attention,’ Evelyn Underhill wrote, ‘a thousand forms of loveliness elude us every day.’ So, too, do a thousand visions of oneness with others elude us in this time of separation, until we notice them shimmering, just on the edge of our vision.” (Kayla Oakes)

These, indeed, are the times our God has given us. May our sorrows and concerns be mixed with hope and joy as we live today in order to prepare for tomorrow.

In the peace and love of Christ,
Sister Jean Steffes, CSA
General Superior

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Editorial Board Members:

*Sister Jeremy Quinn, Sister Jean Perry,
Sister Patricia Hayes, Sister Cyndi
Nienhaus, Dusty Krikau,
and Suzanne Flood.*

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Mother Agnes *Pantry*

“I command you to open your hand to your poor and needy kinsman in your country.”

— Deuteronomy 15:11b

The Mother Agnes Pantry, found in the campus ministry building at Marian University, takes its name from one of the Founders of the Sisters of St. Agnes and the first General Superior of the Congregation. Mother Agnes is rarely referenced without the phrase “courageous initiatives,” because she was willing to take action when she saw a need. In the case of the Mother Agnes Pantry, Sister Edie Crews saw that Marian students were in need, so she too took action.

The pantry opened in January 2018 and has since served more than 200 students of all backgrounds to meet their needs for food or personal hygiene items. While use of the pantry has increased steadily over the course of two years, Sister Edie indicated that the current school year has seen a rapid increase. “There was definitely a spike at the beginning of fall 2020 semester with more than 25 people accessing the food pantry when they couldn’t make ends meet,” said Sister Edie. She noted that her biggest increase came from students off campus who did not have meal plans and from students with families.

As supplies began running low, Sister Edie reached out to the Sisters of St. Agnes and Associates to help replenish food and personal hygiene supplies. In addition to these items, some sisters also donated masks and hand sanitizer, which were the sole request of several of the students who came to the pantry.

The Mother Agnes Pantry accepts donations of non-perishable food items at the Marian campus ministry building during regular business hours. Alternatively, donating gift cards for local grocery stores allows Sister Edie to replenish the pantry with perishable foods or items that are running low or are in high demand.

Marian University is sponsored by the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.



Sister Edie Crews, Campus Minister at Marian University, stands in the Mother Agnes Pantry



Praying for Nicaragua

In November of 2020, the people of Central America became tragically acquainted with the Greek alphabet as Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit the eastern coasts of Nicaragua and Honduras within 2 weeks of each other. The hurricanes caused flooding, mudslides, and loss of homes, crops and livelihood. Photos from the city of Puerto Cabezas suggest a crazed giant rampaged through the area plucking zinc off rooftops, snapping power lines, pulverizing cement structures, and slinging lumber that used to be homes. In the city of Rosita, the sisters experienced a “remodeling” of their home to devastating effect as a section of the roof was blown off. On the western side of the country, the sisters experienced damaging winds, rains, and flooding.





Now, nearly four months later, the country continues to move forward with clean up. The congregation has sent financial support to Catholic Relief Services to assist in the rebuilding throughout the country. Sisters in Rosita work with volunteers to help ensure the community has necessary provisions and the community has helped them with the needed roof repairs to their convent.

The people of Nicaragua have a deep devotion to Mary the Mother of God, especially under her title “Immaculate Conception.” On behalf of the people who continue to recover from these two devastating hurricanes, let us ask for Mary’s intercession by praying the “Memorare.” It has been adapted slightly to reflect a more communal intercession.

“Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence we fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, our Mother. To you we come, before you we stand, sinful, and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer us. Amen.”

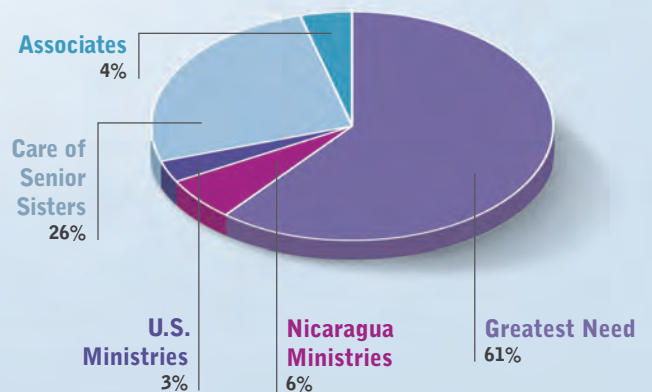


Annual Report

Now Available

Your donations, both large and small, are what allow CSA to continue participating in the mission of Christ by joyful service in the Church, always aware that we, too, are among the needy and are enriched by those we serve. All donations go to funding the ministry of your choice. The full annual report is now available at www.csasisters.org/donate

Donation Designations from
October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020



The full annual report is now available at www.csasisters.org/donate

Total Giving: \$302,834

"When I found out I was 100 years old it just did something to me. I was so full of joy. I know God is with me and loves me. Being 100 years old is great! What added to my joy was knowing that I will be seeing the Lord soon, something I really want to do."

— Sister Mary Ellen Johnston, CSA

Celebrating a Century



This fall, two sisters of St. Agnes celebrated their 100th birthdays. In October of 1920, Sister Mary Ellen Johnston was born in Ireland and in December of that same year Sister Rosa Inés Silva was born in Nicaragua. In 1951, at the age of 30, they both made their first professions and became Sisters of St. Agnes.

Throughout her years in active ministry, Sister Mary Ellen taught and served in administration in schools throughout Wisconsin, as well as in Fort Wayne and Crown Point, Indiana; Evanston, Illinois; and Tucson, Arizona. Upon retiring, she returned to Fond du Lac to serve with the Office of Justice and Peace and eventually moved to Nazareth Court.

Sister Rosa Inés began her ministry in the US working in the medical labs at St. Agnes Hospital before being called back to Nicaragua to serve as a teacher in Waspam. There she learned the Miskito language and assisted the English-speaking sisters as they learned to teach in Spanish and Miskito. She continued to minister in Nicaragua until she retired to Nazareth Court in Fond du Lac.

In 2020, Sisters Mary Ellen Johnston and Rosa Inés Silva celebrated their 100th birthdays under the same roof at Nazareth Court & Center and in 2021 they now celebrate their 70th Jubilees together.

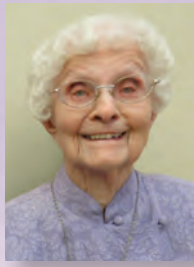
Happy birthday to our CSA Centenarians!



"I say, 'Thank you, Lord, for letting me be a Sister of St. Agnes.'"

— Sister Rosa Inés Silva, CSA

In Memoriam... Walking with God



Sister Rachel Doerfler, C.S.A.

Sister Rachel Doerfler, baptized Mary Agnes, was born on July 19, 1923 to Joseph and Agnes (Staab) Doerfler. She had ten siblings, four brothers and six sisters. In 1938, Mary Agnes entered St. Agnes Convent where she made her profession of vows in 1942. She received a BS in Education, Marian College; MA in English, Notre Dame University; MA in Teaching Religion, Manhattanville College. Sister Rachel served as a teacher and principal in elementary and secondary schools in Wisconsin, Indiana, and Kansas, as well as in congregational positions as postulant directress, formation coordinator, regional and general councilor. She also ministered as director of liturgy, environment, and adult formation for twenty-three years at St. Louis the King Parish in Glendale, Arizona. For many years Sister Rachel was a spiritual director and retreat director for both lay and religious. After her retirement in 2014, she continued serving as a volunteer at St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store and Agnesian HealthCare. When her health diminished, Sister Rachel was transferred to St. Francis Home where she died peacefully on December 11, 2020.



Sister Suzanne Kotel, C.S.A.

Sister Suzanne Kotel, CSA, baptized Mary, died peacefully on December 13, 2020 at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Mary, the daughter of Joseph and Helen Kotel was born on January 29, 1927 in Marquette, Michigan. She had eight brothers and three sisters, all of whom preceded her in death. She received her high school education at Baraga High School and Holy Family Orphanage in Marquette where she and her siblings were cared for following their mother's death. Mary entered St. Agnes Convent in 1945 and made her profession of vows as Sister Suzanne on August 15, 1948. Sister Suzanne spent her life in service to her CSA sisters and to the poor and homeless, ministering as cook, laundress, and homemaker at St. Agnes Convent, St. Mary Springs Academy, St. Joseph Springs Farm in Fond du Lac, as well as at St. Anthony Hospital, Hays, Kansas, and at St. Mary's Convent, Lomira, Wisconsin. During her many years at St. Agnes Convent, Sister Suzanne

volunteered by delivering day-old bread from local grocery stores to individuals in need and to organizations serving the poor. For over twenty years, she faithfully volunteered at the Salvatorian Mission Warehouse in New Holstein, Wisconsin, working side by side with the founder, Brother Regis Fust, SDS, Sister Dora Zapf, SDS, and others, packing supplies of clothing, furniture, food, and medical supplies for Catholic missionaries in 14 countries around the world, including the missions of the Sisters of St. Agnes serving in Latin America. In December 2016, Sister Suzanne joined the sisters at Nazareth Court and Center in Fond du Lac, where she continued to find ways to help the poor until the time of her death.



Sister Ann Walters, C.S.A.

Sister Ann Walters, CSA, baptized Mary Loraine Walters, was born in Catherine, Kansas, on December 4, 1928 to Anthony and Lidwina (Polifka) Walters. She was the third oldest in her family of five girls and six boys. Feeling a deep sense of belonging to God from an early age, Sister Ann entered St. Agnes Convent in 1943 and made her first profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes on August 15, 1948. She received a BS in Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, and taught in schools in Wisconsin, Kansas, Illinois, and Indiana. After earning an MALS in Library Science from Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois, Sister Ann then enjoyed serving as a school librarian in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Further studies prepared her to become actively engaged in ministries of counseling, spiritual direction and retreats, pastoral care, and campus ministry. In 2004, Sister Ann returned to Fond du Lac, living for a time at the CSA motherhouse and with her sisters at Nazareth Court and St. Francis Home. During this time, she volunteered in ministries of hospitality and wellness in the emergency room at St. Agnes Hospital, the Treffert Center, and St. Francis Home until frail health no longer allowed her to engage in these activities. Sister Ann died at St. Francis Home on November 30, 2020.

For full obituaries go to www.csasisters.org. Memorials can be sent to the CSA Mission Advancement Office or through the website.



CSA

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csasisters.org



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Or email us at csaadm@csasisters.org

Or call 920-907-2300



Women's Leadership Breakfast

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 8:00 – 9:30 A.M.

VIRTUAL EVENT, ATTEND ONLINE

TICKETS AND INFO: [CSASISTERS.ORG/BREAKFAST](https://csasisters.org/breakfast)

FOCUS: How local women in need have been impacted by the pandemic and how local women have stepped up to help.

