

# ITEMS



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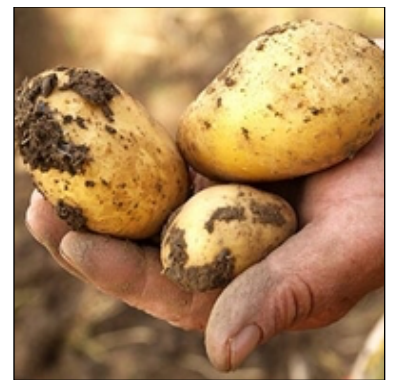
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## SNAPPY RENOVATIONS AT GSS

*Sister Mary Carol McClenon lounges in the newly renovated Hunter Unit for boys at Good Shepherd Services Baltimore. The renovations were made possible by generous benefactors and foundations, supportive staff and directors and the Maryland General Assembly.*

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## Green Corner

Pope Francis speaks in *Laudato Si* about Ecological Conversion and Spirituality. As Sister Virginia Gordon read the Encyclical she said that she began reflecting on these two concepts and what they mean in today's society. She said, "These reflections caused me to think of my own foundation of spirituality for life. I would like to share some of my childhood remembrances with you. Maybe they will inspire you to think of your own development of a spirituality for life."

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## PROVINCE NEWS

ZEAL

## National Advocacy Center sets priorities for 2016

By Larry Couch

*The Constitution of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd states that "Our commitment to reconciliation demands that we promote justice and peace."*

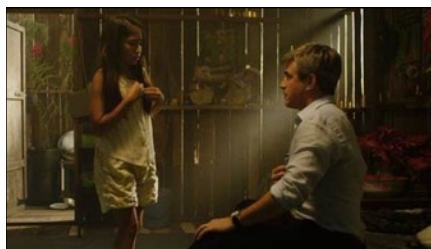
With your active participation, advocacy and prayers, the National Advocacy Center will continue to

- \*Advocate for programs and policies that help people free themselves from poverty;
- \*Work to provide a safe haven for immigrants and refugees fleeing poverty and violence
- \*Seek an end to domestic violence;
- \*Ensure full economic equality for women in the workplace;
- \*Demand legislation and policies to reduce gun violence;
- \*Work to prevent human trafficking in the U.S. and overseas;
- \*Lobby for legislation that will ensure adequate housing for all;
- \*Help enact legislation and policies to protect the environment.

Each issue has a variety of aspects. For example, the issue of poverty includes pressing for tax reform so that the wealthy pay their fair share. To end poverty, we need to increase the minimum wage and protect the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

With immigration, in addition to pressing for comprehensive immigration reform, we seek a ban on private prisons that benefit from, and help promulgate, harsh anti-immigration laws. In addition, to reduce the "push factors" related to immigration we work for the forgiveness of debts of impoverished countries.

In terms of human trafficking, in collaboration with other organizations we support legislation dealing with runaway youth. These children constitute a highly



**More than 21 million women and children are trafficked in the world. At least two million of the victims are in the United States.**



**The number of U.S. gun violence incidents in 2015 totaled 52,102.**

vulnerable population – an easy prey for human traffickers.

One issue may impact another issue. For example, in combatting domestic violence we work to make it more difficult for persons convicted of partner abuse to obtain guns.

The priority on a day-to-day basis relates to where legislative action is happening or what legislation "has legs" — legislation that needs to be encouraged or stopped. When hundreds of children arrived at our shores from Honduras and other Central America countries, we joined with colleagues in other

organizations to oppose legislation that would have reduced protections offered refugees fleeing to our country.

NAC works closely with the Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) Gathering. Our priorities are affected by the theme of the Gathering. The theme in 2016 centers on racism, class and power. Being mindful of racism and religious intolerance, NAC has co-sponsored an EAD workshop entitled *Islam in America, A conversation on what it means to be Muslim in the U.S.* During 2016, we vow to continue to fight back against all forms of religious intolerance and hateful speech.

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***Our priorities are not just a list of issues but issues that interface with each other and the legislative realities of the moment.***

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Because I am the only full-time staff person at the National Advocacy Center, there are some issues we do not deal with in depth. These issues include housing, environmental concerns and overseas issues. At our Advisory Board meeting in February, we will discuss how we can become more involved in these issues without

*Continued on next page*

# PROVINCE NEWS



ZEAL



## NAC *Cont'd from p. 2*

lessening our commitment to ongoing concerns.

In short, our priorities are not just a list of issues but issues that interface with each other and the legislative realities of the moment. However, by listing our priorities we are able to stay focused on the mission of our organization. And certainly we believe we are being guided by prayer, by our own prayers and the prayers of others -- especially the Contemplative Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

In our search for an economy of inclusion and equality, we are guided by the words of Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"). He writes:

"Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and



***Climate change is the most political of the environmental issues facing the U.S. and world today.***

marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape... Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded...

"To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed... Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility



***More than half a million people experience homelessness in the U.S. on any single night.***

and not our own... The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us."

For more information on Good Shepherd National Advocacy Center, visit the website at [gsadvocacy.org](http://gsadvocacy.org). You can also follow NAC actions on social media:

Twitter: @NAC4Justice

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/goodshepherdnationaladvocacycenter/>

## Snippets of life as a Good Shepherd Volunteer By John Freund, GSV

Volunteering internationally is intense. The unexpected oscillations between extreme highs and lows are dizzying, gut-wrenching, and difficult to keep up with. Regularly there is miscommunication with outcomes that range from innocuous to expensive to disheartening to maddening to tear-inducing. We do not have an international cell phone or internet at home, so in addition to the physical distance, there is an inescapable feeling of isolation. After three months I still do not know most of the cultural

faux pas. I have not achieved a functional knowledge of the Thai language, and I rarely know what is in the dish we are eating other than the protein (pork is sliced or chopped very small, chicken has bones, eggs are scrambled, and fish have bones and look like fish) and rice. However, every Monday we feast together with our Thai community and the food is always wonderful (though my legs are often numb from sitting cross-legged for so long). As I have settled into my life here in Thailand, I have felt invigorated by



and connected to life in a way that I would not have thought I could handle."

Read John Freund's full blog and the blogs of other Good Shepherd Volunteers at [justlovegsv.blogspot.com](http://justlovegsv.blogspot.com)



# PROVINCE NEWS

## ZEAL

### Reflecting on being a pilgrimage site for the Holy Year of Mercy

By Elizabeth Garciano, RGS

The Archdiocese of St. Louis invited its six contemplative communities to “open wide our doors” as pilgrimage sites during the Year of Mercy. It is a grace and gift to open our doors to pilgrims this Jubilee Year of Mercy. It calls us to deepen our welcoming and hospitality to receive with open hearts all those who want to come and pray with us.

The Most Reverend Bishop Edward M. Rice, Auxiliary Bishop for the St. Louis Archdiocese, called the Maria Droste Contemplative Community and asked if we would like for him to celebrate Mass with us during the Advent season. As Local Leader for the community, I said, “yes,” with eagerness and enthusiasm.

This was a great opportunity for us, as we had just ended the Year of Consecrated Life and had begun the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Our community decided to have Tridium from December 20 – 22 in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ. We ended the Tridium with Bishop Rice’s Eucharistic Mass and subsequent blessing of the convent. Our heart and soul sings “O, how lovely is your dwelling place”... living in the house of God.”

We share our personal reflection as a community on how the Mass, blessing of the convent and invitation to be a pilgrimage site has impacted us.

The sacred encounter humbled us and made us more greatly realize God’s overflowing graces and gifts. It is a privilege to be of service to others this Jubilee Year of Mercy. The opportunity allows us to be more visible and known throughout the Diocese of St. Louis. Our



*Top photo: Bishop Edward M. Rice conducted Mass in the chapel of the Maria Droste Contemplative Community before blessing the community’s home and altar bread distribution center (bottom photo).*

presence is an affirmation of our missionary life. We live near Ferguson and in the midst of racial tension in St. Louis. May our lives

be a living witness and healing of God’s mercy and reconciliation.

*Continued on next page*

# PROVINCE NEWS



## ZEAL

### Mercy *Cont'd from p. 4*

The Holy Year of Mercy began with the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8. At this time Pope Francis opened the sacred bronze door of St. Peter's Basilica. This gesture marked the start of the Church's "time of great pardon," as expressed by Pope Francis in his homily to the masses.

***With every beat of my heart I give thanks to God for His mercy.***

The Jubilee Year is "dedicated to living out in our daily lives the mercy which the Father constantly extends to all of us," Pope Francis wrote in the papal bull of indiction announcing the Year of Mercy.

Pope Francis said, "At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective."

All of my life I have felt that God created in me a heart that is grateful. With every beat of my heart I give thanks to God for His mercy. Come and join us! May the door of our hearts be a door of forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. We are open daily to welcome you all as we begin the New Year 2016.



*Bishop Edward M. Rice blessed the convent of the Maria Droste Contemplative Community as a pilgrimage site on December 22, 2015.*

### **Purpose of pilgrimages**

Pilgrimage sites during the Jubilee of Mercy provide opportunities for people to get closer to God. Pilgrimages include participating in Mass or another liturgical service such as morning or evening prayer, or acts of piety including the Stations of the Cross, praying the Rosary and Eucharistic adoration. Pilgrimages may also include spending time in prayerful meditation. Pilgrims are asked to conclude their visit with prayer for the Holy Father: the Our Father, the Apostles' Creed or the Profession of Faith from Mass; and a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A plenary indulgence may be gained daily by visiting designated pilgrimage sites.

Pope Francis asks of us throughout this Holy Year of Mercy to reflect

on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Corporal works of mercy include feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, giving drinks to the thirsty, healing the sick, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned and burying the dead.

Spiritual works of mercy are marked by counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, comforting the afflicted, forgiving offenses, bearing patiently those who do us ill, and praying for the living and the dead.

Online resources for learning more about the Jubilee Year of Mercy are [www.archstl.org/mercy](http://www.archstl.org/mercy), [www.im.va](http://www.im.va), [www.stlouisreview.com/TG7](http://www.stlouisreview.com/TG7). To attend Mass or pray with the Sisters call 314-837-1719.



# MINISTRY NEWS



## ZEAL



## Renovations *Cont'd from p. 1*



*GSS Baltimore held a ribbon cutting for the newly renovated Hunter Unit on December 18, 2015.*

The Hunter Unit is a 13-bedroom residential facility for boys ranging in age from 13-18 years old. GSS raised \$255,500 to overhaul the unit. The design is state of the art to provide a therapeutic environment for teens who are on the autism spectrum or have cognitive disabilities. Hunter accommodates sleeping, therapy groups and recreational activities. The ribbon cutting for the Hunter Unit took place on December 18. In attendance were Board Members and Sisters, GSS Department Directors, a representative from one of the three Foundations that provided funding, and three of Maryland's State Legislators who helped GSS obtain a \$100,000 Bond Bill for the capital improvement.



*The Hunter Unit renovations improve the physical and social environment for boys at GSS.*



*Mary Hoban (center), Director of Nursing at St. Joseph Residence, brought her therapy cat and friend Carianne to visit Sisters in December. Sr. Joan Newman enjoyed the cat's warmth and affection.*

## Therapy cat relaxes Sisters

Sisters at St. Joseph Residence in Baltimore like it when therapy dogs and cats come to see them. The pets relax and comfort the Sisters. Some of the Sisters are especially fond of animals and make every effort to be with the pets when they come to St. Joseph.

"Sr. Laetitia and Sr. Jane are regular visitors with the animals. Sr. Mary Ann comes when the cats come. Sr. Nora comes when the dogs come, and Sr. Joan enjoys both the cats and dogs," said Local Leader Sr. Mary Carol McClenon.

The most important characteristic of a therapy animal is its temperament. A good therapy pet is friendly, patient, confident, gentle, and at ease in all situations. Therapy cats and dogs enjoy human contact and are content to be petted and handled, sometimes clumsily. Their primary job is to allow unfamiliar people to make physical contact with them and to enjoy that contact.

Therapy dogs visit St. Joseph Residence once a month. The cats come a little less frequently.

"I'm hoping the cats will come more often in 2016," said Sr. Mary Carol, a cat devotee.

# CHRISTMAS CHEER

**ZEAL**

## Making the yuletide bright

Christmas parties, Santa Claus and therapy pet visits, and children's concerts brought joy throughout the Province of Mid-North America in December, making the yuletide bright for everyone.

### St. Joseph Residence

About 20 children and youth from Saint Philomena's Homeschool in Baltimore performed a holiday concert for Sisters in the St. Joseph Residence community. This was the second year that the children performed for the Sisters. The choral event was held before Mass on December 7. The concert was



*Sisters at St. Joseph Residence were delighted by a new electric train under their Christmas tree (top) and a children's concert (bottom).*



akin to a warm-up dress rehearsal for the youth, who sang before a public audience the following weekend at the Baltimore Basilica.

An electric train, replete with engine smoke and whistle, livened up the Christmas tree at St. Joseph Residence. The train was purchased using a donation from a relative of one of the Sisters. Mission partners selected the tree and set it up in the community room at St. Joseph. Staff and Sisters decorated the tree together.

### Immaculate Heart Convent

Sisters and staff at Immaculate Heart Convent enjoyed a festive Christmas celebration at their annual party. The Sisters at Immaculate Heart also had a surprise visit from Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus (volunteers from Visiting Nurses Association) and Max, the therapy dog from Love on a Leash. Kathy Reid's first grade classroom from St. Ann Catholic

*Continued on next page*



*Mission partners and Sisters at Immaculate Heart made merry at the staff Christmas party.*



*Sisters at Immaculate Heart Convent were visited by therapy dog Max and Mr. and Mrs. Claus and their helper (top).*



*First grade children from St. Ann Catholic School in Normandy sang Christmas songs to the Sisters at Immaculate Heart Convent (top) and read children's books to them (bottom).*





# CHRISTMAS CHEER

ZEAL

## Yuletide *Cont' from p. 7*

School brought joy and good tidings to the Sisters at Immaculate Heart. The children sang to the Sisters, read children's tales and played Bingo with them as a celebration of this most wonderful time of the year. Sisters also learned from Sr. Lioba Abe how to make origami Christmas tree ornaments.



*Sr. Lioba Abe taught Sisters at Immaculate Heart how to make origami Christmas trees.*



## Province Center

Mission Partners and Sisters at the Province Center gathered for their annual potluck feast, where they enjoyed camaraderie and good food.

## GSS Baltimore

GSS Baltimore hosted holiday parties for day and night workers in December. A hearty breakfast beckoned the night crew following their shift with personalized omelets prepared by James Courtney and

## A return to Rose Haven

Sister Cathie Boerboom (center in red jacket), is a high profile volunteer at Rose Haven. She founded the agency to provide women with food, clothing, shelter, hygiene supplies, advocacy and more during the daytime when transitional shelters are closed. Sr. Cathie recently returned to Rose Haven to provide women with counseling services. Rose Haven launched new programs in 2015 and is continuing to grow. The nonprofit agency receives no government funding. Its work is supported solely by individuals. Gifts of \$500, \$1,000 or \$2,500 are currently being matched 100% by the Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund. You can [make a gift online](#), or by calling 503-248-6364. Visit [rosehaven.org](http://rosehaven.org).



*Members of the GSS Baltimore Board of Directors clown around at the Christmas party (top) while staff spin their luck for prizes (right).*



Gwen Maddox of the GSS Dietary Department. A Las Vegas theme party for daytime staff included games of chance with high-stakes winnings that ranged from Lottery tickets to gift certificates. Five members of the Good Shepherd Services Board of Directors who attended the Christmas party gathered for a group photo.

*Happy New Year!*



*Province Center kitchen magicians (l-r) Mrs. Ho, Sister Virginia Gordon and Sonia brought life to the party through their special touches.*



## CHRISTMAS CHEER

ZEAL

## Staff-Sisters Christmas Party

December 11 - Pelletier Hall



MERRY  
CHRISTMAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!



## Jubilee Blessing

Sr. Colette Sauers celebrated her 70th Jubilee of Religious Profession on December 8, 2015, at Pelletier Hall, Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Sr. Colette was missioned with the Contemplative Sisters in Grand Rapids and Detroit, Michigan, before coming to Fort Thomas. She has had many hobbies, and is known for her pot holders, aprons, rosaries and other artistic endeavors. Most of all, Sr. Colette says she loves praying for the Apostolic Sisters and for all of the petitions received for prayers. Sr. Colette was treated to her favorite meal for her Jubilee celebration — Kentucky Fried Chicken. We thank God for Sr. Colette's fidelity and service, and ask God to give her many blessings during her Jubilee year.

*Submitted by Sr. Patricia Marie Barnette*

## SHEPHERDING IMAGES: A MINISTRY OF SACRED ARTS

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

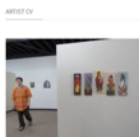
## INTERVIEW WITH GYNIS



Shepherding Images Studio & Good Shepherd Gallery opened on November 17, 2015. Good Shepherd Sister Gynis Mary McManamon, founder of the ministry, led the people of the United North County Chapter of Contemplative and all Sisters of the Order of the Good Shepherd to celebrate the occasion. Immediately after opening the doors to the art studio and gallery, Sister Gynis Mary began accepting donations to participate in local business events, including Small Business Saturday and Popcorn's annual Trough Christmas House Tour.

The heart of the art ministry involves Sister Gynis Mary in painting icons for public viewing and working with schools and community groups on collaborative exhibitions and programs. Shepherding Images Studio & Good Shepherd Gallery will present opportunities for youth and adults to learn their own stories of faith that highlight the Good Shepherd core values of mercy, reconciliation, individual worth and zeal.

Shepherding Images as sacred space  
Sister Gynis Mary is a visual artist who specializes in sacred religious icons. Her beautiful hand-painted icons



## Shepherding Images has a new online presence

The Province of Mid-North America has launched a new online presence for Sister Gynis McManamon and her ministry of sacred arts -- Shepherding Images Studio & Good Shepherd Gallery. The web presence includes a video interview, gallery of her artwork on Pinterest, links to social media platforms and much more. Check it out!  
[www.shepherdingimages.com](http://www.shepherdingimages.com)

CELEBRATION OF LIFE **ZEAL**

# Mary Teresa Lenhoff, RGS

November 15, 1923 - November 26, 2015

The Baltimore Community at Saint Joseph Residence had the bittersweet Thanksgiving Day gift of saying their final goodbyes to Sr. Mary Teresa Lenhoff.

Born on November 16, 1923, in Wilmington, Delaware, she was baptized Rita Agnes and was raised in a traditional Catholic family. Her father worked for Dupont and she had three brothers and two sisters. She outlived all of her family members except one. She is survived by her brother Jimmy and sister-in-law Mildred.

Sr. Teresa entered the Good Shepherd Convent on September 12, 1942, at Germantown in Philadelphia. A tiny woman with a strong character, she lived out her apostolic zeal in a variety of ways during her long years of Good Shepherd consecration.

Sr. Teresa was involved in housekeeping and cleaning ministries in the convent, and is remembered especially for her skills as a seamstress and supervising the "fine work" done by our Contemplative Sisters. She was skilled at doing the smocking on dresses for little girls and also at embroidering Altar Linens.

Sister also worked with the girls. In later years, when she began to be disoriented, she often had an urgent sense that she needed to go to the class to take care of the group.

Sr. Teresa was service oriented. She cared for her mother when she became ill and needed care. She also cared for her ailing sister Mary, who lived with the mother.

When the large Convent in Fox Chase closed in 1997 Sr. Teresa moved to Walley Avenue and went into semi-retirement. Change was very difficult for her, but she bravely left her beloved Fox Chase and went to live in the small community on Walley Avenue in Philadelphia. She enjoyed several years in semi-retirement and exercised pastoral ministry in the local parish of St. Dominic. She served as Eucharistic Minister to senior citizens.

The Walley Avenue community was closed in 2008 when it became clear that the three Sisters living there at the time needed assistance with daily living and could no longer maintain the house. All three Sisters were missioned to Baltimore. In a move that surprised no one who knew her well, Sr. Teresa did not give in without a struggle. She refused to pack and was only talked into getting into the car with great difficulty.

In Baltimore, Sr. Teresa tended to be a wanderer and also was frequently agitated. She was transferred to Stella Maris for care on their secure unit to keep her and other residents safe. She resided there for several years and was well-liked by the staff who described her as "feisty" and sociable. It was her habit to walk almost continuously throughout the day, checking on everyone and everything.

Sister fell and broke her hip in the late summer of 2015 at the age of 92. This brought a stop to her restless moving about. We were then able to bring her back home to St.

Joseph Residence in time to celebrate her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. She was not very verbal by that time but made it clear that she was happy to be home. She had a stroke on November 20<sup>th</sup> that left her unable to swallow.

Sisters and staff were in and out of her room for the last few days of her life. Local Leader Sr. Mary Carol McClenon was sitting with her peacefully when she stopped breathing on the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day.

At the wake, several Sisters spoke about the characteristic determination that was packed into Sr. Teresa's pint-sized body, an attribute that led to her being nicknamed "Mighty Mite."

Sr. Mary Teresa's funeral Mass was celebrated on December 2, 2015, by our pastor, Rev. John Williamson.

*Submitted by Sr. Mary Carol McClenon, RGS*



*Sister Mary Teresa Lenhoff*



CELEBRATION OF LIFE **ZEAL**

# Valerie Brannan, RGS

July 17, 1919 - December 10, 2015

Sr. Valerie was born at Providence Hospital on July 7, 1919. Her parents were Dorothy Catherine Brannan and Patrick Mooney. She had two younger brothers. Her parents were separated. Her mother died when Sr. Valerie was very young. She was adopted by her grandparents and her brothers were sent to a "Home for Boys." Sr. Valerie's grandparents died two years apart, soon after she was sent to live with them.

Fortunately for her, she was placed with a very dear family until she entered the Good Shepherd. While with the family Sr. Valerie finished grade school and was able to attend high school at the Holy Name Academy. During her teenage years she began to think seriously about what she might do with her life.

## Entry into religious life

After high school graduation Sr. Valerie worked for a time but was torn between marriage and religious life. The struggle lasted for several months, but in the end entrance into the convent became the stronger desire.

On February 3, 1938, Sr. Valerie entered the Sisters of the Good Shepherd convent in St. Paul, Minnesota. She professed her first Vows on September 12, 1940, and on September 12, 1943 she made her final profession of Vows.

When asked why she entered the Good Shepherd Congregation and not a teaching community, her reply was, "I think the real reason was that I had the urge to help girls less fortunate than I. Here is where my childhood trait of wanting to

help others seemed to appear," she said.

"With a strong determination to assist and guide girls who were sent to our Homes to become good citizens, professional women, wives and mothers, I had no intention of turning back in my vocation. During my years with the girls there were heartaches and disappointments, but also countless consolations. I attribute my perseverance to my deep faith and love of life," Sr. Valerie said.

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***No matter where  
Sr. Valerie was  
missioned she felt  
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special grace  
because she always  
found a real  
happiness in her  
work with the girls.***

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Sister Valerie served in ministries in Vancouver, British Columbia; Helena, Montana; Denver, Colorado; St. Paul, Minnesota; Sioux City, Iowa; Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. She always worked with the girls in these places.

No matter where Sr. Valerie was missioned she felt that she had a special grace because she always found a real happiness in her work with the girls. After our home in



**Sister Valerie Brannan**

Seattle closed she was asked by the pastor of Christ the King parish to teach Religious Education in the pre-school. Although this work was a new experience for her, she found teaching both enriching and exciting.

Realizing how eager Saint Mary Euphrasia was to teach the truths of our Faith, Sr. Valerie felt that she was responding to the Church's plea to "Teach as Jesus did." She held this position for 24 years.

When Sr. Valerie 'retired,' she returned to St. Paul and lived in Neuville. When it was closed she moved to Boutwells Landing, along with many of her Sisters. Sr. Valerie endeared herself to all that she came in contact with. This was very evident by the number of staff and students from Century College that showed up when she died and were present for the service that was held before her body was taken away.

*Submitted by Sr. Bernadette Faulhaber, RGS*

CELEBRATION OF LIFE **ZEAL**

# Marian Attig, RGS

July 2, 1927 - December 11, 2015

*Sister Marian Attig served as scribe for Immaculate Heart Convent from 2004 - 2007, where she collected vocation stories of Sisters who were missioned there. Among her collection was the story she wrote for herself. This is Sr. Marian's vocation story, in her own words.*

***We are placed on this earth  
for a little space of time to  
learn to bear the beams of  
love. ~ William Blake***

Could I write my own story? Well, if it would save someone else from having to write it, why not?

I was born July 2, 1927, in northern California in the beautiful and fertile sunny San Joaquin Valley. My brother Maurice and I were blessed with loving parents who didn't so much tell us how to live, but showed us how.

I grew up in a small stable city environment where most students attended all 12 years of school together. I graduated from Dominican College in San Rafael and did one graduate year of study at the University of California in Berkeley, after which my plan was to enter law school. But the Lord had other plans.

To look backwards for a moment, I can remember as a high school sophomore having a conversation with my mother when I burst into tears saying, "I think God wants me to be a religious and I don't want to."

Being wise, my mother said that she was sure this would work itself out in time. So I went on my social carefree way until it came time to sign papers for law school. I was sure that would be signing my life away! THIS WAS NOT GOD'S PLAN.

Now time had shown me that a vocation was a privilege. I was accepted to enter the new Carmelite monastery in Berkeley. Low and behold, they had an earth landslide in that hilly district, which meant postponement of an entrance date. I knew God was telling me this was not the right plan.

With help of the Little Flower and a wonderful Redemptorist priest, I found my way to the Good Shepherd convent in Los Angeles, where I knew I belonged.

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## ***Salvation History is a love story ... and so is my story!***

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Clothed in the Habit in 1954 and professed in 1956, my early years were spent in being with our Contemplatives and teaching — until I was sent to St. Louis University to get a Master's Degree in social work.

Next I was missioned to our new convent in Las Vegas, Nevada, where every day was a new adventure because the town was new and growing just like we five apostles were. To our sophisticated girls, even the knowledge and love of God was a new life adventure.

From here I went across the country to New Orleans, where our



Sr. Marian Attig

Sisters were opening a new Halfway House for women prisoners. My job was social work and writing reports for state and federal prisoners. Here is where I learned about humility and how important it is to be nonjudgemental.

In 1977 Blessed Mother gave me a special gift. Five Sisters from the United States and Canada were asked to take over the work on Guam, which our Sisters from the Philippines had begun. Guam is the largest of the Marianas Islands under the special patronage of Our Lady. I felt her special care and love for these islanders who had held fast to their faith when Guam was overrun during World War II.

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## Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today

A report for Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, titled *Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today*, uses historic comparison of the past and present to interpret the future life of women religious in the United States. The report highlights two sources of change that have shaped the reality of current Sisters: the influence of the Second Vatican Council and changes in U.S. culture. It identifies 10 key themes:

1. Path to Vocation
2. Ethnicity, Race and Region
3. Generations and Gender
4. Characteristics of Religious Life
5. Age of Entry and Education
6. Ministry
7. Collaboration
8. Charism and Identity
9. Leadership
10. Sisters' Visibility in U.S. Culture



The report also acknowledges several places where more research is necessary:

- A focus on Sisters in the southwestern United States
- Reasons U.S. Catholic women give for not entering religious life
- Best practices for women's religious orders to transmit their charism to lay partners

An accompanying campaign and website communicates the report's key findings and provides informational and promotional materials. It is a resource for those seeking to become, engage, and support Catholic Sisters. You can

## Sr. Marian *Cont'd from p. 12*

Guamanians are happy people who are blessed with warm, sunny skies: something I much appreciated. I taught English to Vietnamese refugees and catechism to village children. I did counseling with servicemen at Catholic Social Service and taught a social work practicum for a student at the University of Guam. In the end I learned a smattering of the Chamorro language.

When I returned stateside, I moved into our newly built convent in San Francisco and helped sort files and annals. I also worked part-time in the Chancery office for the marriage tribunal. Here I had the joy of helping the relative of one of our Sisters obtain an annulment and rectify a marriage.

Memphis was another big moving expedition in 1997. Sisters had bought the new lakefront home and renovated a former convent for the new DeNeuville Learning Center. So much of my life has involved moving.

As I look back over the years it becomes clear just as St. Mary Euphrasia said, that we are born to love, and as someone else has said, "We are all one love, and to extend love we must express the love we are. Love is the answer to every problem in our lives and in our world."

Love is patience and open mindedness, tolerance and respect. I thank God that I learned this from

my Catholic mother and my Protestant father. Gradually over the years I learned to live in the presence of God through the Church's own school of prayer, the Liturgy of Hours.

The Psalms are love poems that teach us how to love God and "to pray always." The psalms were also Christ's prayer to his Father and we learn to use them for the whole body of Christ. They become my mantras. They begin and end my day, and my life.

Salvation History is a love story ... and so is my story!

Be silent.  
Be still.  
Alone.  
Empty

Before your God.

Say nothing.

Ask nothing.

Be silent.

Be still.

Let your God look upon you.

That is all.

God knows.

God understands.

God loves you

With an enormous love,

And only wants

To look upon you

With that love.

Quiet.

Still.

Be.

Let Your God -

Love you.

~ [Edwina Gateley](#),  
*Psalms of a Laywoman*

78%

of entering men and women say they were attracted "very much" by a sense of call to religious life.

83%

of Catholic Sisters say that someone encouraged them to consider a vocation.

27%

of Catholic Sisters (new members) thought about religious life before age 14.

20%

of Catholic Sisters (members) first entered religious life when aged (18-21).

access the website and read the full report at [www.WeAreSisters.net](http://www.WeAreSisters.net)

## GREEN CORNER

ZEAL

## Born a New Jersey farm girl

By Virginia Gordon, RGS

I was born on a small farm in rural New Jersey. All around us were many other farms. My grandfather planted potatoes, wheat, soy beans and corn. My grandmother raised chickens and sold eggs to other farmers. I often watched as my grandfather tended the earth getting it ready for planting. Each seed was precious and put into the ground carefully.

He watered and patiently waited for the tiny shoots of new life. Many times I observed the worried lines on his face as it failed to rain. He went out in all kinds of weather to observe the new growth. I learned patience while watching his care for new life. Often his lips moved silently as he prayed for enough harvest to meet the year's expenses.

My grandmother's relationship with the chickens was mutual and personal. When she came out the kitchen door, she would call "here chickey, chickey," and chickens came running from all parts of the fields so they could enjoy the small morsels of food from the dish water.

I also would watch as she gently cared for her flowers. They say grandmom had a green thumb but I like to say she had a great love of these flowers. For her they were a reflection of her God. I know, because I observed her beautiful smile as she gently walked among the flowerbeds and the way she cared for her flowers. Through her example I learned to respect all living things and to see the goodness of God among us. My grandparents' care of the earth was passed on to my father and also to me. I am grateful.




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flowers. For her  
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God.***

---

My job at 'picking time' was to follow the digger and rescue any potato that had fallen off the hill, so it would not be crushed when the digger returned. I remember holding the stray potato in my hands and enjoying the smell of the new potato and the soil it grew in. We worked side by side with all the pickers, who were migrants and the poor from the area. This is where I learned my respect for all different cultures and peoples.

Often grandmom cooked breakfast for us before we went to the fields. Many of the pickers joined us. On Saturdays the pickers worked half a day and took home half of what they picked. I learned the meaning of sharing.



I ran free through the fields and watched the butterflies land on the milkweed pods. When the milkweed matured and the pods opened, soft silky feather-like insides would appear. I would pick some to make a pillow for my rag doll. I blew other silky threads into the air and sent prayers with them for some poor child in Africa or wherever they landed.

I spent hours sitting under my favorite tree watching little creatures playing in the grass. Birds sang in the tree above me and mother birds fed their babies. I used to pretend they were singing for me. I would look up and watch the clouds moving in the sky and imagine all kinds of mysteries and stories. In the field across the road from us foxes, deer, rabbits and pheasants lived. Down the road there was a turkey farm where the turkeys ran around free. I often

*Continued on next page*



## GREEN CORNER



ZEAL

Farm girl *Cont'd from p. 14*

enjoyed running around with them and laughed at the funny sounds they made when excited.

On the farm behind us there were cows, who supplied our milk and it was my job to go each day and carry the milk home. I enjoyed chatting with the elderly couple who owned the farm.

At night the fireflies came out and lit up the fields. Their dances of light fascinated me. There weren't any loud noises in the country at night, so the singing of the insects could be heard. I learned their different songs.

Because there were no bright lights in the country, the sky was clear and the wonders of the heavens were visible. It was so thrilling to lay on the ground and watch these marvels in the skies. What joy and squeals of delight when I saw a shooting star run across the sky.

So, I realize now that the foundation of my own spirituality for life began on that small potato farm. The holy dirt, its smell and feel in my hands, developed into my desire to walk gently on this earth.

Love of the earth was cultivated in me as a child. Respect for all life was imprinted in me early in my life. It has carried me through the concrete times of my life. My spirituality of life continues to grow and deepen. I thank God for my childhood, spent on a small farm in New Jersey.

Several years ago I visited the area where our farm was located. I was shocked! I got lost trying to travel among concrete, once fields where I and the chickens had run

free. The wheat, soy bean and potato fields were now houses and a four lane highway replaced the small road in front of our homestead. All is gone, especially the soil I loved to feel and smell. The holy dirt is buried way down deep under concrete.

I wonder how many other farms are lost to large companies that now grow our food? All of my relatives no longer farm because they could not keep up with the take-over by large corporations. *What spirituality of life is present in the factory farms that treat animals as commodities? What respect for life does Monsanto and other large corporations have for God's creation?*

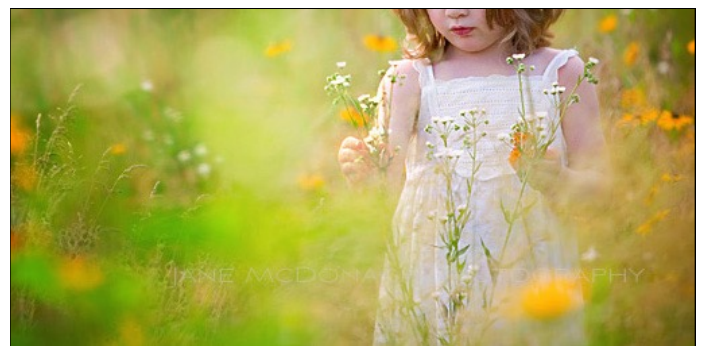
I feel sad to think the children of future generations may have to go to museums or read books about the wonders of the farm and the creatures who lived on them. *What spirituality will they develop?*

Don't you think that our present day spirituality must include the conversion of our harmful habits of consumption?

In *Laudatio Si*, Pope Francis encourages us to ecological conversion and a spirituality of life that can heal our Common Home. He especially encourages us to develop a spirituality for all life. Living a more simple lifestyle is a beginning.

If Saint Mary Euphrasia were living today, I imagine her saying to us:

***Courage, go forward and save the soul of the earth and all living creatures.***



*If you would like to contribute an article to Items of Interest for The Green Corner, The Year of Mercy or other category of news, please contact the newsletter editor, Jeanette McDermott, to discuss your story idea.*  
[jmcdermott@gspmna.org](mailto:jmcdermott@gspmna.org)

## GREEN CORNER

## Global Catholic Climate Movement reports on COP21

For the first time in history, the governments of the world struck an agreement to act together on climate change. On December 11, 2015, 195 countries signed the Paris Climate Agreement. This commits the nations to ending the fossil fuel era, with a long-term goal of bringing emissions to zero and a regular review of national commitments every five years.

Leaders of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) said, "We give thanks for this turning point in the global response to the ecological crisis that Pope Francis called for in his Encyclical.

"We particularly celebrate the agreement's goal to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Catholic Climate Petition which you have been promoting, forwarding, and tweeting has been the ONLY petition campaign that championed the 1.5°C target.

"This target, which was supported by the Vatican, was enshrined in the agreement and now is the tool by which we will hold our governments accountable for keeping fossil fuels in the ground and transitioning to a world powered by renewable energy."

GCCM presented more than 900,000 signatures to the highest political bodies of the COP21, including French President Hollande, UN climate chief Christiana Figueres and locally to the governments in the United States,



*The 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) was the biggest Conference set in place to tackle global warming and mitigate climate change. The Conference was held in December at the UN Summit in Paris.*

United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland.

Following COP21, Pope Francis remarked on the results of the Summit. He said, "With the hope that special attention for the most vulnerable populations is guaranteed, I exhort the whole international community to proceed on the path undertaken at COP21 in the name of an ever more effective solidarity."

The Global Catholic Climate Movement issued a statement encouraging all Catholics to take this time to recommit to climate justice to ensure that the poor and vulnerable are protected from climate disruption. Moving forward GCCM says it will work to hold governments and corporations accountable to the carbon emission reductions and financial promises they made in Paris.

The COP 21 Statement is available in six languages at <http://bit.ly/21XYcrf>.

## Franciscan Friar hosts a theological video series on Pope's Encyclical



A new theology video series titled *Understanding 'Laudato Si'* provides viewers with an in-depth introduction to and commentary on Pope Francis's encyclical. The series also includes presentations about science and religion, theology of creation, and a deeper appreciation for what Pope Francis is calling us to do and what the Christian tradition demands, inspires or invites us to consider. Franciscan friar, author, and scholar Daniel P. Horan, OFM, hosts the video series on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLO2W1tFFtdJn9V9\\_DvEbz9Bygt7XsYXRj](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLO2W1tFFtdJn9V9_DvEbz9Bygt7XsYXRj).

The series contains an introduction and 14 short episodes. You can learn more about Friar Daniel Horan on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DanHoranOFM/>





## LEADERSHIP TRAVEL

ZEAL

NAME	DATES	LOCATION
Sr. Sharon Rose Authorson	Sabbatical	Sabbatical
Sr. Jean Marie Fernandez	Jan 20	Vocation Meeting, Mission San Jose, CA
Sr. Beverly Hedgecoth	No travel	No travel
Sr. Maureen Johnson	No travel	No travel
Sr. Dolores Kalina	Jan 10-20	Home visit
Sr. Maureen Kunz	Jan 4-6	Los Angeles
Sr. Marie Maurer	Jan 9-17 Jan 19-22	Pelletier Hall, Fort Thomas, KY Baltimore Board of Directors meeting
Sr. Mary Carolyn McQuaid	Not available	Not available
Sr. Madeleine Munday	Jan 4-12	Los Angeles

## Resolution for 2016

To your enemy,  
forgiveness.

To an opponent,  
tolerance.

To a friend,  
your heart.

To a customer,  
service.

To all,  
charity.

To every child,  
a good example.

To yourself,  
respect.



## PROVINCE CONTACT

ZEAL



*"Have love towards yourself, a passion for your own spiritual growth. Then you will have true love and zeal for the spiritual growth of others."*

Saint Mary Euphrasia

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**ITEMS OF INTEREST**

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