

# ITEMS

## O F I N T E R E S T

### Online conversations

*Catholic Sisters Week kicks off year-long series of conversations about social concerns.*

**Page 3**

### Focusing on Lent

*Sister Pauline Bilbrough crafts Easter cards with blessed palms to keep focus at Lent.*

**Page 5**

### Baking altar bread

*Contemplative Sister Nellie Hawkins maintains PMNA's tradition of making altar bread.*

**Page 15**

### Transforming lives

*The Good Shepherd ministry in Burkina Faso transforms lives and social taboos.*

**Page 18**



Sister Danielle Fung (second from left) serves in an outreach ministry for adults with mental and physical disabilities in San Francisco.

## PROVINCE OUTREACH MINISTRIES

By Jeanette McDermott, PMNA Communications Coordinator

Sharon O'Grady, RGS, stirred my consciousness when she suggested I write about outreach ministries in the Province of Mid-North America (PMNA). She is doing a service to the whole of Good Shepherd by drawing

*Continued on next page*



## Green Corner

We welcome spring and the onset of Earth Day and Arbor Day, the two days that most reflect our actions of caring for creation. Earth Day is on April 22, and Arbor Day, a day set aside for planting trees, is on April 30. Volunteer efforts and community events highlight the celebrations.

*Continued on p. 16*

# PROVINCE NEWS



ZEAL

## Outreach, *Cont'd from p. 1*

my attention to her passion for these ministries. Beginning with this issue of *Items of Interest*, I will publish an ongoing series about outreach ministries in the province and the Sisters who serve in them.

### **Sisters serve in communities where they live**

Most people tend to think of Good Shepherd ministries in Mid-North America as being institutional. At one time this was the case; however, in the last 30 years, Good Shepherd has branched out. Today, 26 Sisters serve in outreach ministries in the communities where they live. Five Sisters hold staff positions in ministries owned and operated by the province, with an additional six Sisters serving on these ministry boards.

"We need to develop a theology around outreach ministries. We

need to invest time and energy in learning about one another's ministries so that we can increase ownership of them," said Maureen Kunz, RGS.

*We need to invest time and energy in learning about one another's ministries.*

~ Maureen Kunz, RGS

Sister Maureen finds it incredible to witness Good Shepherd's outreach in communities across the United States. For example, Good Shepherd has a presence in San Francisco with homeless people in the marginalized Tenderloin district through Sr. Jean Marie Fernandez. Presence in the city also includes ministering to adults with disabilities through Sr. Danielle Fung and supporting long-

term hospital patients through Sr. Olga Cristobal.

Good Shepherd's presence in Oregon includes working with families with mental illness through Sr. Joan Spiering, online therapy through Sr. Carmel Irving, and Zoom-based spiritual direction through Sr. Cathie Boerboom.

### **Ministries across 13 states**

This is a small sample of PMNA's Good Shepherd outreach ministries. All said, Good Shepherd has a presence in multiple ministries across 13 states.

"We are serving people with each Sister who is out there. These ministries are Good Shepherd Sisters responding to the mission beyond our sponsored ministries. They are "corporate" in new and fresh ways," Sr. Maureen said.

## An open door

By Sharon O'Grady, RGS

I had engaged in prison ministry a number of years ago after the Phoenix diocese hired me to be part of its prison ministry team. I worked at three facilities for women in Arizona: the state prison in the desert, a moderate security prison close to downtown Phoenix, and the local jail.

I helped with Mass and visited the women who attended. I also held a weekly Bible class in the state prison. These early encounters with the inmates were short and limited. Bible studies brought more engagement than Mass, but I felt the call to something more. We did not have large numbers attending Mass or Bible study, and I began to ask myself, "Is there a way to reach out and connect with more of the inmates?"

The answer to this question came to me one day when the inmates at the state prison were leaving Mass. I decided to walk with them into the prison yard. While

walking, I asked them where they lived, and where they ate. I asked them to show me around the "village," and they did.

The prison had a large fence around several two-story L-shaped motel-like buildings. Individual cells opened onto the outside. Inmates were allowed to stroll the grounds and had to return to their cells only at the designated hour to count bodies. After the head count, they were allowed to come out again.

In the weeks that followed, I continued to walk with them into the prison yard. I watched as they roamed the grounds, engaged with each other in conversation and outdoor games. I yearned to enter their lives, sit at their doorsteps and in their cells to be a presence for them. I did join them in the lunch line and ate and drink with

*Continued on next page*



# PROVINCE NEWS



## ZEAL

### Open door, *Cont'd from p. 2*

them. I often had conversations with officers who were in view. They never questioned my presence. I felt privileged in being called to this ministry of presence. I extended my actions to the other two facilities and began to make additional visits on days when we didn't have Mass.

#### What I was called to do

What I did was not as simple as it might seem—especially in the beginning. It was a delicate dance of respect and interaction. How do I reach out, invite and not intrude? Who, when, and where do I engage? I had to test, reach out, and create possibilities. I was determined to show up and attend. I made it possible for them to invite me into their lives.

I knew what I was called to do. Years of work in our Good Shepherd programs instilled in me a paradigm that was based on trust in our core values. I did not have an official role in these ministries with incarcerated women. I wasn't a counselor, social worker, or one to give advice or preach. My goal was simply to be with the inmates, counting on the mercy of God to take the encounters where they needed to go.

I wanted the inmates to know that I was connected with God. This was easy, as I was wearing a religious habit. I did not have an agenda; the agenda had to be theirs. There were times when I felt that the inmates considered me a curiosity, and this became a means of encounter.

#### Be with them in their weakness and help them in their darkness

Adapted words from Mary Euphrasia lived in my consciousness and accompanied me through the experiences of my prison ministry. These were her words: *Walk with them, accommodate your pace to theirs, join in their conversation, be with them in their weakness, help them in their darkness.*

As time went on, I was increasingly invited into their lives, into their stories, and into their pain. An inmate once asked me to bless her at the end of our conversation, and I did. It occurred to me that I could offer a blessing at the end of our conversations and make it mutual by asking them to bless me in return. This became a routine ritual. Sometimes an inmate sent me to another inmate in need. I learned as I went along.

#### A great gift

The time I spent with the inmates was a great gift to me. Many things happened. There were many stories.

In the words of Pope Francis:

*We need to enter the darkness, the night in which so many live. We need to be able to make contact with them and let them feel our closeness, . . . they need to find an open door, not a closed one. They need to find acceptance, not judgment, prejudice, or condemnation. They need to be helped, not pushed away or cast out.* I tried to be an open door—an open door to mercy as described by Francis: *Mercy is a force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.*

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*Items of Interest is running stories about outreach ministries as a new feature. Stories spotlight PMNA Sisters who have served, or are currently serving, in outreach ministries in the communities where they live. The next issue features Sr. Patricia Marie Thomas, who led the way for Sisters to serve in outreach ministries.*

## Catholic Sisters Week launches year-long discussions

Each year Catholic Sisters Week (CSW) is held March 8-14. This year, in honor of CSW, St. Louis Sisters kicked off a year-long series of online conversations about societal concerns facing the community. The series is called *Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate*. The conversations deal with issues that religious Sisters across the Archdiocese of St. Louis are tackling in response to their vocational calling. The events are held on the second Wednesday of every month from March 2021 through March 2022. Anyone can join the live conversations or watch the recorded video and podcast versions on YouTube.

The St. Louis Review, a newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, ran a story during Catholic Sisters Week about the Good Shepherd Arts Center and its director Sr. Glynis McManamon. The Review reported how GSAC's mission and diverse art exhibits dovetail with the themes being explored in the yearlong series of online conversations with Sisters. In the article, Sister Glynis said, "The arts help to build bridges in our understanding of one another. It's fear of the other, the person who is different from me, the situation that is unfamiliar, that causes us to build barriers instead of bridges. Art can take something that is unfamiliar and build that bridge. This person's experience is not my experience, but I look at that (art) and it draws me in. The humanity is what it speaks to." Read the story at "<http://bit.ly/3on4bLP>."

*Continued on next page*

# PROVINCE NEWS

## Discussions, *Cont'd from p. 3*

The live-streamed online series features a different issue each month and explores how it intersects with racism, migration, and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation. Three panelists across different generations bring unique perspectives to each session.

- The series is a project partnership between Region X of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and Communicators for St. Louis Sisters (CSLS). The aim of the series is to provide a forum for a constructive conversation on some of the biggest social issues of our time, and the complex intersection of these topics with racism, migration, and climate. Topics for the series shape us as humankind. Among them are
- food security
- human trafficking
- gun violence
- health care
- affordable housing
- climate change, and much more.

Charish Badzinski hosts the live-streamed series. She is a writer, public relations consultant, and founder of Rollerbag Goddess Global Communications.

"We live in a time when so many of us get our information in bite-sized pieces from social media. But, in truth, all of the issues we will be talking about are highly nuanced and interconnected," Charish said.

"The topics require much more than a tweet, meme or TikTok to understand. It all comes down to educating ourselves and helping one another along in our quest for deeper understanding," she said.

CSLS manages the monthly live-streamed conversations and records

**APRIL 14, 3pm (CT) | CARE OF CREATION**

**HOST**

**CHARISH BADZINSKI**  
Founder, Rollerbag Goddess Global Communications

**LEAH CLYBURN**  
Activist, Organizer

**CATHERINE MCCOMAS-BUSSA**  
Student, Advocate  
Northland College

**CHRISTIN TOMY, OP**  
Sister, Farmer, Student  
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa

**EXPLORING INTERSECTIONS**  
CATHOLIC SISTERS  
ON RACISM, MIGRATION AND CLIMATE

exploringintersections.org

each session for video playback and as a podcast on YouTube.

The presentations are offered as free webinars at 3 p.m. (Central Standard Time) on the second Wednesday of each month. In addition to the conversations with panelists, each episode includes suggested action items for how we can help one another move forward.

The first episode of *Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate* addressed the issue of gender equality on March 10. Panelists were Beth Allen, Director of Affiliation for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration; Ga'nea Jones, a student at Missouri State University; and Sister Joan Mitchell, CSJ, a teacher, writer, and the editor of Good Ground Press. You can find the video recording and podcast of the episode on gender equality at <https://exploringintersections.org/2021/01/20/exploring-gender/>

Angela Aufdemberge, President and CEO of Vista Maria, will be among the panel presenters for the July episode on Anti-Trafficking on July

14, 2021. Don't miss it. Visit [exploringintersections.org](https://exploringintersections.org) to learn more about the conversations, and to obtain links to the recorded video episodes and podcasts.

## Topic Schedule

2nd Wednesday of the month

### 2021

1. April: Care of Creation
2. May: Migration
3. June: Racial Justice
4. July: Anti-Trafficking
5. August: Gun Safety
6. September: Economic Justice
7. October: Food Security
8. November: Restorative Justice
9. December: Affordable Housing

### 2022

10. January: Education Justice
11. February: Access to Health Care
12. March: To Be Determined



## PROVINCE NEWS



ZEAL



## Sister Pauline says making works of art from palms is an opportunity to keep focus at Lent

By Jennifer Brinker, St. Louis Review



*Sister Pauline Bilbrough shows one of the braided palm cards she made last year during Lent. Photo: Jeanette McDermott*

Sister Pauline Bilbrough has been making works of art from palms for more than 60 years. With each tuck, bend and fold, making works of art from blessed palms is a form of prayer for Sister Pauline Bilbrough. Sister Pauline learned the art form nearly 60 years ago, as a young novice with the Religious Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Since then, her art of creating woven palms has turned into a Lenten tradition; the finished works of art, most of which measure no more than a few inches, are accompanied by a hand-embellished card and given at Easter to fellow Sisters, family and friends.

“It focuses me during Lent, because there’s so much going on that it’s hard to keep the focus,” Sister Pauline said, adding that she also usually partakes in some sort of spiritual reading during the penitential season.



*Sr. Pauline chats with St. Louis Review reporter Jennifer Brinker at Mason Pointe Care Center, where Sr. Pauline serves as local leader for Good Shepherd Sisters who are missioned there. Photo: Jeanette McDermott*

She continued the tradition over the years as she worked in various ministries in several cities, including at a residential program for teen girls, as an administrator for a home for the elderly and caring for elderly religious Sisters. Sister Pauline came to St. Louis about 10 years ago and now lives at Mason Pointe Care Center with several other Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Sister Pauline orders a bundle of palms from Catholic Supply of St. Louis about a week ahead of Palm Sunday. The palms must be as fresh as possible — “green” if you will — because they’re still pliable and easy to work with. Older palms don’t work as well since they’re too brittle.

One year, Sister Pauline became too busy with a new ministry and travel that she didn’t have a chance to make them. After Easter dinner with her fellow religious Sisters, someone asked her: “Well, where are they? Where are the palms?” After explaining she didn’t have time, the Sister pressed her: “You have to, you just have to.” She went to everybody’s bedroom and took them off the wall and gave me the palms. I sat there after we had our refreshments and braided a new palm for all of their rooms.”

*Continued on next page*

# PROVINCE NEWS



## ZEAL

### Sr. Pauline, *Cont'd from p. 5*

The tradition of palm weaving is an old one. After Palm Sunday Mass, families return home with blessed palms, which are considered a sacramental, and place them on display, sometimes behind a crucifix on the wall. Others enjoy making them into works of art, such as a simple cross, grapes and leaves, or other more elaborate designs such as a crown of thorns.

Sister Pauline has taught countless others how to make the works of art, whether fellow Sisters, friends of people she's worked with over the years — really, just about anyone who is willing to sit down and learn.

"Usually when I am sitting watching the TV in the evening, I will pull (the palms) and start working on them," she said. "And then the other sisters say, 'Can I learn?' or 'Can I help you?' They cut the ribbon, or they punch the holes, or the stamp the blessed palm sign on the back" of the cards.

*"It helps remind me that this is a preparation for Easter and to never forget the mystery of it."*

Lent is a time to slow down, look in a different direction and detach from the busyness of life, Sister Pauline noted. "It's time to pull in a little bit to focus on what it's all about, and why it still has so much meaning. It helps remind me that this is a preparation for Easter and to never forget the mystery of it."

Reflecting on Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the beginning what was to be Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, Sister Pauline said that "the story is a wonderful one that brings a lot of consolation, and that life is full of ups and downs.

There's the cross as well as the christening. God was willing to have his Son do this so that the gates of heaven can be opened again for everybody who believes in that and strives to live the Christian life, to walk the way of Jesus."

Holy week ends with Easter and the resurrection of our Lord, the Good Shepherd. "When we're down, we should not lose sight of the fact that Easter comes — and it will come for everybody."

*Story reprinted from St. Louis Review, March 18, 2021*



*Sister Pauline Bilbrough practices weaving with paper to demonstrate how she creates palm artwork. Sister Pauline has made woven palm art for more than 60 years, starting when she was a young novice. Photo: Lisa Johnston*



*Some of last year's cards. Photo: Jeanette McDermott*



# PROVINCE NEWS



ZEAL

## Storytelling from the grassroots

Sister Joyce Meyer, of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, held a two-part online storytelling workshop for Good Shepherd Sisters and Lay Mission Partners on February 18 and March 4. Cristina Duranti, Director of the Good Shepherd International Foundation, presented the webinar.

The workshop covered the importance of grassroots storytelling and addressed how to make storytelling effective and powerful so that it impacts readers and listeners. Sister Joyce addressed the value of telling stories about Good Shepherd ministries and our own personal stories to “help tell the Universe’s evolving story to the world.”

Sister Joyce is a member of the board of directors of the Good Shepherd International Foundation. She also serves on the board of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, which funds Global Sisters Report (GSR). She writes for GSR and has served as international liaison to women religious for Global Sisters Report since January 2014.

During the workshop, Sister Joyce expressed her passion for spiritual dance and said she was looking for stories about dance that she could include in Global Sisters Report. She encouraged webinar participants to contact her if anyone knew a Sister who was engaged in any form of spiritual dance.

As it happened, Sr. Jean Marie Fernandez had written a story for the November-December 2020 issue of *Items of Interest* about her devotion to liturgical dance. PMNA Communications Coordinator Jeanette McDermott contacted Sr. Joyce and told her about Sr. Jean Marie’s article. Jeanette inquired as to whether GSR might like to reprint the story. Long story short, what emerged from the exchange was an invitation from Sr. Joyce to Sr. Jean Marie to tell her personal story of liturgical dance to the GSR audience.

Sister Jean Marie is no stranger to Global Sisters Report. In 2018 she wrote an article for GSR titled “The Heart of Love, a Shepherd.” You can read the article at <https://bit.ly/2Pet6PU>. Sr. Jean Marie’s story on liturgical dance for *Items of Interest* is found on the PMNA website at <https://bit.ly/3daqnPo>.

Global Sisters Report encourages all Sisters to contribute stories that provide first-person accounts of their own work and mission. Send stories and questions to [info@globalsistersreport.org](mailto:info@globalsistersreport.org).

## Announcements and News Tidbits

There have been several changes in room numbers of Sisters at St. Margaret Hall. Please make these corrections in your directory.

Sr. Alena Bernert, Rm 103

Sr. Marilyn Kahl, Rm. 344

Sr. Noreen Sheedy, Rm 338

The main address for St. Margaret Hall is  
1960 Madison Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Two Good Shepherd ministries have received recent awards for excellence. Read about the Top Workplace recognition CORA Services received on p. 10. Read about the Hero Award Bon Pasteur Kowlezi received on p. 18. You can also listen to the voices of children and women from the Kolwezi program on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/3sip8nD>

Two Mid-North America province Sisters made headline news in the St. Louis Review in March. Read the story about Sr. Glynis McManamon on p. 3 and the story about Sr. Pauline Bilbrough on p. 5.

NAC has a new Poetry Library on its website, featuring the poetry of NAC Director Larry Couch and others. Find it at <https://www.gsadvocacy.org/poetry.html>

Sisters of the Good Shepherd answered the urgent call for support at the U.S./Mexico border by sponsoring a Spanish-speaking volunteer to work with Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities has 19 border sites in California, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Each site is facing challenges of caring for families and children as numbers swell at the border.

Sisters in the Mid-North America province will renew their vows on Good Shepherd Sunday, April 25, 2021. The day prior to Good Shepherd Sunday is St. Mary Euphrasia’s Feast Day. We celebrate and rejoice both of these occasions.

## NAC NEWS

ZEAL

# NAC's 2021 Shine the Light Virtual Conference: Root Causes and Intersections on Human Trafficking

By Sylvia Casaro Dietert, NAC Advisory Board

As a partner-in-mission and recently elected chair of the National Advocacy Center (NAC) Advisory Board, I was invited to share my impressions of the conference with you. Ending human trafficking has been a cause dear to my heart since my days of working to eradicate modern day slavery with the Good Shepherd Sisters in Budapest.

At the time, Hungary, particularly Budapest, was at the center of East - West human trafficking transit from Eastern Europe to Germany, France, Canada and the United States. We eventually joined a larger network, the Mouvement Du Nid in France, with international representation in Brussels.

## Empowering those on the margins

Since the year 2000, NAC has served as a voice to represent the Sisters and their social services agencies who empower those on the margins, particularly vulnerable women and children. With a small office and ambitious goals, its staff has managed to pull off three human trafficking conferences in the past four years. This year NAC ventured online seamlessly on March 8-9 with a reach of more than 500 registered participants from the U.S. and abroad.

During opening remarks, NAC Director Larry Couch pointed out that human trafficking "is a growing global criminal industry with power, money and licentiousness at its center that disregards the truth that every individual has worth and human dignity." Larry has led the NAC organization for the past 12



*l-r: National Advocacy Center staff Fran Eskin-Royer and Larry Couch participate in the virtual conference NAC hosted on human trafficking.*

years (the last seven as both director and lobbyist).

## Value of the human person

Anchored on the value of the human person, Larry also highlighted the importance of advocating for systemic change. He said, "structures and attitudes in our societies enable the trafficking of persons for sex and labor."

Faced with complex systemic issues to tackle, the conference focused on the root causes of human trafficking, including poverty, immigration, racism, and lack of equal opportunities for all. These issues call us to action.

Sister Winifred Doherty, who represents the Good Shepherd Congregation and its mission partners at the United Nations, brought to the conference an international perspective on root causes of human trafficking. She emphasized how economic systems and forced migration compound the problems facing vulnerable women, children, minorities and other marginalized groups.

Sister Winifred summarized the five Ps that are at the root of exploitation: pleonexia (greed and avarice), privilege, pleasure, power and profit. She also reflected on how

*Continued on next page*



## NAC NEWS



ZEAL

Conference, *Cont'd from p. 8*

the coronavirus pandemic “has shone a light on the fault lines in society, showing ever more clearly the structural and systemic issues that we have known, ignored or chosen not to address.”

**Moved by zeal**

Clearly, the task ahead is colossal and ongoing. Moved by zeal as love in action, we are called to readiness and mobility to embrace the needs of the times. Human Trafficking is one of those needs of our times, and the 2021 Shine the Light Conference implores us to ACT NOW.

Visit the [NAC website](#) to learn more about the conference and find links to conference actions. Working together, we can make a difference.



*Patricia Kelly is a Good Shepherd Volunteer who is missioned to the National Advocacy Center of Sisters of the Good Shepherd. She assisted the NAC staff with the Shine the Light conference on the root cause and intersectionality of human trafficking.*



*Sylvia Casaro Dietert has served on the Advisory Board of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd since 2017; she was elected chair in January 2021. Sylvia is the workforce development programs coordinator for the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO and lives in Germantown, Maryland.*

## Ecumenical Advocacy Days focus on environmental justice

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) is a movement of the ecumenical Christian community and its partners and allies. EAD is grounded in biblical witness and the shared traditions of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Each year EAD holds a conference in Washington, DC, that focuses on a particular issue of advocacy. This year, EAD stresses climate justice. The 2021 theme is "Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored." Conference topics will address how environmental racism grew out of colonialism and structural racism.

The National Advocacy Center of Sisters of the Good Shepherd is actively engaged in planning and organizing the conference. Poet and director of NAC, Larry Couch, will emcee with three other poets a workshop titled, *Poetry and the Creative Process*. The workshop will take place on Tuesday, April 20, at 8:00pm Eastern Time. In addition, Larry and Fran Eskin-Royer, Associate Director at NAC, produced a brief video for the conference. The video honors the Native Americans who lived on the land where NAC is located (504 Hexton Hill) before White people arrived. Conference planners are collecting similar videos from all conference attendees to show at EAD.

The EAD website states, “Around the world, we again bear witness to protests for racial justice, this time set amidst unprecedented climate-induced disasters, an economic crisis, and the deaths of more than one million people globally from the pandemic. We have an opportunity to reflect on this moment as Christians. Together we can seek the balm to heal God's Earth and all humanity.”

The EAD 2021 virtual gathering will take place April 18-21, 2021. Register at <https://attendify.co/ecumenical-advocacy-days-pbfNWPY>

### GSR reports on conference

Global Sisters Report (GSR) reported extensively on the online conference that National Advocacy Center held on human trafficking March 8-9. Conference speaker and United Nations representative for Sisters of the Good Shepherd Sr. Winifred Doherty is quoted throughout the article. Read GSR's report of what unfolded at the conference at <https://bit.ly/31uUj3c>

# MINISTRY NEWS



## ZEAL

### GSAC exhibits

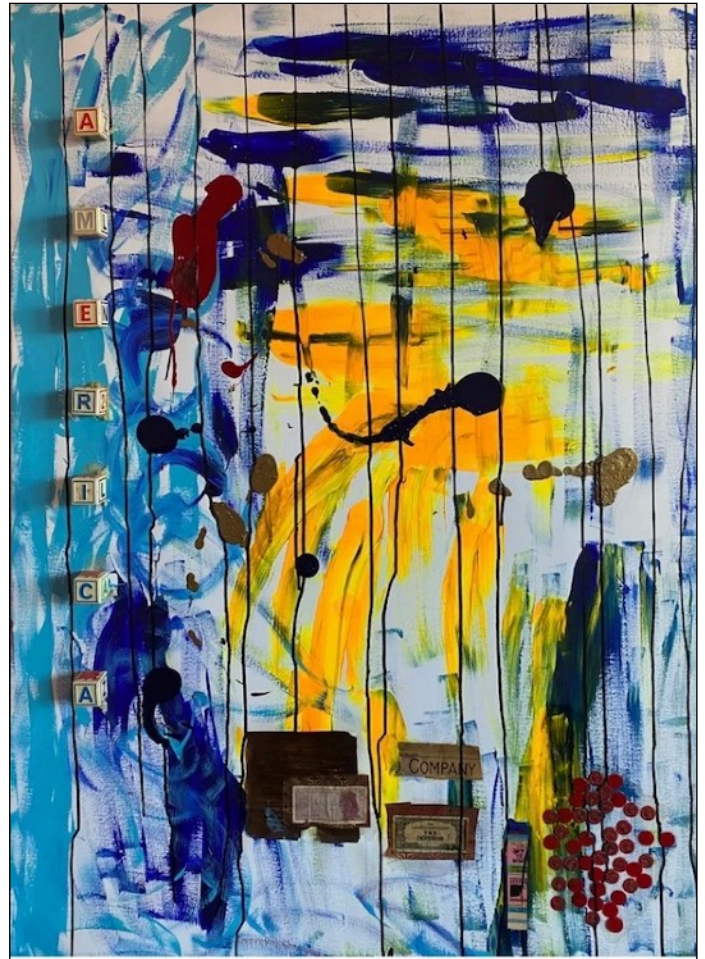
Recent online art exhibits at Good Shepherd Arts Center have featured abstract art, mixed media sky-scapes, and,



most recently, athletic shoes in the exhibit titled "If the Shoe Fits." The Director of Good Shepherd Arts Center Glynis McManamon, RGS, interviewed the artist Brock Seals about the exhibit, his recent projects, and personal development as an artist. Watch the recorded interview at <https://bit.ly/39rZKUX>

To subscribe to the GSAC YouTube channel and get alerts about video shows, visit <https://bit.ly/39Iw9Hh>

On another note, GSAC reached its recent \$5,000 fundraising goal and thanks everyone who donated.



## CORA Services recognized for excellence in the workplace

Top Workplaces has recognized CORA Services for its excellence in achieving a people-centered culture. As part of its celebration of Women's History Month in March, Top Workplaces featured CORA and other exceptional women-led companies who believe in the power of putting people first.

AnnMarie Schultz is the Chief Executive Officer at CORA. In her position as CEO, and along with the members of the corporation, who are Good Shepherd Sisters in leadership, affirm the women-led focus of Top Workplaces. With its focus on values, CORA is slated to receive additional awards and recognitions in coming weeks. We will report on this news in the next issue of *Items of Interest*.





# MINISTRY NEWS



## ZEAL

## CORA looks back over a year of change

March 16, 2021 marked one year since we began operating remotely. In some ways this has been the longest year ever, and in other ways, it has flown by. From either perspective, this past year has burdened many, and although there is hope for some level of normalcy returning in the near future, we still wonder exactly what that means and when it will take place.

Social distancing has profoundly impacted CORA's young people, as well as the older generations. Parents and grandparents continue to navigate the challenges of balancing parenting, education, jobs, and the overall health and wellness of their families.

I witnessed our staff battle these difficulties and am grateful and impressed by their dedication and poise, despite these added stressors. Our Truancy, Early Years and

YouthCOR Summer Camp staff were among some of the first providers in the city to return to face services in the early summer, followed by our non-public school staff who stepped back into classrooms in September.

Then we began opening access centers and digital learning pods for children who needed access to and supervision during their virtual education experiences.

### Moving forward slowly

Slowly, we allowed our staff and clients back into the building for in-person counseling sessions. And now we are carefully working through getting all of our staff back into our building, and the homes, neighborhoods and schools in communities we serve.

When we physically closed our doors, we embraced a new way of serving others that required a

monumental collective team effort. I cannot even begin to fully express how incredibly responsive the CORA team has been in the face of this adversity. The openness to new ideas, change, innovation, and ongoing pursuit of the highest quality of service for others has humbled me.

As the agency celebrates 50 years of caring and compassionate service this year, I can't help but reflect on the way we've adapted to this new environment and how it's prepared us to better serve children and families moving forward.

If you aren't already partnering with our team in some way, please consider how you could meaningfully connect with CORA this year as we launch the agency into the future.

*Reprinted from CORA's newsletter*

## Abundant Hope video series features two Good Shepherd Sisters

Good Shepherd Sisters Barbara Beasley (Los Angeles) and Virginia Gordon, (St. Louis) share their lived experiences of responding to God's call in a video series called "Abundant Hope."

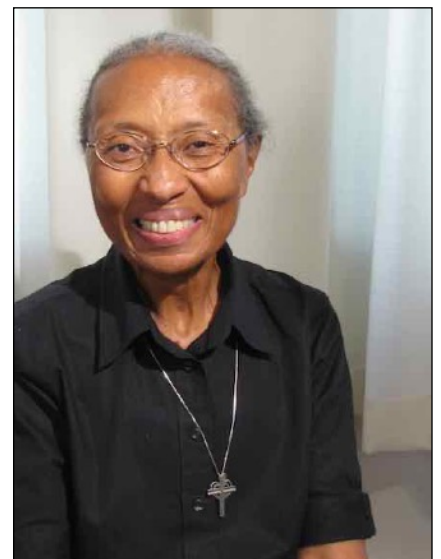
The National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC) sponsored the video series. You can watch Sr. Barbara's video segment at <https://youtu.be/fCTZsF7Y3B4> and Sr. Virginia's video segment at <https://youtu.be/-q-DiFK-alQ>.

The videos run about three minutes long and feature 61 Sisters, brothers, and priests who demonstrate the vitality of consecrated life across generations.

NRVC says the aim of the Abundant Hope video series is to spark conversation about and amplify hope in religious life. Visit <https://bit.ly/3u29OMr> for the full list of presenters. A study and reflection guide is also available at <https://nrvc.net/products/show/92>



Virginia Gordon, RGS  
<https://youtu.be/-q-DiFK-alQ>



Barbara Beasley, RGS  
<https://youtu.be/fCTZsF7Y3B4>

# MINISTRY NEWS



## ZEAL

## Gracenter celebrates Catholic Sisters Week

The San Francisco Community of Good Shepherd Sisters celebrated Catholic Sisters Week by joining with communities of religious women across the country to put a spotlight on food insecurity during the COVID pandemic.

Bringing a financial gift to the San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition (SFAAFBC), on March 9, 2021, the Sisters met some of the coalition's wonderful volunteers. SFAAFBC is a coalition of 21 churches, including three Catholic parishes, working together to address the health inequities among African Americans in San Francisco. The mission of the coalition is to mobilize the city and its resources to eliminate health inequities among African American residents.

Parishioners at St. Paul of the Shipwreck Catholic Church in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco stage food distribution of various types three times each week. Good Shepherd Sisters in the San Francisco community said they were grateful to be a part of "neighbors helping neighbors."

### Purpose of Catholic Sisters Week

Catholic Sisters Week (CSW) invites everyone to celebrate women religious each year from March 8-14. The annual celebration began in 2014 to honor women religious with a series of events that instruct, enlighten, and bring greater focus on the lives of Catholic Sisters. CSW is a chance to recognize all that women religious do. The hope is that as more young women learn about women religious, more will choose to follow their example.

Fifty-two weeks a year women religious stand with the poor and immigrants, teach children, fight injustice, heal the sick, share spirituality, empower women, defend the planet, promote peace, create community, and offer hope. For that one week, March 8-14, the goal of Catholic Sisters Week is to shine the spotlight on women religious in order to

- invite all who follow Jesus to expand and support their gospel witness
- grow the service networks they have seeded
- share their spirituality, charisms, and community
- encourage young women to consider a vocation to religious life
- support their pastoral, teaching and prophetic works
- focus on the new world they call into being.

*Submitted by Marguerite Bartling, RGS*

See related story about Catholic Sisters Week on page 3.



*Top: Good Shepherd Sisters Anne Kelley and Olga Cristobal stand with three volunteers from the San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition after presenting them with a donation check to support their food insecurity program.*

*Bottom l-r: Sisters Olga Cristobal and Marguerite Bartling stand with a volunteer from the African American Faith-Based Coalition as she accepts a donation check from Good Shepherd Sisters in the San Francisco community. Sr. Anne Kelley is on the right. Sisters presented the check to the coalition in celebration of Catholic Sisters Week in March.*



# MINISTRY NEWS



ZEAL

## Praying with scripture

By Maureen Kunz, RGS

Going into a second year of the pandemic, people are more and more open to meeting on Zoom. I took advantage of this opportunity in March and offered women in my community in Blaine, Washington, a 3-part series on praying with scripture. Here's part of the most recent invitation I offered:

Three prayer skills in the Catholic tradition

1. Lectio Divina: March 3
2. Ignatian Meditation: March 10
3. Ignatian Contemplation: March 17

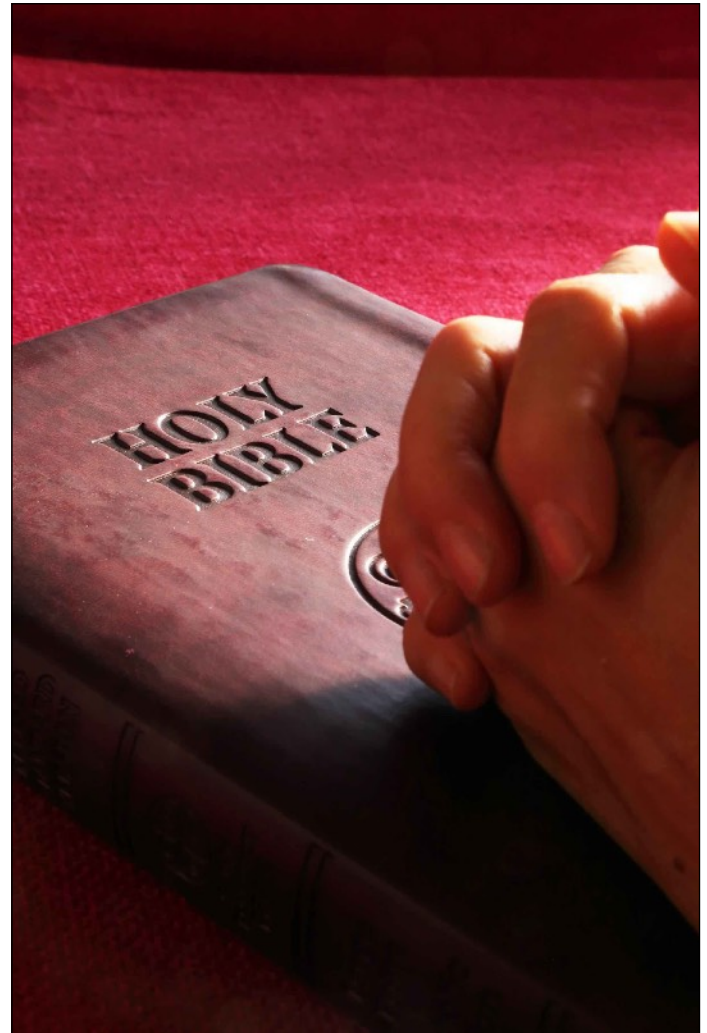
7:00 pm to 8:30 pm: teaching---praying---sharing

Vowed Sisters take these prayer skills for granted. We learn them early on in our formation, if not sooner. This isn't the case for many parishioners.

I've been involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) for many years and have taught these skills to many people coming into the Catholic community. Why should only new Catholics or women religious get this chance? We need to offer these experiences to long-time members of our faith communities too. Since January I have worked with pastors in my two parishes to offer this series to people.

How wonderful to see how enthusiastic participants are! With clear facilitation, parishioners are experiencing the scriptures in fresh and exciting ways. Plus, they have the chance to share how they are engaging with the text in ways they never have before.

If any of you would like to offer this series to your parishes, please contact me. I'll share my materials so you don't have to create your own from scratch if you don't want to. If you want company, I'll do them with you! It's amazing! And fun! And sometimes



heartbreaking, as you can imagine. It's all the work of the Spirit!

It's time to stop hoarding Catholic resources!

## Sister Patricia Marie Barnette featured in podcast interview

Sr. Patricia Marie Barnette was the topic of a podcast interview about her book, *God's Mercy Awaits You: Find Healing After Abortion*. Listen to her interview on Color of Thought Podcast at <https://bit.ly/3m5BjC8>. The host of the podcast said, "Mercy! Sister quickly and often affirms the need within the Church to remind those suffering from trauma about God's mercy. I hope you check out sisters book at <https://bit.ly/3fqRHLW>"



## COMMUNITY NEWS

ZEAL

## Zoom training can make you a pro

Now that Zoom has become a way of life for all of us, you might want to consider watching some training videos to better understand everything the platform has to offer. There's more to Zoom than logging in and unmuting your microphone. Zoom training is for anyone who wants to make conference calls more interactive so you get the most out of conference calls.

### Video tutorials

Zoom video tutorials are easy to navigate and understand. A search function allows you to type in a topic you want to learn about, such as how to screen share and assign people to breakout rooms. There are abundant resources

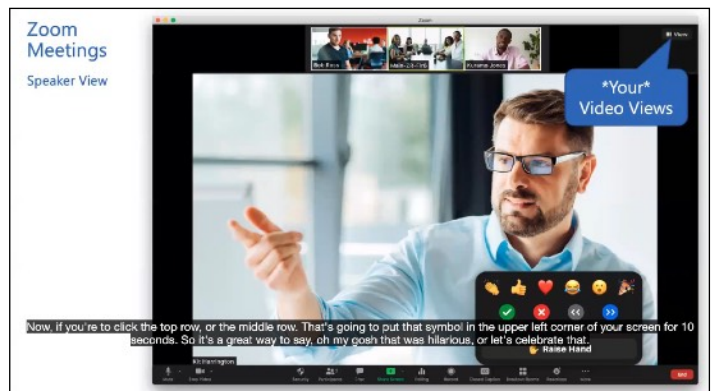
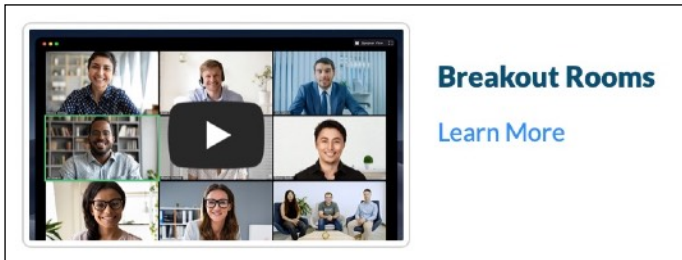
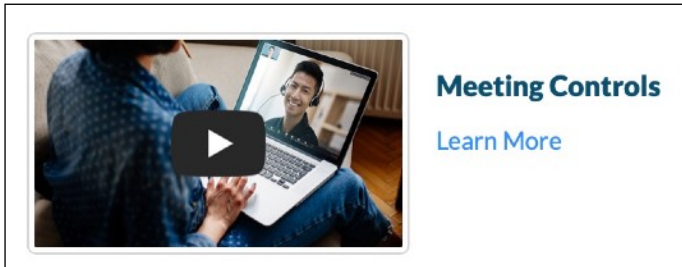
to help you get started and learn best practices. Here is the link to video tutorials that cover a wide array of topics, such as joining and scheduling meetings, using closed captioning, and assigning meetings with Google or Outlook Calendar. <https://bit.ly/3fqSM6E>

This link takes you to the beginner basics of getting started with Zoom. <https://bit.ly/3suQDdL>

You can find the Top 20 Zoom resources at <https://bit.ly/2O7OaHi>

The page of Frequently Asked Questions provides links that answer some of the most common questions Zoom users have. <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206175806>.

Best of all, the training allows you to learn at your own pace.



## Sister Anne Marie Solomon turns 105

We had a little party for Anne Marie's 105th birthday. Seven Sisters from Maria Hall joined Emmanuel staff in singing Happy Birthday and congratulating Sister. She was very sleepy and hard to rouse because she had been awake most of the night before, teaching children that nobody else could see. (This happens fairly often.) She was aware that we were there. We brought her a milkshake from the local ice cream parlor. Staff decorated with balloons and streamers, posters, and a party hat. Sister Anne Marie said, "I love you" and "Yes!" when asked if she was enjoying her birthday. Local newspapers covered Sr. Anne Marie's 105th birthday celebration. Read the stories at <https://bit.ly/3tZtMau> and <https://bit.ly/3fmUjKU>

*Submitted by Mary Carol McClenon, RGS*



*l-r: Sisters Caroline DeAngelus, Agnes Yamamoto, and Mary Carol McClenon wish Sister Anne Marie Solomon a happy birthday.*



## COMMUNITY NEWS

ZEAL

## Sister Nellie maintains tradition of baking altar bread

By Jeanette McDermott, PMNA Communications Coordinator

Sister Nellie Hawkins entered the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in 1962 and committed herself to a Contemplative Life. She has been baking altar bread ever since.

A member of the Contemplative Community in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, Sister Nellie rises at 7 a.m. in the convent every morning for prayers, Mass, and breakfast. She then goes downstairs to make altar bread for some 300 customers.

This is her routine every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday she cleans the altar bread room and takes a break Friday through Sunday. She reserves her free days for making greeting cards, reading, dabbling on the computer, and taking mini retreats.

Sister Nellie's altar bread operation helps sustain the Good Shepherd contemplative lifestyle and enables the Sisters to participate directly in the sacred liturgy of the Church.

### Making the hosts

"I make the communion hosts and the priest consecrates them so they become the body of Christ, the Bread of Life. Without the hosts, priests would conduct a church service rather than celebrate a Mass," Sr. Nellie said.

The Good Shepherd Contemplative Sisters have been baking altar bread for more than 150 years. Today, Sr. Nellie is the only Good Shepherd Sister in the Province of Mid-North America who still bakes communion hosts.

The recipe for making the hosts is simple. Sister Nellie mixes a thin batter made from white or whole wheat flour and water and pours the batter onto a flat griddle. The



*Sister Nellie punches out a sheet of hosts after baking them the day before.*

griddle is embossed with a crucifix, a lily and other religious iconography. The wafers bake for a few minutes and emerge as a flat sheet stamped with the designs.

The reed-thin wafer sheets are fragile. Sister Nellie said she has to be gentle when placing the sheets into a humidifier to moisten them overnight. If the hosts are not moistened in a humidifier, they could crumble when Sr. Nellie slips the sheets into the machine the next day that punches out the 2 1/8" disc-shaped wafers. Cheltenham community Sisters counting, bagging, boxing, and sending the hosts to parishes complete the task. A bag of 1,000 hosts costs about \$20, plus shipping.

Sister Nellie provides hosts primarily to local parishes. She also inherited some customers in other regions of the United States when

Contemplative Sisters in St. Louis and Detroit closed their convents and moved to elder care facilities.

Sister Nellie said she bakes 500 wafers on each of her three working days. She baked closer to 3,000 wafers each day before COVID kept people from attending Mass.

"I would imagine people will be going back to church soon and then I will be baking more hosts once again," Sr. Nellie said.

To set her intention for each work day, Sister Nellie said she blesses herself with the sign of the cross. She prays for parishioners and priests while mixing batter, running machines, and cutting hosts. Sister Nellie said baking altar bread helps keep her mind focused on her purpose within the Church. She offers a prayer of gratitude to each customer before shipping the hosts.

# GREEN CORNER



ZEAL



## Green Corner, *Cont'd from p. 1*

### Arbor Day

As pioneers began moving into the Nebraska Territory, they felt a loss from lack of trees. They missed the beauty of the stately trees they left behind. They also missed having the trees for practical reasons: as windbreaks to keep soil in place, as fuel and building materials, and as shade from the sun on the open prairie.

Nebraska newspaper editor and local resident J. Sterling Morton loved trees and advocated for individuals and civic groups to plant them. Once he became secretary of the Nebraska Territory, he spread with fervor his message about the value of trees. On January 4, 1872, at a meeting of the State Board of Agriculture, Morton proposed a tree planting day to be called "Arbor Day." The celebration date was set for April 10, 1872, with prizes being offered to county government and individuals for the largest number of trees properly planted on that day. Historic records show that more than 1 million trees were planted in Nebraska on the first Arbor Day.

Arbor Day was named a legal state holiday in Nebraska on April 22, 1885. Many other states also passed legislation to observe Arbor Day. By 1920, more than 45 states and territories were celebrating Arbor Day each year. Today National Arbor Day is celebrated in April in all 50 states.

Arbor Day symbolizes hope for the future. The simple act of planting a tree represents a belief that the tree will grow to purify air and water, while providing cooling

shade, habitat for wildlife, healthier communities, and endless natural beauty — all for a better tomorrow. Plant a tree!

*"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now" ~ Chinese proverb*

### Earth Day

The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970. It marked the birth of the modern environmental movement and mobilized 20 million Americans (10% of the total US population) to call for increased protections of planet Earth. Earth Day went global in 1990 with 200 million people in 141 countries. The movement kept growing and in 2010 engaged 75,000 global partners in 192 countries. Today, one billion people around the world mobilize every year on April 22 for transformative action for our planet.

Earth Day began with Senator Gaylord Nelson, a junior senator from Wisconsin who had long been concerned about the deteriorating environment in the United States. In January 1969 he and many others witnessed the ravages of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Inspired by the student anti-war movement, Senator Nelson wanted to infuse the energy of student anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution.

By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

*Continued on next page*





# GREEN CORNER



ZEAL



## Earth Day, *Cont'd from p. 16*

and the passage of other first of their kind environmental laws. Among the laws are the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act. Two years later, Congress passed the Clean Water Act. A year after that, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act and soon after the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

### Observance of Earth Day

Earth Day 1990 gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Today, Earth Day is widely recognized as the largest secular observance in the world.

How much do you know about Planet Earth — its species, resources, and threats? Test your knowledge at <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-quizzes/>

### Environmental history

Want to learn more about environmental history - starting in 1720 in India, when hundreds of Bishnois Hindus of Khejadali were killed trying to protect trees from the Maharaja of Jodhpur, who wanted wood to fuel



the construction of his palace? This event is considered to be the origin of the 20th century Chipko movement, one of the strongest movements to conserve forests in India.

The Chipko movement began in 1973 at the foothills of Himalayas and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world. It created a precedent for starting nonviolent protests in India. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2PHu9b3>



*Women in the Chipko movement stand around trees to protect them.*

## ACROSS BORDERS

ZEAL

## Good Shepherd ministry in Democratic Republic of Congo wins Hero Award

Each year the Thomson Reuters Foundation awards companies, NGOs, businesses and journalists in eight categories for making vital contributions to combatting slavery - a multi-billion-dollar industry that affects more than 40 million people worldwide. The foundation, part of Thomson Reuters, the global news and information services company, held this year's ceremony online.

The foundation announced on February 25 that the Good Shepherd International Foundation won its 2021 Stop Slavery Award in the Hero Award category for the Bon Pasteur Kolwezi program in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Good Shepherd ministry works to eliminate child labor in cobalt mines and provide alternative livelihoods to the families working in the Kolwezi mines.

With modern slavery garnering attention worldwide, businesses are under growing pressure from both governments and consumers to disclose what actions they are taking to ensure their supply chains are free from exploitation. The economic slowdown from the COVID-19 pandemic has left countless people at greater risk of exploitation. See page 20 of the last issue of [Items of Interest](#).

Jane Wainoi, RGS, is Director of Bon Pasteur Kolwezi. Sisters work at ground level there to combat child labor and modern slavery in the cobalt mines. The Sisters provide access to education and nutrition to more than 3,000 children in eight mining communities. They help 500 families embrace alternative livelihoods, while strengthening cohesion among communities, mining companies and government. "It is a great opportunity for Bon Pasteur to raise awareness globally that slavery is real and rampant," said Sr. Jane.



Sister Jane Wainoi

## Good Shepherd Sisters are transforming lives in Burkina Faso

By Jeanette McDermott, PMNA Communications Coordinator

Bobo-Dioulasso is Burkina Faso's economic and commercial capital. It thrives with small businesses that drive the nation's economy. It is also rife with poverty. It is in Bobo-Dioulasso's poorest neighborhood that three Good Shepherd Sisters pitched a tent and founded a ministry on December 3, 2011. Within days, local women began coming to the Sisters for help. The three missionaries — Sisters Yvonne Clémence Bambara, Carmelita Medellin, and Hilaria Puthirikkal — welcomed the women and invited them in to hear their stories. Many of the women revealed that they were illiterate and trapped within traditional roles of marriage. Having no education or employment opportunities made them vulnerable to

*Continued on next page*



*l-r: Sisters Carmelita, Yvonne, and Hilaria build a strategic plan in November 2011 for founding a Good Shepherd presence in Burkina Faso.*



## ACROSS BORDERS



ZEAL

Burkina Faso, *Cont'd from p. 18*

domestic violence. Other women spoke about their widowhood or how their husbands had abandoned them and their children. Some of the Muslim women talked about being part of a concubine that their husbands struggled to support. Others explained that they could not get loans to develop small businesses because they had no savings and nothing to offer as collateral.

Sister Hilaria said, "Vulnerable women came with their children, looking for food. They had no work, and sometimes they were sick and had no means to buy medicine. With the help of the Mission Development Office in Rome, we were able to distribute bags of corn and rice, along with oil and soap."

Troubled and challenged by the stories they heard and the poverty they witnessed, the Sisters began thinking long and hard about how they could help the women.

### The emergence of microcredit financing program

As the women continued to pour into the Sisters' tent to tell their stories, the missionaries grew determined that the best way to

help people in Bobo Dioulasso would be to raise women out of poverty and into self-reliance. Before long, a plan to develop a microcredit financing program had emerged from the conversations. "Vulnerable women are always in need, and it is our duty to provide," said Sr. Hilaria.

In early 2012, just months after founding the new mission, benefactors began sending donations to the Sisters to help them establish the Women's Economic Empowerment Microcredit Financing Scheme. Eight women enrolled in the program.

*"Every woman can do something. Working together with her, we discover that she is never lost, that there is always hope!"*

~ Hilaria Puthirikkal, RGS

By 2020, more than 50 women were benefiting from the Sisters' ministry. Now in its 10th year of operation, the program continues to grow. Women have established businesses that allow them to earn enough money to repay their monthly loan installment, provide for their families, and send their children to school.

Businesses range from selling produce and cereals to selling dry wood, charcoal, clothes, shoes, craftwork, sandwiches, and cakes. Some women have opened restaurants and dressmaker shops and employ other women. Others get paid to make shea butter soaps



that the Sisters distribute to 500 inmates at a women's prison.

### More than a loan program

Before receiving a micro-loan through the Sisters' program, each woman must identify the business activity that best matches her skills and future goals. In addition to the loan, the Sisters help women improve, develop, and sustain their business activities through ongoing training and formation. As time goes on, the women can access increased amounts of aid to expand their businesses and make their dreams come true.

"Every woman can do something. Working together with her, we discover that she is never lost, that there is always hope!" said Sister Hilaria.

The microcredit program runs deeper than economic empowerment. The program incorporates political and socio-cultural empowerment strategies, as well. Lawyers, psychologists, and health and medical professionals offer educational workshops where the women discuss ways to tackle society's taboos, such as forced and early marriage, abortion, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and HIV and AIDS.

*Continued on next page*



## ACROSS BORDERS



ZEAL

Burkina Faso, *Cont'd from p. 19*

**Blessing the land before building the Burkina Faso community**

Workshops on human rights, family law, conflict management, health, and hygiene also educate women on how to better care for and look after themselves and their families. The program is lifting women from poverty while raising their consciousness and confidence. As the women grow increasingly self-reliant, their lives are being transformed. They are breaking down walls of the vast gender inequality in Burkina Faso and playing a major role in driving the country's economy forward.

### The backstory: climate of faith

"Faith is very much alive in Burkina Faso, and young people dedicate themselves to serving the Lord. The country is a land rich with religious and priestly vocations," said Sr. Yvonne Bambara.

It is this climate of faith that eventually brought Sisters to Burkina Faso. The story begins in 1989, when Cardinal Paul Zoungrana, Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, asked the Good Shepherd Sisters to settle there. Cardinal Zoungrana had visited Dakar, Senegal, in 1989.

In his letter of thanks to the local leader of the Good Shepherd community in Dakar on May 11, 1989, he wrote: "I thank you, Sister Renée Mocci for the welcome of your community. I do not hide from you that the contact with your community and your work leaves me the desire to request your establishment in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

In the following year, Good Shepherd Sister Nirmala Abeyasingha met Monsignor Anselme T. Sanon in Bobo-Dioulasso. The monsignor implored Sr. Nirmala to establish a foundation in the city. The meeting occurred two years before Sister Yvonne, from Burkina Faso, entered the Good Shepherd Congregation in 1992.

Sister Yvonne had developed a relationship with young people in Burkina Faso who felt a call to religious life. The youth asked Sr. Yvonne if she could help organize a community experience to aid in their religious formation.

The wheels moved slowly. Years later, in November 2005, the Sector of Senegal made a request to the Congregational Leadership Team to organize vocation camps in Burkina Faso.

### Vocation camps

The first vocation camp was held in 2006 with Sister Yvonne and Sister Joanita, from the Philippines. The second camp took place in 2008 with Sister Yvonne and Sister Brigitte, from Senegal. The third Camp was in August 2010 with Sister Yvonne, from Burkina Faso, and Sister Hilaria, from India.

At the vocation camp in 2010, Sisters Yvonne and Hilaria met with the bishops of Ouaga, Burkina Faso, to see what might be possible in terms of establishing a permanent Good Shepherd presence in Burkina Faso. Upon leaving the meeting, Sisters Yvonne and Hilaria set out to make a list of needs of the Burkina Faso women that they could present in an official report to the bishops.

### Report to the bishops

While compiling their list for the report, Sisters Yvonne and Hilaria met and spoke with widows and vulnerable women. In their report, the Sisters declared, "There are women in prostitution, women are being beaten and abandoned by their husbands, there's witchcraft, women in prison, and girls forced into marriage. There is child labor in the mines, trafficking in children, child exploitation, and poverty. This is the reality of the country, from what we have seen."

Sisters Yvonne and Hilaria also included in their report to the bishops that they had visited orphanages and the Social Action (Administration) of Bobo-Dioulasso. And they reported on their visits to different groups of women at the parish level, who meet regularly every week, to pray and share personal news. Their report stressed Saint Mary Euphrasia and the Good Shepherd's charism and mission. It included what women said to the Sisters about the mission and charism, including the

*Continued on next page*



## ACROSS BORDERS



ZEAL

Burkina Faso, *Cont'd from p. 20*

comment: "We are the ones who need Saint Mary Euphrasia here."

Ultimately, the Sisters' report to the bishops emphasized the importance of the apostolate to women and girls in Bobo-Dioulasso.

When Bishop Paul Yemboaro Ouédraogo succeeded Msgr. Sanon on November 13, 2010, and became Archbishop of Bobo Dioulasso, he accelerated the request for Good Shepherd Sisters to establish a foundation there.

**The new beginning**

And then, finally, the long-awaited day came. On December 3, 2011, the congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd pitched a tent in the Diocese of Bobo Dioulasso, with three missionary Sisters ready to begin the work.

"A city and a Foundation are not enough, our zeal must embrace the whole world," says our blessed Mother Mary Euphrasia Pelletier," said Sr. Yvonne.

**Team effort**

Over the years, a number of Good Shepherd Sisters in the Senegal Sector aided in the formation of the Burkina Faso ministry: Renée Mocci; Nirmala Abeysingha; and Marie Del Vallée, General Councilor for the Senegal Sector. Other Sisters who played a key role were: Armelle Dehennault, Brigitte Dion, and Marie Noel Tendeng. Many other Sisters assisted with issues related to customs, cultural traditions, law, language, and social action.

The valiant Sisters who accepted the challenge of forming a new ministry and community in the small West Africa country have their own fascinating story.

Sister Carmelita Medenilla was 79 years old when she went to Burkina Faso. Prior to the assignment, she had closed the ministry in Ethiopia. Sister Hilaria Puthirikkal had come from Madagascar after more than 20 years of mission there.

Sister Yvonne Bambara was part of the Sector Senegal when she



*One of the many women benefiting from the Good Shepherd program in Burkina Faso.*

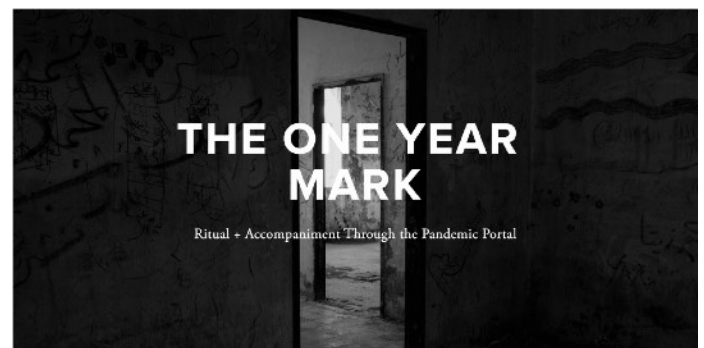
entered in 1992. The congregation entrusted her to lead the community and accept responsibility for the apostolates.

Sister Yvonne now works in the Spirituality Center at the Motherhouse in Angers, France. Sister Carmelita returned to the Philippines. Sister Hilaria has been serving as local leader of the Burkina Faso community since 2014.

## COVID: the one year mark

A year ago, COVID caused meltdown across the entire globe. People the world over were thrust into the terror of the unknown, fear of isolation, and social inequities. Time passed and we felt grief. We realigned our values and priorities, adjusted, and moved forward. Ritual became an important way for many to ground themselves at home and in their communities.

Arundhati Roy likened this time of pandemic to a portal, an invitation to pass from this world to something else. In her words, "Pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. *Or we can walk through lightly,*



*with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."*

Nuns and Nones cofounder Adam Horowitz wrote an article titled, "The One Year Mark: Ritual and Accompaniment through the Pandemic Portal." A

*Continued on next page*

## ACROSS BORDERS



ZEAL

COVID, *Cont'd from p. 21*

A resource guide accompanies the article and offers prompts to assist with individual and collective transformation. Both pieces are available at <https://bit.ly/39qRqoJ>

Nuns & Nones is a community of seekers, united in the search for new forms of community and ritual that can serve these times.

The community invites us to “create space for ritual and reflection, with the goal of emerging on the other side of the pandemic with deeper courage, compassion, and commitment.”

Horowitz said, “Last April, the portal might have seemed a compelling metaphor but hard to fully access or enter through the thick fog of confusion that marked the first months of the pandemic.

“Now, however, with one full year of lived pandemic expertise, perhaps enough of us can pass through the portal with the clear-seeing and resolve needed to make another world possible,” he says.

For more information about Nuns and Nones, visit <https://www.nunsandnones.org>



*If we choose, we can claim COVID as a collective rite of passage into a more just and loving world.*

## OLCGS leaves legacy in Wheeling, West Virginia

*Our Lady of Charity came to Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1900 to care for children of miners' families impacted by mining accidents and disasters. Eventually this evolved into care for dependent adolescent girls. In 1970 the program closed and the building sold to the Wheeling Diocese for \$1 if they would use it for a nursing home. The Bishop asked three Our Lady of Charity Sisters to begin the ministry. Today it is flourishing and carries the name and spirit of the Good Shepherd. Two Sisters in the Central South Province continue to be a presence at the 190 bed nursing home. The Sisters faithfully visit Good Shepherd Nursing Home residents, especially those with no family. Read the story at <https://bit.ly/3cvL35b>*

*Chapel in the Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Wheeling, West Virginia*



*Carrollton Community in their chapel in Carrollton, Ohio*



*James Cody, RGS, distributes communion to a nursing home resident.*



## CELEBRATION OF LIFE ZEAL

## Josephine Fritz, RGS

December 27, 1918 – January 31, 2021

On December 27, 1918, Mary Josephine, the fourth of five children, was born to John and Mary Fritz during the Great Depression in Detroit, Michigan. She was born into a faith-filled Catholic home strongly dedicated to fidelity, conviction, education, and an ethnically based work ethic. Along with her brothers, she helped with household tasks and worked with their father in his tailoring business and dry goods store. This prepared them all for success in their future endeavors. Prior to entering religious life, Sister taught catechism in two parochial schools. She participated in a Catholic Study Club, lived and worked for a year at The Augustinian Mission Helpers Convent of St. Rita of Cascia in Detroit, and participated in the “Know Your Religion” radio program.

Mary Josephine entered the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in 1939 and received her religious name of Sister Mary Ursula. Among the many duties she held throughout the years were sacristan, group mother of teenage girls, and teacher. With her MSW and ACSW, she was a case-worker for those in alcohol and drug treatment, and a social work supervisor. She established a shelter for battered women and their children, helped start Catholic Social Services on Guam and became its Deputy Director. She was Local Leader of an inter-province community on Guam for 8 ½ years and served in several roles in the apostolic and contemplative communities of the congregation. She had many areas of interest and hobbies, including pro-life work and making hundreds of crocheted baby blankets for Birthright. She studied languages, gardening, reading, and was especially fond of the spiritual classics and Church-related articles in defense of the faith, scripture, and Church.

Sister Mary Josephine enjoyed visiting and praying with the sick and supporting social justice issues. She marched with Caesar Chavez, protested nuclear dumping, advocated for the protection of women and children at the Alee Shelter, and promoted racial justice.

**From an apostolic to contemplative lifestyle**

After her return from Guam, she asked to transfer into our Contemplative branch in 1987. She returned to her baptismal name of Mary Josephine. Sister Josephine identified her Good Shepherd experiences as “fun-filled community living with an intense prayer life (communal and personal). She also called her religious experiences growth-productive labor. She particularly enjoyed personal and group studying, the companionship of many



*Sister Josephine Fritz spent much of her free time crocheting baby blankets for the pro-life organization Birthright. Photo: Lisa Thompson, St. Louis Review.*

friends with like values, active participation in ecclesial mission, and the comfort of belonging to the Divine Shepherd's sheepfold.

Sister Mary Josephine is survived by many nieces and nephews of several generations. We thank her family for the gift she had been to all of us and to the many to whom she brought the Good Shepherd's love and compassion.

*Submitted by Pauline Bilbrough, RGS*



*Josephine Fritz RGS*

## LEADERSHIP TRAVEL

ZEAL

NAME	DATES	LOCATION
Leadership Team	No travel	Leadership team meets by Zoom 2-3 times each month
All Lay & Sister mission partners welcome	April 10 10 am - 12 pm CST	Virtual pre-Chapter launch including draft Direction Statement. Register by April 6 with <a href="mailto:mmunday@gspmna.org">mmunday@gspmna.org</a>
Sister delegates and representatives of Congregational Leadership Team	April 23 - 27	Virtual Province Chapter
All Lay & Sister mission partners welcome	April 28 Noon CST	Virtual celebration for installation of new Province Leadership Team. Zoom link TBA

Easter ~ April 4

Let us *Rejoice!*



## PROVINCE CONTACT

ZEAL



*"Never before have we had, and perhaps never again shall we have, such an opportunity. Let us not allow it to pass, therefore, without making the holiest use of it."*

St. John Eudes,  
Letter to Mme de Camilly  
October 25, 1661

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