



# PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

*offering hospitality to the world*



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## Your THOUGHTS & COMMENTS

We want your input. Please send or email photos, stories and information about our sisters, associates, former members, family and friends, or any ideas which relate to the aim of this publication. You may submit the following to:

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## Cover PHOTO

Sister Sheila Kane enjoys listening to a story read by her second-grade pen pal. See page 21 for story.

*The doorways represented on the cover are snapshots of significant moments in the Presentation history: (left to right) doorway of the current motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road; doorway of St. Vincent's Academy (now St. Columbkille) in Dubuque in 1879; doorway of Sacred Heart Chapel at the current motherhouse; doorway of the former motherhouse at 1229 Mount Loretta which was built in 1909; and doorway by which Mother Vincent Hennessy left Mooncoin, Ireland, to begin the Dubuque foundation in 1874.*

# PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

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# A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

by LEANNE WELCH, PBVM

One recent evening I decided to rearrange my closet. Emptying the closet, I thought a yardstick might be handy in relocating items. Seeking one in vain I began to sort when my eyes fell upon a book about Nano Nagle, our foundress. As I browsed, I began to muse that Nano never needed a yardstick.

Nano never measured what she gave – her inheritance, her time, her talents, her possessions, her energy. The same could be said of Mother Vincent, our Dubuque foundress. She didn't measure how much she would give when she chose to come to America, when she experienced a harsh Iowa winter with little heat, when there was little food for her valiant group of women, when asked to start a school with no materials, when asked to send sisters somewhere when they were few in number.

Neither Nano nor Mother Vincent measured out what they gave but neither did they give without reflection, prayer and consideration – especially considering what would be good for others and how they could make a difference in the lives of others. They didn't give according to what was culturally acceptable to many (the easy life), they didn't give according to what was comfortable for them (they spent their days and nights in service), they didn't give only according to the skills they had developed (they kept developing new ones).

In spite of, or probably because of, their generous service, Nano and Mother Vincent experienced joy – joy fed by their commitment to prayer, by their life in community and by celebrating with their sisters daily. They lived what Bishop Robert Morneau wrote about in one of his reflection books, “The major consequence of doing our duty with love and knowing our proper place is joy. It is that inner affective mood that says this is good, this is very good. Be it visiting a nursing home, proclaiming the Gospel, giving that cup of cold water, fasting or praying, we have a sense of fittingness. We are doing God's will. In that is our joy and peace. To do this ourselves is partial joy; when the community does it together, our joy will be complete.”

As these thoughts ran through my head I began to ponder how we, as followers of Nano and Mother Vincent, do this as a community of sisters, associates and friends. We do so much for so many people in so many ministries. And we do it with joy. This is clearly reflected in the articles contained in this issue of *Doorways*. But can we do more? Do we unnecessarily limit how we serve? Do we need all our 'stuff'? Can we be more?

Then my sorting resumed. Yes, some things were kept but some went to those who actually had a need. And could I do more? Could I be more? With prayer, I continue to expand my service. With community, I continue to enjoy life.

So, who needs a yardstick?



## Our PURPOSE

The purpose of Presentation Doorways is to further the Gospel mission of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our associates by sharing the news and views of the congregation with our benefactors, families and friends. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our congregation and invite others to become involved in our mission.

## Our MISSION

We, the Sisters of the Presentation, are Catholic women who dedicate our lives to God through evangelization, prayer, service and hospitality. Our way of life is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We share in the vision of our foundress, Nano Nagle, who dared to dream of a better world for the poor, sick and uneducated of Ireland. We commit ourselves to the empowerment of women and children. We reverence and celebrate all creation as gift. We commit ourselves to confronting injustice and working for peace.

As we continue to keep Nano's dream alive, we are pleased to share our mission with you.

### Sisters of the Presentation LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sister Jennifer Rausch, president

Sister Marge Healy, vice-president

Sister Beth Driscoll, councilor

Sister Leanne Welch, councilor



Sister Marilyn’s abundant creativity is ever present at St. Joseph the Worker Parish. She explains, “As leader, I am responsible for the visioning and planning of faith formation for the parish community. My main responsibilities include: Wednesday evening religious education, preparing for sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Eucharist and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).”

It is in this parish community that Sister Marilyn walks with children and adults, alike, as they journey in this life, and she remains a strong presence with them and their families at the end of life. Sister states, “Our Presentation charism of hospitality challenges me to be a welcoming presence for all whom I meet, from the children coming for religious education to new parents asking for Baptism for their child. In welcoming, it is my hope that they will discover God in the ordinary of their lives and realize that they are loved and valued no matter their circumstances.”

The Wednesday evening religious education program under Sister’s direction is taught by lay people of the parish. There is a long history of solid catechesis at St. Joseph the Worker. Sister Marilyn cultivates and fosters a spirit of creativity among the teachers, as they look to open the minds and hearts of the children and to find God within. The catechists accompany parents in forming the faith of their children and Sister challenges them to find ways that unify learning for the entire family. “I love the enthusiasm of catechists, as they teach children and experience their curiosity for life and learning,” she says.

Creativity and leadership are hallmarks of Sister Marilyn’s ministry and community service. She served two consecutive leadership terms (1989-1998) for the Sisters of the Presentation. As first councilor (1993-1998) she directed the total renovation project for Mount Loretto motherhouse. Her leadership in this role served as a liaison between construction personnel on one hand and the needs of the sisters on the other. Sister’s special artistic touches are visible throughout the house and grounds to the present day.

Whatever the task, Sister Marilyn’s seeming ease and calm approach lighten the burden. Whether teaching, directing projects, gardening, cooking, baking, doing needlework or administering, this woman of depth and vision manifests competence. Her fine mind and multi-faceted talents mitigate the challenges she faces. Well read and reflective, Sister enjoys life and ministry. Her voice is soft, her manner gentle and her questions probing. Even in her personal prayer, the spirit of creativity abounds in looking for new ways of giving voice to the God within.

Sister Marilyn recognizes that she is a life-long learner and continues to grow in her faith and spirituality with each new opportunity. For the past five years, She has lived in community with the newest members. On a daily basis the skills for living religious life have been modeled to those walking in initial formation. Her great love for community is

**Our Presentation charism of hospitality challenges me to be a welcoming presence for all whom I meet, from the children coming for religious education to new parents asking for Baptism for their child. In welcoming, it is my hope that they will discover God in the ordinary of their lives and realize that they are loved and valued no matter their circumstances.**

*Sister Marilyn Breen*

expressed as she meets each new candidate at the door, ready to accept them at any stage of life, open and honest in her sharing of herself and all that she has. Her quiet, unassuming, steady presence fosters the gifts of others. Her hospitable heart shares without counting the cost.

“I have been blessed with many opportunities to learn and to grow. Living with our newest members has been a gift which helps me to be open to new ideas and ways of looking at life,” shares Sister.

Sister Marilyn, an Irish woman in her own ancestry, truly lives the call of Presentation foundress, Nano Nagle, utilizing to the fullest, her abundant gifts to go “one pace beyond.” Using her creative spirit to teach the faith and model religious life to all who wish to follow, Sister Marilyn lights the way with her lantern flame.



Left to right: Sister Marilyn Breen celebrates with Mike and Angie Breitbach after the Baptism of their baby, Joah.

# *Creativity* by ELIZABETH GUILIANI, PBVM Pathway to the Sacred

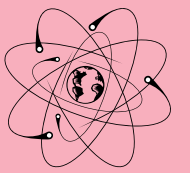
**An artist creates out of the materials of the moment, never again to be duplicated. This is true of the painter, the musician, the dancer, the actor, the teacher, the scientist, the businessman, the farmer – it is true of us all, whatever our work, that we are artists so long as we are alive to the concreteness of a moment and do not use it to some other purpose. M.C. Richards**

Creativity is a pathway to the sacred; it gives credence to God that we are living in right relationship with self, one another and Earth. Sister Marilyn Breen, faith formation leader at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Dubuque for the past 11 years, moves in and through her ministry, fostering right relationships with a creative spirit. It is in creativity that Sister Marilyn is continually nourished to serve those in need of love, compassion and understanding.

“Ministry today is very challenging and requires that we listen, reflect and plan while holding the teachings of the Church and the needs of those who come, in tension. This requires compassion and creativity,” reflects Sister Marilyn.

# WOMEN & Spirit

## CATHOLIC SISTERS IN AMERICA



## PRESENTATION QUEST

### IMMERSION & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

#### May 14, 2011 Quest Service Opportunity Dubuque, Iowa

Sisters, associates, community members and volunteers clean two miles on Highway 20 between Epworth and Peosta by removing trash and debris. This Adopt-a-Highway program helps increase public awareness of environmental needs along Iowa highways.

#### June 4-11, 2011 Quest Immersion and Service Opportunity New Orleans, Louisiana

This is an immersion into the poverty of the South and the continued challenges of rebuilding New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Ministries include working with Operation Helping Hands/ Catholic Charities, Café Reconcile and Lantern Light, Inc. by serving food to those who are hungry and homeless, harvesting vegetables used in teaching culinary skills to at-risk young adults and physically working on gutted houses.

#### July 19-23, 2011 Quest Service Opportunity Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The Cedar Rapids Rebuild Project helps to rebuild a flood-ravaged community by building simple, decent, affordable houses. Though the majority of volunteers have no prior construction experience, they are involved in most phases of construction. Working side-by-side with future residents, volunteers directly experience the joy created by a family realizing the dream of home ownership.

Visit [www.dubuquepresentations.org](http://www.dubuquepresentations.org) for more information or contact:

Sister Rita Cameron  
Presentation Quest Coordinator  
2360 Carter Road  
Dubuque, IA 52001-2997  
563-588-2008  
[service@dubuquepresentations.org](mailto:service@dubuquepresentations.org)

## Discover a World Few Have Seen, Millions Have Shared

Presentation sisters from Dubuque and throughout North America are among the hundreds of women religious featured in "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America," a traveling national exhibit currently showing at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, from February 18-May 22, 2011.

"Women & Spirit" features the untold stories of the innovative, action-oriented women who played a significant role in shaping the nation's social and cultural landscape. Exhibit visitors of all ages will discover the pivotal presence of these very self-determined women at many of the nation's dramatic turning points. The untold stories of these unsung heroes are recounted through rare, heretofore unseen artifacts, vivid first-person accounts, photographs and both modern and archival video.

"Women & Spirit" is a project of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States.

"Few people are aware of the tales of the brave women who came to this country to help immigrants assimilate into the fabric of America," said Jane Burke, SSND, executive director of LCWR.

As part of the national exhibit, regional congregations of sisters present a local history component that highlights the roots of their individual congregations – each of which has a significant connection between its mission and the Mississippi River. They also present information on their contemporary ministries.

## For More Information

Group rates are \$12.50/adult and \$11.50/senior. All group visits require 20 or more people and offer two complimentary passes (driver/tour escort). Advance reservations needed by contacting Nate Breitsprecker at [nbreitsprecker@rivermuseum.com](mailto:nbreitsprecker@rivermuseum.com) or 563-557-9545 ext. 214.

Admission is a two-day pass which includes access to the whole museum. The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is handicapped accessible and is located at 350 East 3rd Street, Dubuque, Iowa 52001. For more information, visit [www.rivermuseum.com](http://www.rivermuseum.com) or [www.womenandspirit.org](http://www.womenandspirit.org).

## Local Art Exhibit

The Dubuque Carnegie-Stout Public Library is hosting the Local Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America Art Exhibit beginning Tuesday, February 22 through Sunday, May 22, 2011. The exhibit is connected to the national "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America" traveling exhibition concurrently showing at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium through May 22, 2011.

This new exhibit brings together the talent of artists from five local Catholic sisters' congregations for the community to enjoy. The exhibition, with over 50 pieces of art, features the works of sisters trained in various art genres.

The diverse art collection displays a wide range of media created over several historical periods, from late 19th century works to contemporary ones. Books, authored or edited, by sisters are also on display. Each of the participating congregations of the Dubuque Franciscans, Sisters of the Presentation, Sisters of Charity, Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa and the Sisters of the Visitation.

The exhibit is located in the library's newly renovated historic second floor rotunda and is open during regular library hours. For more information, contact the library at 563-589-4225 and ask for library administration or visit the library web site at [www.dubuque.lib.ia.u](http://www.dubuque.lib.ia.u).



Top photo: Sister Beth Driscoll finds the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque listed within the national exhibit.  
Bottom photo: Display wall in the exhibit.

### WOMEN & SPIRIT LOCAL COMMITTEES

**Core Committee:** Sister Beth Driscoll; **Content and Design Committee:** Jane Buse, Sister Beth Kress, Sister Hermann Platt, Sister Marian Sweeney; **Public Relations Committee:** Jane Buse, Sister Beth Kress; **River Museum Docents:** Sisters Jessi Beck, Marilyn Breen, Rita Cameron, Donna Demmer, Sheila Ann Dougherty, Beth Driscoll, Benjamin Duschner, Lynn Marie Fangman, Lizzie Guilian, Sharon Kelchen, Margaret Anne Kramer, Joan Lickteig, St. James Lickteig, Anne McCormick, Jennifer Rausch, Rosalyn Ulfers, Leanne Welch, Dolores Zieser; **Presentation Sisters Artists and Writers on Display at Dubuque Carnegie-Stout Public Library:** Sisters Marie Barth, Kathleen Dolphin, Gina Foletta, Carrie Link, Basil Taylor, Leanne Welch, Dolores Zieser, Josita Zieser



Left to right: Art pieces on display are "Christ Crowned with Thorns" by Sister Josita Zieser; "Woman of the Earth" by Sister Marie Barth; and "Aurora Tower" by Dolores Zieser.



Left to right: Amy Pitz, Karen Freiburger, Darlene Richard and Sue Murphy represent the "faithful four" who share in the Presentation charism of hospitality as they tend the Mount Loretto reception desk.

# The Ones Who Receive

## The Faithful Four

by JOAN LICKTEIG, PBVM

You're driving on Asbury Road, signal onto Carter Road, enter the driveway near the large Sisters of the Presentation sign and approach the front door. You're in for a treat! That is, if you consider a smile, a friendly greeting and a "How may I help you" query, a treat. You have just met a Mount Loretto receptionist, and it's likely you are conversing with one of the several Mount Loretto lay employees, staff members who graciously complement the Presentation mission.

Four women, Darlene Richard, Karen Freiburger, Sue Murphy and Amy Pitz spend a significant number of hours each week greeting guests who come to the front door, assisting them in carrying out their business or in locating the sisters they're visiting. Guests come for jubilees, funerals, wakes, retreats, daily liturgies, spiritual direction, any number of meetings, as well as, friendly chats.

Receptionists also answer the telephone, for both in-house and outside calls, managing well, even when multiple calls come at the same time. In addition they learn the schedules and whereabouts of the 60+ sisters who live in the house and can predict who is where at what time.

"Knowing the territory" proves helpful with the variety of phone calls received: business connections, birthday wishes, greetings from former students, appointment reminders, prayer requests – all of which must connect with a person on any one of four floors in one building or six in another. The sign-out-system used to locate a particular sister works most of the time, but on other occasions it's like "Where's Waldo?"

I appreciate the friendly courtesy and hospitality of the switchboard foursome. They offer a warm, welcoming presence.

*Sister Annette Skyles*

A receptionist might be defined as "one who receives." This definition suggests a certain openness and warmth. That's exactly what visitors and callers experience when one of the "faithful four" is on duty. These gracious women handle 50 hours a week of switchboard duty, offering a "first encounter" with the public. First impressions have a lasting quality, and the sisters are grateful for the 20 total years of employment these receptionists have accumulated.

"I appreciate the friendly courtesy and hospitality of the switchboard foursome. They offer a warm, welcoming presence," states Sister Annette Skyles.

A look at the world of the receptionist, through the eyes of the receptionist, offers a perception of enjoyment at meeting many new people, fielding a variety of calls, respecting privacy, offering a smile, providing directions, assisting with a multitude of "busy-work" tasks during down time, visiting with the sisters in the house as they come and go, "basking" in the peaceful surroundings and being part of the Presentation family.

Along with the other receptionists, Karen loves going to work where the sisters and their guests cheer her. Sue sees her role as representative of Nano Nagle and the sisters. Following the death of a spouse, Darlene found that her employment at Mount Loretto contributed to personal healing through the love and care of the sisters. Amy, the mother of a five-year old who works two jobs, finds her switchboard time relaxing.

The only ones more delighted than the receptionists themselves are the sisters who both appreciate their service and enjoy their company.

Every issue will tell you a little bit about the life of Nano Nagle, the woman behind the lantern, and the women who follow in her footsteps.

The Lady of the Lantern

NANO Lives



by JOAN LICKTEIG, PBVM

### Mother Angela (Catherine) Crowley, Superior 1901-1906

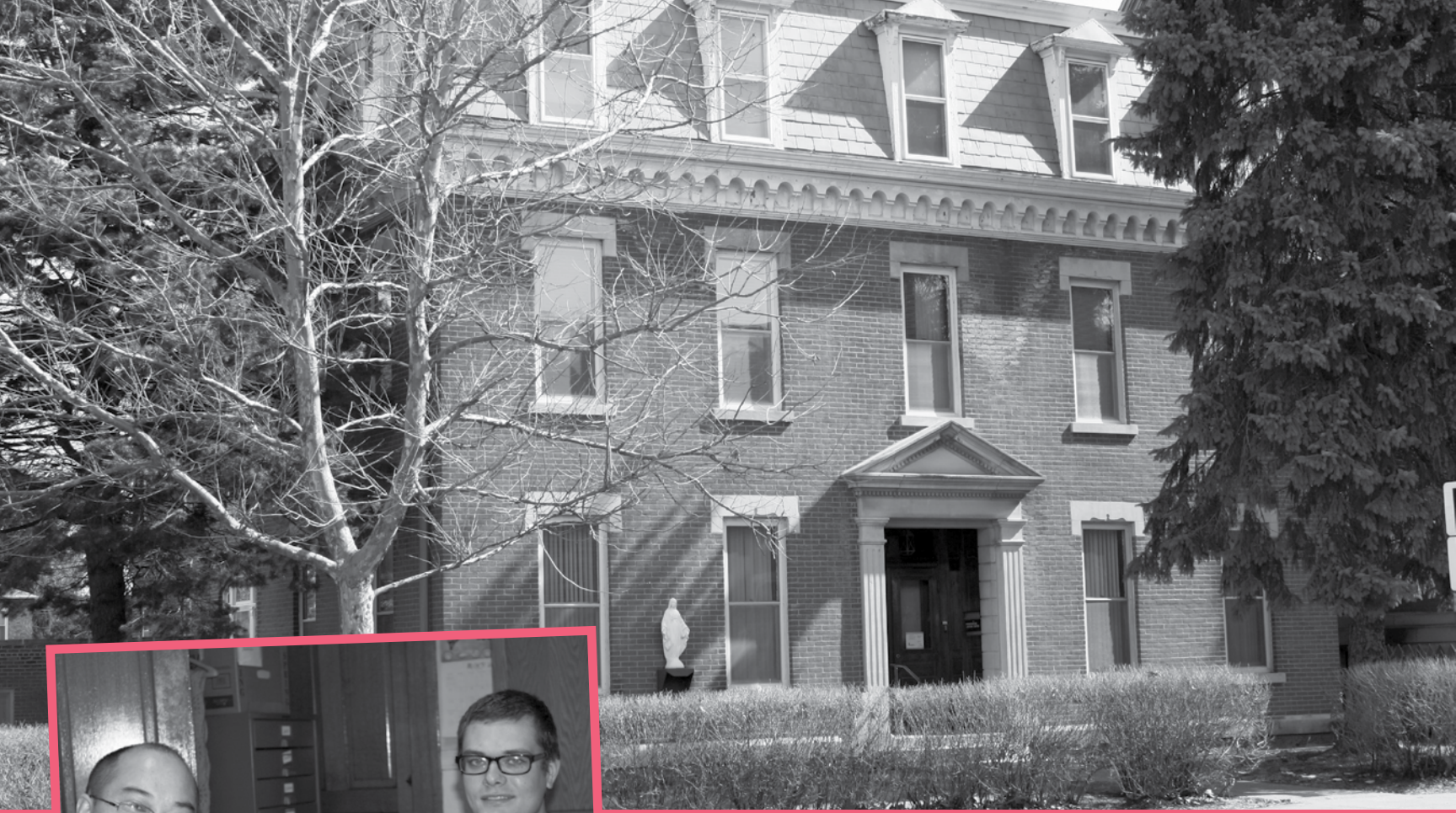
Mother Angela Crowley, fifth superior of the Dubuque Presentation sisters, was the first postulant to enter the new Presentation community in Key West, Iowa. Her second claim to fame is that she was the young girl who directed Bishop Hennessy to the Mooncoin Convent on the eventful day when he first met Mother Vincent Hennessy. That was the time when the seed of the Iowa foundation was planted in the hearts of the Irish Presentation sisters. As Sister Angela personally asserted, in her teasing manner, credit for the beginning of the Dubuque foundation obviously belonged to her.

One morning, the sisters, returning to the convent from Mass, found a girl on the front steps awaiting their arrival. She had come to join the young community. Educated by the Presentation sisters in Mooncoin, Ireland, "Kitty" Crowley had a heart for the poor, as well as a kind and friendly manner. As the first postulant, "the postulant on the porch," she had the opportunity to receive her initial formation from Mother Vincent and share the first four and a half years of her life in Dubuque with the four founding mothers.

Mother Angela's time of leadership occurred in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, another period marked by survival concerns, both financial and physical. Crowded conditions created health problems for the increasing number of sisters. A consequent hardship for Mother Angela was the death of eight young sisters during her five years in office. The unremitting culprit responsible for these early deaths was tuberculosis.

Elected to a second term of office, Mother Angela hoped to build another, much needed, home for the growing community, but her own sudden death prevented the realization of her dream for a new motherhouse. The archbishop advised her assistant and successor, Mother Presentation Griffin, to purchase the Wilde property on which a new motherhouse (1229 Mt. Loretta) would subsequently be built. Mother Angela was the second congregational leader to die in office, approximately 25 years after Mother Vincent.

Much-loved, Mother Angela's personal qualities endeared her to others. She gifted the community with her radiant love, matching the "caritas" motto proclaimed by the community for many years. Today's charism of hospitality, "lived love," finds its roots in caritas.



Left photo: (left to right) Jason and Michael from China enhance their English skills with their tutor, Ben. Top photo: New location of Presentation Lantern Center at 1584 White Street in Dubuque.

# Presentation Lantern Center “Moving” Forward

by CORINE MURRAY, PBVM

On cold days, the warm sunshine filtering through the beautiful glass in the front doors invites people to come in and experience hospitality. Presentation Lantern Center moved from 1501 Jackson Street to 1584 White Street, the former parish office and rectory of St. Mary’s Church, in late December, reopening January 4, 2011.

When visitors and tutors come for the first time, they are delighted. Volunteer tutor Elaine Hunt expresses her feelings, “We love our new Lantern Center. It’s much more spacious and has such beautiful old woodwork, tin ceilings and leaded-glass windows.”

Frequently tutors and students comment on the size of the space, the beautiful windows and the abundance of natural light. The center has two offices, two large rooms for individualized instruction, a designated room for children to be with their mothers during tutoring sessions, a dining room for coffee breaks and a full kitchen with a dishwasher.

“Everything is so warm and comfortable here,” comments tutor Barb Featherston.

A picture of Nano Nagle, Presentation foundress, with her lantern hangs in the main entrance, a reminder of her life and work and a symbol assuring all who come are, indeed, welcome.

Behira, a woman from Bosnia and new United States citizen shares that, “the new place is very nice. I feel welcome.”

## Moving Days

Many people helped to make this move possible. The board of trustees was involved in a long search for a new location. During the month of December, tutors, visitors, sisters, associates, board members and friends did the sorting, packing, marking of boxes and preparing for the actual move.

One afternoon Board Member Frank Reinert brought his truck. In about an hour, many of the boxes were taken across the alley, up the steps and into the new space. The following morning a second crew of movers from St. Joseph the Worker Parish offered their services. In less than an hour everything else was transported except the large pieces of furniture. Before the snow fell the following Monday, December 20, a group of men with strong backs and willing hands from the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center moved the larger items. Much of the Christmas break was spent unpacking, sorting and finding a new home for all that had been moved. Again, everyone pitched in. One group of sisters cleaned the kitchen; the next day another group unpacked and organized it. In due time, books were placed on the shelves, tables and chairs were arranged, pictures were hung and the place started to feel like home.

Tutor Sandy Amberg was at the center almost every day during the unpacking process. She recruited her husband, Tony who, in addition to helping with the moving process, gave one of the offices a fresh coat of paint, making quite a difference.

Reflecting on those days of hard work, Sandy offers this piece of wisdom, “All the sweat equity paid off.”

## Warm Welcome

Assistant Helen Cox, greets each individual who comes to the door, “It feels as though we are welcoming the visitors and tutors into our home,” she states. “Because it has a friendly, relaxing and warm feeling, it may relieve some of the pressure of learning English or studying for the citizenship test.”

On April 4 and 5, the center will host an open house. Visit the center’s blog at [lanterncenter.wordpress.com](http://lanterncenter.wordpress.com) for updated stories and photos.

## PRESENTATION LANTERN Honors Volunteer Tutors

Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote a good or improve the quality of human life. The mission of the Presentation Lantern Center is furthered by the many volunteers. At the December 2010 Appreciation Dinner for volunteers and board members, two individuals were honored for their outstanding service at the center.

When presenting the Presentation Lantern Service Award to Sister James Marie Gross, Sister Corine Murray recalled the familiar prayer formula, “As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.” Sister James Marie noted that the first two parts apply. From the very beginning in 2002, Sister James Marie volunteered as a tutor. She has tutored individuals from three continents and many different countries. As a tutor she brought well-honed skills from a teaching career that spanned over 50 years.

“The chance to tutor at the Lantern Center has been a blessing to me in many ways,” states Sister James Marie. “It allows me to continue to use my teaching skills and there is a sense of satisfaction in helping such highly-motivated people who come to the center to improve their English skills. It stretches one’s perspective to work with people of so many different cultures and to hear their stories. It also makes one realize how very difficult it is to learn English.” She states with pride, “Many with whom I worked have become my very good friends.”

Donald “D.J.” Ruden was also honored with the service award. As a retired high school government teacher, he was especially well-suited to help Gaby, one of the visitors, prepare for the citizenship test. For weeks, they worked on the list of 100 questions. On the actual day of the test, 10 questions were randomly chosen. To pass the test, six of the 10 questions had to be answered correctly. Gaby passed with flying colors. She took the oath and became a citizen of the United States the very same day.

“I was educated by Presentation sisters through 12 grades and I am familiar with the significance of the lantern and of Nano Nagle, their foundress,” comments D.J. “The friendships I make enrich my life.”

Since the fall of 2007, D.J. has helped others learn English and laced his teaching with a delightful sense of humor. Reflecting on this award, he shares, “My hope is that every volunteer I have met at the center be recognized because my own contributions are necessarily limited.”

Volunteers take the time to make the world a better place.

Left to right: Sister James Marie Gross receives her award from Sister Corine Murray.



# Art for Art's Sake

by JENNIFER RAUSCH, PBVM

"It was the Holy Spirit that inspired me." With these words, Melvin Shortess of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, explains how he was drawn to memorialize his aunt, Sister Basil Taylor, through the establishment of a fund that would enable art educators to open up the world of art.

The process looked like this. At the death of Sister Basil in 2006, Melvin and Jack Shortess, Sister Basil's nephews, focused their interest in maintaining art education that Sister Basil had dedicated herself to during her 71 years as a Presentation sister. The Shortess family dream was communicated to the Presentation community, and the "Sister Mary Basil Taylor Art Fund" was born. Melvin invited other family members to make donations for the purpose of "keeping Sister Basil's legacy alive and well." Sister Basil is remembered as an art teacher for students in kindergarten through high school. In her retirement she had the opportunity to design greeting cards, paint ceramic Christmas ornaments and Easter eggs and continue her self-expression through watercolor.

Melvin relates from his own childhood, "We had no art classes in the Catholic schools that I attended in Iowa and Louisiana. We had lots of love but some educational materials were in short supply." With an almost wistful tone he said, "I, myself, might have been an artist." Deep respect for Sister Basil and the realization that art education is an important part of a well-rounded person, brought Shortess family members to decisions about their roles as benefactors to the Presentation sisters.

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up. *Pablo Picasso*

In 2009, Presentations sisters teaching in elementary and high schools were informed that the Shortess family had established a fund that could be accessed for art materials and education efforts. Requests were submitted and a total of \$2,900 was distributed. As part of the granting process, art teachers were asked to forward samples of the students' creations so that the Shortess family could enjoy their creativity. On viewing the students' artwork, Melvin remarked, "We were so touched by the look of pride in the kids' faces. Their pride was a great return for our investment."

Art teacher, Kathy Greve of St. Mary School in Manchester, Iowa, expressed her gratitude, "I cannot thank you enough for your kindness. The kids were so excited to use the materials. I will share Sister Basil's story with them. Thank you from the hearts of 160 students in kindergarten through sixth grade."

In December 2010, Melvin's daughter, Amey Shortess Crousillac and her daughter, Anna, of Monroe, Louisiana, created an online collection of student art that was produced as a result of the grant and forwarded it to family members and friends. This "art gallery" was accompanied by a second opportunity to make donations. A total of \$1,700 was distributed in March 2011.

This is a story of inspiration and of generosity. The Presentation sisters along with hundreds of art students and their teachers express their sincere gratitude to the Shortess family as faithful benefactors to the Sister Mary Basil Taylor Art Fund. Their gift actualizes these words of E. M. Forster, "Works of art, in my opinion, are the only objects in the material universe to possess internal order, and that is why, though I don't believe that only art matters, I do believe in art for art's sake."



Left photo: (left to right) Jack and Melvin Shortess; Top photo: Students proudly display their creativity as a result of the Sister Mary Basil Taylor Art Fund.



# REMEMBERING DEL O'HEA Joyful Irish Spirit

by JANICE HANCOCK, PBVM

That best portion of a good man's life,  
his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.

*William Wordsworth*

On Christmas Day, the Sisters of the Presentation celebrated in a festive atmosphere; later that day they received word of Del O'Hea's entrance into his eternal home.

Del spent his 79 years of life in service to his family, friends and church. In 1946, Del's mother died in a house fire; his father passed away in 1950. Del, the oldest of seven, assumed family responsibilities beyond his 15 years of age. He graduated from St. Columbkille High School in 1949. He was a parishioner at St. Columbkille for over 70 years and an active member of St. Vincent DePaul Society for more than 60 years. Del was employed at Ridge Motors selling auto parts, lawn mowers and televisions for over 30 years. He later owned his own business at Grandview Milk House. After retiring from the business world, Del began driving for the Presentation sisters, a position he held for 17 years, retiring a few weeks before his death.

In 1958, Del married Mary Bahl and had five children, one son and four daughters. Del enjoyed time with his children and grandchildren and took great pride in their accomplishments.

"How blessed are we to have known Del," states Sister Damian O'Brien. "He was truly a faithful friend and dedicated co-worker of our Presentation community, always willing to be of service. Each sister has her own memory of Del – we could write a book. He was really special to each one of us."

Del was gifted in music, poetry and 'Del-isms' (quips unique to him) that he shared with the sisters on the way to their appointments. He had Irish music playing in the van, which was another of his favorite things. On one of his last drives Del took the sisters past his early childhood home on Cleveland Avenue and also past his present home on Cross Street. Between drives one would find Del checking mileage on the cars,

cleaning the garages or tickling the keys on the piano. What a delight to hear him play song after song without a sheet of music. Del was proud to share what was important to him.

How blessed are we to have known Del. He was truly a faithful friend and dedicated co-worker of our Presentation community, always willing to be of service. Each sister has her own memory of Del – we could write a book. He was really special to each one of us. *Sister Damian O'Brien*

Sister Lynn Marie Fangman reflects, "Del loved to visit, whether it was about the latest White Sox game, his children and grandchildren, happenings from our old West Hill neighborhood and St. Columbkille Parish or just a little nonsense, often an Irish joke. Many days his whistling of a tune let you know he was heading toward the offices for a pick-up or delivery for one of his drives. His absence certainly leaves an empty spot in our hearts and in the halls of Mount Loretto."



Left to right: Front row: Sister Jennifer Rausch, Del O'Hea and Sister Lynn Marie Fangman; Back row: Sisters Marge Healy, Damian O'Brien, Beth Driscoll and Leanne Welch



"Give me discernment, O God, that I may live." *Psalms 119:144*



# Dispositions for Discernment in Everyday Life

by JULIA WINGERT, PBVM

## Articulate Your Faith Experience

Verbalizing your faith experience, your awareness of God's presence and influence in your day and in your life, helps to deepen the experience and opens you to future experiences of God.

Journal is one way to acknowledge your experience of God's presence. Journaling helps to savor and interpret your experience and to note patterns of God's activity in your life.

True discernment, however, does call for a balance between listening for God's call in the quiet spaces of your own heart and listening in communion with others. We all need someone who can encourage us and challenge us. We need to surround ourselves with those who can help us discern and stay on the path. We need spiritual community, be that one person or several persons, to help us stay focused on God rather than our own agenda and ego needs.

A spiritual director is one who cares about your spiritual journey, one who walks with you as listener, teacher and guide, one who helps you discern the Spirit by listening to and with you and inviting you to observe how God is at work in your life.

Spiritual directors know how to listen and how to ask good and insightful questions. They offer little in the way of advice. They do not judge; neither are they afraid to ask the hard questions. They are comfortable waiting for God's wisdom to be revealed rather

Discernment is an ongoing process and we are each responsible for attending to and listening for God's guidance for our lives.

than jumping in with their own opinion. They readily admit they do not have all the answers and surely do not have *your* answers. Spiritual directors are people who see with the eyes and ears of the heart – with compassion, care and concern. They are good observers who can help you learn to pay attention at a deeper level to clues about God's guidance for your life.

Discernment can become a way of life, a habit of turning to and listening for God in the unfolding of the everyday in whatever is and in all that is. Surround yourself with discerning companions with whom you can share your faith journey and articulate your faith experience, your experience of God.

What are your hopes for becoming a more discerning person? What "new" or "renewed" practice would help you to develop a more discerning heart?

"... may your love increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception to discern what is of value ..."  
*Philippians 1:9-11*

## Coming Next Issue...

Ignatian Spirituality: A Discernment Process

# Spirituality of Finance

by FRANCINE QUILLIN, PBVM

Faye Fangman grew up in the area of Dubuque known as "West Hill," which soon gave its residents the title of "West Hill Indians." While Faye avidly denies that she fit that category, there are rumors...

Daughter of Charlie and Lorraine, and sister of Phil, Faye enjoyed a happy, loving and faith-filled family life, which prepared her for her life's vocation. "When I was a high school junior, my family moved to Phoenix, Arizona," says Sister Lynn. By some twist of fate, she met another West Hill native, Charlie Rastatter, who was the counselor in her new high school. He helped make the move feel a bit like home.

After high school, Faye returned to her beloved West Hill, this time to become a Sister of the Presentation. In those days, such a distance separating an only daughter from her family was a big sacrifice, but Faye had already learned about trusting God.

Completing her bachelor's degree at Clarke College in Dubuque, Faye, now Sister Lynn Marie, began her teaching career, first in Algona, Iowa, then in Sheldon, Iowa, and finally at St. Columbkille in Dubuque. Sister Lynn had become the principal in Sheldon, and later held the same position in Algona and at St. Columbkille. Her administrative and educative skills were recognized beyond her community and these schools: the archdiocese of Dubuque invited her to become an associate director of education for the Archdiocese. Sister Lynn thus moved to Waterloo, Iowa, where she assumed the responsibility of mentoring principals and teachers in 28 schools, traveling countless miles.

Serving as principal in two rather large schools, Sister Lynn Marie gained considerable experience with budgets, finance, administration and working with boards. Thus it was no surprise that eventually she was asked by her community to begin preparation to assume the office of general treasurer. In addition to the responsibility of the 28 schools, Sister took accounting classes at the local community college, and, after her move to Dubuque in 1990, took more classes at Loras College.

While taking classes, Sister Lynn was also working part-time with Sister Helen Marie Feeney, a widely-known financial manager. The following year when Sister Helen Marie retired, Sister Lynn became the general treasurer and fiscal manager for the community, remaining in this position until late 2010. She is now the associate director of stewardship and development for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, while remaining general treasurer for the Sisters of the Presentation.

Sister Lynn Marie has served on the board for Christian Brothers Investment Services, Catholic United Investment Trust and National Association of Treasurers of Religious Institutions

(NATRI), for which she also served two terms as president. As a member of NATRI, she was a financial consultant to religious communities and currently serves on the finance boards of other religious communities. Sister also serves on various committees for Holy Family Catholic schools and parishes in Dubuque.

Lest one begin to think that Sister Lynn's work is somehow "non-religious," being only about money and business, one must be tuned in to how she views this as ministry. She sees the role of the finance officer as promoting the mission of the community.

"The 'spirituality of finance' means using available resources to do the most good possible. The money is not about us, not about squirreling it away," states Sister Lynn. "Rather, it is about stewardship of any money in order to fund our mission, about how to use our resources wisely for the sake of our mission. The Presentation mission is fundamentally to care for the poor through a variety of missions, to work for justice, being attentive especially to the needs of women and children."

"We are grateful to Sister Lynn Marie for the stewardship of her own gifts for others, for her years of internal service to the community so that they might reach outward, continuing the vision of Nano Nagle, and for her cheerful and generous availability to whatever is asked of her," says Sister Jennifer Rausch, congregational president. "May her continued service to others deepen her desire to make God present in the narrow lanes and winding roads of poverty and need."



Sister Lynn Marie Fangman enjoys her new surroundings as associate director of stewardship and development for the Archdiocese of Dubuque.



Left to right: Top photo: Associate Marlene Hagemann and Sister Annette Skyles serve a meal at a local shelter. Right photos: Marlene Hagemann, Marilyn Jacobs, Deb Jasper, Sister René Laubenthal, Charlotte McCoy, Sister Francesca Presseller, Sister Annette Skyles and Sister Lynn Wagner.



# Where We Are All One

by CHARLOTTE MCCOY, ASSOCIATE

English or whose skin is not white. Isolation brings loneliness and fear. Servant Seekers are called by Nano and God to bring people out of isolation and to honor the place “where we are all one.”

Hope House in Dubuque is a place where people come when they feel isolated because of their economic circumstances. However, the spirit of the house lets people know they are welcomed and that poor circumstances do not necessarily mean poor in spirit or isolation. While the house itself is humble in appearance and by most standards poor in structure, it is a place of love and hope. Again, how could this associate group rest in what they have and not share? The group responded by being a delivery service for a few meals and preparing and serving other meals. These activities brought each of them hope, another *Namaste* experience.

Women and children were a priority of Nano Nagle when she traveled the byways of her home town, helping them learn and bringing them basic goods for survival. The sisters have also set the rights and needs of women and children as part of their mission. The associates work with the sisters to achieve that goal.

Food is not always the greatest need. Sometimes it is difficult to trust those who just need money, thinking the person may not use the cash as intended. Setting aside the barriers of the heart, the group gives cash and non-perishable items to women who have shared the need for such care. The group's understanding has always been: “once it is given it is no longer theirs, meeting in faith the place in these women ‘where we are all one.’”

Called by both Jesus and the Presentation community, Servant Seekers come together every other month to share, to pray, to

learn and to serve others. It is in community they are challenged to hear the needs of others and to respond to those needs. Between meetings, each member finds other ways to “go one step beyond.”

The needs are endless in the community. The ways to meet the other are all around. Some visit the local mission and bring food and conversation to those on the fringe. Some help at the local food pantry collecting food and filling baskets. Others are Confirmation sponsors and still another is a tutor at the Presentation Lantern Center. These are just a few of the ways the Servant Seekers go forth from community to meet that which makes them all one.

While all that they do as Presentation sisters and associates is simple and small, it is an effort to bring the “Good News” to others and in turn give them a light to shine with endless opportunities to “honor the place in you where we are all one.”

## ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP

### In Memory of Virginia Fuchsen

February 1, 1925 - December 29, 2010



As taken from her obituary, Presentation Associate Virginia Fuchsen, from West Bend, Iowa, “worked hard at being an ideal wife and mother, immaculate house-keeper and a great cook. She loved traveling and had been to most every state with the exception of Alaska. Virginia also enjoyed sewing projects and playing bingo at the American Legion Club.”

Virginia was pleased to be a Presentation associate for the past eight years along with two of her sisters, Rosella Metzger and Carol Schmidt. Though Virginia's health had not been the best the last few years, she stated, “I can't be of much help in doing ministries, but I sure can pray for all the sisters and associates and their many good works.” We remember Virginia with love and gratitude.

## Annual Benefit Garage/Gym Sale

Spring is coming and the Presentation Garage/Gym Sale is right around the corner. For the past six years, many of you have helped support the Sisters of the Presentation ministries. The 2010 sale raised over \$14,700. Can we count on you again this year?

**WHEN:**

Thursday, Friday, Saturday  
April 28, 29, 30, 2011

Thursday, Friday, Saturday  
May 5, 6, 7, 2011

(Thursdays, Fridays 8 a.m.-dusk; Saturdays 8 a.m.-1 p.m.)

**WHERE:**

Garage and gym behind the Sisters of the Presentation, 2360 Carter Road, Dubuque, Iowa

**WHAT:**

Come shop or donate gently-used items: clean adult, children and baby clothing; household items; books; CDs; furniture; games, toys, etc. Plants such as hostas, ferns, schefflera, crotons, etc. sell very well too. (Please no shoes, computers/ accessories, TVs, baby cribs or car seats)

Homemade baked goods will be sold.

**WHY:**

The proceeds from the 2011 sale will assist the following ministries/charities:

- Student tuition assistance to Seton Catholic School (Bankston, Farley, Epworth, Peosta and Placid, Iowa)
- Presentation Lantern Center, Dubuque, Iowa
- Caminando Juntos, Aberdeen Sisters of the Presentation Hispanic ministry, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

The gym behind the Sisters of the Presentation will be open for drop-offs of usable items from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily EXCEPT Sundays beginning Monday, April 4 until Saturday, April 23. Larger items such as furniture, desks, large lamps, etc., should be dropped off at the garages across from the gym.

Wrapped baked goods can be brought to the gym on April 28-29 and/or May 5-6.

For more information, contact the Associate Partnership Office at [associates@dubuquepresentations.org](mailto:associates@dubuquepresentations.org) or 563.588.2008.

# Women of Gratitude

by BETH KRESS, PBVM

## SISTER MARY LOUANN DOERING

*Happy to be, to serve and to be grateful*



To treasure the moment and be open to the Holy Spirit is a genuine desire. When one changes from a full-time career or ministry to retirement, one can often realize this desire more fully. This is true for Sister Louann Doering, retired from ministry as a pastoral associate in a cluster of parishes in northeast Iowa in July 2007. She is most serious about the present time in her life.

“This new stage is a time of ‘re-visioning’ – a time of seeing the meaning of religious life from a new angle,” Sister Louann states. “In active ministry there is a healthy tension between the necessity of ‘doing’ ministry, with its deadlines for preparation and of ‘being’ present to the persons involved.”

As she journeys in her fourth year of retirement, Sister is also attentive to the needs of others, doing errands for sisters and accompanying them to appointments or offering hospitality at the reception desk, to name a few. The added interests that enhance her days are reading, emails and visits from family and friends, board games and new learning experiences such as auditing classes at Clarke University.

“This so-called retirement stage allows ‘being’ to be the stronger part of daily experience,” she reflects. “One can be more relaxed to be in tune with the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and thus, be more alert to the needs and presence of others.”

Community life has been of special value to Sister Louann who remarks that the last six years of parish ministry offered her a bit of a challenge. “The people of the cluster parishes were wonderful and welcoming people, but I missed having a community of sisters with whom to pray and to share fun times.”

In looking back on her life, Sister Louann sees the influences of each stage. The carefree security of childhood is a treasured gift for her and she values being raised in a fun and loving home. “It was a home in which respect for others was a lived example. Especially evident was respect for Christianity in both its Catholic and Lutheran dimensions,” she adds.

Reflecting on her years of full-time ministry she shares, “Teaching fifth- and sixth-graders was a special time. I enjoyed the children’s spontaneity. Teaching philosophy courses at Clarke College

provided the opportunity to enjoy the growing wisdom of young people who were moving into adulthood. In parish ministry, the inspiration of sharing faith with those in the RCIA process is perhaps the highlight of my ministry experiences.”

Nano Nagle’s life offers inspiration to Sister Louann. “Nano’s life was high-powered and intense in her dedication to her schools for the poor and her care for those in need. Yet, she always made time for long hours of prayer after a day and late evenings of ministry. She always was a cheerful encouraging presence for her sisters.”

That same inspiration affects Sister Louann’s living in community. “I now have a more leisurely time for prayer and the privilege of getting to know my sisters with whom I never lived on mission. It is a very special gift to experience the depth of wisdom in the lives of my former teachers,” she comments. “I try to be a positive source of encouragement and joy.”

A grateful heart is a happy heart and Sister Louann is grateful for the opportunities to grow spiritually and intellectually and to be enriched by meeting a great variety of faith-filled and interesting people who reveal God’s goodness.

“A friend once told me that we act out of our perceptions. I think it keeps a person busy trying to make sure one’s perceptions are as close to the truth as possible,” concludes Sister Louann. “The strongest truth for me is still, ‘to be grateful, is to be happy.’ What an easy thing to be!”

## SISTER MARY EUGENE GOSS

*Following her mother’s footsteps as teacher and servant*

“I like people, politics and plants,” states Sister Eugene Goss, when summarizing her top passions in life presently. This retired social studies teacher has given much energy to cultivating relationships, digging into political action and history and nurturing the planet’s green life for many of her 80+ years.

From monthly party meetings to the Iowa caucuses and county and state conventions, Sister Eugene is consistently visible and involved in grass roots politics. But, then, what would one expect from the granddaughter of one of the mayors of Lawler, Iowa?

“My mother, Florence, and her father, my Grandpa Canty, taught me to serve others,” she says, crediting their involvement in local politics and care for those in need as her inspiration. “My father died when I was 11 months old, so I went to live with my grandparents until I was old enough to start school in my mom’s classroom. Mother followed her dad’s footsteps in attending political meetings and I witnessed their commitment.”

Florence Goss was her daughter’s first classroom teacher. “I was never going to be a teacher; I wanted to be a sister, but mom’s dedication was contagious,” states Sister Eugene. “She taught me to give and not to count the cost.” That wisdom became useful when, being sent to prepare to teach home economics, she found herself challenged in chemistry and math classes at Creighton University in 1962. “I had to memorize the book in order to pass the classes; I never did have to teach home economics classes,” she recalls.

As a high school social studies teacher, Sister Eugene was invited to do research during the summers of 1976 to 1994 at the Library of Congress for Senators Culver and Harkin. “It was an excellent way

to resource my teaching of high school government,” she comments. In addition to the research experience in Washington D.C., she appreciated being immersed in the history and happenings of American government. She has kept alive her keen interest in politics and followed some of her own students’ political careers.

Now, Sister Eugene uses her inherited philosophy to not count the cost in teaching herself acceptance of the aging process and changes in her health. Yet, she keeps going with a variety of community services at Mount Loretto. “I always thought I’d like to work in a flower shop when I retired,” states Sister Eugene. “Plants provide surroundings for displays, lend color and spirit to a room and extend a welcoming atmosphere throughout the house. So, I still try to do seasonal doorway decorations and holiday trees or floral pieces for tables and grow plants for the annual garage sale. I buy stamps for the sisters and look after the fifth floor lounge.”

Reading biographies, autobiographies and political articles and books and working crossword puzzles continue to be her favorite pastimes.

Having taken care of her aging mother on weekends when still teaching in Fort Dodge, Iowa, Sister Eugene has a special place in her heart for the elderly. “I feel strongly about the ministry of presence to our sisters when they are sick and near death,” she states. “Sitting and praying with them is a privilege.”

With her senior gusto and tenacity, Sister Eugene now translates the energy she used in the 52 years in the classroom to organizing and promoting the annual American Cancer Society’s “Relay for Life” and the Alzheimer’s Association “Memory Walk” for Mount Loretto

participants and donors. She has served both organizations for 15 years.

Bright brown eyes twinkle as Sister Eugene says with delight: “Fun? Well, I always loved to dance, which I found hard to give up when I entered. But, a yearly outing for a Notre Dame football game is wonderful!”

Assured and grateful for each day, she concludes, “I am grateful for my teaching career, for the time spent in caring for my mother, for many professional and spiritual opportunities in religious life. Whatever God has in mind for the future, I am content with that and I know that I have the prayers, love and support of those who have gone before me and those still with me.”



# Remembering Lawler

by HERMANN PLATT, PBVM

“A backward glance over close to 70 years reveals how sincere and warm was the welcome extended to Sisters Vincent Donnelly, Baptista Hussey, de Sales Weibel and Cecilia Malloy by the great-hearted people of Lawler, that beautifully located inland Iowa town, on September 15, 1882.” This description in the annals by Sister Benedict Murphy in 1949 begins the story of the Presentation sisters in Lawler.

Just over two years after the death of Mother Vincent Hennessy in 1880, Bishop Hennessy, “peerless advocate of Catholic education,” again requested sisters for a new school in his diocese. Four daughters of Nano Nagle were sent to bring the Gospel message to a new group of students.

With Sister Vincent in charge, the new school opened its doors in 1882 with an enrollment of 70 pupils. The two-story frame building consisted of one long room on each floor, accommodating both grade and high school by 1892. It sent out its first graduating class in 1897. To relieve crowded conditions, a new brick building was erected in 1899 which served the students until 1919 when a fire destroyed the upper floor. Not to be daunted, the parishioners rebuilt the second floor and added a third floor as well. The high school was discontinued at this time.

Another fire on December 21, 1963, threatened the existence of Catholic education in the area. At 8:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning, the sisters smelled smoke and looked in dismay at the black cloud rising from the school building. According to one source, two book cases and a record file were the only things saved from the inferno.

The sisters considered themselves fortunate in that they had taken the choir music for Christmas Mass to the church earlier, and enough copies were available for all who wished to participate. An account in the parish centennial brochure states, “The new Mass rendered by the choir of the Catholic Church on Christmas was beautiful. Much credit is due to the Presentation sisters for the choir’s excellent training.”

A massive cleanup began even though the future looked bleak for the re-opening of school in the new year. The fortunate purchase by the parish of a nearby vacant public school building gave new vigor to the efforts of the local people, and the sisters from neighboring towns, who rallied to clean, furnish and ready the building so that classes could resume as quickly as possible. Many hours were spent copying charred records and replacing supplies, while textbook companies cooperated to supply lost textbooks quickly. Amazingly, class sessions resumed in the new setting January 8, 1964, only two days later than the original school calendar dictated. The school was to continue serving the parishioners of Lawler until 1969, with 96 Presentation sisters having been part of the faculty over the years.

Difficult times in the early days of the parish gave rise to the tradition of generosity toward the sisters. Every fall parish members went door to door collecting potatoes, meat, vegetables, lard, wood, money, anything to supplement the meager supplies at the convent. This tradition of giving extended into the better years when Presentation Day became the occasion for bringing gifts to the convent.



Left photo: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Lawler before the fire in 1963. Top photo: Sisters who taught in Lawler in 1915.

Sister Agatha Murphy, the first postulant from Lawler, entered the Presentation community in July 1883. Her answer to God’s call was only the first in a long line of vocations to come from Lawler, which saw 55 women enter religious life and 12 men ordained to the priesthood.

Sister Eugene Goss recalls her years attending Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, “The school was the seat, center and heart of Lawler for kids growing up, any age, Catholic or not.” She has vivid memories of Sister Marie Celine, who was always on the playground with the students, acting as umpire for their ball games.

She also recalls fond memories of winter fun. “We haunted the convent in the evening, waiting for the lights in chapel to go off signaling the end of prayers, so the sisters could come out and sleigh ride with us. The prominence of the black fringed shawls and flying veils said much about the sleigh riding on Eickhoff Hill, not to mention the habits getting caught under the runners of the sleds. We loved to have the sisters join us.”

Other pupils followed other pursuits for which they were well equipped by the education they received at Mount Carmel school. One example is that of Art Winter, founding editor of *Praying* magazine. He says in a letter dated October 17, 1996, to his fourth-grade teacher Sister Gertrude Schmelzer that, “Over the years, a highlight of our life has been returning to Lawler. About 15 years ago, we realized what great places small towns are and we began to wonder why we ever left Lawler in the first place.”

In 2001, Sister Louann Doering began her work as pastoral associate in the Servants of the Lord Cluster consisting of the parishes of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Lawler), St. Mary (Waucoma) and St. Luke (St. Lucas). She conducted RCIA programs, helped with funeral plans, led wake services, visited homebound and care center residents and helped with community-building events. Her duties expanded over the years as several other parishes were clustered with the original three in order to provide services on a larger scale. Sister Louann remarked that the clustering was difficult for parishioners, who tended to retain loyalty to their own parishes. When Sister Louann left the area in 2007, plans were underway to design a six-parish grouping known today as Christ Our Hope cluster.

Lawler, Iowa, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School and Parish are true examples of a happy union between Presentation sisters and the people of God.

## YOUNG AT HEART

by JEAN LANGE

According to Sister Lois Lehman, the best part of having a pen pal is the reconnection with students who are excited about school. She feels young at heart when she receives their messages. On the other side of the relationship, second-grader, Leah Hansel, says “My pen pal is nice.” During a bingo game, Sister gave Leah her winning card so she got the prize. However, it isn’t just the bingo prizes or the messages that make the pen pal project so well received by the 35 Presentation sisters and the 49 second-graders from St. Francis Xavier School in Dyersville, Iowa.

So, how did the Presentation sisters become pen pals with children in a school that was faithfully served by the Franciscan sisters? It all began when Stacy Richard, second-grade teacher at St. Francis, asked her mother, Jean Lange, house coordinator of Mount Loretto, if the sisters would become pen pals for her students. At the same time, when Amy Schroeder, LPN, at Mount Loretto, asked if we could find a class of students to whom the sisters could write, the project blossomed.

Letters of introduction were exchanged between the students and sisters in September. In mid-October, six sisters journeyed to Dyersville to formally introduce the children to the history and work of the Presentation community and invite the children to visit their home. In November, the children came, all 49 of them, and with great excitement, the children and sisters finally met. Through several hours of prayer, reading stories, playing bingo and touring the motherhouse, the two groups shared a little of their lives. It became strangely quiet in the house when the children boarded the bus to return home. Since then the two groups have exchanged several greetings such as Halloween candy, Christmas ornaments and Valentines.

As Sister Dolores Moes says, “All this brings back memories of how special it was to be a teacher in Catholic schools.” Many sisters commented how they remember their pen pal in prayer each day.

That love and concern is felt by the students. Brandon Lansing says, “I can say nice things to Sister Ellen Mary. She said I am a great kid.”

On May 12, the second-graders will make another visit to Mount Loretto to essentially end their formal pen pal status for the year. Plans are to begin next year with the new group of second-graders to build more relationships. As Sister Rosanne Rottinghaus shared, “I hope one or more will be inspired to explore religious life someday because of their experiences with us.”

Left to right: Sisters Anne McCormick and Annette Skyles share Presentation heritage with their pen pals.



# WOMAN OF BLESSING

## *Sister Mary Louis McCormick*

*December 20, 1923 - February 25, 2011*

by JOAN LICKTEIG, PBVM

Sister Louis McCormick, one of 11 children in the Rose and Edward McCormick family, had a heart for ministry. With a bachelor's degree from Loras College, Dubuque, and a master's from the University of Vermillion, South Dakota, Sister demonstrated her versatility by contributing to six different ministries. Perhaps most challenging and rewarding among them was her long-term assignment as resident manager of a senior housing facility, Ecumenical Towers, in downtown Dubuque. Here Sister Louis spent long days and short nights, on duty 24-7, for 16 consecutive years. For her it was a ministry of love. She delighted in each of the residents and supported them with love and personal concern. When they were happy, she was happy. When they wanted to play cards, she played cards; when bingo was the choice, they had a bingo game; for birthdays and special occasions she offered a party. The shy and the reclusive were encouraged to join the socializers. No one was overlooked; no one left out. Was it any surprise they loved her?

Sister Louis had an exceptional concern for children. In the schools where she ministered she was aware of and provided for those in need – children who lacked adequate school supplies and those without caps and mittens in the winter. She was attentive to the girl whose mother was under psychiatric care, the family who lost a parent due to cancer and the boy who hurried to school from the farm chores without washing his hands. (If she directed him to the bathroom before the others arrived, he wouldn't get teased.)

It was often said of her, "She loved children." We might ask the familiar question, "But where did she get all this caring?" Was it from the large family of which she was a member? Or was it because she was paying attention? Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." Nano set an example, spending herself instructing the children of the poor. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor..." Mother Vincent and her three companions traveled an ocean to be of service to the poor Irish children of Iowa. Jesus said, "Whatsoever you do..." Yes, Sister Louis was paying attention.

Father Doug Wathier, chaplain at Mount Loretto, read the Gospel of Matthew whose beatitudes formed the framework for the homily at Sister's funeral. Father linked Sister Louis' life to the beatitudes where Jesus invites his listeners to experience happiness by the way they respond to others: in gratitude, compassion, courage, awareness of needs, kindness, openness and purity of heart. As evidence of these gifts unfolded in examples from Sister's life, Father Doug summarized her life as "Woman of Blessing."

Fifty-five years of ministry found Sister Louis in classrooms, the principal's office, religious education ministry, parish ministry, resident management, and later ministering to the elderly and homebound. She did it all. At her 60<sup>th</sup> jubilee she commented, "I was happy to give as much as I could as long as I could for the poor and needy." And she certainly did. And she was happy. Sister Louis enjoyed a good joke, playing cards, walking, dancing and music. A special joy of hers was sharing Presentation life with her younger sister, Sister Dorothy.

With a heart as big as herself, Sister Louis always wanted to give to others: gifts, a good time, assistance, whatever she had. When the children across the street from Mount Loretto sold lemonade to buy a dog, she wanted to give her entire monthly allowance to help the cause. "I don't need the money," she insisted. "Give it to the children – for the dog."

When her health started to fail in her retirement years, Sister couldn't always finish her sentences, so she would complete the message with a kind of nonsense rhyme, using the same syllables each time her mind failed to conjure up the intended words. Sister Rosanne Rottinghaus shared a similar incident. When she asked Sister Louis a question and she couldn't come up with an answer, even after a reflective pause, Sister Louis dismissed the whole idea with, "I don't think God wants me to give the answer to that question right now."

As dementia robbed her of nearly all her words, it did not stifle her personal communication. Sister Louis offered the warmest smiles of welcome and the brightest eyes of delight for her visitors, along with her silent but lively invitation to dance to the music of her hummed melodies. During her lifetime of living the beatitudes in ministry, and her 12 years at Mount Loretto motherhouse, Sister Louis McCormick has been, indeed, a "Woman of Blessing."



# Mount Loretto AND BEYOND

Featured below are special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation sisters, near and far.

## Women of Recognition

### Sister Beth Driscoll



In conjunction with Catholic Schools Week, Sister Beth Driscoll received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Sacred Heart School in Osage, Iowa. In receiving the award she expressed gratitude and congratulations to all Presentation sisters who have taught and ministered at Sacred Heart over the years.

### Sister Jeanette McCarthy



On March 8, Sister Jeanette McCarthy received the Impact 365 Award in the "Inclusion" category. In the style of the Oscars program, she was honored for her dedication to Hispanic ministry as sponsored by the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Sister Jeanette accepted the award in the name of her colleagues and Presentation sisters.

### Sister Corine Murray



Sister Corine Murray has been selected by Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa, as the recipient of the 2011 Matthew 25 Award. This award aims to honor individuals engaged in frontline ministries with the "least among us," with those living at the margins of society and still lacking their own public voice. It aims to honor individuals who are ministering within Dubuque and surroundings areas. Sister Corine is the executive director at the Presentation Lantern Center.

### Sister Dolores Moes



The Impact 365 Award in the "Non-Profit Excellence" category was awarded to Du-Ride, an organization that provides rides to Dubuque senior citizens for medical appointments and shopping trips. Sister Dolores Moes serves as a board member.

### Sister Joellen Price



In the name of St. Pius X Church, Sister Joellen Price accepted the "Organization of the Year 2010" plaque from the Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This award gives testament to the parish and its faithful volunteers dedicated to the partnership established 22 years ago with Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity.

### Sister Mary Lou Specha



Café Reconcile Executive Director, Sister Mary Lou Specha was awarded the 2010 Director's Community Leadership Award by the New Orleans FBI Division. This award publicly recognizes the leadership of individuals and organizations whose work enhances the local community and promotes safety for communities in any way. Under Sister's guidance, Café Reconcile works to foster a safe, supportive environment where the youth of New Orleans can learn the skills necessary to become productive individuals.

### You are invited to join us.

**April 25-30, 2011**  
QUEST Immersion Opportunity  
Urban Plunge/8th Day Center for Peace  
Chicago, Illinois

**April 28-30 & May 5-7, 2011**  
Garage/Gym Sale  
Sisters of the Presentation  
2360 Carter Road  
Dubuque, Iowa

**April 29-30, 2011**  
Dubuque's Got Sisters  
Sisters of the Presentation  
Dubuque, Iowa

**May 14, 2011**  
QUEST Service Opportunity  
Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up  
Dubuque, Iowa

For updated information about the activities and events of the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, please visit our web site at [www.dubuquepresentations.org](http://www.dubuquepresentations.org) or call 563.588.2008.

### Please pray with us.

**April 2, 2011**  
Presentation Associate & Sister Retreat  
Dubuque, Iowa

**May 15, 2011**  
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

**21st of each month**  
Pray for Vocations

**25th of each month**  
Mass for Benefactors

## Share Your News

We would love to publish it.  
Please send your news items to:  
[doorways@dubuquepresentations.org](mailto:doorways@dubuquepresentations.org)



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**For more info:**  
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**ext. 5134**  
**[newmember@bvmcong.org](mailto:newmember@bvmcong.org)**



Sponsored by Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dubuque Franciscan Sisters, and Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters.