



PRESENTATION DOORWAYS

offering hospitality to the world



The COMMITTEE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY by the
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The PURPOSE

The purpose of Presentation Doorways is to further the 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 to invite others to become involved in our mission.

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. Submit to:

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Cover PHOTOS

The doorways represented on the cover are snapshots of significant doors in the Presentation history and present day ministries: (Left to right) Doorway of Hotel Hope, a nonprofit hotel for homeless women and children in New Orleans, Louisiana; Doorway of St. Vincent's Academy (now St. Columbkille) in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1879; Doorway of Céad Míle Fáilte (100,000 Welcomes) located on the property of the Presentation Motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road in Dubuque, Iowa; Doorway of the Presentation Motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road in Dubuque, Iowa; Doorway of Casa Betania, home for retreats and a gathering space for students in Tarija, Bolivia.

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Cover PHOTO

Sister Janet Stelken was honored at St. James Catholic Church in Chicago, Illinois, with the Spirit and Light Award for her generous and enthusiastic service to the work of evangelization at St. James. Father John Edmunds, S.T., presented Sister Janet with the award. (Photo by Eddie Quinones)



Openings A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

by RITA MENART, PBVM

We are getting closer to our General Chapter, the major meeting that happens every five years in the Dubuque Presentation community. As explained in other issues of *Doorways*, our theme is Embrace the Journey: Dare, Trust, Begin. In many discussions, sisters and associates have expressed that they do not want fear to hold them back from taking risks to make God's love real on Earth. We want to dare. We want to deepen trust with each other and the wider world community, so we can work together. We know we have to begin now rather than later. The human family and all of creation eagerly awaits relief.

So what are we doing? We are having meetings! We had a meeting in April, a meeting in July and will have the official Chapter meeting in October. There are monthly promise group meetings, various community Zooms, conversations over coffee ... and the list goes on.

What good are meetings for a suffering world? The temptation is to think nothing. God's hand in meetings that build relationships between people is often unspectacular to the human eye. The growth in trust is hidden until we look back at where we have been. The transformation is imperceptible as it grows, but these relationships are necessary for valuable change.

The gradual shifts that germinate in meetings, both small and large, have effects far beyond the present moment. As a mental health counselor, I witnessed change in married couples struggling with their relationship. A small change in choosing to share a positive comment about ones spouse daily instead of five negative comments can angle a marriage from the road to divorce to a road to life. Of course the shift needs to be maintained by practice. The meetings of the couple throughout the day give ample space to practice, as meetings of all kinds provide interactions to grow stronger relationships.

Both community and individuals can be transformed by participating in meetings. We have learned to strive to understand differences, to stay with the tough subjects, to wait in silence for the quiet voice of God in others and to renew respect for each other. Individuals have expanded their leadership skills. Small changes in words, behavior and/or attitude help to build relationships that strengthen the body of Christ. All the meetings are teaching skills and providing practice space for this to happen.

Jesus used meetings too. He went to the desert for 40 days to hear God's call, then began meeting with a small group of 12 people and then larger groups. Others caught the spirit and carried it on by meeting others one on one, in small groups and in large groups.

This transformation of heart is not an easy process in the building of relationships for the body of Christ. Skills need to be constantly practiced, attitudes checked and adjusted, and forgiveness extended and received. This is what our polarized world needs. Hopefully, as we continue to meet, our transformation will affect the world as Jesus and the disciples did so many years ago.

You will read about many of the meetings in this issue. We will talk about what we have done and hope to do, but behind the doing and dreams is the transformation of hearts for relationship.

May all of your meetings be blessed with opportunities to grow and transform into loving servants of the Gospel with blessed relationships for the body of Christ.

Sister Carmen Hernandez Sister Rita Menart Sister Joy Peterson Sister Marilyn Beese

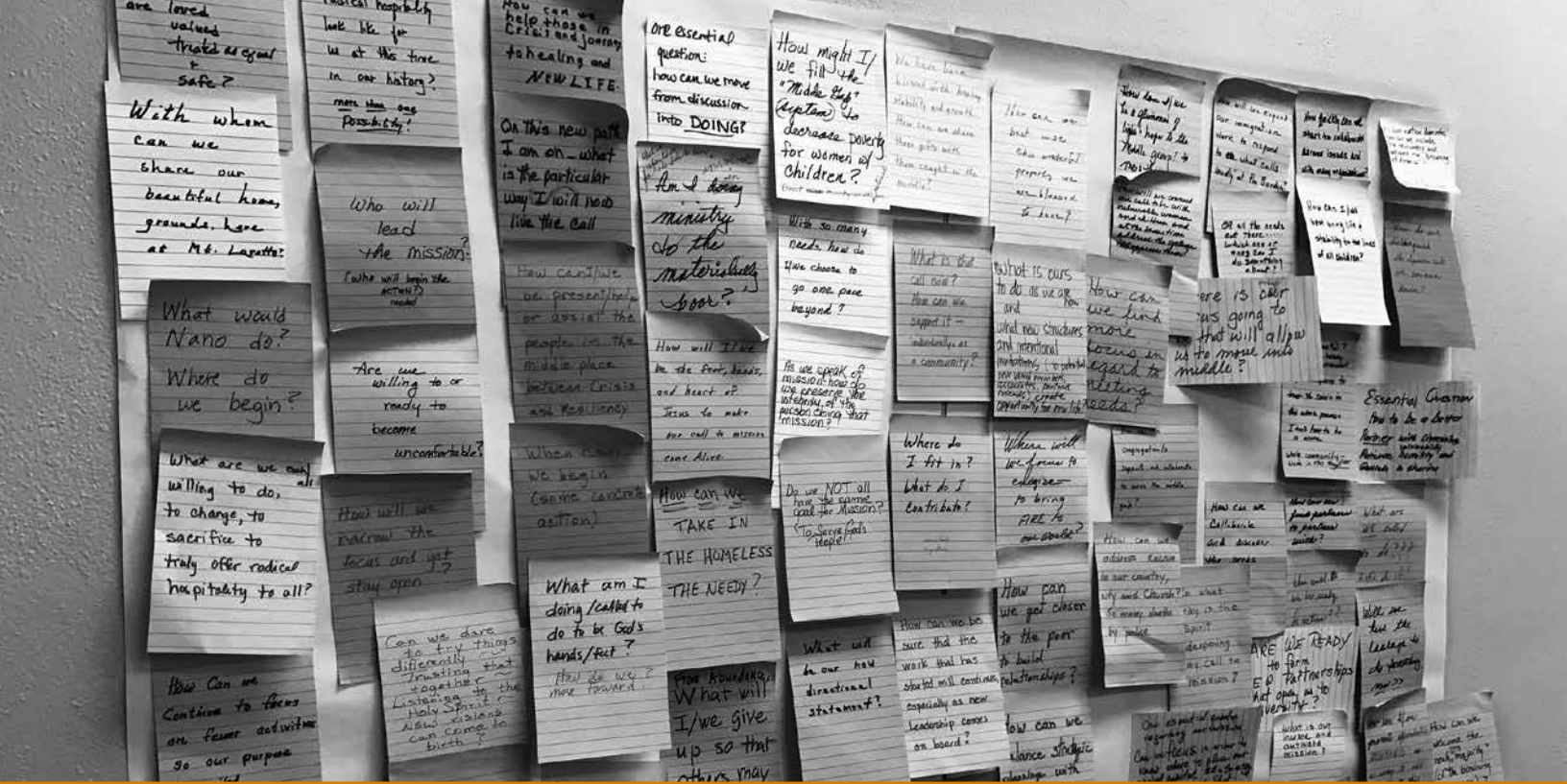
Our MISSION

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, Venerable 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 vision with you.

Our DIRECTION

Rooted in the Gospel, inspired by Nano Nagle and united to Presentation Sisters and associates around the world through the International Presentation Association, we, the Sisters of the Presentation of Dubuque, Iowa, are called to live our charism of radical hospitality in kinship with Earth and all people.



Reflecting on the Presentation charism, sisters and associates offer thought-provoking questions for the future.

Participation, organic clear structure, interconnectedness

Promise Groups Impact Days Ahead

by BETH KRESS, PBVM

WE PROMISE:

- to live radical hospitality in all relationships,
- to practice non-violence of mind and heart, speech and action,
- to form partnerships and utilize resources for the purpose of mission,
- to implement governance practices that foster dialogue and communication.

The lantern and the oak tree, symbols of the spirit of Nano Nagle’s response to her baptismal call, have produced fire and fruit for nearly 250 years. From Cork, Ireland, in 1775, to all six continents and 20-plus countries in our day, Presentation Sisters and associates continue the mission of Nano.

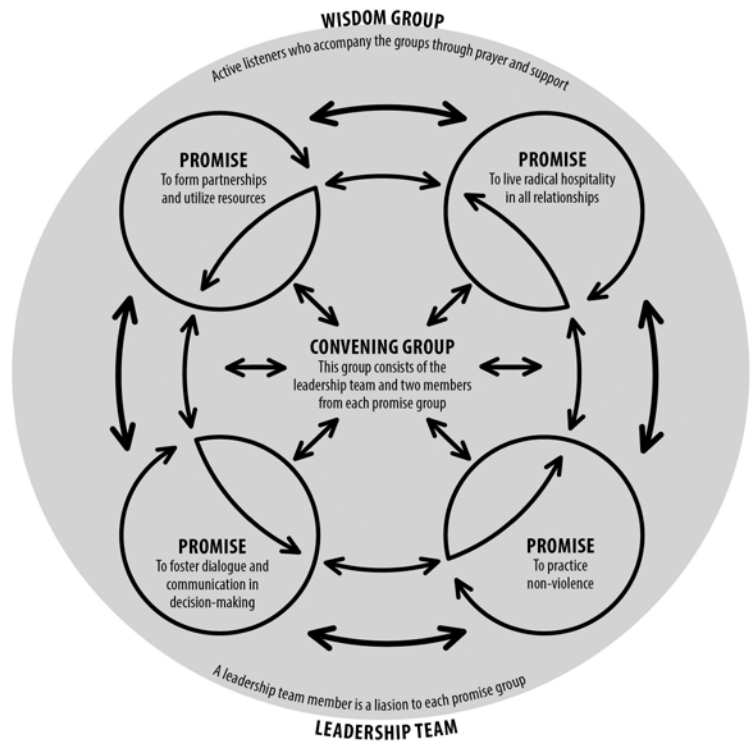
In Dubuque, Iowa, Presentation Sisters replicate Nano’s spirit. Whether responding to needs throughout communities and villages, teaching in schools and centers, crossing oceans to found missions, peacefully protesting, vigilantly watching, personally counselling, pastorally ministering and passionately advocating for systemic justice – Presentation people witness to the living spirit of Nano. To engage in their call to action, like Nano, they ground themselves in contemplative prayer and spirituality.

Disciples of Jesus must also rely on the commitment to “go away for a while,” to listen to the Spirit, to take and share nourishment and to nurture the practice of deep listening, honest and heartfelt sharing. The dynamics of contemplation and action guide Dubuque Presentation Sisters and associates.

From 2019 to 2022, they have participated in a process as their response to the directives of the 2017-18 Chapter. The directives of that Chapter took the form of “promises” and subsequently gave impetus for forming groups based on the directives. We promise:

- to live **radical hospitality** in all relationships,
- to practice **non-violence** of mind and heart, speech and action,
- to form **partnerships** and utilize **resources** for the purpose of mission,
- to implement **governance** practices that foster **dialogue** and **communication**.

Thus were born four promise groups and a wisdom group for prayer support. Sisters and associates chose to participate in a promise group or the wisdom group. Promise group leaders formed a group, with a professional facilitator, to foster integration and coordination of the directives flowing from the charism of radical hospitality. Promise groups met regularly and set goals and initiatives for action grounded in four aspects of radical hospitality. The strategies and objectives for each promise group took cues from life experiences in the world, in regional and local issues and events, and in the Dubuque Presentation congregation.



The above graphic depicts the movement of the four promises which were established from the directives of the 2017 General Chapter.

Promise groups helped me remember what was happening and when it was happening. They helped me see the importance of the relationships between the promises and kept everything before us.

Sister Pamela Quade

Radical Hospitality Promise

The Radical Hospitality Promise Group chose as their goal to educate themselves and others on racism/anti-racism. They studied and discussed the basics of racism, collected resources to develop modules for small groups and gathered groups to experience the modules. Broadening the circle of conversation, they planned an online 2021 monthly series “Let’s talk about racism” and invited sisters, associates and others from beyond the Presentation community, including persons of color and others, to share their experiences regarding racism. Some members participated in anti-racism training workshops. The promise group read and discussed Dan Horan’s book, *A White Catholic’s Guide to Racism and Privilege*. A plan to engage a professional team to give in-

person anti-racism training for a broadened representation of the wider Dubuque area is underway. Due to COVID-19, in-person training is not presently available.

Non-violence Promise

The Non-violence Promise Group set their goal toward educating themselves and others on how to live non-violently. They gathered resources and read and discussed John Dear’s book, *The Non-violent Life*. The group sponsored an online workshop for sisters and associates on ways to live non-violence and offered a resource guide on non-violence. In 2022, they chose to focus on Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home* and are promoting the Laudato Si’ Action Platform from the Vatican group for Promoting Integral Human Development. The group is continuing discussion on how to organize for implementation of the Laudato Si’ platform, completing the provided assessments and reassessing where we are with our carbon footprint and the possibility of the North American Conference of Presentation Sisters working together.

Partnerships and Resources Promise

The Partnerships and Resources Promise Group determined their overall goal to be: “Within the context of mission sustainability, care of members and legacy, we will study, research, develop and initiate implementation of a phased plan for property and resources of Sisters of the Presentation.” This promise group launched a process of study and

discussion to identify the needs of the congregation in strategic property planning and in relationship to sustaining the mission, while including a study of the projected demographics and resources of the congregation.

They surveyed 10 congregations of women religious across the United States about their strategic planning for property and resources and engaged a facilitator to assist in their study. A strategic planning team was formed to include the congregational leadership team and the leaders of the Partnership and Resources Promise Group. The promise group made a recommendation to the strategic planning team to hire a consulting firm. From 2021 to 2022, Plante Moran Real Estate Investment Advisors from Southfield, Michigan, was hired and began meetings online and in person with sisters, associates and employees.

Governance and Communication Promise

The Governance and Communication Promise Group set as their goal to develop a strategy/plan that will lead to the implementation of governance practices that foster dialogue and communication in decision-making. They set out to define governance practices and what current practices foster dialogue and communication for decision-making, to explore internal and external governance practices pertinent to sisters and associates, to explore options and possibilities of participation during the 2022 General Chapter and to develop an educational module explaining Chapter. They reviewed the governance practices of the Associate Partnership and the Associate Advisory Committee; reviewed the meaning and purpose of Chapter; had conversations with seven congregations about who participates in Chapter of Affairs; recommended at Community Days 2021 that there be participation by associates in Chapter of Affairs; continued education on governance practices of sisters and associates.

How have the promise groups impacted Presentation Sisters and associates?

First, in this age of increased communication through technology, the promise groups likely engaged more of the total community over the last three years (2019-2022). The invitation to participate went to all and the promise groups met regularly and communicated their proceedings, learnings and actions to all.

“Promise groups helped me remember what was happening and when it was happening. They helped me see the importance of the relationships between the promises and kept everything before us,” comments Sister Pamela Quade.

“Inclusion. As associates, we were brought into the process and given the sense that we each have something valuable to offer to the whole,” remarks Associate Mary Lou Mauss.

Second, an organic structure has existed for three years to help the vowed and associate members to reflect on and implement the directives. That in turn gives focus to the preparation for the upcoming Chapter of Affairs in October 2022. Events such

The essence of it all for us as Presentation Sisters and associates is radical hospitality.

Associate Carol Witry

as town halls, reports during Community Days and updates in the community’s monthly newsletter gave the community at large opportunity to listen, discuss and inquire about what was happening.

“The process offered us a way to hold onto the wisdom from the past and, at the same time, provide a structure that allows us to embrace new promises,” states Sister Elena Hoye.

“The promise groups have demonstrated the prophetic vision of the 2017-18 Chapter,” declares Associate Linda Dolphin.

Third, this structure is clear and specific. It has four components: focus, plan, process and progress. It gives everyone opportunity for personal and communal reflection and conversation. Everyone’s input is important and that fosters the importance of listening to one another. That, in turn, creates a circle of friends who want to know what is happening and how others feel.

Finally, in a world and church where issues face some groups or sections of the population more than others, this structure demonstrated a concept that is integral to grassroots and to systemic change: intersectionality. An intersection is a place where multiple things meet. Intersectionality is a theory that explains how multiple things meet, or overlap. Specifically, intersectionality makes sense of experiences and identities that are too complex to be thought of in one dimension. Intersectionality explains the wholeness of identity and interconnectedness of experience. For example, poverty and racism, non-violence and sustainability of Earth, immigration and climate change, to name a few.

Reflecting on the Presentation charism, sisters and associates witness that call to make the circle whole and the dance beautiful. “In the spirit of shared leadership and the living of the promises, the charism is the promise. It is the significant thread of the whole,” remarks Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ, facilitator for the promise group process.

“The essence of it all for us as Presentation Sisters and associates is radical hospitality,” declares Associate Carol Witry.

What is a General Chapter?

by CORINE MURRAY, PBVM

We are not living in an era of change but in a change of era.

Pope Francis

chapter

{chap-ter} noun

In accord with our constitutions, every five years the Presentation community holds a General Chapter. This is an important time in the life of a religious congregation. It is a special meeting preceded by nearly a year and a half of planning, prayer, reflection and serious listening to God and to each other.

A General Chapter has two distinct parts:

The **Chapter of Affairs** determines the direction and focus of the community's energies, resources and actions in light of the Gospel and the charism of our foundress, Nano Nagle, at this time in our history.

The **Chapter of Elections** elects a new leadership team to carry out the vision discerned by the community. Newly-elected leaders will be installed in April 2023.

How does the Presentation community prepare for Chapter?

The Chapter Preparations Committee is established to work with a facilitator and the total community. For well over a year, the committee gathers the wisdom of the sisters and associates and designs a discernment process for the election of delegates, the nomination and election of the congregational leadership team and all other aspects of Chapter preparation.

What are options for participation?

As they are able, associates and sisters contribute to the Chapter through prayer, study, observing and engaging in meaningful conversations, participating in Zoom gatherings

and taking part in discussions during the General Chapter. Together they look at the crying needs of the world and ask hard questions: What needs doing? How do we choose to live out the mission at this time in our history? What are our next steps as we carry these concerns into the future?

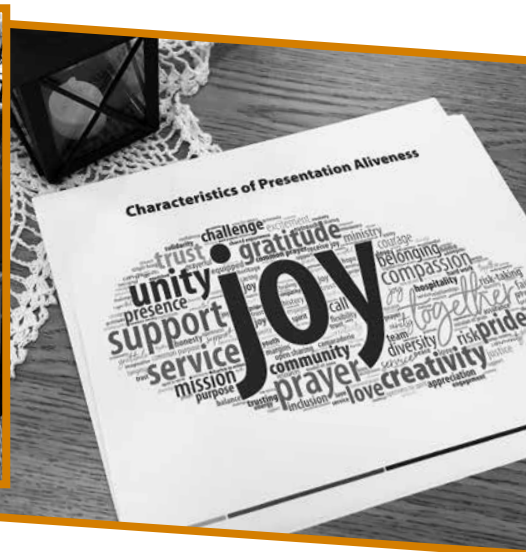
Sisters are elected by the congregation as delegates to the Chapter and have voting power. Their responsibilities include participating fully in all tasks related to the process, carefully studying all materials and attending all meetings. Following the lead of the Chapter Preparations Committee and the facilitator, they vote on significant business and on the election of the leadership team.

What are the outcomes of the Chapter?

1. A Chapter formally approves and proclaims the direction statement that unites us and forms and informs our living and doing for the next five years.
2. A Chapter formally elects the leadership team tasked with helping the community live out the direction statement and the shepherding of the community through their ministry.

As the Presentation Sisters plan for this Chapter, they want to take a realistic look at their present reality, to consider the needs of the world around them, to reflect on the life of Nano Nagle as she lived the good news of Jesus and to listen to the Spirit who resides in their midst. They carry the gifts of a heritage lived by Mother Vincent Hennessy, who came from Ireland in 1874 with three young women to bring the gospel to Iowa. They also stand on the shoulders of Presentation people throughout the world. Please remember the sisters in your prayers as they prepare for their General Chapter in the days to come.

**Scheduled dates for
the 2022 General Chapter
are October 7-12, 2022.**



Embrace the Journey: Dare, Trust, Begin

by CORINE MURRAY, PBVM

On July 13, five jubilarians stood before associates and sisters. Collectively, they represented 290 years of life and faithful service as daughters of Nano Nagle. Sisters Joellen Price, Margaret Anne Kramer, Marilyn Breen and Michaeline Healy celebrated 60 years of membership. With Sister Suzanne Takes, celebrating 50 years, they led a prayer service of gratitude. In song, with Scripture, a picture gallery and happy hearts, they recalled the places where they carried their lanterns of hospitality and hope. In lieu of gifts, they requested donations for our mission in Bolivia where Sister Suzanne's heart and feet have been planted for nearly 35 years. Following the Jubilee prayer service, the celebration continued in the courtyard, the dining room and into the night.

Reflecting on the festivities, Sister Joellen Price expressed that "stories abounded as we prepared for the jubilee celebration! Our hearts, being grateful for family, friends, our Presentation community and the many people with whom we have shared our life over these 50/60 years, led us to celebrate these stories and when woven together they became our story – of gratitude, change and faithfulness."

Community Days, a time for formal meetings of associates and sisters, began the next morning and continued for the next three and a half days, July 14-17. This annual meeting time also provided many opportunities for visiting, listening, sharing and learning. Each day was wrapped in contemplative prayer.

On July 14, Plante Moran Real Estate Investment Advisors from Southfield, Michigan, made a presentation. During the

past two years, they have partnered with the Strategic Planning Team and the sisters at large to become aware of the charism of Nano Nagle and the community's common focus on mission, especially to women and children. Plante Moran reminded the sisters that they have a history of sharing skills and gifts and have helped to accomplish amazing things.

Their presentation highlighted the importance of responsible stewardship and long-range planning. After researching, studying and surveying needs in the civic community, they named potential service gaps that may contribute to some of the difficulties people experience journeying from crisis to resilience.

In the afternoon, sisters and associates shared the fruits of their prior "coffee conversations" that invited them to focus on the following questions: "In the light of our mission, what needs call us to respond in the next five years?" and "What one concrete action might we engage in as our response?"

On Friday morning, storytellers and weavers of dreams, including Presentation Sisters and others, shared some of the ministerial highlights and struggles of their projects. Sister Carmen Hernandez spoke about the founding of La Luz Hispana, a center for Hispanic women and families in Hampton, Iowa. Next, Sisters Mary Lou Specha and Julie Marsh shared the story and dream of Hotel Hope, a





Left to right: Those gathered for Community Days reflect on post-it notes displaying the shared hopes and dreams of all for the future. Associates Radie Roberts and Laurie Noel engage in one-on-one discussion. A word cloud represents Presentation life. Sister Suzanne Gallagher and Associate Billie Greenwood smile for a photo op during a break. Sisters Rita Menart, Marilou Irons, Damian O'Brien and Leanne Welch participate in small group discussion. Sisters Martha Donnelly, Emilie Bormann and Suzanne Takes enjoy an ice cream treat in the courtyard.

transitional shelter for women and children in New Orleans. Via Zoom, the group heard from Sheena George, CSJP, Sister of St. Joseph of Peace, who dreamed of and helped to found Houses of Hospitality for immigrants in New Jersey. Each of these sisters dared a dream and made it happen. Conversations around ongoing dreams continued in the afternoon.

On Saturday morning, the associates and sisters met separately. When both groups came together in the afternoon, they shared summaries of their work.

Facilitator, Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ, who has worked with the leaders of the promise groups for the last four years, met with the associates to discuss their concerns and plans for advancing the mission and charism. Meanwhile, the sisters addressed the topics of structures and governance. They recalled structural changes from the past and the ways that changes helped them thrive. For example, once upon a time, sisters received an envelope on the morning of August 15 which told them where they would be teaching for the next year. Now sisters interview for ministry positions which may be a better fit for one's gifts and talents.

Since that time, much has changed in the world and in the community. Today the median age of Dubuque Presentation Sisters is 77, with 80 members, including 30 in their 80s. Looking to the future with many unknowns, sisters envisioned areas of exploration for mission and options in governance structures, including the roles of elected leadership, the possible delegation of some specific tasks and other evolving government structures.

At the end of the day, a Zoom group, consisting of associates and sisters, articulated their dream for the future this

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming, "Wow! What a ride!"

Hunter S. Thompson

way: "We want women and other vulnerable people to be empowered. To be empowered, we need equality – equality for women in our church and society, in the workplace and in positions of power. We need to be in partnership with organizations which raise awareness about sex discrimination and work for equal rights for women. We also need equity – that little extra boost for vulnerable people to have what they need to be on a level playing field. We need justice – for women, for persons of color – to live in a world that is fair and right."

The last formal business, reviewing the process for October elections, was led by the Chapter facilitator, Mary Catherine Redmond, PBVM, Presentation Sister from New York.

At the Sunday liturgy, associates and sisters were commissioned. Together they prayed that the God who walks with them in possibility would always be near.

*Come, Holy Spirit,
Lead us to places we would rather not go.
Expand the horizons of our limited imaginations.
Awaken in our souls dangerous dreams for a new tomorrow,
And rekindle in our hearts the fire of prophetic enthusiasm.*

People journeyed home with much to consider. Their unfolding sacred history invites them to a deep fidelity to the mission and charism of their foundress, Nano Nagle, as they chart a course for the future, navigating both the unknowns and the possibilities of the current landscape.



Sister Joetta Venneman blesses Rachel Dunlap during her Rite of Initiation into the Sisters of the Presentation community while Sister Rita Cameron looks on.

RITE OF INITIATION

Sister Rachel Dunlap

by JANE BUSE-MILLER, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Rachel Elizabeth Dunlap, of Keokuk, Iowa, was received into the Sisters of the Presentation community on Sunday, August 14, during the Rite of Initiation, which begins her novitiate journey.

Companionship through her formation process, Sisters Rita Cameron and Joetta Venneman gave witness to Rachel's commitment to religious life. "In the time we have walked with Rachel, she has grown in her transition into community life and worked to live the charism of our foundress Nano Nagle. She has deepened her call with us by living in and praying with community. It has been a privilege to walk with Rachel as we have personally witnessed her deep desire to continue growing as a woman religious."

Reflecting on what drew her to religious life, Rachel states, "When I began my studies at St. Ambrose, Sister Rita Cameron was one of the first sisters I met through the busy student retreat. Several sisters invited me to Dubuque's Got Sisters and I was immediately drawn to the Presentation Sisters' joy, peace, prayer life and commitments to community and ministry. During my last year at St. Ambrose, Sister Rita invited me on a service/discernment trip to New Orleans, where I saw the charism of hospitality present in the deep love and compassion that was extended to each guest at Lantern Lights and Hotel Hope. I was drawn to both the types of ministries the Presentation Sisters engaged in and the way in which they ministered."

Rachel continues, “This deep love and hospitality was reaffirmed when I spent several weeks in Bolivia in 2018 with our sisters, and through relationships I built with other Presentation Sisters. Through these experiences and relationships, and many others, I have come to see that I am my best self when I am living in a community dedicated to prayer and service. Ultimately, I have the feeling of being at home in this community.”

The oldest of four children of Matt and Teri Dunlap of Keokuk, Iowa, Rachel attended St. Vincent Grade School and Keokuk High School. Rachel received a bachelor’s degree in psychology and in theology from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, and continued her education at Boston College, obtaining a master’s degree of social work and a master’s degree of theology and ministry. Most recently, Rachel worked as a mental health counselor at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. In addition, she volunteered as an English tutor at the Presentation Lantern Center during her candidacy year.

“Rachel has ministered and served in the spirit of Nano these past several months,” affirms Sisters Rita and Joetta. “Her energy toward creating a more healthy and fair world has brought forth gifts that have been affirmed in her. She lives a reflective life, notes limitations and is not afraid to adjust expectations while being careful to balance community needs with personal needs.”

Looking forward to continuing her journey of discernment, Rachel expresses, “I am filled with joy, excitement and peace as I begin my journey as a novice. I look forward to having the opportunity to grow deeper in my understanding and experience of God, this congregation, and myself, to further discern where God is calling me. As I continue my discernment, I am trusting in God’s grace and the support of sisters, associates and loved ones.”

Rachel has been accepted into the InterCongregational Collaborative Novitiate (ICCN) in Chicago, Illinois. This canonical experience began on August 22, 2022, and ends in June 2023. On August 22-25, Sisters Joetta, Rita and Rachel attended an orientation explaining the ICCN program and the planned activities the novices would experience during their time in Chicago. They were introduced to five novices and their respective directors and spent quality time getting to know each of them. Religious communities represented include the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, CSJ Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, Sisters of the Precious Blood, Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities and Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross. The five other novices come from Honduras; Philippines; Ghana, West Africa; Pakistan and Hong Kong.

Please continue to hold Rachel in prayer during this next part of her discernment journey.

All Souls’ Day

Remember Your Loved Ones on November 2, 2022



*Those we hold closest
to our hearts
never truly leave us.
They live on in the
kindnesses they shared and
the love they brought
into our lives.*

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The letter to the Hebrews (12:1-2) speaks of the “cloud of witnesses to the living God” who have gone before us. The writer suggests that we are surrounded by the love and support of those witnesses who cheer us on in our lives. Their encouragement unites us all in what has traditionally been known as the communion of saints.

In November, the Sisters of the Presentation make special remembrance of these saints who are interceding for us as we gratefully recall all that they have meant to us in life.

Remembrance cards will be mailed to you in late September. The sisters encourage you to return the card with names of those you mourn and the sisters will remember them in daily prayer throughout the month of November.

You may also submit your intentions to Karen Tuecke at partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org with the following information for each loved one:

Name of Loved One _____

Relationship _____

Date of Death _____

Name of Loved One _____

Relationship _____

Date of Death _____



Leaving Algona and Monticello **End of an Era**

by HERMANN PLATT, PBVM, ARCHIVIST

The Sisters of the Presentation saw the completion of their ministries in two long-term missions this year. Algona, Iowa, and Monticello, Minnesota, bade farewell to the sisters who had been their partners in evangelization for a combined total of 176 years. With a mixture of gratitude for mutual blessings and sadness upon leaving friends, they shared memories for one last time.

In each place there remains a footprint of Presentation presence, in the hearts of sisters and parishioners, and in the structures that bear the name of Presentation. When St. Henry Parish in Monticello built the new church in 2001 it included Presentation Chapel “in honor of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who faithfully served the parish of St. Henry for 60 years.” A new parish hall in Algona, at Divine Mercy Parish, was recently named Presentation Center in recognition of the 95 years of dedicated service by Presentation Sisters, in the parish and school, in Algona and the surrounding areas.

In 1927, parishioners dug the basement for what was to be known as St. Cecelia Academy in Algona, using horses and plows, muscle power and shovels. The word around town was that a new school was to be built, and it would be staffed by the Sisters of the Presentation from Dubuque, Iowa.

Five sisters arrived in September of 1927, the first of 160 who would eventually serve in school and parish. Throughout the years between 1927 and 2022, their ministries changed with the shifting of population and needs. Beginning with teaching in the Catholic school setting, the sisters later re-invented themselves as parish ministers, leaders of RCIA, catechetical instructors, visitors to the homebound and volunteers in various parish capacities. Sister Janet Goetz, the last sister to serve in Algona, divided her time between volunteering

as school board secretary and recorder of Sacraments at the parish office, unofficial representative of the Church at wakes and funerals, and general “go to” person as needed.

Sister Janet Stelken, who ministered in the Algona school system, had this to say about her 16 years in the area: “My teaching years hold many fond memories. I love that community – the students, the staff, the parents and all who made up the Bishop Garrigan High School family! It was a wonderful time in my life!”

Sister Janet Goetz, who was born and grew up in the area and graduated from Bishop Garrigan High School, dubbed the area as “a place where everyone cares for one another and watches out for each other ... joy and gratitude are in my heart for the many fond memories I have of the people in Kossuth County.”

The parishioners at St. Henry in Monticello had their first glimpse of Presentation Sisters when Sisters Callista Ryan and Denise Kollasch arrived in 1941, to be followed by Sisters Eunice Kane, Lucy Rogers and Inviolata Crowley. They had come to replace the Franciscan Sisters from Little Falls, Minnesota, who had previously staffed the school of religion.

This was a new venture for the Presentation community, whose members had previously concentrated on ministry in Catholic schools. A fully functioning religious education program soon became the norm for the small band from Iowa. Among the 38 sisters who called Monticello their home away from home, two were long-time residents. Sister Eunice Kane gave 25 years of her life to the school of religion and the parish. Sister Carrie Link was the last resident sister to be part of the parish, arriving in 1990 and just recently retiring.



Left to right: Sister Eunice Kane instructs teachers in Monticello, Minnesota. Plaque outside Presentation Chapel at St. Henry Church in Monticello. Sister Marilyn Breen, Associate Colleen Vlasisvljevich, Sisters Rita Menart and Diana Blong, Associate Carol Kane, Sisters Carmen Hernandez and Carrie Link attend the farewell at St. Henry Parish for Sister Carrie. Sister Hermann Platt, Associate Lisa Schmidt, Sister Diana Blong, Associate Ruth Ludwig, Sisters Janet Goetz, Marge Healy and Janet Stelken attend the reception honoring Sister Janet Goetz and the Presentation Sisters in Algona, Iowa.

Upon retiring and moving to Mount Loretto, Sister Carrie had this to say: “Speaking for all of us who have ministered in Monticello, it has been a joy and privilege to serve in such a vibrant, loving and hospitable parish – truly the holy people of God. My prayer is that the seeds of faith each of us planted will stay rooted, continue to grow and bear fruit for many years to come.”

Sister Jennifer Rausch shares of her time in Monticello, “At first, it was a bit overwhelming to see 100 fifth-grade students fly off the school bus that transported them from their elementary schools to St. Henry School of Religion. But I soon came to treasure the mutual attraction between dedicated teachers and eager students that brought great energy to the classrooms. After two hours, a different grade grouping would arrive by bus ... and the learning experience repeated itself. I greatly admired the generosity of the many parish members who volunteered as teachers. They were wonderful.”

Over the years, Presentation presence in Monticello transitioned from serving in the school of religion to parish ministry. Sister Carrie was catechumenate coordinator at St. Henry, as well as pastoral minister/liturgist at Mound, Minnesota. She was also known for her expertise in the field of art, including portraiture and icons.

Not to stop at the usual artistic endeavors, Sister Carrie participated in the designing of the new parish church in 1999, where a side chapel was named Presentation Chapel. There, iron lilies symbolizing faith and purity are part of the décor, with oak leaves, a symbol of the Presentation community.

As our physical presence in Monticello and Algona comes to a close, fond memories and prayers remain in our hearts.



GIVING TUESDAY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2022

Giving Tuesday is an opportunity for people around the world to use their individual power of generosity to connect with and support their communities and the Presentation Sisters. It’s not just one day – this is a global social movement that is working every day to fuel more generosity and service to build a more just and equitable world.

On this annual day of celebration, Tuesday, November 29, 2022, the whole world comes together to give back in many different ways: through acts of kindness, gifts of voice, time, talent or treasure.

In this time of uncertainty, stress and even despair, one thing that gives all hope is that this crisis is catalyzing innovation like we have never seen before. From the pandemic, we learned that the crisis created not only the sense of urgency, but enhanced our desire to share information, ideas and collaborate, which has never been stronger. All around the world, we are joining forces and leaning on each other – and this generosity tells us that we will achieve the better, more just world that we all seek.

People can show their generosity in a variety of ways during Giving Tuesday – whether it’s helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue, sharing a skill or supporting your favorite cause – every act of generosity counts.

To learn more, contact Karen Tuecke at partnersinmission@dbqpbvms.org or visit www.dbqpbvms.org/give-back/givingtuesday.



Service & Awareness Opportunity Seeing with New Eyes

by RADIE ROBERTS and COLLEEN VENTER, ASSOCIATE PARTNERSHIP CO-DIRECTORS

On Saturday, June 25, 11 associates and three sisters participated in a service day, Seeing with New Eyes, in Dubuque. This was an opportunity to step away from the busyness of daily life to learn more about the issue of food insecurity. The group gathered at Mount Loretto to get acquainted, began in prayer and then traveled to their first stop, Presentation Lantern Center. Megan Ruiz, executive director of the center, spoke with the group about the challenges and issues facing immigrants in the community. For three hours, the group helped with deep cleaning of shelving, cabinets, ductwork, windows, carpets, offices and entering records in the computer.

Their next stop was Convivium Urban Farmstead at 2811 Jackson Street in Dubuque. Convivium is a nonprofit with a mission to improve life through food. The organization provides free meals, as well as tools and education about healthy food choices, to children and adults who are struggling with food access, especially those living in the North end of Dubuque. Owner Leslie Shalabi shared the organization's mission and history then offered a tour of their building, private gardens and the chicken coop. Some group members were delighted to see live chickens for the first time! Participants then enjoyed a farm-to-table lunch and conversation.

Six associates were invited to stay and learn how to make pesto, which Convivium uses in their open kitchen restaurant and sells in their store. The proceeds of those sales go to their nonprofit. Group members enjoyed chopping garlic scapes, squeezing and zesting lemons, then processing the fresh

ingredients together and ladling the pesto into canning jars. The other members of the service team returned to Mount Loretto after lunch to assemble hygiene bags for Resources Unite, a local organization that strengthens the Dubuque community by creating connections, providing resources and grocery items from food banks. The hygiene bags included toiletries such as soap, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste and toothbrushes. The group also included a handwritten note in each bag to let the recipient know they were prayed for and cared about.

The last part of the day was spent writing cards of caring and notes of encouragement to associates who have been on our prayer lists. Time was left for the group to reflect and share their experiences with each other. The day ended in prayer and gratitude.

Nano's Nine associate group member, associate Darla Budden reflects about the day, "Seeing With New Eyes, Presentation Lantern Center, Convivium and Resources Unite graciously serve the community with compassion and respect for all who walk through their doors. I was enlightened to learn their history and hear stories of people who come needing their assistance. I was humbled to serve and participate with the other associates and sisters. It was a wonderful experience I will always treasure."

Left to right: Members of the Seeing With New Eyes team present hygiene bags they assembled for Resources Unite. Associate Dora Serna chops garlic scapes at Convivium Urban Farmstead. Team members display jars of pesto they processed at Convivium Urban Farmstead.

In Loving Memory

This summer we lost three dear associates who will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved them.

SANDY KAHLE, DUBUQUE, IOWA

September 7, 1945 – June 6, 2022

Sandy became an associate in April 2008. She was a member of the Servant Seeker's Group in Dubuque for many years. She was grateful for her many connections to the Sisters of the Presentation community and the Associate Partnership. In her associate application, Sandy stated, "I spent three years of lay formation with Sister Carla Popes, and it was through her that my heart became on fire with the beautiful story of Nano Nagle."



RICHARD BALDWIN, NASHUA, IOWA

March 4, 1941 – June 28, 2022

As parish coordinators for St. Michael Church in Nashua for 16 years, it was there Richard "Dick" and Sue Baldwin met Sister Diana Blong and learned about the associate program. They became Presentation associates on September 18, 2010. Dick enjoyed the Lantern Flames group gatherings and the interactions between the members. He felt his time with the group had been an outstanding journey of praying together, helping others, and especially meeting so many wonderful people.



VIRGINIA LAMMER, DUBUQUE, IOWA

August 11, 1923 – July 29, 2022

Virginia felt blessed to have connected with the Presentation Sisters through both Sisters Barbara Rastatter and Margaret Anne Kramer at St. Anthony Church in Dubuque. She admired the dedication of both sisters in their position as pastoral associate. She was so impressed that she longed to learn about the associate partnership. After orientation and discernment, Virginia became an associate on November 2, 2003. At her death, Virginia had been an associate for almost 19 years!



**Please go to our website for full obituaries
DBQPBVMS.ORG/NEWS-EVENTS/OBITUARIES**



Associates assemble after the associate gathering at Community Days.

Community Days 2022

Presentation Sisters and associates were thankful to gather in person for Community Days 2022 centered around the theme "Embrace the Journey - Dare, Trust, Begin."

On Saturday morning, associates gathered separately for a session led by facilitator Sister Carol Crepeau, CSJ. Beginning in prayer, each person was asked to discern how God has been present in his or her relationships and prayer life. This led to rich discussions within their small groups. Sister Carol then led the group in a futuring process, where the small groups discussed the hopes of associates for the future of the Presentation community and for Chapter 2022.

Associate Partnership co-directors Radie Roberts and Colleen Venter then presented suggestions of their hopes which included further enhancement of the role of associates with increased awareness and affirmation of their role in the mission, committing themselves to protecting women from all forms of violence to create a nonviolent environment, and continuing Nano's charism and Presentation presence by taking action to help the materially poor.

Summing up her experience, Associate Mary Lou Mauss states, "Attending Community Days is always a great time to meet old friends and get to know new ones. There is always some challenge to take away from these days to make life better for myself and others. This year that takeaway were the questions: 'What story breaks my heart and how am I called to respond? What is mine to do?' Big or small, it's our calling as associates to make a difference."

Presentation Associate Identity Statement

Dubuque Presentation associates are women and men called to share in the life, spirituality and mission of the Dubuque Presentation Sisters. Grounded in prayer, we support and encourage one another as we seek to embody the Presentation charism of radical hospitality both individually and communally. In the spirit of Nano Nagle, we reach out with hospitality and compassion as we seek justice and respond to the needs of the world.

An Abundance of Gifts to Share

by KAREN TUECKE, PARTNERS IN MISSION COORDINATOR



Sue and Jim Garrett enjoy their visit with Sister Ellen Mary Garrett in 2019.

James “Jim” and Sue Garrett provide a bit of insight into their relationship with the Presentation Sisters, “Growing up, our families attended Catholic schools and were faithful to the church. The Garrett family consisted of six children, one of whom was our sister, Sister Ellen Mary Garrett, who entered the Sisters of the Presentation in 1961,” expresses Jim, who is the second youngest in the family. Sister Ellen Mary, who passed away September 23, 2021, was his older sister.

“My family was raised in Storm Lake, Iowa, and attended St. Mary School where the Presentation Sisters taught for many years.” Sue (Overmohle) Garrett’s mother was the secretary for the high school. “I am the second oldest of nine children. When we attended school, we had many Presentation Sisters teach us. I remember a few of them such as Sister Lois Lehmann teaching fifth grade and Sister Beth Kress was on her first teaching assignment. They were so compassionate!”

Sue went on to say, “We now live in Hampton, Iowa, where we raised four children of our own and now have 10 grandchildren. This year we celebrated 47 years of marriage! We have been blessed!”

The Garrett’s have visited Mount Loretto many times, specifically to see Sister Ellen Mary. Sue elaborated on how she felt when she visited, “One thing that impressed us was

the staff and sisters took notice of how many came for Mass and how many were coming to the meal. They always made sure that we were fed, too. Sharing their abundance and hospitality is so important to the sisters and we felt welcome.”

Jim and Sue enjoy their family, friends and gardening. “Over the years, we have been fortunate enough to have an abundance ourselves. We have a 40’ by 80’ garden. Almost every vegetable imaginable is in the garden. In addition, we have apple and pear trees and raspberries. We absolutely love gardening. Whenever we come to visit we try to bring some of the fresh vegetables and fruit that are grown in our garden.”

Thanks to generous and faithful benefactors like Jim and Sue, the sisters can enjoy fresh and nutritious food items throughout the year.

Reflecting on their time with Sister Ellen Mary, Jim and Sue share, “She valued prayer and community service, as the family was raised with the respect of the church. At her 50th Jubilee celebration in 2012, it was said, ‘Sister Ellen Mary Garrett has gifted us with a gentle spirit, intelligence and good humor. Her family has grounded her in the simplicity and love of the land. Her days have been spent teaching youth. She has done this faithfully and with care. In gentle ways, Sister Ellen laughs at life’s incongruities and lives with a connectedness to the earth. A person of gratitude, she celebrates life and offers a warm and hospitable welcome to all.’ This statement is a true reflection of Sister Ellen Mary.”

When asked why they give in so many ways, such as the gifts of time, talent and treasure, Sue responds, “The Presentation Sisters taught us from kindergarten to high school. They took care of us when we needed care, taught us when it was time to be taught and they instilled importance on social justice, supporting those who struggle and are in need and this makes them happy, so we are happy. We are giving back to the sisters what they gave to us. For this we are grateful.”

Jim and Sue Garrett have been faithful supporters for decades. The Presentation Sisters appreciate all of the support the Garrett’s give. Thank you, Jim and Sue, for being partners in mission!

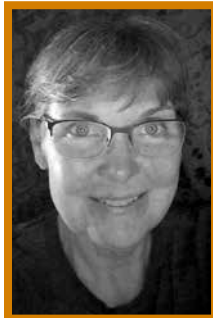
Presentation Lantern Center Extraordinary Volunteers

by SARA MILLHOUSE, PRESENTATION LANTERN CENTER

On a balmy summer evening overlooking the Mississippi River, the Presentation Lantern Center celebrated 20 years of improving immigrant lives with the help of amazing volunteer tutors. About 100 people enjoyed dinner, games, laughter, conversation and delicious desserts brought by students.

At the volunteer appreciation event, two very special tutors earned the prestigious Lantern Center Service Awards. The award is given to a Presentation Lantern Center volunteer who demonstrates extraordinary effort, skill and commitment in tutoring adult immigrants in English and citizenship.

Lantern award winner **Barb Day** is a trailblazer and a trendsetter who was utilizing technology to tutor virtually even before the pandemic. She regularly tutors multiple students, multiple times a week. She is also a passionate advocate for the center and has recruited new volunteers who have become regular volunteers as well.



Barb Day

Barb has helped her son, tutor Chris Day, launch Reboot Dubuque, a computer giveaway program that rebuilds computers for people in need of technology in Dubuque. Families from the Marshall Islands, Puerto Rico, Afghanistan and elsewhere have been able to have a functional family computer, a necessity in modern times, because of Reboot Dubuque.

The second award winner is **Sister Marci Blum, OSF**. Sister Marci stepped up to tutor multiple students each week when we were in need of more tutors during the pandemic. She has helped her regular students with citizenship, English skills, applying for and gaining employment and professional development coursework. She has provided transportation to and from the mosque and important appointments when needed and always provides warm friendship and wise counsel.

When a family was temporarily homeless, Sister Marci helped them obtain safe shelter without payment. Three of her students have now successfully passed their U.S. citizenship test. Her most recent citizenship student, Diego, is the center's 100th student to successfully achieve U.S. citizenship! As are all of their successful citizenship students, Diego is exemplary: dedicated, hard-working, ingenious, intelligent and community-minded. He always has a smile on his face and a kind word for everyone. He is trilingual and

extraordinarily brave, making the perilous decision to journey to the U.S. at a young age.

At the picnic, the Lantern Center also recognized board president and tutor Tim Moothart for earning the Governor's Volunteer Award in May. He is an outspoken voice of outreach for the center in the Dubuque community and has been a dedicated tutor for many years.

This year, the volunteer appreciation picnic brought together students, tutors and supporters in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. Board and committee members, Sister Marilou Irons and Mary Lou Mauss, Presentation associate, deftly organized the event so that everyone could feel comfortable and welcome. Many attendees commented that they enjoyed the opportunity to socialize, especially since students could bring their families. People reconnected who hadn't been able to see each other during the course of the pandemic.

The center hopes to continue this tradition next year with another volunteer appreciation celebration that truly exemplifies the hospitality integral to their mission.

"We are so thankful for all of our volunteers and supporters and recognize our award winners as shining beacons who truly spread the light of education and advocacy for our immigrant neighbors," expresses Megan Ruiz, executive director of the center.



Presentation Lantern Center executive director Megan Ruiz gives out the Lantern Service award to a surprised and delighted Sister Marci Blum, OSF.

Reflections on the Journey

Sister Karen Jasper

by MAURA MCCARTHY, PBVM

Vera Cecilia Jasper was the second youngest of eight children born to Tony Jasper and Clara Anstoetter in 1936, less than a mile east of Farley, Iowa. Her siblings, Rita and John, died in infancy, but the other six attended St. Joseph School in Farley. Emma (who became Sister Philip) had her heart set on joining the Presentation Sisters right after high school, but her Pop, as they called him, asked her to wait until she was 21. She went to Mount Mercy College for a year, passed the teachers' exam and taught in the rural school that her parents attended before entering the Presentation Sisters.

Vera grew up with the intention of becoming a religious sister after high school and Sister Philip and her teachers in Farley kept the dream alive. Vera entered the convent in September of 1953, was received as Sister Mary Karen, completed college, sister formation, and teacher preparation and began her teaching career in the new school in Osage, Iowa. Her bachelor's degree at Clarke College (now Clarke University) was in the natural sciences and her master's degree was in biology from the University of Notre Dame with additional courses in administration from Clarke for her principal's certificate. Sister Karen taught for eight years and then became teacher and principal for 20 years. She often served as cantor for parish Masses and sought solitude to pray and express in poetry her deepening spirituality.

Sister Karen had made it known that someday she would be interested in caring for her elderly Presentation Sisters. After nine years in Waukon, Sister Karen was called by Sister Joan Lickteig, congregational leader, about the urgent need to help Sister Barbara Marie Gross in the infirmary and wondered if she felt called to respond. Sister Karen replied immediately that she was very willing. After 28 years in education, she would begin her new role in healthcare at Mount Loretto.

During this transition, Sister Karen received a letter from Father Russell Bleich, superintendent of schools in the Archdiocese of Dubuque: "How can I possibly thank you for two decades of leadership in Catholic education. As a principal, you have always demonstrated a sensitivity to others. Yours is a transforming presence. During your years in leadership, you have been able to work effectively with boards, parishes and pastors of all types and persuasions. This flexibility and cooperative style have produced fruits for the kingdom that will last forever. Your love for the children is an example for all."

Sister Karen prepared for her new ministry by becoming a certified nursing assistant, then a CNM, along with countless



Sister Karen Jasper with her sister, Sister Philip, who passed away in 2005.

workshops on health care, aging, life sustaining treatment, memory care and ethics. Anne Schrobilgen was added to the nursing staff and credits Sister Karen with hiring her and providing precise instructions about care. Anne has worked for the Presentation Sisters for 30 years and continues to share a special relationship with Sister Karen. Anne recalls that Sister Karen kept a detailed notebook with the clothing sizes of each of the sisters and shopped for them, especially at Christmas time. She loved to enhance each sister's door with creative seasonal decorations all through the year.

"Nano Nagle visited the sick, bringing them comfort and a healing presence of Jesus," stated Sister Karen as she reflected on her ministry years in healthcare in relation to the mission of the Presentation foundress. "By caring for my sisters at Mount Loretto, I became more aware of my call to allow Jesus to use me to make His presence, love and compassion felt by all to whom I ministered."

Sister Karen loved sharing life with Sister Philip at Mount Loretto in their later years. "Sister Philip's contentment and happiness impressed me always. She was the kind of religious woman I aspired to be." Together, both sisters loved the Presentation community and their ministries. Both loved the members of their family and showed concern for each one. They were always confidantes to one another.

Sister Karen lives by the outlook, "Everything in life is either a stepping stone or a stumbling block in our journey to eternity. It depends on our attitude toward it." The attitude of Sister Karen is expressed in the last three lines of her poem: "Called to be happy, Called to be me, Called to be holy!"

CARING AND FAITHFUL

Sister Annette Skyles

February 8, 1930 – June 1, 2022

by LOUISE SCIESZINSKI, PBVM

There is an appointed time for everything ...

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

And how does one person fill a lifespan of over 92 years? Sister Mary Annette Skyles once told us how in her own words, “I am myself. I enjoy people and try to be open and compassionate with them.” And she showed us how by her calm and steady manner, her eye for a good prank or a fun tease, her plain talk and straight-forward honesty, her caring presence and her constant faith.

Sister Annette’s parents, Leo and Anna Skyles, made family and faith a lifelong anchor for her, her three sisters and four brothers. Sister Annette would tell with pride that the “eight Skyles” spent a combined 96 years at St. Joseph School in Mason City, Iowa, and, with added delight, would add tales for proof. The family bond grew stronger and wider through the years and extended to nieces and nephews who saw distance and miles, although a nuisance, a prompt for creative planning. Barbara Jean Skyles entered the Sisters of the Presentation on September 8, 1949 and took perpetual vows on June 19, 1955. She died on June 1, 2022.

A time for ministry...

Sister Annette showed she was a teacher by who she was and what she did. Her classroom teaching experience spanned 52 years. She once received the Excellence in Education Award from the Diocese of Sioux City. Her response to that and to an earlier recognition by “Who’s Who Among American Teachers,” based on a student nomination, was the same: “I couldn’t have done it without the kids.”

Sister Annette enjoyed teaching. She wanted to provide children with opportunity for religious education and formation and was committed to helping each student become the best person that he/she could be. Her teaching skills were effective because she knew each student as able and unique. Not only did she enjoy her students, she followed them in later years with interest and prayer.

She taught in parish schools at Waukon, Osage, Dubuque, Cedar Falls, Epworth, Storm Lake, Key West and Algona in Iowa, and in Oregon, Illinois. She also taught countless Saturday religion classes and many years of summer religious education.

A time for community ...

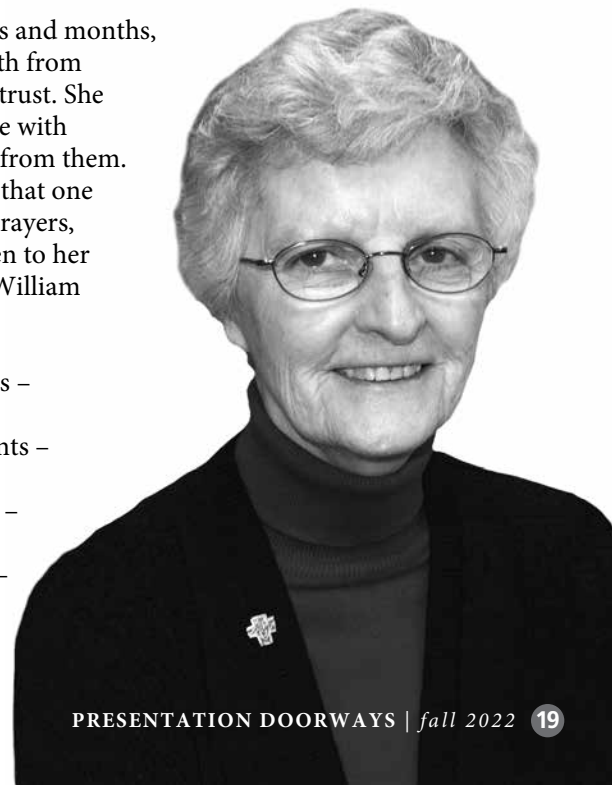
Sister Annette was a community person. She lived the faith she taught and she taught the faith she lived. Her peaceful presence, her balance in life, her concern for other sisters and their loved ones, her willingness to generously help, support and lend a hand without notice are long remembered. She enjoyed reading, sports and card games. She excelled at a quick quip, an outright prank or a straight-faced joke. Sister Annette appreciated the richness of the ordinary and then turned the moment into greater enjoyment for others.

A time for prayer ...

Sister Annette lived her life with deep gratitude. She cherished her vocation and life as a Presentation Sister. One of her frequent comments was, “We are so blessed,” followed by talk about the blessing of the moment. She lived intentionally, ever aware that blessings are gifts and not to be taken for granted. She found everyday clarity in two questions: “What did I do *for* Jesus today?” and “What did I do *to* Jesus today?” Her witness of daily personal and community prayer was inspiring.

In her later years and months, she drew strength from acceptance and trust. She knew how to live with limitations, not from them. It is no surprise that one of her favorite prayers, written and given to her by Sister Mary William Allen, was:

Happy Moments –
Praise God.
Difficult Moments –
Worship God.
Quiet Moments –
Trust God.
Every Moment –
Thank God.



THROUGH THE EYE OF AN ARTIST

Sister Josita Zieser

August 12, 1934 – July 14, 2022

by JENNIFER RAUSCH, PBVM

Sister Josita Zieser was born Mary Lavonne on August 12, 1934, in Walker, Iowa, daughter of Joseph and Martha (Haxmeier) Zieser. With her siblings, Mary Lavonne attended one-room rural schools near Monti. She shared a room with her older sister, Arlene, and the two eventually shared life for over 70 years as Presentation Sisters, known as Sister Josita (Lavonne) and Sister Dolores (Arlene).

Being raised on an Iowa farm, Sister Josita had a love of art and crafts from her early childhood, a gift encouraged by her mother who, although kept busy with 14 children, still found time for doing crafts, crocheting, knitting and sewing for her children. This prepared Sister Josita for her life's works.

She entered religious life on September 8, 1952, and professed her perpetual vows on August 22, 1961. Throughout those years, she engaged in her personal process of formation, education and ministry. She earned degrees in art: a bachelor's degree from Clarke University and a master's degree from the University of Notre Dame. She focused her creativity and love of beauty as she experimented in a variety of art forms ranging from a wood carving of St. Joseph, pottery, oil, water color, to wood prints and others. Her "artist's eye" could discern the beauty to be captured and her trained fingers could bring that beauty to reality so it could be enjoyed by others.

Sister Josita's teaching career of 46 years empowered her to use her creative eye to discover another form of beauty ... the potential of her students. She engaged in elementary and secondary education in Catholic schools in Iowa, including Mason City, Key West, Algona, Dubuque and Storm Lake, and in St. Paul, Minnesota. She also served as parish secretary and administrative assistant at St. Mary Parish in Storm Lake.

Her love of art education urged her to develop art curricula for diocesan schools as well as hands-on training sessions for art teachers and summer art camps/workshops for budding artists. It was obvious that the "eye of this artist" was able to see far and wide as to how students and teachers alike could walk into the world of art and gain a level of comfort and appreciation there.

Her ministry of teaching expanded to summer religious vacation programs in a variety of parishes in South Dakota

over a period of 24 years. Sister Josita delighted in returning year after year to attend to the spiritual development of young people in these parish settings.

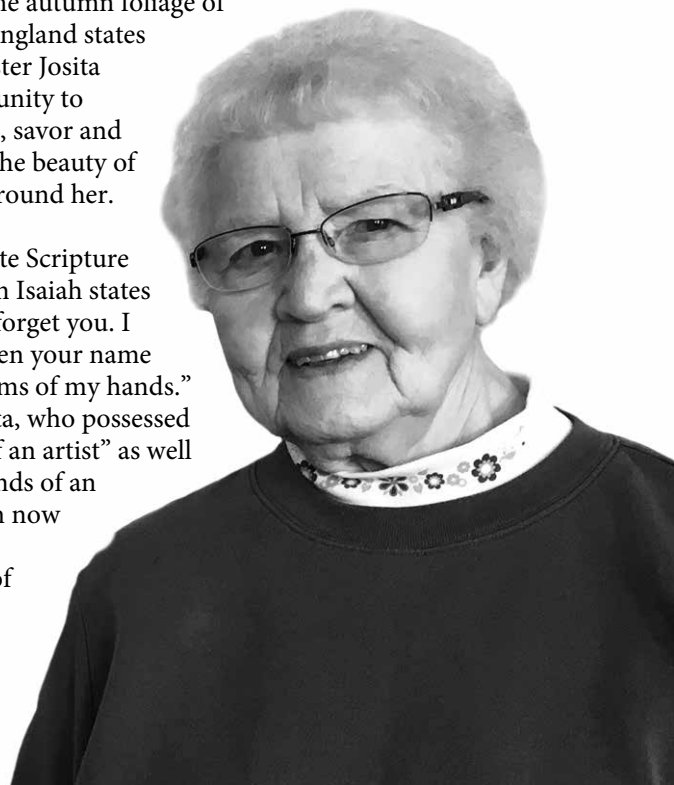
Sister Josita's creative, artistic touch was often demonstrated in banners and posters that she created for use in church settings. She designed stained glass windows for the St. Joseph Convent chapel in Mason City. In 2009, Sister Josita retired to Mount Loretto in Dubuque and true to her passion, continued to illustrate her creativity as she fashioned items from plastic canvas to be displayed at the annual craft sale.



Wood carving by Sister Josita Zieser

Bus tours to Niagara Falls, Washington, DC, and the autumn foliage of the New England states offered Sister Josita an opportunity to appreciate, savor and celebrate the beauty of creation around her.

Her favorite Scripture quote from Isaiah states "I will not forget you. I have written your name on the palms of my hands." Sister Josita, who possessed the "eye of an artist" as well as the "hands of an artist," can now rest in the presence of God.



A WOMAN OF JOY AND LAUGHTER

Sister Benjamin Duschner

May 6, 1941 – July 28, 2022

by LEANNE WELCH, PBVM

Sister Benjamin Duschner, daughter of Ben and Dorothy (Klaren) was born Grace Margaret on May 6, 1941, in Farley, Iowa. Sister Benjamin, with her siblings Dorann and Gene, were formed in their faith through family prayer, attending Mass and witnessing their parents' willingness to be of help to others. Family gatherings were a joyous time for the Duschner family. Chores on the farm introduced Sister Benjamin to a good work ethic.

After graduation from St. Joseph High School in Farley, Sister Benjamin entered the Sisters of the Presentation on September 8, 1959, and made her final profession on August 22, 1967. She earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree from Clarke College (now Clarke University), which prepared her for ministry as a teacher and principal in South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa. Her last ministry was as pastoral minister at St. Elizabeth Pastorate for the parishes of Bankston, Epworth, Farley, Placid and Peosta.

One of Sister Benjamin's favorite quotes was "Be still and know that I am God" (*Psalms 46:10*) Not many who knew her would associate the word "still" with the "Gracie" they experienced as a woman full of life, laughter and passion about serving others. Yet she knew how to be still before God. She knew God on friendly terms. She fostered her spiritual life with daily Eucharistic liturgy and the liturgy of the hours and, importantly, in her retirement, her daily holy hour in the presence of the Eucharist.

An excellent cook, Sister Benjamin excelled in gathering family or community members around a good meal. She was the cook who could open the fridge and make a meal of what was there. For her, a meat bone was cause for a good soup and a holiday was cause for a batch of divinity. Not only did she enjoy providing a good meal for others, she enjoyed a good meal made by others.

Sister Benjamin's love of God, family and community was clear. She spoke often of her siblings, her nieces and nephews, their spouses and their children. She did the same with sisters with whom she had lived and the people she served in ministry, especially the children and the elderly who she visited in their homes or in nursing homes. She saw it as a special privilege to bring Holy Communion to these same

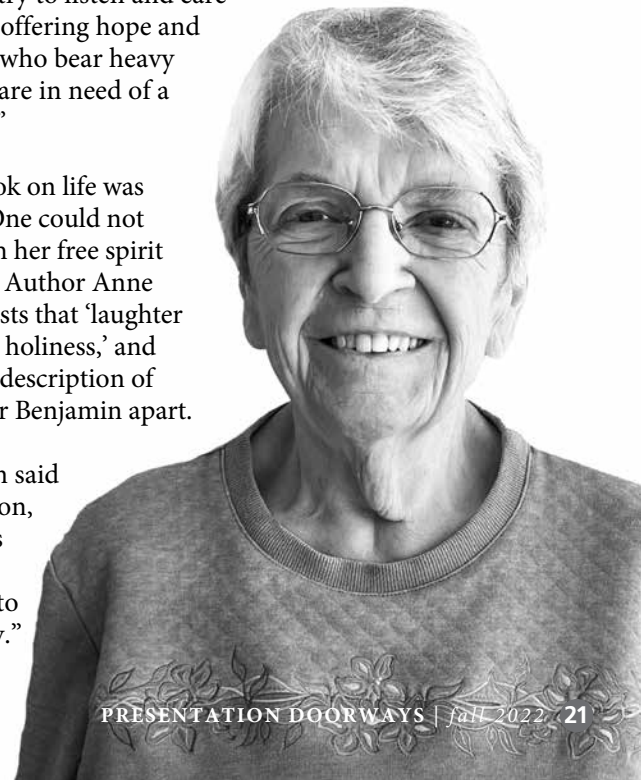
elderly. Her unique way of making people feel special was truly one of her many attributes.

Sister Benjamin was a woman who enjoyed life. Her laughter bubbled at the table, in the hallway, in almost every conversation. That laughter brought release from the difficult situations she sometimes faced: personal issues such as surviving a tornado and then living with the life-long fear of storms, coping with long-term pain from a broken ankle, dealing with cancer, open-heart surgery and breathing issues. All of these without complaint – except perhaps for the storms! She also dealt with serious ministerial issues: overseeing the combination of three schools into one operating system, serving as chaplain accompanying police officers to inform a family of the unexpected death of a loved one, leaving her school ministry to begin her pastoral associate ministry.

Faith, family and friends were the life of Sister Benjamin. She once said, "I see the call to live out the life of Nano, our community foundress, by incarnating the hospitality of God. God has gifted me with freedom, joy, laughter and an inner happiness that are fuel for my life. Joy is the laughter of my soul. I try to listen and care for others by offering hope and love to those who bear heavy burdens and are in need of a listening ear."

Sister's outlook on life was contagious. One could not help but catch her free spirit and laughter. Author Anne Lamott suggests that 'laughter is carbonated holiness,' and that is an apt description of what set Sister Benjamin apart.

As one person said at her visitation, "She taught us how to enjoy life and how to die peacefully."



PEACE AND JUSTICE ADVOCATE

Sister Mary Dennis Lentsch

January 15, 1937 – August 13, 2022

by JOY PETERSON, PBVM

Sister Mary Dennis Lentsch, daughter of Raymond and Joann (Collins), was given the name Elizabeth Ann at her birth on January 15, 1937. The oldest of five children, Elizabeth entered the Sisters of the Presentation from Clare, Iowa, on September 8, 1954, and professed her perpetual vows on August 22, 1962. She chose the name Sister Mary Dennis in honor of her only brother.

During her years of formation for religious life, Sister Mary Dennis earned a Bachelor of Arts from Clarke College (now Clarke University) in Dubuque, and a Master of Science from Pittsburg State in Pittsburg, Kansas. She spent 25 years teaching science and math in schools in Iowa and Minnesota. In 1985, she was elected to the leadership team of the Sisters of the Presentation and at the end of her term of service to the community, she was able to fulfill her dream of ministering in Appalachia.

In 1989 she moved to Jellico, Tennessee, to share ministry with Sister Anne Hablas, a Presentation Sister from Fargo, North Dakota. Initially, Sister Mary Dennis worked with local women to establish a childcare center and then began work to make housing and land available for low-income families. She became involved in Save Our Cumberland Mountains, a movement with a focus on the environmental challenges of coal mining along with concern for the clearcutting of forests.

Sister Mary Dennis deepened her commitment to protecting the environment with a move to the Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center. There she taught courses in environmental literacy and organized a movement to call for a recycling center in the county. At Narrow Ridge, she lived in a “tiny house” before tiny houses became popular. Most people would have found the house too primitive, especially since she shared it with a four foot-long black snake that took over the small loft where her mattress had originally been.

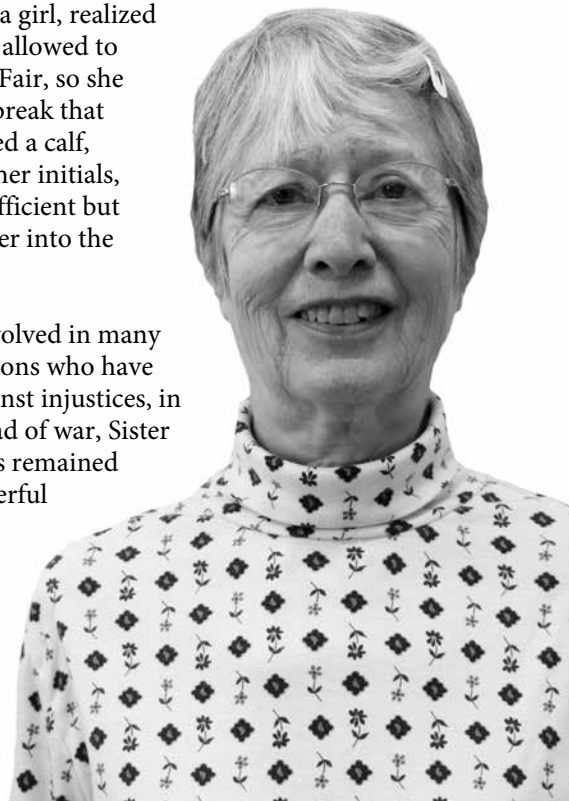
Sister Anne introduced Sister Mary Dennis to the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA). Not far from where the sisters lived was the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where thermonuclear weapons are developed. For 30 years, Sister Mary Dennis participated in OREPA vigils at the gates of the Y-12 on Sunday evenings, calling for an end to nuclear weapons. She was arrested

several times for involvement in acts of nonviolence such as trespassing by climbing over fences onto U.S. government property. Her arrests resulted in multiple nights in jail with months in federal prisons in Kentucky and Georgia.

While not everyone understood her commitment to peace and justice to the point of taking actions that resulted in her being arrested, during the 2010 trial following her nonviolent action at the Y-12 plant, Sister Mary Dennis explained her motivation to the court, “In order to protect all the sacred gifts of creation, I feel called to do whatever is necessary to abolish nuclear weapons. My years of nonviolent resistance and acts of conscience have their roots in my Christian baptismal promise to renounce and resist evil, and in the public witness of my religious vows as a Catholic sister. My heartfelt conviction for resisting nuclear weapons is reinforced by a passage from the Book of Deuteronomy: ‘... I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life that you and future generations may live.’”

Sister Mary Dennis often attributed her strong commitment to peace and justice issues to her mother. She shared, “Perhaps my thirst for justice arises from my mother who, as a girl, realized that only boys were allowed to exhibit cattle at the Fair, so she was determined to break that barrier. She exhibited a calf, cleverly using only her initials, J.C., which was a sufficient but honest ruse to get her into the exhibit.”

In spite of being involved in many ministries with persons who have less, in protests against injustices, in seeking peace instead of war, Sister Mary Dennis always remained a peaceful and prayerful person who single-handedly has made a difference in the world.



Mount Loretto AND BEYOND

Featured below are special times in the lives of Dubuque Presentation Sisters and associates.



Gun Violence Prevention Awareness

On Saturday, June 5, the Dubuque Coalition for Nonviolence held a “Wear Orange” rally on raising gun-violence prevention awareness. The coalition acts to address the crisis of weapons of violence in order to create a more peaceful and nonviolent community. Sisters Kay Cota, Shazia Lal (Presentation Sister from Pakistan), Marilou Irons and Marge Healy braved the rain to attend the rally.



SHOW LOVE. OFFER HOPE. LIVE HOSPITALITY.
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY

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Contact Sister Jessi Beck at vocations@dbqpbvms.org

PLEASE CONNECT WITH US.

For updated information about the activities and events of the Sisters of the Presentation, please visit our website at www.dbqpbvms.org or call 563.588.2008.

PLEASE JOIN US.

September 25, 2022

Praying with Sacred Art

This online prayer experience is open to single women ages 18-45 seeking prayer and faith sharing.

RSVP: bit.ly/pbvmpm2022

December 11, 2022

Prepare the Way Advent Prayer

This online prayer experience is open to single women ages 18-45 seeking prayer and faith sharing.

RSVP: bit.ly/pbvmpm2022

PLEASE PRAY WITH US.

October 7-12, 2022

General Chapter

Dubuque, Iowa

November 6-12, 2022

National Vocation Awareness Week

21st of each month

Pray for Vocations

25th of each month

Pray for Benefactors

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS

A daily affirmation is shared on our social media channels. **Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @dbqpbvms.**

Or, if you would like to receive these daily affirmations by email, contact info@dbqpbvms.org.



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to us, call us at 563.588.2008 or email us at
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PRESENTATION SISTERS CELEBRATE 50 AND 60 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE



SISTER JOELLEN PRICE (60)



SISTER SUZANNE TAKES (50)



SISTER MICHAELINE HEALY (60)



SISTER MARGARET ANNE KRAMER (60)



SISTER MARILYN BREEN (60)

We honor and give thanks for the lives and ministries of five Dubuque Presentations who celebrated their jubilee on July 13, 2022, at the Sisters of the Presentation (Mount Loretto). Sisters Marilyn Breen, Michaeline Healy, Margaret Anne Kramer and Joellen Price observe 60 years of religious life and Sister Suzanne Marie Takes observes 50 years.

These five extraordinary witnesses of endurance, grace and dedication have been a blessing for many – family, students, parents, community members, parishioners, professional colleagues, the sick and elderly. We are grateful for their combined 290 years of faithfulness and the impact they have in our lives.

{ Read more about each sister at dbqpbvms.org/news-events/jubilees. }