



CONNECTION

A publication for the family and friends of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Spring 2021

Volume 29, No. 1

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE 2021

The safety, wellness, and personal independence of our aging IHM sisters are of foremost importance to the congregation and to all those who share a deep love for the sisters. Thanks to the generosity of our family and friends, work has begun on several capital projects at the IHM Center and *Pascucci Family Our Lady of Peace Residence (OLP)*. These projects are providing the necessary modifications, improvements, and repairs to accommodate the needs of our elderly sisters.

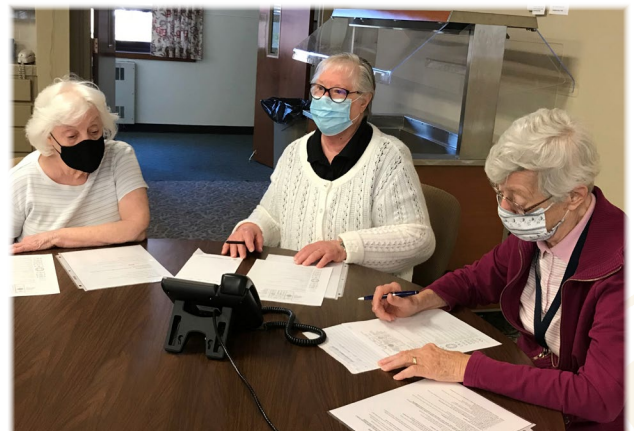
Many of the 125 semi-retired and retired sisters residing at these two facilities continue to safely serve the IHM mission by helping those in need while earning little or no income. These sisters are tutors, ESL teachers, hospital chaplains, community volunteers, counselors, care takers, pastoral care and prayer ministers.

Project jobs completed include the installation of a new telecommunications system, upgrades to existing restrooms, and replacement of a garden access door. As faithful stewards of our resources, additional projects planned are renovations to the IHM Center dining room, installation of a fire sprinkler system, an air handler and condenser unit for the chapel air conditioning, LED lighting, and replacements of a zone pump, medical carts, flooring, and food service equipment.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

During this ongoing pandemic, facilities across the country, including the IHM Center and OLP, shut their doors to visitors. Social distancing can be especially difficult for older adults, like the sisters, who now must rely on their telephones to stay in touch with loved ones.

The previous telecommunications equipment was installed in sections, over time, beginning in the late 1980s and developed numerous issues and problems. New phones, servers, and LAN equipment which will support our voice and data networks, were recently installed.



Pictured L to R: IHM Sisters Joan Paskert, Bernadette Thomas, and Joan Thompson receive training on the new telecommunications equipment.

*Living Out
the IHM
Charism*

- Sisters
- Associates
- Friends
- Family

*See How,
Inside!*

Continued on back

MEDICAL SUPPLY FIRM DONATES THERMOMETERS



Mike Zayac, director of IHM facilities, has his temperature checked at the start of each workday.

Sisters of IHM are grateful to LOH Medical, a medical equipment supplier located in Clarks Summit, PA, for their generous donation of 200 infrared forehead thermometers. These thermometers are being used at the IHM Center, *Pascucci Family* Our Lady of Peace Residence, Marywood University, St. Joseph's Center, and Marywood Heights. This gift is enormously helpful for maintaining the safety of our residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We trust that Sisters of IHM will responsibly distribute our donation of thermometers in line with our mission - mobility and independence - to those who need them," said Nadia Richez, general manager, LOH Medical. "If we can prevent even one person or family from getting ill by detecting symptoms early, we can slow the spread of this virus and make a positive impact."

Due to COVID-19, our congregation has implemented safety protocols at both residential facilities. These include temperature screenings of all staff and contractors before they enter either building. Infrared thermometers allow the screening to be completed accurately while maintaining a greater distance between the person being screened and the screener.



Hundreds showed up at Scranton High School for a drive-through food giveaway sponsored by IHM Friends of the Poor.

IHM SISTERS CONTINUE MINISTRIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Millions of people have experienced unprecedented hardships due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many are receiving a helping hand thanks to an IHM-sponsored ministry where four IHM sisters have been at the forefront of making a difference in the lives of those who need it the most. Even during this challenging time, these courageous women – IHM sisters Terry O'Rourke, Mariette Quinn, Ann Walsh, and Betty Bullen – are easing the burden of living in poverty and enhancing the quality of life for those who live in low-to-moderate-income communities. Like all IHMs, these faithful sisters are defined by an abiding sense of purpose and work tirelessly to support the most vulnerable among us.

ABOUT SISTER BABETTE

Sister Babette Opferman, IHM, who will celebrate her 60th Jubilee in March, entered the congregation right after graduation from high school. Born in Jamaica, NY, sister is one of seven children born to Joseph and Kathleen McGraw Opferman. Her oldest sister Mary Edith, who passed away in 2012, was also an IHM sister.



Sister Babette earned a BA in English/Education and MS in Elementary Education/Art from Marywood College (now University) and a MS in Religious Education/Theology from Duquesne University. Sister Babette's ministries included teaching and the formation of children for sacraments while developing programs that would bring their families closer to the Church.

Sister resides at the IHM Center where before the pandemic; she tutored students at the Educational Enrichment Institute and provided hospitality services at Our Lady of Peace Residence. Sister enjoys working on crafts, fixing statues, rosaries, books or other things in need of mending, and reading.

"I am very artistic, and also have a knack for "fixing things" - both inherited from my parents. My talents have been gifts shared with others during all my years of teaching," says Sister Babette. "I learned how to make rosaries and these along with other beaded creations have been for sale at our Congregation's gift shops. I have repaired or restored statues for many people, and enjoy doing so."

Read more on **page 6**, about how Sister Babette shared her time and talents to restore the wood carvings of the *Stations of the Cross* located on the path between the hermitages and the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes.



CONNECTION

Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Development Office IHM Center
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Scranton, PA 18509

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IHM Connection is published three times a year and is mailed free of charge.

Suggestions and contributions are welcome.

Sister Ellen Maroney, IHM
President

Sister Ann Monica Bubser, IHM
Director of Development

If you would prefer to receive IHM Connection and other communications from the IHM Sisters via email, please send an email to armbrustl@sistersofihm.org with your preferred email address.

Change of Address?

Contact the Development Office at 570 346-5431 or armbrustl@sistersofihm.org.

www.sistersofihm.org



Please Recycle

IHM Connection is published by the Development Office of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, IHM Center, 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509. The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate the works and needs of the IHM Congregation.

JOIN US FOR PRAYER VIA VIDEOSTREAM

<https://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv>

WEDNESDAYS AT 6:30 P.M.

MARCH 1

APRIL 14

MAY 12

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Friends,

The season of Lent is upon us once more, a season which coincides with springtime and the rebirth of nature and new life. The three traditional practices of Lent are **prayer**, **fasting**, and **almsgiving**. Lent is intended to enrich us by re-awakening our need for God's graces and of our obligation to put others before ourselves.

This past year has made us more aware of our frailty and our strength both as individuals and as a society. In rebuilding a broken world, I have observed the traditional Lenten practices incorporated into the daily lives of so many.

The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing many of us to slow down and spend more time in personal reflection and **prayer**. All over the world and right here at home, people are realizing how empty life is without prayer. Every day, IHM sisters pray for the needs of our world and the many intentions we have received from our beloved families, friends, benefactors, and co-workers.

The social distancing imposed upon us to slow the spread of the virus has forced us to unwillingly **fast** from many things: hugging others outside of our own household, traveling to see extended family members, attending liturgy services and social events, dining at our favorite restaurants, and many more. As a result, people are using the time to do positive things to help themselves and to help others.

During Lent, we are asked to focus more intentionally on **almsgiving**, which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. Direct giving—by individual donors to struggling households, local restaurants, essential workers, complete strangers—has exploded during the pandemic. We are also reaching out more to families and friends—especially those that live alone—by letter, phone, email, social media or video platforms.

As a result of the pandemic, are we more conscious of these three Lenten practices - **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**? Walking with Christ, how open are we to be changed this Lent because of our experiences during this difficult time?

In His Peace,

Sister Ann Monica Bubser, IHM
Director of Development

GOD STILL CALLS - VOCATION MINISTRIES CONTINUE VIRTUALLY

Because of extraordinary changes in communications and social interaction driven by COVID-19, promoting vocations to religious life is continuing virtually. Sister Mindy Welding, IHM, director of IHM vocations, has adapted to these unexpected challenges and is collaborating with other vocation groups to provide virtual retreats, online activities, and enrichment opportunities.

“This past year has certainly changed our world. No one would have ever imagined that we would still be social distancing, masking, and connecting through social media into 2021,” observes Sister Mindy. “We look to reach young adults and others through new and different ways so they know that we are here to help, listen, care, and support.”

Sister Mindy has been attending virtual meetings with the Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Committee (PRVC). Along with several vocation directors from other congregations, Sister is collaborating with students from Marywood University and Robert Morris University and two working young adults to plan a Lenten retreat. ***Our Call to Love: Relationship with God, Self, and Others*** will provide an opportunity for young adults to grow in their Catholic faith and meet like-minded people. Pictured here are the three Marywood University students.



Brian McChesney



Paige Bell



Tommy Flynn



Remain in Our Love continues with special prayers for the parishes, schools, and organizations where IHM sisters have ministered but are no longer present. Special prayers will be offered by the Sisters at the IHM Center and Our Lady of Peace as follows:

- March 25 Diocese of Scranton
- April 22 Dioceses of Harrisburg, Altoona-Johnstown, Allentown, Pittsburgh, PA, Cleveland, OH and Grand Rapids, Detroit MI
- May 27 Dioceses of Baltimore, Washington DC, Fort Wayne-South Bend, IN
- June 24 Dioceses of Wilmington DE, Wheeling-Charlestown, WVA, Arlington VA, Lexington KY

Please check our website at www.sistersofihm.org/remaininourlove for ministry locations.

We recently received a touching letter and donation from Dr. Sal and Andrea Selvaggio in remembrance of Sister Janice Heisey, IHM, who passed away in November 2020. Sister Janice served as administrator for 30 years at the Spanish Catholic Center in Washington, DC with Dr. Selvaggio, a retired dentist. In part, Dr. Selvaggio's message read:

“Knowing Sister Janice was one of the beautiful experiences of my life. Her life should be remembered as an example, but also as a challenge as to how to live one's life in service to others.”

We invite you to share any special intentions you may have with Sister Ann Monica Bubser, IHM, at 570 346-5431 or bubsera@sistersofihm.org.



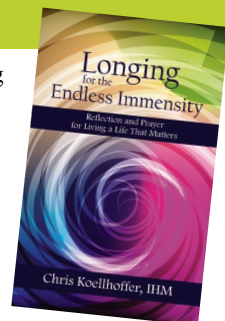
Longing for the Endless Immensity

Reflection and Prayer for Living a Life That Matters

by Chris Koellhoffer, IHM

Within our hearts is a profound longing to live a life of significance, to make meaning out of our inner experience in ways that will enrich and influence our world.

Longing for the Endless Immensity speaks to this collective desire and invites us to enter every moment of our lives as an arena for living contemplatively, for doing justice, for moving forward with intention. This book underscores the wisdom that no aspect of our everyday living is without impact on our evolving universe. Each section begins and closes with prayer, offers a thought-provoking reflection, invites time for stillness and personal prayer, and suggests questions for journaling or group conversation and sharing. *Longing for the Endless Immensity* is recommended for faith-based groups and anyone hoping to leave a graced footprint on this earth by living a life that matters.



PURCHASE ON AMAZON.COM: <https://tinyurl.com/y5omzej2>



A formal blessing of the trees in the Friendship Garden was attended by a large group of sisters and friends. IHM Sisters Chris Koellhoffer and Jean Louise Bachetti created a beautiful prayer ritual for the occasion.

FRIENDSHIP GARDEN CONTINUES TO GROW

As part of the IHM commitment to the Care of the Earth, Sister Donna Korba, IHM, agreed to serve on the board of Pennsylvania Power & Light, a statewide inter-faith climate organization. Through another board member, Sister Donna connected with the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership in their pledge to plant 10,000,000 native trees in Pennsylvania by 2025 as a means to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Sister Donna and EarthCARE Committee members planted 175 native trees on the IHM Center property as part of the land restoration and to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the Congregation (1845-2020). EarthCARE member Jan Novotka

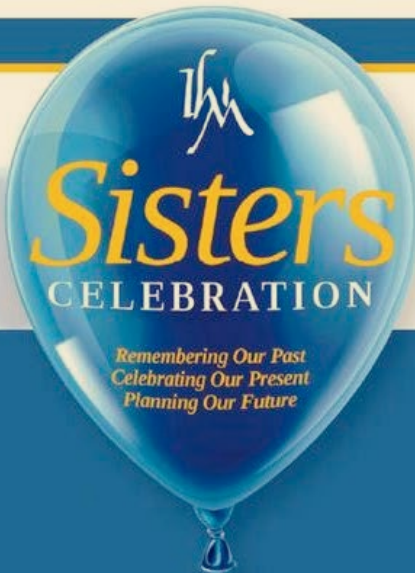
oversaw the selection of tree species and their placement taking into consideration the native birds, butterflies, and animal life in the Friendship Garden. Infrastructures for the pollinator garden were constructed with a donation from Penn State Master Gardeners. In early spring, more native saplings will be added to the IHM property.

Sara Melick, Marywood University, environmental science professor, and her students helped plant trees, tested soil, and conducted research. Greg Williams, a PAIPL board member, and Jan ordered and distributed saplings, tubes, and spikes. Sisters Donna and Kate Clancy along with Jan and additional EarthCARE members planted the saplings over many weeks during the pandemic.

The IHM commitment to care for the Earth extends beyond the IHM property as we make new friends and forge new networks with others who share the same allegiance. Various ecological groups and concerned individuals are on board with planting native species along riverbanks and other key areas.



Volunteers Rick and Rene Ammenhauser installed green tubes designed to protect the saplings during the cold winter months.



SAVE THE DATE!

The Sisters of IHM Foundation is hosting a virtual event honoring IHM Sisters on

August 7, 2021

to benefit the IHM Retirement Fund

SISTERS UNDERTAKE RESTORATION OF STATIONS OF THE CROSS



Sister Ave Maria Foley, IHM

In 1988, a set of 15 symbolic outdoor Stations of the Cross were carved in wood by Sister Ave Maria Foley, IHM, a resident of Our Lady of Peace Residence in memory of her mother Anna. Anna's name is carved into several of the stations, and Sister Ave's name, along with IHM and OLP, are carved into station VI. The stations were installed near the Theresa Maxis Center and near the site of Our Lady of Peace Residence, until they were removed for the construction of the new residence in 2005.

In gratitude to Sister Emerita, Sister Maryalice Jacquinot's father offered to oversee the relocation of the stations in 2006 to the path between the hermitages and Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine. Sister Emerita worked at Marywood with Mr. Jacquinot's favorite aunt, Bea Reidy, when his mother passed away shortly after his birth. When Sister met Mr. Jacquinot 60 years later, she recalled praying for him at the request of his aunt.

Two years ago, several sisters noticed that one of the stations had a large hole in it, as if it had been pecked by a woodpecker. There were some cracks in a few others. IHM sisters Babette Opferman and Marianne Knight decided to undertake the project of restoring these carvings. The stations were reinstalled this past fall. What a great gift to see the carvings restored to life again!



Sister Marianne Knight, IHM painted all the mounting brackets, plus the rooftop on each Station.



Before restoration



After restoration



Sister Babette Opferman, IHM cleaned, repaired, and weatherproofed all of the stations.

REMEMBERING THE MOTHERHOUSE



Fifty years ago on February 21-22, 1971, the home we called our Motherhouse was completely destroyed by fire. We lost the 71 year old structure, but no human lives nor the spirit of the place. This year we commemorate the Motherhouse in prayer, music, history, and stories of the night of the fire. A virtual memorial service will take place on Sunday, February 21, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. The service will be available for online viewing at: <https://www.ustream.tv/channel/ihm-tv>.



GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCK MAY RESULT IN TAX SAVINGS

Giving the gift of appreciated stock to a charitable organization, such as the IHM sisters, has the potential to benefit you, the donor, and the charity. Potential tax advantages are the elimination of the capital gains tax on the appreciated value plus the charitable donation deduction of the calculated value of the stock when donated to the IHM sisters. To obtain a deduction for the current tax year, stock transfers must be completed by the end of the calendar year. Consult your financial advisor or tax professional about your specific tax situation.

For more information about giving a gift to the IHM sisters, contact Sister Ann Monica Bubser, IHM at 570 346-5431 or bubsera@sistersofihm.org or visit <http://www.sistersofihm.org>, click Donate, then Other Ways to Give Smarter.

SC WINNER SHARES PRIZE WITH THOSE IN NEED



Recently the development office received a heartwarming message from Marilyn Sessions who used her \$100 Silver Circle winnings to feed the hungry and homeless in her Kent, OH community.

“The minute I saw the Silver Circle check I knew it needed to go back or be used for God’s work. How perfect He sent it right before Lord’s Lunch,” exclaimed Marilyn. The winnings went toward groceries, and I couldn’t be more thankful. There were 60 hungry souls who left with warm, full bellies and a prayer.”

Born and raised a Baptist, Marilyn converted to Catholicism as an adult. She first came to learn about the IHMs when she met IHM associate, Mary Lynn Delfino, a longtime friend and student of the IHMs (including the deceased Sister Maryla Farfour). At the time, Mary Lynn was a campus minister at the University Parish Newman Center at Kent State University, Marilyn’s alma mater.

Marilyn considers Mary Lynn and the IHMs an integral part of her faith formation. “Sister Maryla taught Mary Lynn, who shared her knowledge with me. As a new Catholic, I would ask her all kinds of questions, and she would answer simply in a way I could understand.”

A few years ago, Marilyn visited Scranton with Mary Lynn to attend Sr. Lisa Perkowski’s First Profession of Vows. Her connection with the IHMs grew even deeper after meeting Sister Maryla and also spending time at an IHM convent.

How grateful we are to count among our blessings a friend in Marilyn Sessions, who in a desire to be more like Jesus, carries the IHM spirit

wherever she goes. She is certainly an inspiration to all who know her.



Marilyn Sessions, third from left, and volunteers from St. Patrick’s Church alternate Saturdays with other faith/friend groups and feed those who may not be fortunate enough to have food that day.

CAPITAL UPDATES (Continued from front cover)



Daily life for elderly and disabled sisters becomes more manageable with furniture designed specifically for the physical challenges they face. Funding from SOAR! allowed the congregation to purchase tables and chairs that greatly improved our elderly sisters' comfort and addressed their safety needs for many years to come. Enjoying the benefits of the new furniture are L-R IHM Sisters Jan Marie Kalyan, Mary Mercy Gilbert, and Patricia Hauser.

DINING ROOM

A dining room on the ground floor of the IHM Center is where meals are prepared and served twice daily. Sharing meals and conversation with other sisters is oftentimes the highlight of a sister's day. The new dining area will continue to be used as a space for sisters' gatherings, celebrations, funeral receptions, special events, and congregation and community meetings. Projects included in the dining room renovation were chosen based on their potential to improve the sisters' overall safety, well-being, and quality of life.

RESTROOMS

The restrooms adjacent to the IHM Chapel were renovated to improve accessibility for disabled sisters and guests.



Modifications included widening the entrance doors to allow wheelchair and walker access, installation of grab bars at the sink and toilets, enlargement of one stall so it is considered a "roll-in" and can accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. Sinks and sink fixtures were also installed at a level to accommodate those using wheelchairs.

GARDEN ACCESS DOOR

The replacement of a rear side entrance door has enhanced the security, increased the ease of access, and improved the energy efficiency at the IHM Center. This door is used by IHM sisters to enter from the adjacent parking area and as a fire escape from the back stairwell. It allows for wheelchair entry and exit to the nearby Friendship Garden, vegetable garden, and walking path. It is also used to access a multi-purpose area, called "Welcoming Space," where innovative and educational programs for Catholic schools and church groups, spiritual development programs, and retreats take place.

Our hope is that with the financial support of IHM family, friends, and benefactors like you, we can keep our elder sisters active, engaged, and healthy now and into the future. We prayerfully ask you to consider a gift reflecting your appreciation for our dear sisters who spent their lives caring for others. It is now time to care for them.

CELEBRATION OF FIRST PROFESSION ON THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY

Sister Giovana Fuentes Bendivez, IHM celebrated her First Profession of Vows on November 10, 2020, in Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in the IHM Center, Scranton, Pennsylvania.



The day also marked the 175th Anniversary of the IHM Congregation.

Born in Arequipa, Peru, Giovana first came to know the Scranton IHMs in Lima around the year 2010. Her journey to profess vows as an IHM has been intentionally extended as she has had to integrate a lifetime of relationships and meaningful experiences into her present life. Family, culture, and country are dear to Giovana, and they are intricately woven into her identity.

Giovana's first encounter with religious life was with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who had and continue to have a profound impact on her. Giovana has integrated her devotion to St. Joseph with her love for Mary, whom we IHMs embrace as the first disciple and model of a life rooted in God. During initial formation, Giovana immersed herself in Alphonsian spirituality. She has integrated the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who compassionately speak of the other as their dear neighbor, with the spirit of the IHMs, who joyfully and passionately embody God's unconditional love for all.

The IHM sisters and associates, as well as the family and friends of Giovana, promised to support her ongoing and evolving journey with their prayer and example.

¡Felicitaciones, Giovana!