A Journey through our IHM History

The focus of Mother Kathleen Hart, Superior General 1955-1962, was to provide a separate building for the novitiate at the far end of the Marywood property. As a result of the hard work and dedication of a group of men named “Fathers and Friends” the building quickly took shape and the new IHM Novitiate was completed in 1962, leaving Mother Kathleen never to witness its completion. These great men, many of whom were fathers of novices and junior sisters, helped to plan, fund, and construct this building. The Novitiate was to become the home and education center for sisters in formation from its opening in 1962. Large classes of sisters lived and studied in the building over the years, and Mother Kathleen’s dream had come true. This year, we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this building, our Center!

February 22, 1971, would change the course of the building forever, as that night a fire encompassed the IHM Motherhouse building, leaving the seventy-five sisters from Marywood College and Seminary and the IHM Junior sisters without a home. As a result, the IHM Novitiate became new home to the many sisters residing on campus. In due time, the Novitiate Building became the IHM Center and hence, the new Motherhouse. The building has had many necessary improvements and renovations over the years, chiefly to make the dormitories once used by the novices into separate bedrooms. Our main hall has become our Heritage Display, inviting viewers to “walk through” and become participants in our history. Large common spaces have been converted to accommodate meetings and assemblies to invite sisters and friends into our IHM mission.

Today, the IHM Center is comprised of a residence for more than fifty-five semi-retired women religious. It also houses leadership and administrative offices, conference rooms, the Center Chapel, the Educational Enrichment Institute (EEI), the Theresa Maxis Center and the congregational archives. The IHM Center is truly the home, center and heart of the IHM sisters. Join with us as we celebrate the memories that our Center holds for us.

Members of “Fathers and Friends” gather (L-R): Mr. Jacob Shuta, Mr. Aloysius Wilson, Mr. William Connolly, Mr. Edward Coyne, Mr. Pio Ferrario, and Mr. John Williams.
In October 2010, Sister Janet Jeffers was named executive director of Catholic Social Services of Lackawanna and Wayne counties in Pennsylvania. As a licensed nursing home administrator, Sister Janet holds master’s degrees in both business administration and hospital and healthcare administration. In the past, Sister Janet was administrator of planning and development at Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Carbondale, a member of the congregation’s administration, and administrator for nursing operations at Our Lady of Consolation in West Islip, NY.

Recognized for outstanding leadership and her commitment to creating successful learning communities, Sister Rosemaron Rynn, principal of Little Flower School in Bethesda, Maryland was named a 2010 National Distinguished Principal by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Under her leadership, Little Flower School, which has 279 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, received the United States Department of Education’s Blue Ribbon Award for Excellence in 2008. In October 2010, Sister Rosemaron joined other honorees for two days of activities and an awards dinner.

Sister Catherine Sitja y Balbastro became a US citizen during a ceremony held at Federal Plaza in Manhattan on September 3, 2010. She was among 150 people representing 28 countries who took this solemn oath to our country. As a new citizen, Sister Katie received a congratulatory letter from President Obama along with copies of the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

Sisters Annmarie Sanders and Chris Koellhoffer attended the opening reception for the Women and Spirit Catholic Sisters in America exhibit on Ellis Island on September 22, 2010. Sister Annmarie was a member of the Women & Spirit History Committee and Sister Chris served on the Public Relations Committee. In October 2010, IHM Sisters and friends from Scranton traveled to New York where they were joined by IHM sisters from missions in New York to experience the display. The exhibit was on display from September 24, 2010, through January 22, 2011.

The leadership teams of the Sisters of IHM, Sisters of St. Casimir, and Sisters of SS Cyril and Methodius met in November at the SSCM motherhouse in Danville, Pennsylvania. The joint meeting included prayer, updates on each congregation’s activities, and discussion about future collaborative efforts on a tri-community level.

*People & Places*

** Lent begins March 9 **

Order your Reflection Books Today!

Fourteen IHM Sisters and friends share their reflections for each week of Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter Season. The photography of Sister Jan Marie Kalyan is featured throughout the book.

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$7.00 per book

**IHMs Honored for Service at St. John the Evangelist**

IHM Sisters who served at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Silver Spring, Maryland, were honored at a parish picnic on September 19, 2010, marking the school’s sixtieth (diamond) anniversary.

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*Pictured with Bishop Barry C. Knestout, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington are: front row L-R Sisters Mary Ellen Malloy, Roberta Harding, Kathleen Lannak, Mercille Schneider, Rosemary Goulet, and Mary Lambert Rossi. Second row are Sisters Mary Mercy Gilbart, Doreen Willis, Ellen Maroney, Daniel Mary Heisey, and Lisa Perkowski. In the back row are Sister Theresa McElroy, Bishop Barry Knestout, Sisters Lois Buckley, and Maureen Schrimpe, and the pastor, Msgr. John Pennington.*
From The Director’s Desk

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Our articles in this issue also speak of dedicated service and anniversaries. IHM Sisters have served in Silver Spring, Maryland for seventy-five years and returned to celebrate with the parish and school community for a yearlong span of events to commemorate the jubilee. Sisters Angela Mary and Mary Mark traveled to Washington, DC to a class reunion of students from Little Flower School in Bethesda and recount the joys of staying united to wonderful people who continue to live the IHM mission. It is amazing to me how the spirit of the IHM sisters is kept alive through the goodness of those with whom we serve.

We are also blessed to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of our IHM Center this year! As our administrative hub, our chapel, our conference center and our home to many sisters, the IHM Center is truly our core, our nucleus, and our heart. As we begin this year of anniversary, we pause to remember all that this building means to us and all the dear memories held in these walls. Families helped the dream come true, friendships and visions took shape here, and now our Center gives life as the hub of activities for our ministry, our Associates, our monthly prayer gatherings and community events. “Come Follow Me” invites all to share our IHM journeys and celebrate our Center.

Gratefully,

Sr. Ann Monica Bubser, IHM

Donors in Germany Support IHM Mission in Peru

Sister Eileen Egan recently visited Weiher, Germany, where she met parishioners of Saint Nikolaus parish who financially support the IHM House of Studies in Sicuani, Peru. Sister Eileen commented, “It’s humbling to be the recipient of so much unconditional love for the benefit of our IHM House of Studies. They are so interested in our girls and other parish activities, sending a donation of 300 euros each month. Even the mayor of the little town gave a donation and the Confirmation class had a collection for the children’s summer program that we run in January. They were also very anxious to show me around Southern Germany. We visited a medieval castle in Heidelberg, hiked a nature trail in the Black Forest, and visited various churches of different architectural styles.”

Little Flower Reunion – “The Flying Nuns”

When Sister Angela Mary Parker received a letter from Paul Haaga, 1962 graduate of Little Flower School in Bethesda inviting her and Sister Mary Mark Lowery to a reunion, they could not have imagined such a reception. November 5-7 marked a weekend full of reminiscences for the sisters and more than thirty classmates of the Class of 1962 as they came together in celebration and to honor their special teachers. Sister Angela Mary remarks, “The generosity of Paul and his guests never ceases to amaze me.” Sister Mary Mark adds “What a memorable happening! To think that so many wonderful lives came together to celebrate the memories of young students and two young IHMs of many years ago.” Mr. Paul Haaga led the way in organizing the get-together to celebrate their teachers. Paul is pictured here greeting his guests on the tarmac of Dulles International Airport near Washington, DC. Calling the sisters his “flying nuns,” he states how honored he is to be able to bring them to his home and provide the opportunity for his classmates to honor them.

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Pictured right is Jennifer Gonzales (a volunteer with Sister Eileen from Germany) dancing at a party with one of the boarders at the IHM House of Studies.

Pictured L-R: Mary Margaret Hamill of Boothwyn, PA, Class of 1962, Sister Angela Mary Parker, Paul Haaga, and Sister Mary Mark Lowery.

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Named Executive Vice President, Mission Integration at CHE

On September 13, Sister Barbara Wheelely, RSM, CHE Sponsors Council coordinator and Judith M. Persichilli, CHE president and CEO announced that Sister Mary Persico, IHM, had accepted the position of executive vice president, mission integration at Catholic Health East (CHE), which is a multi-institutional Catholic health system, cosponsored by nine religious congregations and Hope Ministries, a Public Juridic Person within Catholic Health East. On October 11, 2010, Sister Mary succeeded Sister Julie Casey, IHM who served in this position since 1998. Sister Mary served on CHE’s board of directors from 2006 through 2009 and on CHE’s Sponsors Council from 2004 through 2010; she was the coordinator of the Sponsors Council from 2006 through 2009. In her new role as EVP of mission integration, Sister Mary will provide direct leadership for a system-wide sponsorship structure which includes the orientation and education of sponsoring religious communities and new CHE Sponsors and the oversight of CHE’s Public Juridic Person. Sister Mary will also provide leadership, support and assistance to the mission and ethics functions, as well as to Global Health Ministry. Sister Mary was president of the IHM Congregation from 2002 through June 2010 and holds degrees in education, as well as having worked nationally and internationally in leadership education.

Attend Call to Action

Faithful Prophets: God Alive in Every Generation” was the title of the annual Call to Action National Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, November 5-7. Along with more than 2,000 other participants, Sisters Donna Korba, Francis Mary Rundell and Jean Louise Bachetti took advantage of the opportunity to hear well-known presenters. One of the keynote speakers, Joan Chittister, OSB, made Old Testament prophets come alive in present-day life and church situations. Though she does not consider herself a prophet, Call to Action Leadership Award recipient Dr. Jamie T. Phelps, O.P, noted that we all have the opportunity to speak the truth to power through “pockets of occasion when we can be prophetic. Prophetic call is a call to be on the cutting edge of life.”

Regional Discernment Gatherings for Women

A new initiative in vocations for 2011 is the creation of Regional Discernment Gatherings for Women. This is just one simple way that young women can begin to learn more about the Sisters of IHM and join others in their search to explore how God might be inviting them to religious life. Some sisters have already been participating in the monthly gatherings for women in North Carolina such as Sisters, Betty, Carol and Kieran. Sisters Kathy, Lisa and Rachel will be facilitating a monthly gathering for young women in the MD/DC area. In addition, Sister Ruth already participates in the monthly discernment gatherings for women in the Archdiocese of New York. This spring semester the Sisters of IHM and the Mercy Sisters Mid-Atlantic Community will be cosponsoring a monthly gathering for young adult women, which will be held at both Marywood and Misericordia Universities.

Do you know a young woman who would be a wonderful IHM sister? Invite her to one of these regional discernment gatherings for women. To learn more about life as a religious sister or to join others in their search contact Sister Ruth Harkins at 570-346-5413, harkir@sistersofihm.org, or visit www.facebook.com/sistersofihm.org. If you are interested in starting a regional discernment gathering for women in your area simply contact Sister Ruth.

2011 IHM Summer Service Trip July 9 – 16

IHM Summer Service trips are an opportunity for young women to share the IHM spirit of prayer, community, and ministry. It is a time for IHM sisters and young women to bring God’s unconditional love to those who are in need. This year’s trip to Chicago will offer area residents the opportunity to gain help they need. Assisting at a food pantry, providing music for the homeless, making home repairs in a Chicago neighborhood, and participating in a Peacebuilders Initiative for Immigrants are all areas of focus for this trip. Contact Sister Ruth Harkins, at 570-346-5413 or HYPERLINK “mailto: harkir@sistersofihm.org” harkir@sistersofihm.org for more information.
For Sister Gilmary Speirs, communication is exciting and essential to her daily life. Her excitement for how the media impacts the masses stems from her lifelong passion to organize and disseminate information. It also stokes her interest in all media, but especially her area of expertise: nonprint media. She would be the first to tell you, however, that long before she became an expert in nonprint media, she valued the print media in the form of a New York newspaper.

Sister Gilmary Speirs, IHM – Centennial Librarian for Photographic Materials – Marywood University

Sister Gilmary was one of four girls born in the Bronx to Irish immigrant parents, James Speirs and Mary Hogarty Speirs. She recalls that the first church she attended was located in a storefront within their neighborhood. That church would become the Church of the Visitation and include a grade school operated by the Sisters of Charity from Riverdale, New York.

Her love of libraries and all things related to learning and education began when Sister was very young. She remembers that The New York Times was always around the house, resulting in her becoming an avid reader and an excellent student, eventually being awarded a full scholarship to Immaculata High School in Manhattan where she was introduced to the IHM Sisters. Her love of the sisters and her interest in their lives thus became the seed of her religious vocation. In February 1950 she made her decision to enter the IHM Congregation.

Sister Gilmary, professed in 1952, completed her undergraduate degree and later earned a master’s degree in library science from Marywood College. From 1952 until the spring of 1961, she taught in elementary schools in Pennsylvania and New York; from the fall of 1961 until 1967, Sister Gilmary continued her ministry of education in secondary schools also in Pennsylvania and New York.

In 1967, Sister Gilmary was called to serve the congregation at Marywood College as collection management librarian for nonprint media. At the same time, the college had begun a campaign to construct what is now the Learning Resource Center. With Sister’s love of media and her vast experience in media resources for libraries, she soon became the resident expert in this area.

Always fervent about the IHM Congregation’s mission to serve the people of God wherever there is need, Sister Gilmary’s interests continued to move her toward education and advocacy for the poor. She offers her educational expertise instructing parish catechism classes and teaching reading to SCOLA (Scranton Council of Literacy Advance) participants.

Known also for her strong advocacy for social justice, it is no wonder that Sister Gilmary is active with The Christophers, whose primary focus is to encourage all people to use their God-given talents to make a positive impact in the world. A key program of this organization is the Christopher Awards, given annually to honor books, films and television programs that “affirm the highest values of the human spirit.” Because of her expertise in media, Sister was asked to serve on their awards committee and has done so for many years. In addition, Sister is committed to The National Right to Life organization where she enthusiastically advocates for the rights of people through participation in the organization’s endeavors.

Recently, Sister Gilmary was appointed Centennial Librarian for Photographic Materials for the upcoming centennial celebration of the founding of Marywood University. Who better for this work than the “resident expert?”

We congratulate and celebrate Sister Gilmary Speirs on her lifelong accomplishments in the field of education and for her passionate commitment to the IHM spirit “to commit ourselves to stand with others in their joys, hopes, griefs, and anxieties.”
The IHM Air Conditioning Project

The summer of 2010 brought record-high temperatures to the residents of Scranton, causing great concern, especially for our sisters who reside in the IHM Center, which is without an adequate cooling system. As you can imagine, many of our sisters found it difficult to be in these rooms on the second and third floors during the sweltering heat. Although there have been renovations to this fifty-year-old building through the years, the heating/cooling system has not been included in those updates, and as a result of the past summer’s experiences, it becomes apparent that the system requires immediate attention. The year 2011 marks the launch of the IHM Center Air Conditioning Project which will include updating the current Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system to accommodate these floors so that our sisters will have a comfortable and safe environment in which to live. As summer will quickly be upon us, your financial support, at a level comfortable to you, will ensure that this critical need is addressed appropriately.

We are most thankful to our friends who give of themselves in every way possible. Your prayers, your time as volunteers, along with your financial support, assist us in our mission of “proclaiming the Good News of God’s unconditional love for all people”. We would be most grateful to you for your financial support with this project.

Planned Giving

You make a charitable contribution to what matters most to you in life. Your affinity to a cause or organization shows a connection between your beliefs and the charity’s mission. Those who support the IHM Sisters are most grateful for an education they received, guidance that was given, or a mission to which the sisters have shown a lasting commitment. Gifts made to the congregation are dedicated to help educate younger sisters, to support work among disadvantaged persons, to support foreign ministries as well as to ensure that the sisters are cared for during their later years. Whatever the reason, your generosity will impact the good work of our sisters.

Perhaps, today you are in a position to make an annual gift, and with that gift, we hope that a seed has been planted to consider a planned gift for tomorrow. Bequests, retirement plans, real estate, personal property, or gifts of securities or stocks can all serve as a means for the future of our sisters. Follow us in our direction as we continue “to stand in solidarity with the people of our world” with your gift today. We would be most grateful to you for your kindness.

Wishing Sister M. Francis Gabriel Lenihan a very Happy Birthday as she celebrates her 100th Birthday on March 1, 2011!

Pictured above are (L-R) Sisters M. Gracette Baker, Patricia Woll, Mary Martha Gardiner, and Jean Conaty, who reside at the IHM Center.
IHM ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT
GROWING IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

Currently there are twenty-one IHM Associates in Florida, from Palm Coast and Gainesville on the East Coast to St. Petersburg on the West Coast. The sisters in these areas have generously responded to enter into the joys and hopes of these women who are yearning for a deeper spirituality. Within their circles they create a unique community experience for the sake of the mission of Jesus. Out of these Circles of Grace, nine associates have already been commissioned and continue to gather, while the other twelve meet in preparation to commit formally to living the mission of Jesus through the IHM Charism. The Circle of Grace in St. Petersburg is one such group moving through orientation. Sister Flo Marino, with the assistance of IHM Associate Jeannine Storer organizes the time and place for the gathering.

Support SICUANI School

Emerging from study, prayer, and sharing in their Circle of Grace, the associates in Vestal, New York, felt moved “to do something.” They were not sure what that would be. Following a presentation on IHM ministry in Peru given to Our Lady of Sorrows Parish by Sister Robert Mary Murphy, the two Circles of Grace decided to make Peru “their mission.” In conjunction with Sister Eileen Egan and the IHM Associates in Sicuani, the associates in Vestal will support the school by funding the purchase of books for the library—IHM Associates working together across the continents.

IHM LEADERSHIP ATTENDED LCWR ASSEMBLY

At a time when Vatican officials are conducting two investigations into the lives of Catholic sisters, approximately 750 members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) met in assembly where discussion of their identity and role in the Catholic Church headed the agenda. Gathered from August 10 to 13 under the theme, “Hope in the Midst of Darkness,” the leaders of United States orders of Catholic sisters drew on the expertise of two theologians as they spoke about Catholic identity and the unique function of religious life in the church today. Richard R. Gaillardetz, PhD of the University of Toledo, spoke on the fidelity of Catholic sisters to the vision of the Second Vatican Council. M. Shawn Copeland, PhD of Boston College emphasized that the prophetic ministry of Catholic sisters is critical for the future of the Church. The IHM Leadership Team members and Sister Annmarie Sanders stand with Sister Margaret Brennan, IHM (Monroe) who was the recipient of LCWR’s Outstanding Leadership Award.
Pay tribute to our sisters through your estate plans!

Yes! I would like to include the IHM Sisters in my estate plans.

☐ Please send me information!

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City ________________________________________________________________

State ___________ ZIP CODE ______________

Phone ________________________________

E-mail ______________________________________________________________

IHM Development Office • IHM Center
2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509
www.sistersofihm.org

Pictured (L-R) Sisters M. Chrysta Lerhinan, M. St. Monica Costello and M. Redempta Sweeney share some time together at the IHM Center.