



Afire for God's Mission in Today's World

by Sr. Rosemarie Sommers, MSC

MSC Provincial and District Leaders from around the globe gathered in Manila, Philippines during the month of February for the 17th General Conference.

Participants also included Sr. Barbara Winkler, Congregational Leader, and members of the General Administration. U.S. Province Leader Sr. Rosemarie Sommers and Councilor Sr. Marie Raymond Gazo represented the USA.

The theme of the General Conference, "Afire for God's Mission in Today's World", expresses the Sisters' deep desire to stir anew and spark the fire and passion within them for God's mission. In her opening remarks Sr. Barbara stated: "Today we see a world that is broken and growing increasingly divided by voices and forces that polarize and create barriers between people and nations. We see and hear daily, evidence of the evils of our time in wars and violence, abuse and neglect of people and our planet, injustices and affronts to human rights and dignity. What is God, the Church and the world asking of us, Missionary Sisters of the

Sacred Heart today? Do we trust that the Spirit is present and creatively at work in our midst?" Following these introspective questions, participants engaged in reflection, prayer and sharing in order to reach a new vision of how MSC wish to be today and into the future.



MSC Sisters gathered in Manila during February for their General Conference.

One of the highlights during the conference was the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the MSC mission in the Philippines. For many years the Sisters had an international house of formation and studies in Manila. Today the mission of the Sisters is carried out in two tutorial centers where they offer poor disadvantaged children in the area the opportunity for learning and provide them

a daily meal. The Sisters also have a program for mothers who make various items for sale and so are able to earn some money that is saved to buy Christmas gifts for their children. During the conference one day was set aside for the participants to visit the tutorial centers and also to visit several families in their homes. This experience deeply touched the hearts *continued on page 8*

Parish Honors MSC Sisters with Special Monthly Collection

The Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus expresses deepest gratitude to the parishioners of Queenship of Mary Catholic Church in Northampton and to their Pastor Rev. Patrick Lamb. In January Fr. Lamb announced that the MSC Sisters had been chosen as the recipient of the parish's special monthly collections throughout 2019. This decision was made in order to recognize the Sisters' 97 years of presence among the families of the school and parish of Our Lady of Hungary, now Queenship of Mary. Having



Sisters Rosemarie Sommers and Deborah Reho extend gratitude to Fr. Patrick Lamb and Queenship of Mary Parish in January of 2019.

continued on page 7

Trail of Death Commemorative Caravan



Approximately every five years a group of Potawatomi Native Americans, historians and friends embark on a 660 mile journey to honor and remember their ancestors who were forcibly moved from their home in Indiana and made to walk to a reservation in Kansas in 1838. During this journey, 42 deaths were recorded, mostly babies, children and elderly who were then buried in unmarked graves along the way.

Sr. Mary Seibert, MSC became intensely interested in the triumphs and trials of Native Americans during her time as a pastoral assistant with the people of the Soboba Reservation in California. Her immersion in their culture and spirituality has created in Sr. Mary a deep respect and admiration which she will carry with her always. In light of this, Sr. Mary decided to join the Trail of Death Commemorative Caravan in September of 2018. *continued on page 3*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LMSC Highlight	2	\$10,000 Prize Winner.....	3
Thank You SOAR!.....	2	Donor Report.....	4-6
Oktoberfest in April.....	3	In Memoriam.....	7
Jubilarians	3		

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To receive Connections in email format only,
contact: cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org

Lay MSC Associate Highlight



Name: Joann Rivera, LMSC
MSC Connection: In 1997 I began work as a receptionist at what was then St. Michael Convent. Prior to this position I had no experiences with the MSC Sisters. Getting to know the Sisters was a great joy. I now have been the Lay Director of the Lay Missionaries since January 1, 2014.

Lay Associate Commitment Date: June 20, 1998

Beloved Lay Associate Moment: As strange as this may sound, although many moments are beloved, one that stands out prominently was the funeral of a dear friend and fellow lay missionary. Many Sisters and laity participated in the celebration of her life and I felt such a oneness with everyone. We gathered together and sang "Oh Heart of My Jesus". The Lay MSC Associates truly are family.

Why the MSC Sisters: It was the MSC Charism [spirituality] to be the Heart of God on earth that drew me, and continues to draw me to the MSC Community. I can't think of a more beautiful sentiment, especially in these times, than to be the Heart of God to ALL people! †

Thank You



MSC Sisters is truly grateful to **Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!)** for granting a \$25,000 request for help replacing a section of the roof at Sacred Heart Villa which caused significant damage in the fall of 2018. Several times we

have reached out to the generous folks at SOAR for assistance and they have not let us down! We Sisters are now able to look toward the rain as more friend than foe since our roof repairs. Thank you, SOAR!

During **National Catholic Sisters Week**, March 8-14 of 2019, MSC Sisters were the recipient of a generous grant from NCSW. This grant allowed the Sisters to host a Meet & Greet at a local restaurant to celebrate the contributions of women



religious throughout the world. National Catholic Sisters Week, a branch of National Catholic Sisters Project headquartered at Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI is present at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minn., and is held in



conjunction with Women's History Month. We Sisters wish to thank NCSW for this community-building opportunity and we thank the many friends who gathered with us to celebrate. We look forward to NCSW 2020! †

Benefactors' Mass & Brunch postponed in January due to snow, is rescheduled for November 17, 2019

All donors/benefactors are invited to be our guests.
 RSVP required by 11/10/19 to CWhitmoyer@msscreading.org.



Gift of Mission Day



Sr. Lisa Valentini, far right, and several other religious women shared their experiences of religious life with female high school juniors at Sacred Heart Villa.

Sr. Lisa Valentini, MSC and several Sisters from other congregations of women religious hosted a Gift of Mission experience for female high school juniors at Sacred Heart Villa on March 20. Gathered for the purpose of exchanging life

experiences, these young women had the opportunity to share common misconceptions about religious life and to explore the facets of life as a Sister by asking many deep and not-so-deep questions of the religious women in attendance. The Sisters thoroughly enjoyed the young women's enthusiasm and curiosity remarking that it "fuels us for mission". The young women were happy for the chance to dispel some common stereotypes about Sisters by speaking with them woman to woman. Sr. Lisa hopes to extend this invitation again in the coming year. †

BE IMPACTFUL!

Consider Membership in our Monthly Giving Program

- Your tax deductible gift arrives automatically each month and is recorded on your monthly statement
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To consider membership, visit www.msscreading.org for information and registration or contact Carrie, 610-929-2802 or cwhitmoyer@msscreading.org.

Celebrating Love, Friendship and Mission

From dancers to prize and raffle winners to surprise reunions, the second annual MSC *Oktoberfest in April* event was a wonderful celebration of love, friendship and mission. MSC Sisters extends sincere gratitude to all who attended this fundraiser and/or sponsored the event and to the many individuals and businesses who provided in-kind gifts for our guests to enjoy. Additionally, each Sister is thankful for the volunteers who donated hours of their time to create a positive experience for all: Marcella Shaver, *Committee Chair*, Andrea Bensusan, Linda Calderin, Nancy Chaiko, Sue Kasopsky, MJ McClennan, Carol Noga, Rita Phillips, Carm Sosik, and Barb Spinka. †



Dorothy Cebula accepts the MSC Mission Partner Award from Sr. Rosemarie Sommers on behalf of the Swann Family



Oktoberfest antics from guests Mike, Andrea, Roger and Masayo.



Trail of Death *continued from page 1*



Sr. Mary Seibert, center, joined many on the Trail of Death which stretches from Indiana to Kansas.

Traveling in automobiles along often dusty, gravel roads, sojourners move from marker to marker stopping to conduct a solemn prayer ceremony at each. Sr. Mary shares that her journey brought to light the generally "callous lack of concern for the Potawatomi during this grueling walk" evidenced by the words a soldier had written on a log along the trail: "Nothing of importance happened today. We walked 16 miles. Two babies died."

Sr. Mary was proud to participate on behalf all her MSC Sisters and she reiterated the goal stated by one of the journey's leaders who was asked "What are we to take from all of this?" His simple reply: "Respect others." †



At a recent gathering, Lay MSC Associates were surprised and inspired by Sr. Mary's first person account of her journey with the Trail of Death Commemorative Caravan.

Danke Schön

Thank you to the following businesses and individuals who generously provided sponsorships for *Oktoberfest in April 2019*:

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Congratulations to our Heart of Mission \$10,000 Raffle Prize Winner Edward Pohl, Jr.!

Thank you to the 239 people who played our Heart of Mission Raffle. Please play again next year—tickets available beginning in January!

Congratulations Jubilarians!

60 YEARS



Sr. Catherine Crilly, MSC

50 YEARS



Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC

Join our prayers of joyful gratitude for our Jubilee MSC Sisters!

Celebrating 60 and 50 years of service in vowed religious life, our Sisters gratefully thank YOU, their family, friends and benefactors for your support. To honor or remember one of our Jubilarians with a gift, please print the Sister's name on your check memo and remit to: MSC Mission Advancement, 51 Seminary Ave., Reading, PA 19605.

2018 MSC Sisters Donor Report

The MSC Sisters express joyful gratitude for all who support our mission. Each of your gifts, whether time, energy, treasure or prayer supports our mission to be God's Heart for others in the United States Province and around the world. Your generosity also enables us to care for ourselves as we age. Thank you for sharing your resources with us. Your gifts make a positive difference every day!

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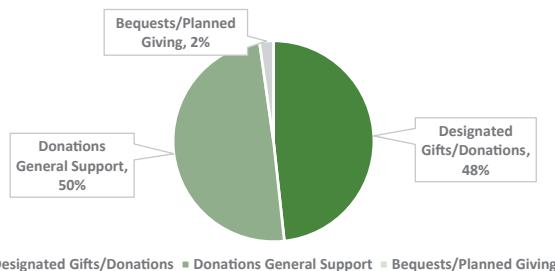
"The love of the heart of Jesus is the remedy destined to save the world at this crucial moment of time."

– Rev. Jules Chevalier, MSC

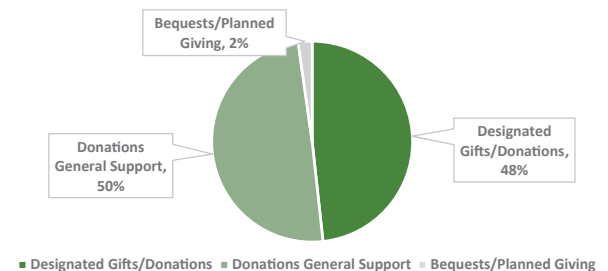
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IN MEMORIAM



Sister M. Edna (Eadburgis), MSC – Maria Averbeck

1924 – 2018

Sister Edna knew about our MSC community from a young age as her uncle was Father Joseph Averbeck, MSC and her older sister was Sister Clementis, MSC. She was one of the last Sisters from Germany to be missioned to our USA province and arrived in New York on May 15, 1951 as a young temporary professed Sister ready to serve

wherever she was needed. She made her Final Vows in her adopted country on February 2, 1955 and became a U.S. citizen on November 7, 1956.

Sister Edna was a very practical no-nonsense person who had a heart of gold and showed her care and concern for others in many kind and generous ways. She used the gifts that God had given her in every place she was assigned. She took care of the MSC priests and seminarians in Geneva, Illinois; the Marianist Brothers in Dayton, Ohio; the children at Sacred Heart Home in Coopersburg; the elderly residents at the Knights of St. George Home in Wellsburg, West Virginia and at Villa St. Elizabeth, Reading. Sister Edna also spent many years in domestic ministry for our Sisters in St. Henry's, Philadelphia, St. John the Baptist, Allentown, and in the kitchen, laundry, and sewing room of our Motherhouse.

In 1988 Sister Edna took charge of sending mission packages to respond to the needs of our missionaries around the world. This was an important service that she provided for many years and she did it with great care and compassion for the poor and less fortunate.

Since we opened Sacred Heart Villa in 2004 Sister Edna has been a welcoming presence to the lay residents who live here and has reached out to them in friendship and kindness. She has been a good friend to many people throughout the years, offering to help in any way whether providing a meal, mending clothes, or just being a good listener with an understanding heart.

Sister Edna loved her God and loved God's people. A few years ago she shared a prayer that she prayed every morning:

*You are ushering in another day
untouched and freshly new, so
here I come to ask You God if
You'll renew me too?
Forgive the many errors that
I made yesterday, and let me
try again dear God, to walk
closer in Thy way.
But Father, I am well aware
I can't make it on my own.
So take my hand and hold it
tight for I can't walk alone.*

Our loving God came to take Sister Edna by the hand the evening of December 13 to walk with her on her final journey home to Heaven. She had a small suitcase packed with her clothes for the undertaker. Inside was a note with her last message to us: "Thank you for my funeral. Thank you for taking good care of me." And thank you, Sister Edna, for taking good care of all of us. †



Sister M. Joanna (Frances) Monticello, MSC

1949 – 2019

Before Sister Joanna entered our community she was asked why she wanted to become a Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart. Her response was "To give myself totally to the Sacred Heart. To increase my love for Him by sharing this love with others and to do His Will." Sister Joanna was faithful to this desire during her 48 years of vowed life.

Sister Joanna grew up in a very close and loving Italian family in Endicott, New York. She was the third oldest of seven children and had four brothers and two sisters. She felt drawn to religious life at a young age and so entered our Aspirancy High School when she was 15 years old. She entered as a candidate in 1967. When she received her religious name as a postulant she chose "Joanna" to honor her parents Joseph and Anna.

Her life journey as an MSC Sister led her to many and varied ministries in service of God's people. Sister Joanna was a very good cook and for several years served our Sisters at our Motherhouse and at our parish convents in Slatington, Northampton, Philadelphia, and Nazareth.

In 1977, Sister Joanna requested an exauration and lived in a Carmelite community to discern if she was being called to the contemplative life. After 2 years she prayed that she would receive a single red rose as a sign from God that she was meant to return to her MSC community. Her dear friend, Fr. Andy Torma, MSC, came to visit her and decided to bring a gift. That gift was a single red rose and Sr. Joanna believed that it was God's Will that she live the rest of her life as an MSC.

Sister Joanna was a licensed clinical social worker who received a Master's Degree in Social Work in 2003. She worked in Houston, Texas, at Casa Esperanza, a home for children who had been abused and neglected and children with AIDS. Sometimes their parents were prostitutes, addicts, or in prison. In one of her letters she wrote: "These are God's precious ones and knowing what they have been through in their tender years, you can't help but loving them."

From 1992 – 1996 Sister Joanna worked as a Foster Care Caseworker at the Catholic Social Agency in Allentown, PA. In 1996, she was asked to be the first administrator of Mary's Shelter, a residence for young women who were pregnant. Sister Joanna also served at Lourdes Hospital in New York as a Hospice Social Worker and later as the Coordinator of Counseling Services. During this time she began caring for her elderly mother.

In 2015 Sister Joanna was asked to help establish Mercy House, a home for people with terminal illness "so they can live the final chapter of their journey with dignity and experience the unconditional love of God." Since 2016 she has served there as the Director of Social Work and Spiritual Care. She was a comforting presence to the residents, their families, the staff and volunteers. Each day she chose to help families shoulder the burden of terminal illness, to listen to their concerns and help them cope.

Sister Joanna was a joy to live with in community. She was a source of laughter and fun and had a wonderful sense of humor. Jesus, her Beloved, has called her home to be with him for all eternity in Heaven. †

Parish Honors *continued from page 1*

served in the parish from 1914 to 2011, MSC Sisters ministered as school teachers, principals and religious education instructors.

In response to Fr. Lamb's invitation, several MSC Sisters visited Queenship of Mary Parish this past January to express their gratitude for not only their present sponsorship but also for the many impactful, continuing and past relationships which have resulted in treasured memories and eternal bonds. United States Province Leader Sr. Rosemarie Sommers thanked the congregation from the pulpit at each weekend mass and several other Sisters including Deborah Reho, Raymond Gazo, Bonita Heydt and Patrice Cosgrove visited with parishioners as well. MSC Sisters look forward to returning to Queenship of Mary at the conclusion of this year of special collections to thank parishioners once again. †

Mission Update

U.S. Province Sister to Begin Mission in Peru

Since she entered our MSC community in Mexico City in 2003, Sister Remedios has often expressed a desire for an international mission experience. When the MSC Sisters 2014 General Chapter called us "to communion . . . to strengthen our internationality by identifying ways to foster international collaboration in initial formation, on-going formation and mission", Sister Remedios responded. She left her home country of Mexico on October 24, 2018 and traveled to Peru to begin a three-year mission experience in Province Latina. Sr. Herlinda and the other sisters at Stella Maris, the MSC Motherhouse, welcomed Remedios warmly. Following a period of cultural adaptation and travel among service sites, Sr. Remedios will begin a ministry of love and service to God's people in Peru, that all may know the mercy and compassion of the Heart of Jesus. †



Sr. Remedios, top right, among the women of Peru.

Find more mission stories at www.mscreading.org

God's Mission *continued from page 1*

of the Sisters who felt shock and empathy for these families who live together in one or two room houses with dirt floors and few possessions. Some of the homes sit by a river bank which is polluted by trash and human waste as the government does little to provide for their peoples' basic human needs. Often the children live with their grandparents because their parents have to travel far away to find work so that they can earn money just to



Sisters visited with this Filipino family in their home in Manila.

feed and clothe their children. These Filipino families are truly grateful to the Sisters for providing an opportunity for education and a better life for their children and grandchildren.

The MSC Sisters ask that you hold their entire community in your hearts and in your prayers as they continue to respond to their call to share God's love through their worldwide mission of evangelization and outreach. Together we can improve lives and bring salvation to people around the globe! †

Engage with the MSC Sisters by liking us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/MSCSisters>
 and visiting www.mscreading.org

2019 EVENTS

- June 9 **60th Jubilee Celebration** for Sister Catherine Crilly, MSC
- June 28 **Feast of the Sacred Heart** On this date the June Calendar Sweepstakes \$500 Prize winner will be drawn. Be sure to play and it may be you!
- Aug 7-9 **Chapter of United States Province of Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus** Sacred Heart Villa, Reading, PA
- Aug 10 **50th Jubilee Celebration** for Sister Barbara Winkler, MSC Sacred Heart Villa, Reading, PA
- Sept. 21  **10th Annual Nun Run** Sacred Heart Villa Reading, PA Online registration now up at www.mscreading.org
- Oct 5 **Annual Lay MSC Associate Retreat and Commitment Ceremony**, Sacred Heart Villa, Reading, PA
- Nov. 17 **Benefactors' Mass & Brunch** 10:00 AM at Sacred Heart Villa, Reading, PA (rescheduled after snow cancelation in January) **All donors/benefactors are invited to be our guests. RSVP required by 11/10/19 to CWhitmoyer@mscreading.org.**
- Nov. 28 **Happy Thanksgiving!** MSC Sisters welcome you to join them for Thanksgiving Mass; call ahead for the mass schedule at 610-929-5751. On this date the November Calendar Sweepstakes \$500 prize winner will be drawn. Be sure to play and it may be you!
- Dec. 3 **Advent Agape and Tea** with the MSC Sisters at Sacred Heart Villa, 6:30 PM. All are welcome! RSVP to MissionAdvancement@mscreading.org by December 1.
- Dec. 25 **Merry Christmas!** MSC Sisters welcome you to join them for Christmas Mass at Sacred Heart Villa, Reading, PA. Call ahead for the Mass schedule at 610-929-5751.

Advance the Missionary work of the MSC Sisters beyond your own lifetime...

Remember the MSC Sisters when making or changing your Will.

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