



Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

USA Province

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A PUBLICATION OF THE USA HANDMAID PROVINCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

FROM THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

2014 was an exciting year for the Handmaids in the USA province. In recapping some of the year's highlights, we realize and are deeply grateful for the many blessings God has given us.

- Our on-going process of discernment is bringing us closer to an understanding of our mission and ministry in the USA.
- Hosting a historic event for the international community of Handmaids gave us the opportunity to share "all that we are and have" with our sisters who represented the 23 countries in which we serve.
- The sisters in our Province continue to serve well the six ministries that spread across the eastern part of the USA and El Salvador. (Our mission in El Salvador reached its tenth anniversary in 2014 and is more vibrant than ever.)
- Our *Legacy Gala* was a wonderful success and celebrated the Handmaids past and present, affirming the unique and continued bond we enjoy with our friends and supporters.

Yes, we have been blessed. This year, we are working diligently to improve the offerings and amenities of Saint Raphaela Center. Our second oldest ministry, the Center is in its 57th year. In this edition of our newsletter we share some of its rich history and the ways in which it has evolved to meet the needs of an ever-changing world and its people.

We thank God for the opportunity that comes with answering the call to our ministries and fills our lives each day. We also thank God for those who share their love, compassion, and kindness with us, for us, and about us.

With Gratitude and Hope,

Sister Dorothy Beck acj

Sister Dorothy Beck, acj
Provincial Superior

Historic Meeting Takes Place in Haverford



The United States Province of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus recently hosted the Intermediate Meeting of Handmaid leadership representing twenty-three countries throughout the globe. The meeting is held during the five-year interval between two General Congregations and convened at St. Raphaela Center in Haverford, PA. In addition to the Superior General, the Assistant Generals, and the General Secretary and Treasurer, the Provincials of Spain, Italy, Europe-Atlantic, Japan, Argentina-Uruguay, Peru-Bolivia, Colombia-Panama, Ecuador, and the USA; the Vice Provincials of Chile and the Philippines, and the Regional Superiors of India and Africa comprised the leadership team.

The historic event marked the first time that the USA Handmaids had hosted such an important gathering and made it possible for the international community to experience firsthand some of the ways the USA province answers God's call to service. Each day began with a carefully prepared bilingual liturgy in the Saint Raphaela Center Chapel, and was followed by meetings and discussions related to the initiatives begun at General Congregation XIX. Everything that the sisters experienced gave them an attitude of hope and trust in the Lord, whom they felt very present. They appreciated the sense of apostolic body they experienced during the meetings, and on seeing the ways in which the mission is being carried out in different countries, affirmed that, indeed, *"the Lord is changing the Institute."*

Prior to the meetings, the Handmaids were welcomed with a liturgy hosted by the USA Province Advisory Board. Over 100 guests took part in a celebration of the Eucharist for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The beautiful and meaningful liturgy was followed by a luncheon reception. Both Handmaids and friends were moved by witnessing the togetherness and oneness in Jesus Christ, universally expressed. While in the USA, the sisters had the opportunity to visit New York, Washington, DC, and historic Philadelphia. Many also spent time with the sisters in Athens, GA, Miami, and El Salvador, as well as the two local communities in Wyncote and Philadelphia. To the delight of the visiting sisters, the ACJ Associates shared an exceptional experience by hosting a Thanksgiving feast, explaining this unique custom of American culture.

Provincial Superior Sister Dorothy Beck, who was responsible for coordinating countless details during the year-long planning of the meeting, was pleased and inspired by its outcome, sharing the sentiment of Superior General Sister Inmaculada Fukasawa: *"You [the USA Handmaids] are a vibrant group full of energy to carry out our Eucharistic-Reparative mission in such a variety of ways — care for education and retreat ministry, action on behalf of immigrants and refugees, with horizons even beyond the USA."*

ST. RAPHAELA CENTER

Saint Raphaela Center began in 1957 when the William S. Scull family sold their thirty room mansion on Coopertown Road to the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The sisters quickly adapted the beautiful home to serve as a place of prayer that could house overnight retreatants. The mansion's library was converted into a chapel and partitions were added to provide for more suitable accommodations.

From the beginning, the group of retreatants grew steadily, with womens group retreats taking place every weekend. The small group of sisters who were living there, with Sister Philomena Monte as the Center's director, maintained every aspect of the facility — from making beds and cooking meals to tending to the spiritual needs of its visitors. Gradually, the Center underwent additional expansions to serve the needs of its ever-growing group of visitors.

Today, the Center serves as a welcoming place to 5,000 visitors and guests annually. An oasis of peace, it succeeds in its mission to *"provide a place and a time for God."*

AN INSPIRATION & A VISION

St. Raphaela Mary

When Sister Raphaela Mary founded the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she envisioned a community that would open its hearts to being "universal, like the church." Today, more than a century and a half later,

the Handmaids continue to open their doors at Saint Raphaela Center to not only those of the Catholic faith, but to a great number of religiously and culturally diverse individuals and groups from across the United States.

One Retreatant's Story

Long-time friend and volunteer of the Center, Carol Buono, reflects on a recent Directed Retreat experience.

Some of us speak to God at church, on the beach, in nature or in our homes. But many times, in order to really hear and listen to His voice speaking back to us, it helps to find a place away from all of life's distractions.

Just recently, I went on a directed retreat because I felt the need to be away in a peaceful, quiet place. To be still and to listen is a challenge, and I knew I would need some help. I thought, what better place than to be guided or directed by one of the sisters at the Center? Yes, the house is full of spirit and has a quiet reverence that gives the visitor a feeling

of goodness and warmth; but it is in the chapel that the Blessed Sacrament is exposed daily, a wonderful opportunity to sit in prayer with Jesus. It is truly a time for conversation. I prayed for the grace to listen.

The past few months had been difficult, and my retreat experience was far from what I had anticipated. Much to my surprise, I received the grace of joy and the revelation that God loves me, too, just as He loves all of us. This time I believed it.

I had a lot of help and guidance during that week, which made me think of the way a mother takes her



child by the hand and quietly, gently supports the first couple of steps. I am grateful and thankful to those who helped me have such a meaningful experience on this retreat. I am especially grateful to God.

I read somewhere a saying about grace, simply stated but profoundly felt: *"Grace meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us."*

Like all the sisters who live in the Haverford community, Sister Mary Theresa Nguyen takes part in offering a hospitable surrounding for the guests visiting the Saint Raphaela Center. It is part of her ministry. Just a part... Sr. Mary Theresa also works at St. Edmond's Home, a residential facility for severely compromised individuals, sponsored by the Philadelphia archdiocese.

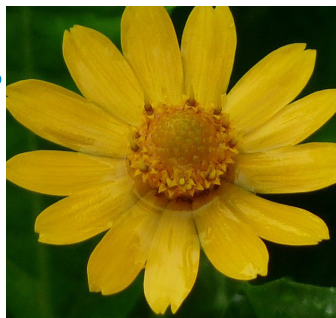


A Handmaid for twenty-five years, Sr. Mary Theresa recently participated in a Renewal Program in Rome for Professed Handmaids called CRECE. While there, she was the animadora (leader) for one of the sessions, presenting her province and leading a shared Adoration.

After her return to the USA, and during her "spare" time, she returned to her annual role as one of Santa's helpers, lending a hand with children from Philadelphia with a Christmas event sponsored by the non-profit group, UNICO.



SINCE 1957, AND FOR 57 YEARS,
ST. RAPHAELA CENTER
HAS OFFERED A PLACE FOR
CONTEMPLATION, HEALING, &
SPIRITUAL RENEWAL.



5 TESTIMONIALS

WHAT'S WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME?



The Emmaus Conference Room is located on the first floor in the Main House. Spacious and versatile, it provides an ideal setting for all forms of presentations and activities. Wireless internet access is available, and it is equipped with a wall-mounted flat screen computer (a laptop is available for use), DVD, and VHS displays. The conference room can comfortably seat 50 people. It is perfect for more structured group activities.

The Heritage Room is a large living room-like area that can be used as a gathering space for groups or a quiet area for reading or meditation by individuals. It can also be utilized as a break-out area for workshop activities. The room is carpeted, and with a few adjustments, it can be used for Yoga or similar classes.

The Board Room is a more formal area with a large conference table and wireless internet access. This room

is adjacent to the Heritage Room and can seat 15 to 20 people as a meeting space.

The Sun Porch is a bright, airy room located at the far end of the first floor beyond the large conference room and is available for groups of 15-20 people. It is ideal for one-on-one meetings or informal discussion groups. Additionally, a chapel, dining facilities, gift shop/book store, and private and shared overnight accommodations await your arrival.

1.

"St. Raphaela Center is an interfaith "resort" for the soul and spirit."

2.

"The Women's Weekend was a pure joy. Among so many gifts I received, it gave me the time to reaffirm God's presence in my life."

3.

"...very encouraging of people of all faiths to meditate, pray, refresh one's spirit, and calm one's mind."

4.

"I have received such blessings being given the opportunity to have met the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and visiting St. Raphaela Center."

5.

"SRC offered the perfect facilities for our high school seniors to engage in a meaningful and reflective overnight retreat."

THERE IS SOMETHING
FOR EVERYONE AT
ST. RAPHAELA CENTER.
FIND OUT WHAT'S THERE
FOR YOU.

PRIVATE RETREATS
OVERNIGHT RETREATS
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
CENTERING PRAYER
FOCUSING
GUIDED ADORATION

FOR INFORMATION, PHONE
610-642-5715.



Students from Mercy Vocational Technical School visit the Center for a day of retreat.

We lovingly remember Sister Philomena Monte



On Thursday, November 20, 2014, Sister Philomena Monte, a member of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus community for sixty-five years, died peacefully at Saint Raphaela Center in Haverford. She was 98 years young. At the time of her death, she was lovingly surrounded by her Haverford sisters, all of whom joined their voices in praying her favorite prayers and singing hymns of praise and comfort.

Sister Philomena was born to Domenic and Almerinda Monte in Philadelphia on February 21, 1916. One of nine children, (two girls and seven boys), she was a proud member of St. Rita parish and a graduate of West Catholic High School for Girls. Her down-to-earth South Philadelphia, Italo-American style won the hearts of all. She often spoke about her “survival” in a large family surrounded by so many brothers, but also said it was a life she would not have traded for anything. After her graduation, Sr. Philomena worked for some time prior to answering the call to enter the Handmaid novitiate in 1949.

Throughout her years as a Handmaid, Sr. Philomena served in numerous ministries. She taught chemistry at Ancilla Domini Academy in Germantown, PA, was the school principal at St. Basil the Great in Kimberton, PA, and served as a member of the staff at Ancillae-Assumpta Academy in Wyncote, PA. When she left the Academy, she returned to the neighborhood of her youth and served the Handmaid community on South Broad Street, ministering to the people of her former parish.

Her greatest passion, and the endeavor to which she had devoted the majority of her life was retreat ministry. In 1957, Sr. Philomena became the first directress of St. Raphaela Center and

worked diligently to establish the Center as a place where one could experience the reparative and transformative love of God. While in Haverford, she also served for many years as the second mistress of the novices, a responsibility that called for her to oversee the aspects associated with the manner of living of the Handmaid formees. It has been said that Sr. Philomena’s engaging demeanor, coupled with her fun-loving spirit, was the perfect influence for the young women in formation — a group that included Sisters Gloria Petrone, Kayjoy Cooper, Kathleen Helbig, Julia Walsh, and Elizabeth McCoy.

Without question, Sister Philomena worked hard for the Greater Glory of the Sacred Heart. No matter how busy she became, she never missed her two half-hour Adorations daily, counting them her greatest privilege after daily Mass. She exemplified for all the joyful cooperation with God’s will of Mary, the first Handmaid: *“Behold the Handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your will.”*

During her final three years at a nearby life care center, Sister Philomena told great stories of her family and of her Handmaid life. Always grateful for the slightest kindness done for her — from receiving fresh-baked pizzelles to having her physical needs attended to, she voiced what became her familiar mantra, *“THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!”*

It is with enormous gratitude, admiration, and love that we bid her farewell, asking God to grant Sr. Philomena the blessings of eternal life, a reward that she so richly deserves.



IN THE HANDMAIDS’ PRAYERS

Please pray for the requests on behalf of:

Sarita Almeida, Eileen Anderson, Jan Baffa, Justin Brown, Rev. Jason Buck, Annemarie Burgio, Diane Clement and Family, Michael Curran, Marianne DeMarco, Tina Dougherty, Ines M. Gallagher, Stephanie Greco, Jeanne Griffiths, Kathy Grim, Guenieri Family, Ruva Gwekwerere, Dorothy Hanshaw, Will Harris, Susie Lastowski, Florence Lazarro, Louise Malinowski, Claire Marra, Mary McDonnell, Jeanne McLaughlin, Brian and Donna McNeill, Cindy Miller and Family, Elizabeth Monis, Mary and Jim Mullaney, Victoria Imani Muhire-Ntaki, Pat Noone, Gemma Orendi, Gloria

Ricchini, Egidio and Palma Ricci, Linda Rimer, Sr. Simon Robb, Theresa Saunders, Sara Siegfried, Bill Smith, George Spaeder, Anne Stout, Kathy Williams, Dawn and Michael Zimmer, Fr. Craig Zimmerman, Malinda and Darcey, Vanessa, Theresa, Helen, Sujith, Priya, Janet, Ajay, Jessy, Vincy, Carrie, and Patty.

Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:

Angie Altomare, Rosemary C. Alvaré, James Beatson, Jane Bender, Cynthia Brooks, Carol Brown, Russell and Jessie Buono, Russell and Josephine Buono, Bill Burns, William Burns, John Buseman, Ann Bushinsky, Watt Butte, Malvina Cacciamani, Mrs. Callahan, George Carlin, Mario Carlo, Bette Caruso, Samuele Cianelli, Moira Coll, Tim Collins, Dorothy Crane, Lawrence Deimer, Giuseppe DelMastro, Mary Delvecchio, Jack Devine, Lily and Robert DiGiacomo, Mary T. DiLella, Elizabeth DiMemmo, Fr. John Dinda, Annette Diorisio, Rita D’Occhio, Joseph Donnelly, Norman Doucet, John Dzwil, Noelle Elliott, Wilma Elmer, Mary J. Festa, Francie Fitzgerald, Willie Fleming, Beatrice Flood, Margarey M. Flores, Jim Flynn, Donna Foley, Edith Ford, Malcolm Ford, Sr., Mary Freund, Donna Fricke, Elizabeth Furman, Dorothy Gillespie, Michael V. Gilvarry, Rita Gilson, Peter Godshaw, Debbie Gove, Carl Gramlich, Dennis Guenieri, Leonard Guerrero, Joseph Gurscik, Viola Hanson, John Heilmann, Jr., Maria Hemsley, Bill Henfey, William Hickey, Joseph Hudak, Rita A. Hummel, Mrs. Hunter, Carol A. Hyman, Charles Jameson, William Janton, Joseph Keefe, Mrs. Koschineg, Anna Kruse, Daniel Krysztofaki, Lydia Lancksweert, Frank Lavecchia, Ralph Hugo Lee, Jr., Joan Lewis, Lorraine Lewis, Dr. Robert Lloyd, Sr. Madeleine Marie, Frances Makichen, Frank Mancuso, Dr. John Maran, Dominic Marino, Donald McCarthy, Jack McCoglan, John McCrane, Clayton McDowell, John McGinn, Joan McKeown, Herbert Meyers, Florence Migliorini, Sr. Philomena Monte, acj, Tony Moore, Ilse C. Mulroy, Lynda B. Murray, Rita Mususock, Ellen O’Donnell, Jane O’Malley Narakal, Robert Nardone, Doris Naughton, Mary Ann Noonan, Barbara Obukanick, Dr. Thomas O’Donnell, Jessica D. Offord, Edmund Orme, William J. O’Toole, Norman Owens, Sr., Daniel Panichelli, Frances Pighini, Annamae Plunkett, William Reavey, Rosemarie Reimel, Beatrice Paschall-Ricci, Laura Haverstraw Riordan, Julia Rodriguez, Sara Sawick, Catherine Schulmeister, Janet Senteneri, Paul Sigmund, Anne Smith, Margaret E. Smith, Gerald E. Speitel, Leah Staniszewski, Dolores Straub, Jesús Suárez, Gene Sullivan, Michael Sweeney, Sr. Suzanne Marie, RSM, Mark Taddeo, Thomas Tarpy, Mary Ann Tears, Chas Tengyel, Herbert Tiedeken, Natalia Tytla, Elvira Vacirca, Dorothy Wackerman, Helen Wade, Bud Wahl, Margaret Walson, Susan Weber, Stephen Weinstein, Rev. Vincent F. Welsh, Jim Wickman, Patricia Wills, and Pam Winning.