

Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus USA Province

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Dear Friends,

At this joyous and blessed time of year we are most grateful for the glorious gift of our Saviour, who came to earth in complete humility and simplicity as an infant. A constant reminder of God's love for each of us, Jesus, the Christ child, brings the hope of love and peace. Let us open our hearts and glorify God's perfect gift to humanity, so that we will be worthy of His coming.

May you celebrate Christ's birth with all the joy and goodwill that it calls forth in each one of us.

~ The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus



Living their Vows of Consecrated Life

In a recent trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, Sisters Michelle Cimaroli, Jessica Kerber, and Oanh Vo shared their Handmaid experiences with 200 Hispanic catechists of the diocese. Later in the week, the sisters' mission



offered the opportunity to engage with several dozen young women as they shared God's dream for each of them and God's invitation to use their gifts and talents to build up community. Through this particular offering, the sisters explained the four states of life

(vocation) of the Church as personal responses to God's love and call to service. While most of the information was new to the young women, they were very engaged and curious to hear the sisters' vocation stories focusing on their deep desires for MORE...for God and the ways in which the sisters use their gifts and talents in consecrated life.



Pope Francis Leaves A Memorable Impression and Message

Sister Belen Escauriaza, Provincial Superior of the USA Province, shares her first impressions and those that followed during the recent visit of Pope Francis to the United States.

My community lives on Broad Street, Philadelphia, where we had planned to host sixteen pilgrims for the World Meeting of Families. Our guests included a couple with a one-year old daughter, another couple with adult sons, and a group of young people from the University of Georgia in Athens. The latter group, it turns out, was not able to gain access to Philadelphia due to the closing of the roads leading to Broad Street because of security concerns. As a result, my first memories of Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia are those of the challenges faced — passing through the security check points, having purses and bags scanned, waiting to be allowed to enter, chatting with those in line.

Prior to the pope's arrival in Philadelphia, his stops included Washington DC and New York City. A long wait — a very long wait — accompanied those of us who ventured to be in his midst. As the Provincial Superior, I, along with Sister



Srs. Catherine Kirwan-Avila and Sagrario Núñez outside of the shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC.

Sagrario Núñez as novice directress, and our only novice, Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila, had received an invitation to participate in the Eucharist at the shrine of the Immaculate Conception in the nation's capital. During the liturgy, Junípero Serra, Franciscan and evangelizer of the Native Americans, was canonized.

So very many people waited to enter, and once we did, it was as if we had gained entrance into a haven of peace. I was seated with other major superiors, some known to me, others not. We felt the joy of seeing each other again and of being able to become acquainted with our companions on the journey. We felt proud to be there. On various occasions the Pope has expressed his support for women religious in the United States. In some way we were thanking him with our presence. We did not need to be alerted when the Pope was approaching — cries of greeting, of welcome, of "Viva el Papa" in his native Spanish told us that he was near. In turn, I wanted to shout out all my support, in union with him on this path to which he is leading the Church. A path to which all are invited and

to which I feel especially invited as a Handmaid and the leader of this Province in the United States.

Hearing his words

His words began to resonate with me: "Jesus always embraced life as he saw it." "What can we do to keep our heart from growing numb, becoming anesthetized? How do we make the joy of the Gospel increase and take deeper root in our lives?" "... that we have a shared responsibility for others and for the world" (Laudato Si', 229) "Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven. Mission is born of a constant experience of God's merciful anointing." "So let us go out; let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ." (Evangelii Gaudium, 49).

Thinking of my sisters

With emotion and interior recollection I was receiving these and other words of the Pope. How could I not have present my dear companions on the journey in our province: the sisters who with so much sacrifice give of themselves in Athens to their mission with the Hispanics; the reparative self-gift that we live in our service in El Salvador — so very many sufferings that are accompanied and healed; the daily service in the school of Ancillae-Assumpta Academy — listening, accompaniment, education, pedagogy of the heart that looks at who is the person in front of me in order to made of him or her the best person possible; the welcome, sacrifice and accompaniment in St. Raphaela Center, creating spaces that make possible encounter with Jesus Christ who heals and gives fullness to the lives of those who gain a meeting with him; the sisters in formation who are living this moment in their story, trying to make space to experience the merciful anointing of God, an experience that will give meaning to their entire lives, to their apostolates and their own lives of faith; the sisters of the province who are in China, Rome, Spain, some continuing their formation, others collaborating with their gifts to the spreading of the knowledge of Jesus Christ; the sisters of Miami and Philadelphia accompanying, listening to, defending and serving the lives of the homeless, Hispanics, Filipinos and accompanying the spiritual process of so many persons; the sisters in residence at Saint Joseph Manor and Bryn Mawr Extended Care — dedicated lives yesterday and today.

My prayer

At the same time that I listened to the words of the Pope, I presented each of the sisters to the Lord and asked him to open my heart to the situations of so many men and women whom we have not yet discovered and who perhaps are part of his project for our Province. Today that is my petition to Jesus Christ: that we may let there be spaces in our life as Handmaids that will make it possible for us to continue, strengthen and increase the experience of his mercy towards us and that this experience might open new horizons so that we can offer to each person that we meet the joy of the Gospel.

Handmaids Offer Hospitality

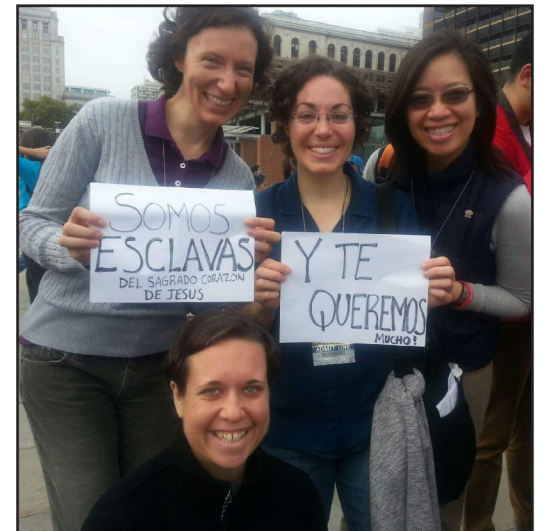


Members of the parish community from St. Francis Xavier Church in Lake Station, Indiana, were guests at St. Raphaela Center for the duration of their pilgrimage to the World Meeting of Families.



The Handmaid community in Haverford also hosted a group of eight members of the Burkina Faso (West Africa) delegation who traveled to the US to participate in the World Meeting of Families.

Viva el Papa!!!



Sisters Jessica Kerber, Catherine Kirwan-Avila, Oanh Vo, and Michelle Cimaroli show their support for Pope Francis when he spoke at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. In Sr. Catherine's words, "There was a pervasive sense of gladness and goodwill among those who had come out to participate — it was an experience of living the joy of the Gospel as universal church!"

"OUR EUCHARISTIC – REPARATIVE MISSION URGES US TO LOOK FOR THE 'LOST SHEEP', TO HEAL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HURT IN SO MANY WAYS, IN THE PERIPHERIES OF OUR HOMES, FAMILIES AND CITIES. WE ARE SO HAPPY TO DO WHATEVER WE CAN DO, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD."

- Sister María Jesús Sagaseta shares her views on the ways in which the Miami based Handmaid community continues to minister to those in their midst.



Sisters Lyan Tri and Mary Theresa Nguyen are surrounded by friends from the Vietnamese community who attended the Open House held on November 1st at St. Raphaela Center in Haverford. About one hundred twenty guests attended the event, taking advantage of touring the beautiful building and its surroundings and attending the liturgy that was presided by Msgr. John Jagodzinski. For more information about programs and retreats offered by the Center, please contact Sr. Dorothy Beck at 610-642-5715.

SISTER MARGARET SCOTT RETURNS FROM JAPAN



Following three years as head of school at the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart Seisen International School in Japan, Sister Margaret Scott is back on US soil and wasting no time picking up where she left off.

In an article printed in the October, 2015 edition of *The Way*, a review of Christian spirituality published by the British Jesuits, Sr. Margaret delves into *Laudito Si'*, the environmental encyclical of Pope Francis. Her insights and realizations in *Greening the Vows: Laudito Si' and Religious Life* share the perspective between the vows of consecrated

religious life (poverty, chastity, and obedience) and the sensitivity to cherishing the earth. Her other efforts at writing currently include working towards completion of her doctoral thesis, *Handmaids of the Sacred Heart: Gospel Women at the UN*.

In addition to her penned work, Sr. Margaret continues her involvement as a member of UNANIMA International, a non-governmental organization that advocates on behalf of women and children, immigrants and refugees, and the environment for systemic change to achieve a more just world. She also provides spiritual direction privately and at St. Joseph's University and continues lecturing throughout the area. A recent presentation, *From Conflict to Convergence*, dealt with the relationship between Catholics and Lutherans. Offered at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, it was the first time a Catholic had been asked to speak at their fall convocation.

Welcome home, Sr. Margaret. It's great to have you back!

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS



The annual Journey of Hope, a friend raising and fund raising event benefitting the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2016, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The cocktail reception will take place at the Sheraton University City in West Philadelphia — just a few steps away from where the Handmaids' first US ministry began in 1926. The event will celebrate each of the sisters whose life's work has been shared so generously. For more information, go to www.acjusa.org or phone the Province Development Office at 610-642-5715, extension 15.



IN THE HANDMAIDS' PRAYERS

Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:

Albert Aiello, Dolores Aileo, Jay Anderson, Charles Antell, Mr. Augustine, Pat Avino, Beau Biden, Walter Boyko, Bernard Boyle, Kathleen Holt Caplan, Christopher Casey, George Ciaramello, Peggy Cliff, Hon. Bernard J. Coates, Joseph Connolly, Timothy Craig, Francis J. Daily, Jr., Betty Deal, Louis DeAtley, Rita Dellaratta, Anthony Diorio, Connie Dodge, Robert Donley, Lucille Dowell, John Ellie, Eileen Eubank, Rita Faia, Alma Katie Francis, Tom Frey, Phillip Friend, Sr., Joseph Gilbert, Carry Gillespie, Joan Giordano, David Grahn, Elizabeth Greaney, Jacqueline Greenbaum, James Hennessey, Junette Henson, Martha Huynh, Mary Interrante, Helen Jennings, William Jones, Muriel Juska, Raymond Kaelin, Willaim Karivalis, Peg Klaiber, Charles Killian, Patricia Kulha, Giovanni Laterra, Mary Lewis, Arthur Loeb, Thomas More McCann, Brenda McDermott, Jack McDonald, Eileen McGoldrick, Isabelle McKee, Suzanne McLaughlin, Laura McTaggart, Bertha Isabel Menendez, Jean Montgomery, Tom Morrison, Gretchen Moyer, Rosemary Munyon, Edward Murphy, Russell Murray, Judith Nadzady, Ida Nash, Edward J. Norris, Judy Nuding, Patricia O'Hanlon, Carole J. Olson, Kathleen O'Malley, Kathy Parry, Thomas Patton, Nicole R. Pepplemen, Mary Perrotto, Thomas B. Petrillo, Daniel Pierra, Mary Pirolli, Mary Pironti, Charles Power, Martin Reddington, Sara Lee Redmond, Joseph and Bernice Register, Judie Richards, Brian Ronane, Albert Santoleri, Louise Schemanski, Joseph Schickling, Josephine Sheridan, Mary Sloan, Anthony Spinelli, Anne M. Strykowski, Mary Theresa Sullivan, Robert Sykes, Margaret Thrasher, Sally Tiedeken, Agnes Tilley, Louis J. Tilley, Anne Tomea, Filippa Toscano, Michael Valosky, Danny Venny, Steven J. Vereb, Jim Warrington, Robert Wilby, Sally Wink, Dorothy May Wiseman, Jean Wysozanski, Connie Yarzabek, and Thomas Zerbe, Jr.

Please pray for the requests offered on behalf of:

Gina and Holly Anderson, Rose Avino, Theresa Barrett, Rev. Daniel A. Bowen, Lisa Branscome, Rosemary Burke, Ed, Daniel and Celia Castillo, Terri Chango, Marie Cosgrove, Judy Deley, Sr. Rita Devine, IHM, Donna Garson, Susan Heaney, The Kenney Family, Jeannie and Ronnie Klos, Al Kocher, Fr. Patrick Lamb, William Lawrence, Daniel Luberski, Denise and Edward Luberski, The McDonald Family, Mary McGonigal, Sis McKay, Kalin McNichol, Patricia Moran, Michael Morris, Mary Ann Nau, Elaine Rinaldi, Nora and Scott Smith, Elaine Stretch, Mo Sullivan, Justin and Felicia Warrington, Eleanor Zerbe, Dawn Zimmer, David, Dorothy, Henry, Ida, Irene, JT, Jennifer, Jessie, Jean, Judith, Lawrie, Mae, Magdalene, Mike, Mike, Robert, Rose, Sarita, Sharon, Sujith, Timothy, Trudy, and Vernon.