



Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

USA Province

VOLUME 8 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ FALL/WINTER - 2016

A PUBLICATION OF THE USA HANDMAID PROVINCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

FROM THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR



Dear Friends,

Each moment in time brings us to a newness in which one can find amazement, grow in faith, and discover a bit more about the magnificent presence of God in the creation and in the history of each person. This newsletter tries to capture pieces of our proud history and the histories of those we have come to love.

I recently visited our beautiful Project FIAT in El Salvador. It is a marvelous work, made only possible because of the donations we continue to receive for the lunch program, scholarships, construction, tutoring, and so much more. Despite our involvement there, the story of El Salvador finds our friends struggling. The pastor at the local parish there is working constantly to seek funds to help the sick, to build a new parish, to offer gatherings for young adults, to help find jobs for those who have none. Vacation for our students has started, and with it, the lunch program will be suspended for a few months. I think aloud, *“What are the students and the elderly people going to do during this period without food?”* We simply continue to try to do what we can for them and with them.

I also visited the sisters in Athens and Miami. How dedicated they are, in both communities, assisting the marginalized and the poor. The beauty that emerges from each of these ministries is nearly overwhelming.

In more personal, individual stories, we remember Sister Ruth, always sensitive, with her inner delicacy, who passed away quietly and peacefully. A beautiful person, she left behind the handprints of God’s love for her and for all who encountered her. Sister Oanh’s graduation as a family nurse practitioner demonstrates a call to serve the sick showing them how important they are to us and to God.

I don’t know if I can find the words to express the beauty of the gathering of the former students of Ancilla Domini Academy: joy, happiness, memories, sharing, friendship, love. We could only witness and enjoy their presence with us.

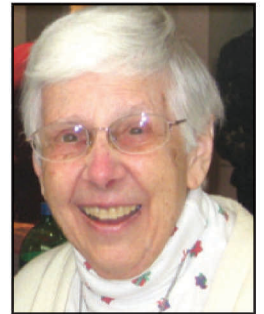
When I stop and contemplate all these events I can only give thanks to God, who is, always and again, with us accompanying and guiding.

As we look ahead, new events and gatherings await us. Our *Journey of Hope* will celebrate our school’s 70th anniversary and Saint Raphaela Center’s 60th. In January, Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila will be making her first vows. Three sisters of the province, two along with me, are en route to Spain to meet sisters from all over the world. We will choose a new superior general and look to the calls that the Church and the world are giving to us as religious Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you once more for everything you do for us, and in so doing, for the sake of God.

With love and hope,

Edna Escamias
as

Remembering Ruth Held, acj



Sister Ruth Jane Held, acj, a Handmaid of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for more than seventy years, died peacefully on Tuesday, October 25th, with members of her Handmaid community present. Ruth Held was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Barbara Waldenberger Held and Leonard Held on July 21, 1920. Her close family were her beloved brother Robert (Bob) and her sister, Sally Held Sharkey, with whom she had a profound spiritual connection in the Catholic faith.

After graduation from John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls' High School with the Class of 1938, she worked some years before entering the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a postulant in Cuba, on September 8, 1941. Admitted to novitiate on March 9, 1942, Sister Ruth made temporary profession of vows in Cuba two years later and returned to the United States to pursue her Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Rosemont College, followed by her Master of Arts at Villanova University. Sister Ruth made perpetual profession of vows on August 15, 1950, in Wyncote, PA.

She became a teacher of Religion and English, and served as Principal of Ancilla Domini Academy, a high school in Germantown, Philadelphia, from 1953 through 1961. During her tenure there, she taught many young women who would later embrace their vocation with the Handmaid community. Also during this time, Sister Ruth served as Superior. In 1967, Sister Ruth began teaching at the School of Saint Basil the Great in Kimberton, PA, where she also served as Principal. She remained there until 1971.

Following her teaching career, Sister Ruth became involved in retreat ministry, working at Saint Raphaela Center, in Haverford, PA from the 1970's through 2012. During this time, she also served as treasurer of both the community and Retreat Center, and also as the Provincial Secretary.

Sister Ruth loved both teaching and retreat ministry and is remembered by all for her joyful, generous presence, full of gratitude for her vocation. In addition to the Handmaid community, Sister Ruth is survived by many cousins, nephews, nieces, and their families.

A viewing and her funeral liturgy were held at the Saint Raphaela Center in Haverford on Tuesday, November 1st, the feast of All Saints Day.

Ancilla Domini Academy Alumnae are Celebrated by the Handmaids

Forty years ago, in 1976, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus closed the doors to its high school for girls, Ancilla Domini Academy (ADA). This school, a beloved and well-respected ministry of the Handmaids, still conjures up a warm and heartfelt sentiment by its alumnae, many of whom shared their thoughts and stories at a brunch held on December 4, 2016 at Saint Raphaela Center in Haverford. Divulging some of their sophomoric antics and remembering the Sisters' reactions, the alumnae relived their days in Germantown and found great humor in the telling and retelling of so many stories. Hosted by the Handmaids, the event was preceded by a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Reverend Michael Olivere. During his homily, Father Olivere shared some of his favorite recollections about the Handmaids. He remembered that during the final year of the school, students attended classes at La Salle College High School, where he was a young student. His anecdotal references to Sisters Jane Anderson and Gloria Petrone, among other Handmaids,



brought more than a few laughs and remembrances. During the liturgy, a memorial tribute displaying the photographs of deceased members of the ADA student

body and the deceased Handmaids who taught there, served as a bittersweet, but loving reminder of the friends and mentors who helped shape so many lives. After many of the stories had been told and the laughter had subsided, one of the nostalgic group made a request to sing the school song. Without hesitation, the ADA alumnae broke into a spontaneous chorus, seeming to remember every word. The photo taking, the yearbooks and mementos brought to share, the rekindling of spirited and meaningful friendships made for something to remember. Most especially, this group of "fifty-sixty-and seventy somethings" evoked a sense of respect, admiration, and love for the Handmaids who taught, nurtured, and guided them through some of the most important years of their lives. Weeks later, one alumna summed it up perfectly, *"Still thinking about the amazing day at Haverford, and the wonderful moments we shared. Truly special. Thank you all..."*



SR. OANH VO GRADUATES

Members of the Haverford community of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus celebrated with Sr. Oanh Vo as she graduated from Villanova University on December 13, 2016. Sr. Oanh received a Masters Degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner from the College of Nursing.



JOURNEY OF HOPE IS PLANNED



The Advisory Board of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will host its Annual Journey of Hope Celebration on Wednesday evening, March 29, 2017. The event will be held at the Saint Raphaela Center in Haverford and will celebrate two of the Handmaid ministries marking significant anniversaries during the 2016-17 calendar year:

St. Raphaela Center - 60 years

Ancillae-Assumpta Academy - 70 years

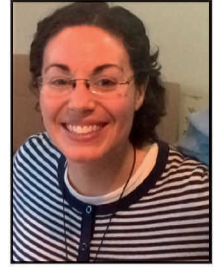
The evening will feature a wine tasting and reception complete with light fare. Tickets for the event are \$50 per person and may be purchased by contacting the Handmaid Province Development Office at 610-642-5715.

In conjunction with the Journey of Hope, a *Trip to Spain for Two* will be offered as the main prize in a raffle. Valued between \$4,000 and \$5,000, the trip will include 7 days and nights in Madrid and Cordoba, Spain. Raffle tickets are priced at \$100 and may be purchased by contacting the Handmaid Province Development Office at 610-642-5715.

For your convenience, enclosed with this newsletter you will find an invitation and response card, along with an entry for the raffle. Information is also posted on the Handmaid website: www.acjusa.org

CATHERINE KIRWAN-AVILA TO PROFESS FIRST VOWS

Catherine Kirwan-Avila will make her First Profession of Vows as a Handmaid of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Saturday, January 14, 2017. Invited guests will join Catherine in this Eucharistic celebration in the Handmaids Chapel in Wyncote. As she affirms her commitment to religious life, we join in praise and thanksgiving for this blessing to the Handmaid community.



Post-Election 2016 STATEMENT

Following the November, 2016 election, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus made public the views they share through a statement issued. In solidarity with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), the statement reads:

"The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, grounded in the gospel and the ACJ mission are committed, in this 'Divided States of America' to uphold the dignity of every person, enshrined in the Constitution, and wish to work for the common good of our nation and to promote a living faith that works for justice. In our society deeply in need of mercy, the Handmaids, with our Eucharistic-reparative charism and our rich experience of multiculturalism, can be agents of reconciliation and dialogue. We will continue working to protect to the fullest extent of the law undocumented immigrants and will support and stand in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters, regardless of their faith traditions, gender, or culture to preserve the religious freedoms on which this nation was founded. As members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), we embrace the post election statement made by our leadership."

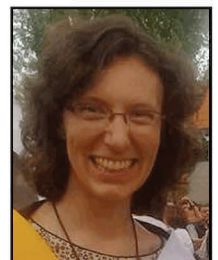
LCWR has about 1350 members, who represent nearly 80 percent of the approximately 48,500 women religious in the United States. It assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.

SR. JESSICA KERBER FEATURED IN NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER PUBLICATION

Sister Jessica Kerber was recently interviewed about religious life and the discernment process for the November 29th publication of Global Sisters Report, a project of the National Catholic Reporter.

Responding to the question, "How does one discern whether God is calling?" Sr. Jessica explained, "We all want signs. We all want the burning bush. We want to know: 'This is it! Ding, ding, ding!' But it's internal. It's asking yourself, 'What is it about that experience that you want to read more about it?' It's that knowing that there's something happening there. It's listening to the internal movements. What is it that fills you with passion? What is it that makes you fully alive?"

To read the complete interview, please visit: <http://globalsistersreport.org/blog/q/spirituality/q-sr-jessica-kerber-working-women-discerning-religious-life-43581>



"The draw to religious life is more than community, It's finding that at that deepest level of self, there is this desire to give fully to God one's own being. . . . It's a commitment to God and God's project, the project of salvation."
-Sr. Jessica Kerber

SR. MARGARET SCOTT SHARES VIEWS

Scholar and published author, Sister Margaret Scott, has been invited to deliver several talks in Nuremberg, Germany. Focusing on her book, *The Eucharist and Social Justice*, Sr. Margaret has presented throughout the U.S. and other countries including Peru, Columbia, and Ecuador.

An ardent supporter of issues regarding social justice and the environment, Sr. Margaret's work, *Greening the Vows. Laudato si' and Religious Life*, was a recent inclusion in the Claretian Missionaries publication, CONFER. In the article, and from a perspective of a consecrated life shaped by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Sr. Margaret sees in these vows an environmental sensitivity that leads to the cherishing of the earth. Sr. Margaret is also a representative to UNANIMA, a non-governmental organization that advocates for the environment.



AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

As he is sometimes known to do, Pope Francis made an unexpected visit to the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Rome. On January 2, arriving at their house of XX Settembre, he informed the sisters that he wanted to pray at the shrine of Saint Raphaela Mary.

According to Superior General Inmaculada Fukasawa, "Many sisters from the Province of Italy, the Sisters of the Preparatory Commission, the Sisters of Torricella, and of the General Curia welcomed him with great emotion."



WIN A TRIP for 2 TO SPAIN

Can't attend the Journey of Hope?
You can still purchase a raffle ticket!
Winner needs not be present to claim prize.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS
FABULOUS OPPORTUNITY!



You and a lucky companion will spend 7 nights and days in unforgettable Spain! Enjoy the food, the sounds, the beauty of this Mediterranean country where the Foundress of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was born. Airfare, hotel accommodations, plus other amenities are provided in this travel offering which is being coordinated by Ventresca Travel.

IN THE HANDMAIDS' PRAYERS



Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:

Lori Altomare, Josephine Antrim, Helen Arndt, Theresa L. Avitabile, Josephine Bauer, John Behen, Arcolino Bianco, Seana Block, Rev. Msgr. John Boland, John Bonik, Sr. Frances Christie Book, Dorothy Borkowski, Mary Esther Bray, Geraldine Breslin, Catherine Burke, Rosemary and Joseph Burke, Mary Rita Burns, Dorothy Chapman, Eli Chavez-Theiss, Elizabeth Christian, Mark Clark, Virginia Collins, Dennis Connor, Joseph Coppolce, Sally Corr, Dottie Cunningham, Sr. Mary Curran, Eugene Daum, Al Dean, Guy DeBellis, Marty DeFrancisco, William Dellaratta, Bernie DeMoreo, Mary Katherine Denny, Johanna DeSimone, Terry Donahue, Br. James Donohoe, O.C.S.O., Thomas R. Dugan, DMD, Stevie Edwards, Ann Elko, Angelina Evans, James Fenerty, Benjamin Fiddler, Janet Fitzgerald, Mildred Fitzgerald, Edmund Fitzpatrick, Alfred Flanagan, Antonio Fontánez, Bridgette Galbreath's grandmother, Maria Luisa Gaston, Herm Gauss, Claudia Geppert, James Gillespie, Maryanne Ginley, Lisa Gleton, Gino Greatti, Vincent Haley, Sr. Ruth Held, acj, Alfred Hilbert, George Hoguet, William Horan, Eleanor Hughes, Charles Hyle, MD, Floyd Isley, Peggy Jones, Jason Juliano, Antonietta Kahn, Kathleen Kelley, Rosemary Kelley, Jeanette Kern, Donna Koruba, Robert M. Kruger, Tim Kuhn, Rita F. Cullison, William Lacon, Richard Lagerman, Eleanor Lee, Bill Lee, Vince Loftus, Sr. Martha Lopez, MSC, Philomena Lovallo, Hugh D. MacEachern, Vincent Madden, Anthony Marotta, Ella Mae Mason, Jackie McAlister, Catherine McBrian, Albert McCarthy, Theresa McCarthy, John McCormick, William McGarvey, Jr., Constance McGettigan, Eleanor McGovern, Malcolm McGuiness, Kathy McNamee, Ervin McNary, Eileen Metivier, Pam Moran, Paul Morganthaler, Jr., John Mulholland, MaryAnn Mulholland, Irene Murphy, Ralph Murphy, Linda Myrtetus, Adele Nales, John Napoleon, Barbara Neff, Catherine Neri, Sue Nush, Irene Pacitti, Tony Paglione, Rosalie Patitucci, Eric Peterson, Karen Petherbridge, Danny Pietro, Eileen N. Pilon, Agnes Poplas, Helen A. Porter, Bill Ring, John Rotchford, Berebice Rueter, John Santangelo, George Schofield, John Shappet, Jack Slater, Richard Slatowski, Ann Starret, Pearl Stief, Shirley Ann Tartaglione, Suzanne Thompson, Paul Tone, Giuseppe Travaglini, Norbert Vadus, Maggie Vitale, Kevin Wallace, Nancy Wehr, John Wozniak, Eleanor Zerbe, George Zindel, III, and Mathias Zubak.

Please pray for the requests offered on behalf of:

Sergio Almeida, S. Amulhas, Bernie Andriozzi, Bernadette Bell, Ray Blum, Sr. Marlene Buttler, Fr. Timothy Canaan, Maria Chanquet, Maria E. Cilio, Duria Cova, C. Daniel, Sion Dharavi, Kathy and Martin Donegan Family, Isabelle Duca, Michele Edelson, Jeannie and Mike Farling, Jean Foster, Eileen Hallissey, Monica Herrera, Cathy Jacobs, Heather Kelly, Virginia Krause, Edith Lim, Sylvia and Paul Lin, Joseph McGuire, Irma McGlone, Carol Morganthaler, Mary Nguyem, Marianne Nicastro, Dorothy Noga, Leo O'Connor, Meg Palapianco, Heather Peterson, John Petito, Greta Pinto, Simon Polaco, Manuelita Porter, Rosemary Powers, Bonnie Ravaioli, Beverly Rochon, Lizy Sana, Rose Shoriak, Joan (Avon) Smith, Rev. Edmund J. Speitel, The Stevenson Family, Madeline Stewart, Nancy and Rich Summers, Rosemary Taddeo, Angela Tierney, Hank and Eileen Torom, Chuck Webster, Derek and Shantel Williams, Alex and Anthony, Anthony, Anthony, Jr., Antonietta, Betty, Brent, Cathy, Clare, Denise, Flannery and Fino, Fryjo, Gabrielle, John, Josephine Amelia, J.R., Kevin and Girijia, Loretta, Mar, Marie, Maria Theresa, Robert and Barbara, Rosario Josephine, Stacey, Yanto, and Campus Ministry at West Virginia University.