

Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, USA Province

VOLUME 8 ■ ISSUE 2 ■ SPRING/SUMMER, 2017

A PUBLICATION OF THE USA HANDMAID PROVINCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

LETTER FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

The experiences of these recent months have been deep and intense for me and a deep sentiment of joy and hope wells up within me.

I was in Rome preparing General Congregation XX when the visit of Pope Francis took place in the house of XX Settembre. I was looking at the body of Saint Raphaela Mary thinking that at any minute she could begin to shudder in amazement at this visit. She could never have imagined that her hidden, sanctifying years could become a source of life and grace for the person who would one day become Pope Francis. A committed pope, infusing hope and encouragement within and outside the Catholic church; calling each and every one of us to a profound conversion, to peace, to care for our planet.

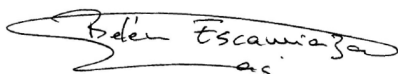
In this General Congregation, there were fifty Handmaids from twenty of the twenty-six diverse countries in which Handmaids are present. By contemplating the world's reality, our history, the example and invitations of the pope by means of his pastoral letters, and above all, in his encyclical, "*Laudato Si*", we asked ourselves how we are responding today based on our charism.

As a Congregation we have chosen a project entitled: "Support for Persons in Situations of Human Mobility" - Refugees, Displaced Persons, Immigrants, Victims of Human Trafficking.

It is our desire to invite each and every one of our collaborators in the mission which the Church has confided to us, ACJ Family and lay friends to live this project. In the fall, we will have the occasion to speak of this. At the moment, we rejoice in the contents of this newsletter. They are beautiful, bearers of hope, speaking to us of the world.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to express my gratitude for the cherished collaboration received to organize and bring to fruition the 2017 *Journey of Hope*.

A new and sincere Thank You to everyone.



Sister Belén Escauriaza, acj



New Handmaid Leadership Team Elected



At the recent General Congregation XX held in Madrid, Spain, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus elected a new Superior General - Rosario Fernández-Villarán (pictured center). Also elected to

serve in leadership positions as assistants to the general are: (from left) Sisters Inés Ruíz, Clemencia Carrizosa, Inés Oleaga, and María Vaz Pinto. Pictured below with the new Superior General are Sisters Sagrario Núñez, Belén Escauriaza, and Margaret Scott, who were among the delegates representing the USA Province at the General Congregation.



The General Congregation meets every five years to evaluate the status of the Handmaid mission and to set forth a direction to pursue in the coming years. The theme of this Congregation was "*In the Heart of Him whom they have pierced we contemplate Mercy.*" Corresponding to the Handmaid Constitutions, this theme became the focus that gave direction to the meetings and discussions that took place over the next several weeks.

Pope Francis & the Handmaids

A LONGSTANDING CONNECTION



Handmaids gather with Pope Francis at the shrine of St. Raphaela Mary.

When Pope Francis recently visited the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at their residence in Rome, XX Settembre, he left an impression that the sisters will not soon forget. Expressing that his primary reason for making the visit was his desire to pray at the shrine of Saint Raphaela Mary gave them great joy. They described his presence as deeply spiritual. They were grateful for his willingness to answer their many questions with his characteristic simplicity and were heartened by his desire to greet each of the sisters who are confined to the residential infirmary. Most especially, the Handmaids were touched by learning about the faithful affection Pope Francis has for St. Raphaela Mary. He explained that his great devotion to the saint began years earlier, and admitted that her experiences were often a source of guidance through many stages of his life, especially in difficult times.

Perhaps it may be called serendipitous — perhaps providential — that his first introduction to the saint came in an unexpected way when Jorge Mario Bergoglio, a young altar server in Buenos Aires, Argentina, was given a copy of the book that retold the life of Raphaela Mary Porras, the foundress of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The woman giving him the book was Sister María Angélica Nan Ovejero, a Handmaid who was a fellow Argentinian. Little could she have

known then the impact her gift would have on the young man who would later become Pope Francis, the 266th papal leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

Known simply as Sr. Angélica, this devout Handmaid was born in Buenos Aires in 1904, but spent time in her early years in Cordoba, Spain, St. Raphaela's birthplace. She entered the novitiate in 1930 in Rome. Following her studies, she ministered first in Bolivia, then Panama. In 1957, she was transferred to the United States, where she settled in Wyncote, Philadelphia, and finally in Haverford, Pennsylvania. Wherever she was, Sister Angélica made an impression on those around her. The Handmaids in Wyncote today remember her as someone who was small in stature, but large in every other way. When she left the US to return to her homeland in 1963, she was honored with a celebration that brought together sisters from all the Handmaid communities.



Sr. Angélica is seated in the front row, fourth from left at a celebration held in her honor.

In 1968, the paths of Sr. Angélica and Bergoglio crossed again. This time it was while both were working for the Community of Christian Life, an organization of the laity who practice an Ignatian model of spiritual life. After working together for some time, the lives of the two would move in separate ways — Sr. Angélica would eventually serve out her ministry in the Handmaids' House of Spiritual Exercises in Buenos Aires and Bergoglio would move through the ranks of the priesthood, in time becoming archbishop of Buenos Aires and Argentina's cardinal.

In 2011, Sr. Angélica passed away. In life, she would never know that two years later, Bergoglio would be elected pope. She would also never know that the gift she had bestowed to him so many years earlier would kindle his lifelong spirit of devotion, fidelity, and gratitude to the Handmaid foundress. His message in the visitor's log at the XX Settembre shares this sentiment: "I came to thank Saint Raphaela



Sr. Angélica at 100 years

Mary for all of the good that she has done for me. The reading of her life (many times) helped me to live a very difficult moment. Thank you.

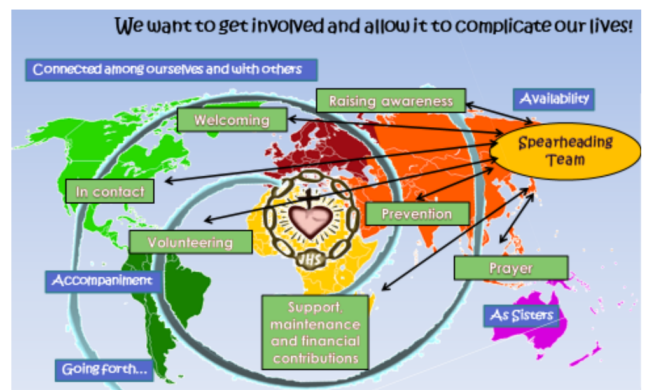
Francisco"

From the hearts of all the Handmaids, **THANK YOU**, Sr. Angélica!

Support for Persons in the Situation of Human Mobility

"Let us contribute our grain of sand to the whole so that, networking, we may be able in each place to raise awareness, anticipate, welcome, support, pray, and commit ourselves to those persons in our world, especially women and children, who are suffering in the terrible situation of Human Migration."

For this reason, GC XX proposes to all the Handmaids, the members of the ACI Family, and the laity who collaborate with us, this project which we want to carry out in the light of the Mercy of the Heart of Jesus.



Sister Dorothy Beck has often reminded us of a comment offered by her mother, Dorothy Beck, in reference to the Handmaids. Her astute words of wisdom - *"If you want to see the world, become a Handmaid."*

It sounds like she knew what she was talking about! In recent months, six sisters from the USA Province have been on three continents spreading the gospel message and extending the ministerial work of the Handmaids. In Europe, Sisters Belén Escauriaza, Sagrario Núñez, and Margaret Scott took part in the General Congregation XX. Sr. Margaret also offered a presentation on the Eucharist in Nuremberg, Germany. Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila remains in Madrid, Spain, where her formation studies are continuing. In South America, Sister Oanh Vo spent time in Lima, Peru. And in Asia Sister Cam Banh completed her ministerial assignment in Cheung Chau, Hong Kong.



Sister Cam Banh (left) is pictured with Handmaid Superior General Inmaculada Fukasawa at Xavier House, an Ignatian Spirituality Center in Cheung Chau, Hong Kong. As a spiritual director, Sr. Cam worked in cooperation with the Jesuits, who sponsor and conduct the center. During her tenure, she was also responsible for supervising employees at the center.



Sister Oanh Vo (first row, right) was recently in Lima, Peru for a 2-month medical Spanish immersion program aimed to assist her in her work as a nurse practitioner at Esperanza Health Center in north Philadelphia. While living with the Peruvian Handmaids, Oanh states that she was able to *"experience at a deeper level the Handmaid's gift of unity in diversity."* In response to the country's massive flooding and mudslides, the Handmaids, Jesuits, and many young adults helped clean up a poor neighborhood outside of central Lima.

Sister Margaret Scott was recently awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. A member of the Philadelphia community, she continues to represent the Handmaids at UNANIMA and also remains on the faculty at St. Joseph's University.



Sister Michelle Cimarolli received a Masters Degree in Theological Studies from Villanova University. A member of the Wyncote community, Sister Michelle will be leaving in August to serve for two years in Equatorial New Guinea.

Sister María Jesús Sagaseta, a member of the Handmaids Miami community was praised at a Mass for the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life by Archbishop Thomas Wenski. Sr. María Jesús recently marked 60 years as a Handmaid of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



JOURNEY OF HOPE CELEBRATED

Over one hundred and twenty ardent supporters came out to Saint Raphaela Center in Haverford to take part in the 2017 *Journey of Hope* hosted by the USA Province Handmaid Advisory Board on March 29, 2017. A friend raising and fundraising event benefitting the Handmaids, this year's event offered a wine tasting that centered on the first locations of the Handmaid communities - Spain, Italy, South & Central America, and the United States. A rich assortment of carefully selected wines paired with delectable hors d'oeuvres, cheeses, fruits, and other taste tempting delights reflected the cultures and cuisine of the countries. Artifacts and other historic memorabilia provided a backdrop that was not only appealing, but offered an educational perspective of the Handmaids and their ministries. Sisters were on hand throughout the evening to answer questions and offer information about the Handmaids in the USA and across the globe.

Special commemorations were made to honor the 60th anniversary of the retreat center and the 70th anniversary of Ancillae-Assumpta Academy, the two longest USA ministries in existence. Tokens of appreciation and remembrance were presented to both ministries, with words of gratitude offered by Sisters Jessica Kerber and Belén Escauriaza, and former Advisory Board member Ray Angelo.

Adding to the evening's festivities were a silent auction and a grand prize drawing of a trip for two to Spain.



Advisory Board Member Jeanne Hisey greets guests at the Journey of Hope.

Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
USA Province Development Office
616 Coopertown Road
Haverford, PA 19041

www.acjusa.org

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 2303
Jenkintown, PA

Address Service Requested

IN THE HANDMAIDS' PRAYERS

Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:

Phyllis Anastasi, Theresa Avon, Albert Bacher, Frank Barrett, Tom Basile, John Beal, Edward Berry, Henrietta Bickhart, Marge Binder, James Binns, Jr., Carol Fitzgerald Bizon, Nick Bond, Eleanor Bonner, Geraldine Breslin, Mark Gregory Bricker, Dick Brill, Charles E. Brogan, Sr., Mary A. Brudy, Mr. & Mrs. Burke, Mary Anne Campanella, Regina Ann Campbell, Daniel Carboy, mother of Kathleen Cannon Jane Cassidy, Alex Churchill, mother of Judy Connor, Mrs. Rita F. Cullison, Tom DeCarlo, Lou DeFeo, William DePre Motria Dejneka, Letizia Deluca, Emilia DiPietro, The Doncevic Family, Lindsey O. Dougherty, Mary Ann Durso, Jean Everly, Gerard J. Ferro, Matthew Fitzgerald, Jeannie Francis, Kelly Ann Friel, Dorothy Ann Gleason, Marian Gordon, Sr. Veronica Grover, SHCJ, Eileen Hallissey, Joan Havens, Geraldine Heaphy, Malcolm Holley Matthew Iannone, Angelica Ibarguen, Dante Intelrano, Albert Jewell, William Johnson, Sarah J. Joyce, Patricia Keen, Geoffrey Kelly, James Lambert, Noreen LaPira, William Larkey, Susan Larsen, Paula Leager, Helena Lloyd, Lisa MacCarrick, Agnes Mahan Edward McDonald, Barbara McDonnell, Mary McDonnell, Kathryn McLaren, Catherine Meyer, Jack Miller, Beth Morris, Charles Mulherin, Irene Murphy, Hattie Muse, Al & Winnie Myers, Daryl Nelson, Catherine Nicolo, Dick O'Brien, Loretta O'Fria, Donna Olsen, Cecelia Ohlanat, George Page, Konstantinos Passas, Robert Pinkos, Mark Powers, Claire Quinn, James Ranieri, Robert Roma, Stephen Saloma, Mary Schurr, Donald Schuster, Fran Sliker, Mark Smith, Joseph Stellabutte, Sr. Theresa Suplick, SSJ, Guesepina Taccone, Glenn Tasset, Angela Tavani, Isabel Tronco, Andrew Van Hoek, Robert Wallace Pearl J. Wesner, Ronald Williams, Margaret Wilson, Fr. William Wright, Vince Yezzi, Joseph Zenak, and Angeliki.

Please pray for the requests offered on behalf of:

Jack Blickley, Alexander Chung, Denise Clofine, Sue Connor, Mario Costanzo, Rose Cunningham, Linda Davis, Tom Deegan, Amancia, Michaela, & Lucia DeMarco, Lydia DiPietro, Jack Donnelly, Diane Donohue, Anthony Flood, Jr., Marie and Anthony Flood, Sr., The Jeannie Francis Family, Caroline M. Gavin, Susan Gerdemann, Ave & Irene Gracey, Susan Johnson, Joanne Harkins, Maureen Howe, J. Hughes, Dr. Parricz & Helen Kambin, Gabby Levy, Patricia Lynch, Joanne Mardone, Family of Anna McDonough, Beth Mirazi, Judy Naujoks, Jeaneen Nelson, Patrick Norris, Marie O'Hanlon, Joan Panaccio, Frances Randazzo, John Joseph Romano, III, Rose Rybas, Paul & Eileen Schaefer, Jose Tapia, Flora Teti, John Walthen, Phil Welzant, Dorothy Wilenski, Ellen Wischuck, Barbara, Catherine, Derek, Fernando, Heather, Jennifer, John & Marie, Kellie, Kelly & Frannie, Lizy, Marie, Marty and Matt.