



# Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, USA Province

VOLUME 9 ■ ISSUE 1 ■ FALL/WINTER, 2017-18

A PUBLICATION OF THE USA HANDMAID PROVINCE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## LETTER FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

I am offering only a few words before spring brings us joy again with its color and the rebirth of nature. It is a reminder that soon we will be celebrating Jesus Christ who is alive, risen, who died, and was resurrected for us. As we approach the Lenten season and Easter, it is my prayer that we keep present in our hearts the countless men, women, and children in the world who live in pain for one reason or another. It is also, and above all, for them that Jesus Christ gave his life.

As I have been reporting in previous newsletters, we continue striving to respond to our commitment of General Congregation XX: "Support for persons in Situations of Human Mobility". Sisters of our different communities are responding in various ways. As a province we have opted to support Maria Elena and her four children. We desire that their lives be made better and seek to offer our support with spiritual as well as material help. Each one of us is invited to give some kind of response, whether it be prayers, accompaniment, or economic help. *"We want to RESPOND AND LIVE WITH PASSION the option for persons who are suffering in the world."* (General Congregation XX).

*"May our presence be the hand of Christ held out to all which reaches all."* (Pope Francis, September 3, 2016). Our life must be a testimony of the living Jesus Christ. Thank you to each of you whose way of living is already a testimony of Him.

*Belén Escauriaza*

Sister Belén Escauriaza, acj



## Handmaids Welcome New Postulant



Flanked by Srs. Lyan Tri and Uyen-Chi Dang, Nhàn Nguyen (kneeling, center) became the newest postulant entering the Handmaid community. Standing in the shrine at St. Raphaela Center are Srs. Mary Ann Craig, Belen Escauriaza, her mother, Nhàn Nguyen, her sister Mary Hoang, and Sr. Kathy Gazie.

The newest member of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was recently welcomed by the Haverford community as she professed her intention to enter religious life. Nhàn Nguyen, who hails from San Jose, California, is the seventh of ten children (5 boys and 5 girls), from a deeply religious family. Prior to immigrating to the United States in 2010, the family lived in Vietnam. Nhàn reports that her family was greatly influenced by the faith of her mother and grandfather who encouraged daily Mass and faithfully practiced Catholicism.

Nhàn explains that her journey to the Handmaids was one that was fairly direct. She knew that she was called to religious life. For her the question was: "which community?" After several years of discernment, and frequent interaction with and guidance from a Jesuit priest, Nhàn made her decision to join the Handmaids whose mission she believes most closely resembles her own.

In addition to bringing with her several years of professional work experience, Nhàn holds a BA degree in Early Childhood Education from San Jose State.

# Assistants General Visit the USA



From left: Sisters Kathleen Helbig, Maureen Gillespie, María Vaz Pinto, Belén Escauriaza, and Clemencia Carrizosa

Two of the assistants to the Superior General in Rome, Sisters Clemencia Carrizosa and María Vaz Pinto visited the Handmaid USA Province in September, 2017. Their stay, which extended for twenty-one days, took them to Athens, Georgia, and the three local communities in Wyncote, Philadelphia, and Haverford.

They spent time meeting with the sisters, observing the ministries, and discussing the current and future plans of the province. During their visit, the sisters had the opportunity to observe the classrooms at Ancillae-Assumpta Academy, witness the retreats and programs at Saint Raphaela Center, and experience the daily ministries the sisters conduct. They also had the additional opportunity to accompany Sister Margaret Scott and take part in a session of UNANIMA at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. (UNANIMA is a non-governmental organization advocating on behalf of women and children, immigrants and refugees, and the environment.)

## DID YOU KNOW???

- The Handmaids welcome individuals and groups of all faiths to experience a retreat or program at Saint Raphaela Center?
- Project Fiat offers people of all ages to a volunteer experience in El Salvador?
- Novena of Mass cards for any occasion are available through the Handmaid Development Office?

## Human Migration - A New Beginning

The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in partnership with the Sisters of Saint Joseph have embarked on the next step in assisting those “who are suffering in the terrible situation of human migration.” As outlined in the sisters’ support for persons in the Situation of Human Migration” and following the Gospel call to welcome the stranger, the sisters have secured housing and accommodations for María Elena, a refugee from Honduras and her four children.

Currently residing in a homeless shelter, the family will soon be making their new home in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. In addition to providing the rent and utility expenses, the sisters are also assisting in the childrens’ educational efforts and in helping to secure employment for María Elena. The sisters are also partnering with the ACJ Associates and many lay friends who are enthusiastically volunteering time and efforts to furnish the home.

If you would like to contribute to this worthwhile endeavor, please contact Sister Belén Escauriaza at 610-642-5715 or Sister Sagrario Núñez at 215-576-6250.



## Hurricane Irma Forces Handmaids to Evacuate

Hurricane Irma, the first Category 5 hurricane of the 2017 season, made landfall in September, and did not spare her fury on the Handmaid community in Miami. The sisters (Gloria Petrone, Kayjoy Cooper, Carmen Cabrejos, and María Jesús Sagaseta) had had warning of the storm for a week and considered options in their mandatory evacuation zone, four doors from Biscayne Bay. They knew a “King Tide” was coming to bring an unusually high water level and that it would be a threat never before experienced. Still no one could predict what that would mean. Fortunately, the sisters were able to evacuate to the home of a dear friend and ex-Havana ADA Germantown school alum, Ani McKee.

Before leaving their home, the sisters had taken the Blessed Sacrament from chapel with them. The playroom in Ani’s home, with its huge hurricane-resistant skylight all the way around the high roof, offered the perfect place for the Presence of our Risen Lord, where the sisters and Ani joined for Morning and Evening Prayer and Adorations. The skylight was the only source of daylight as Floridians use hurricane shutters to preserve their windows and inside the house from whatever might fly through them. Because it becomes pitch black day and night, the sisters each had a flashlight to move about. They had one day to watch the progress of Irma on TV, until she made landfall across the wide swath of South Florida from coast to coast and took with her all access to water and electricity.

After three days away from their home, the sisters returned to find that Irma had claimed every tree in the Handmaids’ back yard, four in all. The car that was left close to the building ‘drowned’ beyond repair! Every neighbor on the street who had any ground level space — theirs was a spare bedroom/storage area — lost all that was in it. The sisters could see who lost what by the huge piles of ruined furniture, clothing, appliances, etc. left for pick-up. The swirling sea inside their home left a water mark on everything including the walls which had to be opened for potential mold at about three feet. They could tell the waters were swirling by what had been toppled. The work to reclaim stored clothing by means of the washer/drier was enormous. Though they lost food in the refrigerator and freezer, it was seen as a minor hardship compared to others.

The sisters gave much credit the first responders in the Florida Power and Light Co. who had arranged for crews to travel from northern states and work round the clock. Finding a silver lining, they consider themselves fortunate when talking to friends who have family in Puerto Rico, some of whom are in their fifth month without adequate water or food, medicines, medical equipment, roads...

According to Sister Kayjoy Cooper, who offered this recounting of the sisters’ experiences, “We now know how to watch for the next King Tide that coincides with the moon....”



# Farewell to a Landmark



For countless generations, poets, philosophers, historians, and scientists have attempted to capture the awesome wonder of one of nature's most magnificent gifts. The beauty and grandeur of a majestic tree, its limbs outstretched as it brushes the clouds, its roots sunk deep into the earth providing stability and grounding — what more must one seek to recognize the hand of God in creation?

Long before the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus purchased the property at 616 Coopertown Road, the glorious tree (pictured at left) made its home. Over the years, for many retreatants and visitors at Saint Raphaela Center, the tree served as a reminder of hope and peace. It offered a place for reflection, contemplation, and nourishment of the soul. It symbolized strength and growth and security.

Unfortunately, in the fall of 2017, the tree was found to be diseased and needed to be removed from the property. The reaction of the sisters was at first shock and later, sadness. Having to take down the tree was akin to losing a friend. As they watched the removal company slowly and painstakingly clip away at the mighty oak - branch by branch - they recalled the countless times they had sat under the tree, its shade providing protection, its natural beauty a reflection of God's infinite goodness. They recalled how many retreatants had referred to a similar experience and decided to find a way to preserve the tree's memory.

To that end, plans are currently underway to have a permanent sculpture of 'The Last Supper' created from the trunk and large branches of the tree. It will take on a new form, but it will continue to provide inspiration and a spiritually fulfilling place for prayer and respite, reminding us that God is never done with his work of creation.

## IN THE HANDMAIDS' PRAYERS

### *Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:*

Pauline Abbonzio, Michael, Peter, Josephine, and Marie Astrauskas, Jack Bali, Joseph Bangs, Marybeth Barba, Terri Bark, Edward Barr, Dr. Nicholas Battafarano, Charles Beaudet, Barbara Bernard, Sara Blackburn, Mary Biel, Edward (Sonny) Bisson, Charles Bonionis, Clifton E. Booker, Sr., Donna Dellaporte Boyko, George F. Brady, Jr., Geraldine Breslin, Cary J. Broderick, Matt Byrne, Rita Cannella, Daniel Carik, Gina Carlo, Dennis Castellano, Elizabeth Cipressi, Amy Clark, Thomas Colangelo, Robert Comis, Peg Conway, Raymond Conway, Meg Cirrincione, John J. Dabagian, Kathy Dabagian, Theresa DeLacy, James Dever, Sal DiNubile, Jr., Helen Donoghue, Dr. Malvin Dougherty, Don Dugan, Salvatore Pietro D'Uva, Mary Fenerty, Michael Foley, Richard Ford, Francis Gallagher, Bob Ganther, Rosemary Gardner, Gerald Geiser, Richard Geruson, Rebecca Gibbs, Paul Gillespie, Francis Giovannone, Rena Grant, Brian Griffin's Father, Harry Grimes, David N. Gutekunst, Father of Nataliya Halan, Joseph Happler, Sr. Rose Harmsen, Frances McCarren Harper, Marie Hearn, Barbara Heath, Paul Hebbert, Peg Holland, Linda Houldin, Diane Huber, Mrs. Jansen, Elaine Javage, Barry Jones, Betty Kane, Scott D. Katherine, Lois Kearney, John Keenan, Adele Kelly, Harry Kilpatrick, Mary A. Kusek, Robert Kyle, Terrence Lambert, David Laverty, Gwen Lombard, Edward & Ann Luberski, Anthony Magione, Eizabeth Malone, Jerome Mamo, Marie Marziano, Cecelia Matthews, Antoinette Matrone, Mary McDonough, Edward McEarlean, Jacqueline McHale, Eileen McHugh, Joan McNichol, John Miller, Marie Mitchell, John Motley, Helen Mullen, Irene Murphy, Ralph Murphy, Rita Nardi, James Nash, Sr., Patricia C. Neher, Frank Niemczak, Joanne O'Connell, Helen O'Conner, Margaret O'Donnell, Dennis O'Hara, Frank O'Neill, Br. William Osmanski, Joseph & Margaret O'Toole, Joan Panaccio, Francesca Pane, Lucy Pawluk, Tom Peters, Lynn Powell, Jon Prendergast, Antoinette Przdziel, James Quigley, Mrs. Quijano, Dolores Quinn, Ligia Quinn, Joan Rau, William Regli, Brandt Reilly, Kathleen Roche, Mary Roma, Ralph Romano, Eugene Ryan, Thomas Sablich, J. Roger Schmeidel, Renee Martorano Schwendimann, Edward Scully, Josephine & Aloysious Sokal, Daniel Specia, Joan Speziale, Arthur Summers, Sr. Theresa Suplick, Rose Ann Townsend, Gennaro Treglia, Joseph Tutolo, Virginia Vinci, SSJ, Theresa Waeltz, Frank Wellock, Jim Welsh, Kathleen Wermuth, Joseph Wierlko and Ellen Wischuck.

### *Please pray for the requests offered on behalf of:*

Sr. Dorothy Aloerio, Alejandro Arizola, Anna Bau, Jim Bergquist, Virginia Brown, Anthony Chiodo, Patrice Cipressi, Alexa, Brendan and Charlie Clark, The Clark Family, Jack Coll, Mrs. Lucia DeMarco and Family, Joe DePalma, Emily DiPietro, Amy Diesel, Jean Foster, Dan Friedman, Meghan Fryer and Family, Kevin Gallagher, Joel and Trevor Garson, Richard Garson, Pat Guntle, Rebecca Haggerty, Ellen Haslett, The Heath Family, Joann Hoffman, The Keating Family and their intentions, Jan Kern, Joyce Kleiber, Donnal Kyle, Eileen Larkey, Donald Leighton, Anna Lich, Maria Lieu, Sue Longmar, Dan Luberski, Theresa Mai, Joanne Mainardi, Marie Marziano, Elaine McNamara, William McWilliams, Fr. Patrick Mundy, Marianne Nicastro, Maria Oanh, Veronica O'Keefe, Randy Rogers, Edna Savage, Carmelo Scuncio, Stan Sherman, Sharon Silvestri, Mary Smith, Specia Family, Ray Subers, John Swartz, Andre Tinh, Giuse Tho, Anton Thue, Hoyt Walter, Luke Willette, Eileen Wolpert, Denise Woods, Miriam Woodland, Bern, Bill, Cuneyt, Debbie, Eddie, Ioulia, Josephine, Lizalee, Meryem, Nastia, Nicoloi, Oksana, Tonia, Vanessa, and Xavier.

# Journey of Hope 2018

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK AND SPEND AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS - OLD AND NEW - IN A BEAUTIFULLY INVITING LOCATION FULL OF AMBIENCE, GREAT FOOD, DRINK, AND HOSPITALITY??

IF YOU ANSWERED "YES"... WE'VE GOT JUST THE TICKET FOR YOU!!!

**BIG SURPRISES  
ARE IN STORE AT  
THE LOCATION!!!**



JOIN US ON  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25TH AT 6:30 PM  
AT ST. RAPHAELA CENTER  
616 COOPERTOWN ROAD HAVERFORD, PA  
FOR THE 8TH

**JOURNEY OF HOPE CELEBRATION**

## **MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF!!!**

DETACH, COMPLETE, AND RETURN THIS FORM TO: Journey of Hope Committee  
616 Coopertown Road Haverford, PA 19041

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to ATTEND the Journey of Hope 2018? Number attending \_\_\_\_\_ at \$100 per ticket

Would you like to be a SPONSOR for the Journey of Hope 2018? Sponsorships are available at the following levels:

☐ \$10,000 - PLATINUM    ☐ \$5,000 - DIAMOND    ☐ \$2,500 - GOLD    ☐ \$1,000 - SILVER

Would you like to offer a GIFT for the Journey of Hope 2018? Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to submit an advertisement for the Journey of Hope 2018? Advertisements are available at the following levels:

☐ \$200 - FULL PAGE    ☐ \$100 - HALF PAGE    ☐ \$75 - QUARTER PAGE