



Listening with an Open Heart

by Lisa Martin, CHM Communications Director

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary (CHM) embraced a theme for their community for the year 2018 of “listening with an open heart.” One might reflect on the history of the sisters’ ministries and think, this isn’t new, but the way it has always been. The CHM mission statement reads, “Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.”

Often, in this publication we have focused on CHM sponsored ministries – Humility of Mary Housing and Shelter projects and Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat: wonderful works with positive effects in the Quad City community. We have also focused on individual sisters who minister in Colorado, Montana, Mississippi, Iowa, Illinois and

Mexico. Here sisters humbly work and minister to their communities in a variety of ways.

But these physical works of the gospel do not complete the picture. Currently as a community, CHMs practice solidarity through prayer, hospitality and financial support.

The financial support comes through the Humility of Mary People’s Investment Fund which provides funding for emergency loans or grants to individuals and to groups seeking to alleviate poverty and injustice. The CHM Resource Stewardship Advisory Committee reviews large requests and determines where funds will be allocated. Some have included:

- Central Community Circle Food Pantry – providing food for the hungry in Davenport, Iowa

- Homeless Veteran’s Stand Down of Des Moines – providing supplies and services to homeless veterans

- Diversity Service Center of Iowa – providing education, information and social services to people from all over the world who live in Muscatine and surrounding areas.

- Bread for the World – ending hunger

- Sister Water Project – bringing safe water to villages in Tanzania and Honduras

- Mexican American Catholic College – dealing with religious life, specifically the language and cultural component

- Pace e Bene – building a culture of peace

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Photo: The Congregation of the Humility of Mary financially supports a wide variety of organizations whose mission reflects their own.

Spring 2018

Volume 16 Issue 1

The Flame is published three times a year for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and friends.

Our Mission: We, the members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary, call one another to live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for Earth itself.

I pray that God will enlighten the eyes of your heart so that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Ephesians 1:18

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The CHM Leadership Team meets regularly to make decisions regarding the welfare of the CHM Congregation and its use of resources in support of the CHM Mission. From left to right: Sr. Lynn Mousel, Cabinet, Sr. Mary Ann Vogel, President, Sr. Marcia Eckerman, Cabinet, Sr. Johanna Rickl, Vice-president and Sr. Irene Muñoz, Cabinet.

Dear Friends,

Many religious communities are facing times of transition as members decrease and median ages increase. Some questions put to us to ponder on are: What gap are we standing on? What edge of life is calling to us? How do we witness to this life in a time of changed realities, circumstances and resources? Pope Francis challenges us to intentionally seek out those who are “different” from us—the poor, the suffering and the marginalized. We CHMs have been there but, as Lisa explains in her opening article, many of us now respond through prayer, hospitality and financial support. Some are quite involved through their volunteer activities and activism on various issues. A few are still in active ministry. You, our donors, are responding “with an open heart” through your generous gifts. Together, we continue to respond, as did our founders, to the needs of the poor and powerless.

Thank you and may you have a blessed week.

Mary Ann Vogel
CHM President

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- SHARE El Salvador – Strengthening solidarity with and among the Salvadoran people in El Salvador and the United States in the struggle for economic sustainability, justice, and human and civil rights
- Still Point Theatre Collective – Chicago based organization offering free outreach programs to marginalized communities
- Riverbend Food Bank – fighting hunger in eastern Iowa and western Illinois
- NETWORK – lobbying for Catholic Social Justice
- QC Interfaith – community of people in the Quad Cities living out their faith and values to collectively transform society and bring about justice and human dignity locally and regionally
- Churches United – Quad City ministries including 24 food pantries, 3 hot meal sites, a shelter for women, and a resale shop
- Friends of Martin Luther King Interpretive Center – promoting MLK legacy and the civil rights movement in Iowa and the Quad Cities
- Living Lands and Waters – providing Mississippi River cleanup services to help with watershed conservation
- Catholic Peace Ministry – helping people answer the call to be God’s instruments of peace
- Christian Care of Rock Island – improving the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals struggling with mental illness, substance abuse, men transitioning out of prison and veterans
- Postville Raid 10 Year Anniversary – calling for just, compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform
- Franciscan Peace Center in Clinton, Iowa – promoting active nonviolence and peacemaking and advocating for social justice issues and care for Earth
- Mottet Leadership Institute Scholarships – providing for people to learn leadership skills that can bring positive change to their community or group
- Pax Christi USA – working for peace with justice

Even though the Congregation of the Humility of Mary is growing smaller, with fewer sisters in active ministry, they continue to contribute to many important ministries locally and throughout the world through these gifts – working for justice within the human family, living the gospel with simplicity and joy.



God of the Universe, these are uneasy times when brothers and sisters everywhere are struggling to escape want, war, carnage, chaos, pain. I carry the imprint of their struggles upon my soul.

I hear the frightened voices of immigrants and refugees with nowhere to turn and few to give them counsel. I hear the desperation of families shackled to systems hopelessly broken.

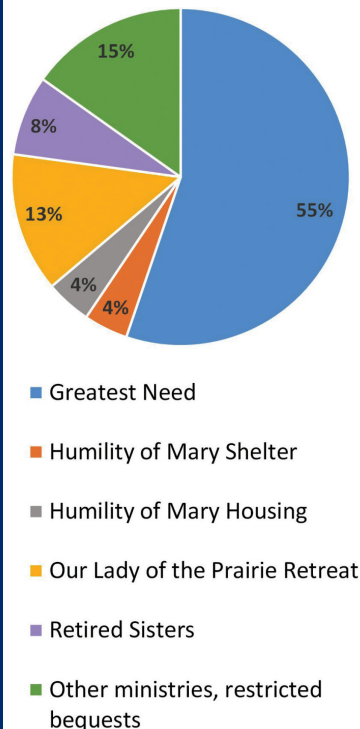
And yes, I hear your Summons, your call to attend to those in need. I cannot turn a blind eye, a deaf ear. The time is now.

How am I to respond to your Summons is not clear. I can only trust that you will give me a sense of direction and purpose, a heart filled with compassion, the strength to step up to the challenge and your companionship on the way! Amen!

On May 11 join others in Postville for: 10 am prayer service, 11:30 walk, 12 pm Respond to Summons.

For more info: Contact St. Bridget Church, Postville, Iowa, dbq134@dbqarch.org

2017 Donations



Each spring, we prepare a list of all our donors from the previous year. This issue is always a special publication for us because it is an opportunity to recognize those who make it possible for CHMs to continue ministries and provide loving care for our retired sisters. Many of our donations are designated to “Greatest Need,” which allows our sisters to direct funds to areas with the most immediate needs. Other donors choose to direct donations to specific ministries. Either way, donations to the congregation are crucial to our mission and greatly appreciated. The chart at left reflects the designation of gifts by our donors for gifts received January 1 to December 31, 2017.

New Beginnings at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat

by Sister Marcia Eckerman, CHM



Guests arriving at the main entrance come to enjoy the peace and quiet of Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat.

Our mission at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat (OLPR) continues in the time of “in-betweenness.” God’s beauty and peace at The Prairie have welcomed Todd Seifert as the new property manager. Todd brings fresh eyes and ideas to the retreat center. OLPR awaits the arrival in March of Sr. Margaret Kruse, OSF, as the new director. She will see God’s beauty emerging as spring arrives.

Amid the cold, greens grow in the greenhouse. All await their new growth.

Creating a new atmosphere, rooms have been re-painted. Visitors enjoying a morning cup of coffee or tea will do so in a brightly colored breakfast nook.

With “all hands on deck,” Prairie Heights’ three levels shine. Guests who enter will stay in the fresh and clean surroundings.

Now shopping in our gift shop will be a different experience. Stop in and visit the new layout.

Ready for spring cleaning? OLPR has started a “tool drive”! The Prairie has three separate buildings located a distance from each other. In addition to creating a functioning maintenance workshop, Todd’s vision is that each building will have an essential tool box. He states, “I am making a plea for tools as a first step in building a solid, functioning maintenance shop.”

If you are ready to spring clean your basement, garage, barn or tool shed and have extra tools you no longer use, give Todd a call at 563-374-1092. No tools to spare? We also welcome your financial donation, which can be made payable to Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, 2664 145th Ave., Wheatland, IA 52777.

For a list of needed tools or to donate on-line visit:

www.chmiowa.org/retreat



Todd and Shelly Seifert enjoy a day of kayaking.

Todd began his employment at OLPR in late December 2017 and now oversees the day to day functioning of the Prairie, including the maintenance, service contracting, liaison with government agencies and the preservation of the Prairie property. Todd is humbled to be part of the Sisters of Humility community, and sees his position with OLPR as nothing short of a ministry.

Over the years, Todd has sat on numerous boards and committees, ranging from professional to municipal, to fundraising – including the OLPR Advisory Committee. Prior to coming to the Prairie, Todd worked in maintenance at Iowa Masonic Health Facilities, in Bettendorf.

Todd has been married to Shelly for 33 years. She works in communications for the Sisters of St. Francis in Clinton, IA, where they are Franciscan Sojourners.

Prayer to Know God’s Will

May it please the supreme and divine Goodness to give us all abundant grace, ever to know his most holy will and perfectly to fulfill it.

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

Being a Healing Presence in our Broken World

by Sister Lynn Mousel, CHM

Each of us, whether directly or not, was affected by yet another school shooting in Parkland, FL, on Ash Wednesday. Different this time is the response to the shooting, particularly from the youth in Florida and around the country. Grief, fear and anger have been positive motivators as youth use their voices in rallies and protests to convey the need for legislation to help bring an end to gun violence. I have been inspired by these youth who in response to this traumatic event are taking action for the benefit of all. It is not difficult to see God at work in the midst of such violence and loss.

What does all of this tell us in the context of the church document "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment"? Two quotes struck me as especially pertinent. The document quotes Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*: "Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start..." The document also says, "It is important that young people—often withdrawn into a stereotype of passivity and inexperience—propose and practice alternatives which show how the world or the Church could be..."

Our personal and communal experiences play a major part in discerning how God is calling us to be our best selves. We experience our joys and sorrows in the context of a member of a family, a member of

the Catholic Church, and a member of our country and global community. Sifting through those joys and sorrows, and all of our other feelings, we ask, "Where is God in all of this? How is God asking me to use these experiences, along with my gifts and talents, to make the world a better place?"

Most of the time, this is a

I am proud and hopeful to see the way in which youth have responded. Whether they are mindful of it or not, they are surely following God's call.

long, gradual process, a path of exploration that requires patience. Other times, something happens that causes a sudden major shift and sets us on a path we never would have imagined. Sometimes it is a path we would have never chosen in the first place, especially if it involves tragedy and grief. But when we come together behind a common goal and vision, it is a powerful force. We know that we are not alone, and together we can accomplish so much more than any individual.

These recent events are a reminder that youth have their own wisdom and a voice that needs to be heard. I am reminded of Jeremiah (Jer 1:5-9) who told God that he was too young to speak as a prophet. God assured Jeremiah that he indeed was called and that God would be with him. I see these youth responding to the Florida school shooting as

prophetic, by giving voice to their needs and calling for change that has so far not been accomplished. They are a voice saying "never again." Certainly this is not the world God imagines for us, whether we are a student, teacher, parent, or a person who is so troubled inside that we resort to violence.

I recently attended a session of the ForMission program, which is designed by the Religious Formation Conference for religious in formation ministry (journeying with those in the process of entering religious life). One of the speakers, Sr. Linda Gibler, spoke about the universe story and evolution in a religious context. Those of us present tended to be the younger members of our religious congregations. We were delighted when Sr. Linda described how juvenile chimpanzees are the ones who first came down from the trees to be adventurous and explore new paths.

It is tragic that it takes repeated events like school shootings to move us to action. Yet I am proud and hopeful to see the way in which youth have responded. Whether they are mindful of it or not, they are surely following God's call. While their path changed in an instant, they have a long road of healing ahead of them. Let each of us discern how we can be a healing presence in our broken world.

This article was first published in the Dubuque Witness.

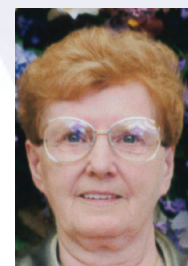
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Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat



Resting in Heavenly Peace



Sr. Charlene Olear
September 2, 1925 -
November 6, 2017



Associate Linda Straw
July 25, 1945 -
January 22, 2018

Tributes to our departed sisters can be found at www.chmiowa.org

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 Renee Cooley
 Sherrill Custer
 Mary Alice Daly
 Barbara & David Detaeye-Dvorak
 Donna Dobbels
 Kathleen Dooley
 Sue Foley
 Eunice Fong
 Marsha & John Forys
 Linda Frear-Eli
 Jim Freeman
 Mary Gauthier
 Raymond P German
 Fr. Robert Harness
 Wilma Hauser, in memoriam
 Dr. Lyle Hellyer
 Rosemary Hendricks
 Msgr. Francis Henricksen
 Mary Hittner
 Dick Inman
 Marilyn Kelley

Shiela D Kielly
 Betty & William Klodt
 Jerri Leinen Moeller
 Gayle Lovejoy
 Kathleen & Glenn Medhus
 Evalée Mickey
 Benita Moore
 Esther Morrissey
 Barbara Mosley
 Jane O'Donnell
 Barbara Pierzynski
 Leslie Poletto
 John & Kathy Prochaska
 Francis & Sandra Raucci
 Margaret Real
 Donna Riedel
 Janet Rossmiller-Dolan
 Gary & Rose Marie Schmedding
 Jonella & Richard Schwaller
 Sarah K Sedgwick
 Russell E Sellers
 Joseph Simons
 Billie Smith-Uitermarkt
 Patricia Spratt
 Dr. Richard W Thiede
 Kenneth Vandersnick
 Carol Vogel
 Gertrude Vogel
 Janet M Walther
 Sue Witte

This spring issue of *The Flame* contains a listing of friends who have made contributions to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary from January 1 through December 31, 2017. Every effort has been made to provide a complete and accurate listing. If there are errors, omissions, or questions, please contact the development office at 563-336-8401.

Thank you for your generosity and support.

CHM Prayer Life



Sister Roberta Brich - Since I am no longer able to take part in greater physically demanding ministries, I have come to understand more deeply the meaning of my life as a “ministry of prayer.” Each day I have a greater awareness of, and gratitude for, the infinite love of God for me.

All of Creation—nature—calls me to deeper love and appreciation for the Divine Creator who allows me to be part of this creation!

Although I have no idea who or what may benefit from my prayers - just as the squirrels chasing one another around and up and down the cottonwood trees don’t know they are a source of entertainment for me—I trust God knows where Divine intervention is most needed!



Sister Kathryn O'Meara - Prayer is a part of me that has developed over the years. It comes in all forms as: spontaneous, group, formal prayer, and personal prayer. I feel prayer is constantly with me.

Through the years it has become more frequent and shorter in duration—I believe human attention span is just 20 minutes—with a variety of sources used. I have expanded my prayer forms with formal prayer evolving into a more relaxed style (or informal) and group prayer and discussion. Most meaningful to me is a walk out of doors enjoying creation, small prayer groups, ecumenical prayer groups and study groups.

*Coming soon to
Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat*

Walk as One at 1

Sat, May 5 | 10am - 3pm

What better day than World Labyrinth Day to learn about and experience walking the labyrinth!

Preserving Stories of Family & Faith

Tues, May 8 | 9:30am-3:30pm

Delve into memories and find ways to creatively write and gift them to family.

Our Deeper Memory: Exploring our Evolving Universe, Earth and Spirituality July 24 - July 30, 2018

Explore the deep memory of the universe, Earth, and ourselves.

For more info call 563-336-8414

*You can find and register for all our
scheduled retreats at **chmiowa.org***