



Quarantine Brings Blessing of Time

Sr. Mary Penelope Wink:

In general quarantine has been good for me because I have TIME; I have time to ruminate what is important, to listen to a recording of “Revelations of Divine Love” by Julian of Norwich, to read all the “links” I am interested in and to look for materials that can be shared virtually with parish ministers. Also, to be attentive and try to figure out what transformations this special time is asking of me as a parish worker, as a member of several diocesan commissions, as a psychotherapist and most of all as a person. This time has been important in the possibility of being in contact, in new ways, with more of the persons who “make up” my life.

One of the constants of this time has been the importance of doing with, for, in ... love. This is not a new concept or conviction; I have been

impressed by how important it is. No matter what I do, even if it is lying in the hammock to rest—love is the motivating factor or my rest isn’t the same. When I look for materials to share via whatever medium, doing it with love has made it very clear which ones would be best. Giving, forgiving, watching, hearing, accompanying families of deceased and the gravely ill—it all changes from a conscious choice of loving. Loving the rest of creation brings my respect for each part of it up a notch.

Another thing that is clear to me is that we can’t go back to how it was. There have to be changes in how we have meetings, how we celebrate, how we meet and greet...because now all has been changed in some way by this experience. Every single person has learned something more, changed in some way, caught on to

something new. So why go back and do the same things in the same ways if we are not the same?

Lately we have had a lot of deaths in this town and diocese and in our parish in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, MX. Some persons were better known and others less so but each one has left a hole in the heart of others. The customs here normally include a lot of accompaniment in the moment and immediately afterward—that has not been possible in these moments.

I think we need to do some collective mourning, take the time to recognize

-TIME continued on page 6

Photos:

At left: Sr. Mary Penelope Wink at home in Chiapas, MX, searching for material that can be shared virtually with parish ministers.

At Right: Sr. Joann Kuebrich quarantines at Humility of Mary Center in Davenport, IA.

Summer 2020

Volume 18 Issue 2

“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.

*Indeed, I consider
the sufferings of the present
to be nothing compared with the
glory that will be revealed in us.*

ROMANS 8:18

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Sr. Mary Ann Vogel speaks during a prayer service June 1 at the Humility of Mary Center in Davenport in memory of the over 100,000 lives lost to COVID-19. Bishop Thomas Zinkula joined the sisters at the service.

Dear Friends and Donors,

For over three months our lives have been invaded by a coronavirus that caused us to look at many things differently. It has caused us to be separated from those we love, to distance ourselves when in the presence of others and to wear facial masks to protect each other. Many business meetings and even social gatherings are being done virtually. This virus has taken the lives of many of our (your) family members and friends. We are learning how racial inequality, poor housing, lack of affordable health care and basic human needs are disproportionately represented in the deaths caused by this virus. Millions are unemployed.

When, or would, life ever be the same? A part of the answer to that question came with the recent protests calling for an end to police brutality and for overdue systemic change in our society. One woman was asked if she was not concerned about the possibility of contracting COVID-19 while participating in the large crowds of people protesting and she responded that she would be willing to give up her life if it meant her children would have a better life.

This certainly is not something that will end soon. And, indeed, this is a time for us as Sisters of the Humility of Mary to be attentive to our mission: to the call of the spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless...and to work for justice within the human family.

To you, our donors and friends, thank you for your support in all we do. There certainly is never an end to the needs of God's people who are, also, our brothers and sisters.

*Sr. Mary Ann Vogel
CHM President*

OLPR Response to Coronavirus

by Margaret Kruse, OSF, Director of Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat

The coronavirus has stopped all of us in our tracks, not only at Our Lady of The Prairie Retreat, but throughout the world. We, at the Prairie, closed our doors to guests in the middle of March and will reopen August 1.

Even though OLPR has been closed to the public since March 12, the facility has been “buzzing” with outdoor projects. This includes the addition of eight new beehives, construction of the new maintenance building the “Sunrise Shop”, and the garden areas and flower beds are being rejuvenated. Signs of new life are everywhere!

Although visitors have missed the blooming of the crab apple trees, daffodils, peonies, irises and much more, we are able to stay connected and share our seasonal beauty in our Prairie play list on YouTube. Please take the time to treat yourself to these micro-retreat videos. While there, check out the UN World Bee Day video and see communications director Lisa Martin as she dons a beekeeper suit and interviews our beekeeper, Bob Roe. (Go to www.chmiowa.org, scroll to the bottom of the page and look for the word “Social,” then click on the YouTube arrow.)

We are also using this down time as an opportunity to implement new guidelines and policies to keep retreatants and staff safe during this time of change. The COVID-19 experience has forced us to meet with committees and attend many meetings virtually through Zoom and has also taught us new ways to connect with family and friends around the world. In May, we experimented with a well-received online retreat and have plans for more in the future.

This time of the pandemic has shifted the way we connect and experience life. It has provided us with the opportunity to slow down, to take time to reflect, and give nature time to breathe and rejuvenate itself. In our slower pace, we can see more clearly what is important—family, friends, nature, etc.—and consciously hold them with greater appreciation and reverence. We are being given the gift of time to strengthen our bonds with each other, to be creative in our time together.

This pandemic is calling us to be awakened to a deeper presence of God in our lives, listening to what God is calling us to do, and creating a world with more love for people most in need. Online meetings and religious services are opening more opportunities of a bigger world to us. We can attend liturgy anywhere, from the Vatican to Houston to Africa. We can also explore different religious traditions—widening our vision

and expanding our understanding of other cultures. The internet may be a sign of a development of a new consciousness on the horizon that can change our thinking, but most importantly our love for others.

We will not go back to the old normal after this pandemic—and many of us may not want to. This time is calling us to a new vision of thinking, being and living. Boldly we must go forward into the future, whatever it may be, whatever we are being called to do. We should use this opportunity to ready ourselves for this new challenge.



Bob “The Bee Man” Roe built eight beehives for The Prairie and tends to the hives each week.

Open House on The Prairie

Sunday, October 18, 2020

2:00pm-4:00pm

☞ Walking Tours ☞

Labyrinth, Prairie Trails, Gardens,
Cosmic Walk and the new “Sunrise Shop”

☞ Refreshments ☞

*Subscribe to “CHM Spirit” e-news and receive
monthly updates with more details.*

*Go to **www.chmiowa.org**
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Honor and Remember

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary is grateful for the donations received in memory or honor of loved ones between January and May 2020. CHMs remember these individuals in our daily prayers and Masses.

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CHM Sisters gather in the Magnificat Chapel at Humility of Mary Center. They social distance and visit with sisters from as far as Mexico using ZOOM video conferencing.

- TIME Cont. from page 1

we have all been touched and that mourning is a collective act because death has been a collective act; it is a common factor. Mourn people lost above all, but also mourn moments lost, customs left behind. I think that only mourning collectively will allow us to move on collectively and that is the only way to move on. We've all lived through this, why not all move on together?

Sr. Joann Kuebrich:

With the pandemic came the Humility of Mary Center (HMC) "lock down." This included residents not leaving campus except for medical appointments and no unauthorized persons entering HMC. This necessitated cancelling daily Mass, closing our doors to visitors, and cancelling scheduled meetings and services regularly held at the Center. Nor could we have the privilege of using our cars to leave campus.

A few days into our quarantine, I sensed a change of tempo and the pace of my days. I felt a little disoriented until it occurred to me that since high school graduation, from my college days and 60 plus years of religious life, my daily routines were controlled by a firmly-set schedule. I recognized that I was so accustomed to or driven by these fast-paced, tightly scheduled routines of community living for so many years my quarantine days felt different—like having more time at the breakfast table. In the busyness of those past years it never occurred to me to consider another possibly slower way of living.

Reflecting on more than two months being quarantined, I feel as though I've been on a long retreat or an extended vacation. These days of grace gave me an appreciation for my life as a retired sister with ample time each morning for contemplative reading, study and prayer. Living this somewhat relaxed

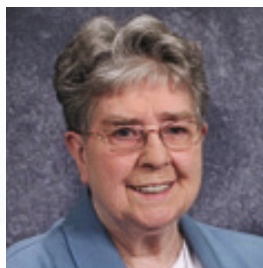
schedule caused me to reflect on how I had been spending my time and asked myself questions about my priorities and motives for the way I use my time and my time management. However, I was always mindful of the many elderly people, families and individuals struggling with various hardships and lifted them up daily in prayer.

I appreciated the concurrence of our pandemic with the end of the lenten season, the Triduum and the 50-day season of Easter. In the past I read and heard the stories of Scripture for these Seasons and became somewhat numb to their meaning even though I had regularly given time reflecting on them. Our quarantine afforded me time daily devoted to contemplatively reading and absorbing the details of the Acts of the Apostles and the daily Easter-season readings.

Our community morning and evening prayers of the church punctuated with Alleluias and the Paschal candle flickering enhanced my deeper appreciation of the Easter Season. These daily readings prompted me to make a special Pentecost novena. Missing was the rich experience and prayer of the Triduum liturgies.

I consider the time of the pandemic that I spent daily doing contemplative reading, study and prayer as a time of special graces and blessing. I am aware the fruits of this daily practice caused me to rethink/change my daily prayer practices and experience a new and deeper spirituality. The lenten readings with the call to return to my true self and turn to God combined with the Easter messages of new life gave a greater awareness of the presence of the risen Christ within me through the power of the Holy Spirit. This was an experience of learning to listen and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Jubilee 2020



Sr. Rosalia Riedel
75 Years



Sr. Rachel Beeson
70 Years



Sr. Judith Carrara
60 Years



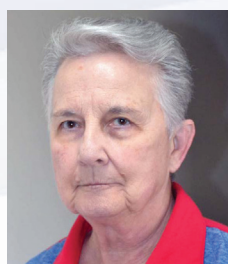
Sr. Kathleen Hanley
60 Years



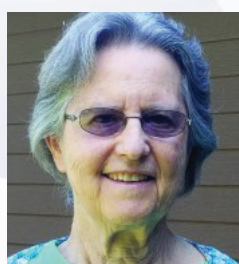
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60 Years



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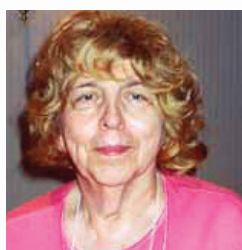
Sr. Johanna Rickl
60 Years



Sr. Nancy Schwieters
60 Years



Sr. Mary Penelope Wink
60 Years



CHM Associate Pat Knopick
25 Years

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary congratulates 10 CHM sisters and one CHM associate on their 2020 Jubilee. It is with great hope that we will celebrate with a special Mass in August.

To keep up with our news and future events go to **www.chmiowa.org** – sign up at bottom of page for our monthly e-newsletter “CHM Spirit.” While there, visit “Sister Stories” to find out about each of these wonderful CHM Jubilarians.

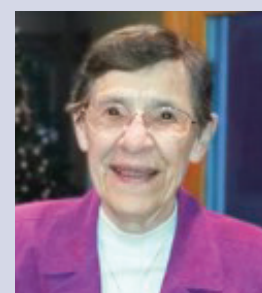
In Loving Memory



Sister Donna Schmitt
November 11, 1929 -
October 25, 2019



Sister Cecelia Vandeberg
June 26, 1918 -
October 26, 2019



Sister Carla Takes
July 16, 1925 -
December 21, 2019



Sister Marianne Nehus
December 23, 1952 -
May 10, 2020



Sister Maribeth Takes
May 28, 1927 -
May 11, 2020

Tributes to our departed sisters can be found at **www.chmiowa.org** in the “Sister Stories” section.

CHM Staff Reflections During COVID-19



Chris Austin,
Systems Analyst

The pandemic has not affected me negatively more than any other seasonal flu

or viral situation. I am just more conscious of the situation and as a community, more careful around others.

I would say it has enhanced close relationships with friends and family. The only hinderance is occasional social events. I suppose I discovered there are things I can simply do without and not dwell on things that cannot be changed.

I pray that people help others in need and realize violence will not solve a thing.



Mike Duffy,
Humility of
Mary Center
Administrator

There is the home me and

the work me. My life feels very compartmentalized. I only go to the grocery store or drug store for essential items, then straight back home. At work, I do very little socializing or face-to-face time with the sisters because I want them to be protected from potential germs/viruses. Meetings have become “different” because voices are muffled beneath masks and we are sitting apart from each other or we are talking to a computer screen (Zoom).

There is also the added stress that we maintain daily operations at HMC while still balancing the risks and benefits of doing business during this pandemic crisis. I pray daily for good health for our sisters and employees.



Claudia Scharf,
Finance/OLPR/
Leadership Assistant

A challenge for me is the lack of personal connection.

A person needs to reach out to “others” to seek the live verbal communication. I think society forgets that. There is communication via text, email, and communications apps, but it takes a single person to initiate the real telephone call. However in doing so, will anyone answer? I rarely get a phone call, and when I do, I think I probably ramble on as I am excited that someone reached out.

I think often of all the people living by themselves. My heart reaches out to them. Although I did not know them by name, my heart connected with them in their struggles, joys, and fears.

A good outcome—time to cook. I am now hooked on baby spinach!