New Beginnings In New Locations

Nano Nagle, our foundress said, “By degrees with the assistance of God, we may do a great deal.” And through the words of Isaiah the prophet we hear God say, “See I am doing something new. Do you not perceive it?”

The summer found many of our sisters involved in a great deal of packing, moving and relocating. All are at the start of accepting challenging invitations to create new communities at home and in their ministries.

Some sisters moved into existing communities adding new life to those communities. We also were fortunate to open two new convents. One community formed in one of the individual houses on our property in New Windsor. Another group of four sisters (pictured above with Rev. Bill Damroth, Pastor and parish staff members) moved into the convent in St. Francis of Assisi Parish in one of the most depressed areas in Newburgh.

The sisters in both new houses are already involved in some of the existing ministries in Newburgh and creating some new ministries: senior citizen groups, adult education classes, ministry to others in local nursing homes.

Sr. Patricia Reills (pictured below with Rev. Rees Doughty, Pastor and Louise Pisano, DRE) has started a new religious education program for the parents of first graders, so they can instruct them in their faith at home.

Likewise, sisters who moved into existing communities are sharing their gifts and talents in the areas they are in. Our sisters in our main convent in New Windsor have recently begun a new ministry: making sandwiches for the people who come to Newburgh Ministry, a local center for the poor and homeless. Of course, our ministry of prayer continues to grow as new tragedies happen around the world. Those sisters are our “go to” people when we really need prayers.

We are so grateful for your continued partnership and support in all our endeavors.

Fall 2016

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Dear Friends,

“Have the courage to teach us that it is easier to build bridges than walls! ...God expects something from you. God wants something from you. God hopes in you. God comes to break down all our fences. He comes to open the doors of our lives, our dreams, our ways of seeing things. ...God wants to make you see that with you, the world can be different. For the fact is, unless you offer the best of yourselves, the world will never be different.” -Pope Francis

Pope Francis spoke these challenging words to more than one million young people from 187 countries who gathered for World Youth Day this past August in Krakow, Poland.

Cannot these words speak to all ages, even to each one of us? I wonder, how am I building bridges? How am I offering God’s mercy and compassion to those who are hungry, poor or unjustly treated, to those seeking employment or to those whose skin color is different from mine? How am I making a difference in my part of the world and how will our world be different because of who I am and the witness I give?

When I build bridges it offers me the possibility to see people and situations differently. A greater solidarity with others begins as I engage in new opportunities and experience new ways of seeing, new ways of being. I can bring about justice and peace to others but also to myself.

This past summer many of our sisters experienced new beginnings as they left familiar surroundings to dream new ways of seeing things. Sisters living at St. Michael’s Convent on West 33rd Street in Manhattan, where our sisters lived and served for over 100 years, have moved on and are facing new possibilities and challenges. Four of our sisters are now living in St. Francis of Assisi Convent in Newburgh, New York where they will serve the poor and immigrant population much like our pioneer sisters did when they came from Ireland in 1874. Sisters from Rhode Island, New Jersey and Bronx, New York have taken up new residences and various ministries in Massachusetts and New York. These changes offer so many possibilities for new beginnings.

Bridges are being built each day and not walls.

Because of your prayers and generosity our sisters are able to continue building bridges as together we face the many challenges of our world today. Your faithfulness remains constant, your prayers inspire us and your donations enable us as Presentation Sisters to be courageous—to build yet one more bridge. With your help and God’s guidance we are opening doors to new possibilities and dreaming dreams for a new tomorrow. God alone can help us make the world different—one person at a time. And so let us continue to offer the best of ourselves, no matter our age, in order to bridge the gap to a new tomorrow giving thanks to God and each of you for helping us make a difference.

With deepest gratitude,

Sr. Martha Otterstedt, PBVM
Vice President
“I love my job and am passionate about my mission promoting the sacredness of the body through therapeutic massage,” replies Sr. Pat Dowler when asked about her ministry at Bancroft School of Massage Therapy located in Worcester, Massachusetts. Sister wears multiple hats as Education Director/Clinic Director/Department Head of Regional Massage Applications III and instructor.

After teaching junior high school for 12 years, Sr. Pat pursued studies in Nursing at the Burbank Hospital School of Nursing in Massachusetts. She stayed on at Burbank working as a charge nurse on a medical-surgical/orthopedic floor for 17 years. When due to downsizing Burbank Hospital closed all acute care Sister left and decided to begin studies at Bancroft School of Massage Therapy in Worcester in 1996 where she later became an instructor.

“Working with students of massage is extremely rewarding.”

Believing in the professionalism of massage and the importance of networking has led Sister to be an active member of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) since 1997. She served as its first Vice President and then 2nd Vice President, and held volunteer positions which she found very exciting. In 2006 she participated as a Delegate to the National AMTA Convention in Atlanta. The AMTA has twice honored her with the President’s award in appreciation of her work within the Chapter.

When time permits, Sister Pat also schedules clients at either her private office in Leominster, Massachusetts or at Bancroft. Sister explains, “So often I realize my hands are not the healers but the instruments with which God brings comfort, relaxation, healing to those whom I touch.”
For the past 11 years Sr. Ruth Abrams, Ph.D. has ministered as the Senior Director of Funded Programs and Policy for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the New York City Department of Education, Division of Non-Public Schools-21st Century Partners in Learning. Sister has worked for the Department of Education in various roles for a total of 31 years.

Serving as a liaison between the private school community and federal, state and local agencies, Sister ensures that eligible private school students, parents and the school staff in the five boroughs of New York City have access to federally funded educational services.

The Division of Nonpublic Schools (DNPS) developed the 21st Century Partners in Learning initiative with the Standing Committee of Nonpublic School Officials. The Standing Committee is comprised of nonpublic school representatives from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, the Jewish Day Schools, the Islamic Schools Association, the Lutheran Schools Association, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, other Christian denominations, and independent schools.

When Sister Ruth was asked, “What about her ministry buoyed her spirits and gave her hope?”, she replied, “knowing that students, parents, teachers, and administrators have access to services that they would not have without these programs.” The programs are offered to over 800 private schools.

Prior to serving in the New York City Department of Education, Sister taught in St. Jude’s in Manhattan, St. Rose of Lima in Rockaway, Queens and Sacred Hearth School in Manhattan.

“Let us all thank those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life.”
- Pope Francis
In May, Sr. Pauline LeBlanc was unanimously selected by the staff of St. Bernard’s School as “Employee of the Year” and received an award from the Fitchburg Rotary Club along with employees from other organizations in Fitchburg. The quote attributed to all of them stated, “They make Fitchburg a better place!”

Sr. Mary O’Neill received the Father Victor Yanitelli Award at the 30th Anniversary Soars Awards Dinner on September 21st in New York City. After many years of teaching and then working for Catholic Charities, Sister began her third career helping the disadvantaged at the Newburgh Ministry. Five women religious started the ministry in 1983 in response to the needs they saw in Newburgh’s streets. Sister Mary’s work at Newburgh Ministry includes advocacy, informal case management and referral to rehabilitation services.

We were pleased to have Serving with the Sisters Service Week -June 5-10th. The week began with a visit at the United Nations hosted by Sr. Elsa Muttathu and IPA Volunteers Olivia and Nicole learning about global issues and how we can work and educate others for systemic change. After sitting in on part of a session we were joined for lunch by NGO executive Assistants Victoria Larsen-UNANIMA International, Cecilie Keren -Sisters of the Charity of Good Shepherd and Teresa Blumenstein-Loretto community along with IPA volunteers Olivia and Nicole. The remainder of the week we will serve in Newburgh at Newburgh Ministries and Habitat for Humanity. "One of the highlights of my first United Nations visit was lunch with five other inspiring young women passionate about social justice and working hard to make a difference. We talked about how we can all do our small part as teachers, youth ministers and med students to make a change in the world.” – Samantha Pashel, Volunteer.
St. Michael’s Convent Closes After 142 Years

On Saturday, September 19, 1874, the Sisters were finally able to move into the newly built St. Michael’s convent on 31st street in Manhattan. The Sisters had traveled from Ireland to help establish St. Michael’s church and school and had to wait for the construction of the convent to be completed before they could move in and get settled.

Years later, in 1907 the church, school and convent were torn down to make way for the construction of Penn Station and North River tunnels. The Archdiocese sold the parish properties in exchange for a new church, school, convent, and rectory on 34th Street. The church was dedicated November 10, 1907 and the Sisters again had a new home. This building was the mother house for the Sisters until 1929 when the Sisters purchased the property in upstate New York naming it “Mount St. Joseph.”

Over the years, many Sisters have called the St. Michael’s convent home and share some memories:

You might say that my life at St. Michael’s began in 1942; I stayed after school for so many activities that my mother told me, “Why don’t you take your bed and just stay over there.”

However, memories of really living at St. Michael’s go back to 1951-1959 when I was assigned to teach there. We were 31 in number and life was very much lived “in community” - common prayer, common meals, common recreation.

There was a good sense of sharing, not only in the religious aspects of our life, but also in our professional lives of teaching and study where help was always cheerfully available. Laughter, too, was very much part of our life, both in the convent and in the school. All in all, I would say that life in St. Michael’s was life “in Presentation style.”

- Sr. Mary McCarthy (formerly Sr. Mary Justin)

St. Michael’s was often referred to as the “monastery.” Truly it was - a place of peace and quiet amid the bustle and noise of New York City. The chapel, the scene of daily Mass and Office, with its dark prayer stalls (below left), reminded me of the setting of a monastery. How often I think of the assembled praying community preparing to begin the day’s activities, to carry on Nano’s mission.

- Sr. Grace Gately (formerly Sr. Mary Vincent)

I lived at St. Michael’s Convent for five years, from 1981 to 1986, and taught in the high school for three of those years. I had not attended SMA (St. Michael Academy) myself as so many of the Sisters had and I always wondered what it was about the school that had so engendered such warm memories. I soon found out! While I expected to enjoy my teaching experience, I had given little thought to what it would mean to live in such a large community of Presentation Sisters.

At the time the Sisters living at St. Michael’s were a very diverse group in terms of age, interests, and types of ministry. Among us were teachers, school administrators, chaplains, librarians, social workers, a nurse, and Sisters who volunteered with the blind and the homeless. All of these contributed to making Saint Michael’s a community that I remember as being rich in sharing, in outreach, and in mutual support. I am glad that I had the opportunity to be a part of it.

- Sr. Barbara Muldoon

Living at St. Michael’s for the many years we have been there are full of happy memories and difficulty in having to leave this wonderful place.

It’s location gave us a good opportunity to meet the many working people that attended the church and came through the neighborhood each day. Many would stop by the Statue of the Sacred Heart next to the convent and pray before it, some leaving notes for special prayer intentions.

Many Sisters from other communities and other countries would receive hospitality for their time in the city. Our presence in St. Michael’s was also very appreciated by the people in the parish, neighborhood and other areas. There were many enjoyable times together and with Sisters from other communities.

Due to many reasons it is very sad and difficult at this time to leave St. Michael’s - but it is helpful to remember that the Lord will continue to bless us and all those we have been connected with during our time at Dear St. Michael’s.

- Sr. Elizabeth Fortune (formerly Sr. Mary Padua) and Sr. Bernadette Rohan (formerly Sr. Mary Rosanne)
On Sunday, July 24, Sisters Barbara King and Virginia Wilkinson (above right) drove to Holy Family Monastery in West Hartford, Connecticut to meet The Nuns on the Bus.

About 200 people from all walks of life filled the dining areas to welcome Sr. Simone Campbell and the Sisters who had traveled the last lap of an historic bus trip across the country to the Republican and Democratic Conventions.

The tour focused on promoting policies that mend the gaps and bridge the divides in our country, with a special focus on the policies that disproportionately impact women and people of color. The two hour event in West Hartford (below) focused on “process” looking at tax justice, living wages, family-friendly workplaces, access to voting and healthcare, immigration reform and housing. For more information, go to: https://networklobby.org/bus2016/

Led by Sister Simone Campbell, Nuns on a Bus place emphasis on the church’s long-standing commitment to social justice. In different years, the nuns have tackled different themes. In 2012, the nuns aimed to draw attention to nuns’ work with the poor and to protest planned aid cuts. In 2013, the theme was immigration reform.

The nuns’ journeys are sponsored by NETWORK.

Sr. Barbara and Sr. Virginia are happy to get their books, A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change, and Community, signed by author Sr. Simone Campbell.
Each year the Sisters celebrate and honor those among them marking a special anniversary in their journey of vowed religious life. Our prayers and best wishes are with these sisters.
Sister Joan Mulcahy - 75 Years

Sr. Joan Mulcahy (formerly Sr. Mary Jean) was a leader in Catholic education starting with her ministry teaching at St. Bernard’s High School in Fitchburg, Massachusetts in 1954. She was named principal then served as mistress, the first woman in the school’s history to hold that position. Sister has many fond memories of her time at St. Bernard’s High School, happy days, wonderful people: both students and teachers. “Never a dull moment.” In 1981 Sister Joan was named Diocesan Director of Education and subsequently a member of the then bishop’s (Most Rev. Timothy J. Harrington) cabinet. Upon leaving educational ministry Sister Joan became coordinator of the Friendly Visitors program of Catholic Charities in North County. In addition to her diocesan ministry, Sister was a leader in her religious congregation on the General Council. Of her life in community at Mount St. Mary Convent, Sister shared, “Sisters were wonderful examples for her and very supportive.” She especially enjoyed living with Sisters who being a variety of ages, learned and shared much together.

Sister Josephine Ortner - 70 Years

Sr. Josephine Ortner, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Conrad) served as a teacher for many years starting in Holy Rosary School followed by St. Frances of Rome, both in the Bronx and in St. Paul’s in Yonkers. After teaching in elementary schools for many years, Sister was then assigned to teach in 1954 to St. Michael’s Academy, a high school in New York City. There she happily ministered until 1965 when she was transferred to John S. Burke Catholic High School in Goshen, New York. Her teaching years continued until 1983 when she became principal of Burke Catholic. Her school days ended in 1999. Sister Josephine has many wonderful memories, “The Sisters with whom I lived were God’s gift to me. Their patience, their generosity, and their learning enriched my teaching and community experience. The lay teachers, my many students and their parents also enriched my life. For all I am truly grateful.”

Sister Frances Capich - 60 Years

Sr. Frances Capich, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Denise) is the Office Administrator for the Marist Brothers Insurance office in the Bronx. Previous to this ministry she taught in a number of the schools in the Archdiocese. She began her teaching ministry at St. Jude’s in Manhattan, followed by Our Lady of Solace, Holy Rosary and Immaculate Conception in the Bronx, and St. Bartholomew’s in Yonkers. Sister also taught in the Diocese of Brooklyn: St. Helen’s in Howard Beach and St. Rose of Lima in Rockaway. Fond memories include living at Visitation House in the Bronx which was open to volunteers giving the sisters the opportunity to meet many young women. They became part of their daily lives - eating, praying and sharing fun times together. Sister Frances also shared that about 10 years ago she received a letter from a former student. He remembered her concern for him when he kept getting headaches and that she spoke to his father about

Sr. Mary Anne Diehl - 60 Years

Sr. Mary Anne Diehl, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Constance) was pastoral assistant for Immaculate Conception parish in Queens before her recent retirement. Sister had taught in a number of schools in the Archdiocese: St. Frances of Rome, Our Lady of Solace both in the Bronx, St. Mary’s in Kingston and St. John in Goshen, as well as in Queens, New York and Louisiana. She also served on the Parish Mission Team for the Archdiocese and directed the Independent Living Program in the Bronx. Sister shared how she enjoyed teaching swimming to the children while in Louisiana. During her novitiate she enjoyed the plays the Sisters put on and

Jubilarians continued...
Sister Dolores Doyle - 60 Years

Sr. Dolores Doyle, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Liam) has been chaplain at St. Joseph Hospital in Yonkers since 1991. She previously served, for a period of time, in a Clinical Pastoral Education program in Massachusetts, and later was the Infirmary Administrator at the Presentation motherhouse in New Windsor. Sister then ministered directing a Career Options Program at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. Her years as an educator were in schools in the Archdiocese, St. Paul’s, Yonkers; Holy Rosary and Our Lady of Solace, Bronx; St. Joseph, New Windsor and St. David in Louisiana. Sister Dolores fondly remembers the 7 years in ministry and community in New Orleans. Sister shares, “Being so far away from “Home” I experienced a special bond with my students and my Sisters. These were years of special growth and learning for me.” Sister also cherishes her 6 years in Congregation Leadership which brought her into a special relationship with so many of the Sisters. Sister Dolores currently serves and has for the last 25 years as chaplain at St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Yonkers, New York. “It has enriched my life as I relate to patients and nursing home residents.”

Sister Helen Marie Raynor - 60 Years

Sr. Helen Marie Raynor, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Ruth) served as an elementary school teacher from 1959 to 1970 at Our Lady of Solace, St. Francis of Rome, St. Raphael, St. Michael Academy and finally Mount St. Joseph. Sister then ministered abroad in Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Venezuela working with adults and teens, in barrio community projects with 9-12 year olds, taught guitar, and preparation for elementary school. Sister Helen Marie then returned to the states in 1976 and served as a pastoral minister in St. Rose of Lima, and St. Mary’s both in Queens, New York. Over the years, Sister also prepared liturgical ministers, worked community outreach in the City of Newburgh and at St. Patrick’s, also in Newburgh. Special memories include working with the poor in Las Minas and Caracas in Venezuela, mission with Edmundite Fathers and the “great joy in preparing and sharing in and with adults and teens in their initiation in the faith.” Sister had wonderfully enjoyable and meaningful experiences of inter-congregational living with three other Sisters from different communities at St. Jude’s in New York City as well as with fellow PBVM Sisters and their special watchdog and companion, Cochese. Days were filled with “special prayer, great conversation, leisurely meals, fun and memorable holidays, jubilees, feast days, etc... Recreation time was filled with lots of laughs and ‘chit-chat’”.

Sister Patricia Reilly - 60 Years

Sister Patricia Reilly, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Kathleen) served as a teacher for many years starting at the Mount St. Joseph Semi Military Academy in 1959. Later she taught at St. Lucy School in Houma, Louisiana, St. John School in Goshen, New York, St. Frances of Rome and Holy Rosary both in and the Bronx. When Sister Pat retired from teaching she helped in the administration of Mount St. Joseph which she still does today. Sister who taught kindergarten and first grade during her teaching years has fond memories of watching the smiling faces of children as they learned – especially about Jesus. She shared, “It is the most rewarding gift one could experience. I loved every minute of teaching.” Celebrating her 60th year of vowed religious life, Sister looks back on many special memories over the years, her profession and final vows, 50th jubilee and the “many prayers and blessings of religious life.”

Sr. Irene Goguen - 60 Years

Sr. Irene Goguen, PBVM (formerly Sr. Mary Jogues) has just begun her 57th year of teaching first grade or kindergarten students. Sister Irene has taught at St. Benedict’s in Rhode Island, Holy Family Elementary and for the longest, 43 years, at St. Bernard’s Elementary. Starting in 1978 Sister has been the only kindergarten teacher since it opened! One special memory Sr. Irene holds dear is when the most difficult child ran up to be the first at Circle Time and whispered to her, “Sister, are you going to tell us more about Jesus?” While teaching, Sister Irene had a second ministry: music. Sister was organist and music director at St. Bernard’s Parish in Fitchburg, Massachusetts from 1976-1984 as well as at other local parishes over the years. Special Presentation memories include: yearly celebrations and gatherings which never cease to amaze her how all the Sisters can come together from near and far and join in unison in prayer, discussions, meals and socials! “Though many, we are one!” Sister expressed, “I am filled with much gratitude for all the blessings and support community has given me during my 60 years as a PBVM.”
Change can be bittersweet. After many years of ministry at the Lantern Light Sister Enid Storey (above left) along with co-founder, Sr. Vera Butler, (above right) headed back to their congregation’s home bases for new assignments. New Windsor PBVM Sr. Enid Storey ministered 11 years at Lantern Light and San Antonio PBVM Sr. Vera Butler served for 18 years. (The Sisters above with quilts they were given as going away gifts.)

Lantern Light ministries located in New Orleans, Louisiana is a collaborative ministry of the Conference of Presentation Sisters. As well as serving lunch (below right) the ministries outreach – all aimed at getting the homeless back on their feet – includes help with certified photo IDs, résumé writing, food stamp registration, prescriptions and other needs commonly addressed by social workers and notaries. Every month, Lantern Light’s mailroom gives about 300 individuals without a permanent address a place to pick up their personal mail and vital documents, while vibrant art and music programs offer creative outlets to the street-weary.

Sr. Enid (above right) remembers the time the center’s homeless guests observed a lunchtime minute of silence for those living in poverty throughout the world. They were invited to put their change into a jar for the Presentation Sisters’ missions in Zambia and Zimbabwe, ponying up $47.

“Imagine the poor giving to the poor! They wanted to help those who didn’t even have a meal like they were having that day,” recalled Sister Enid, “It may have not been a lot of money, but it was really touching.”

We wish both Sisters much happiness and success in their new ministries.
In Memoriam

Sr. Kathryn Flattery  (May 19, 1924 - May 22, 2016)

Sr. Kathryn Flattery entered the Presentation Sisters in Newburgh, New York on February 7, 1947, and was given the name Mary Kevin on the occasion of her reception the following August. Sister Kathryn began her ministry of teaching in the Bronx and for over 35 years taught in New York, New Jersey and Louisiana schools. In 2002, Sr. Kathryn retired and moved to Mount St. Joseph where the Office of Mission Advancement welcomed her. Working in the Prayer Association for almost 10 years, she helped raise funds, convincing everyone that they needed extra Get Well Cards, Christmas Cards, etc! Sister Kathryn was known for her love of the ocean and her fond memories of trips to Rockaway beach. She often remarked how stepping into the ocean gave her strength and renewed her spirit. The one word that describes Sister Kathryn is faithfulness: to God, to the Church, to her community, to work, to family and friends.

Sr. Mary Teresa Leane (May 19, 1930-May 23, 2016)

Sr. Mary entered the Presentation Sisters in Newburgh, New York on September 8, 1947 and was given the name Mary Teresa when she was received the following April. Sister ministered as a teacher for over 31 years teaching French and Spanish among other subjects in schools in Manhattan, the Bronx and Goshen, New York as well as New Jersey. In 1981 Sister Mary decided to leave teaching and take her gifts of speaking French and Spanish to embrace a new ministry, helping the undocumented to obtain green cards for work and eventually to become American citizens. So for the next 29 years Sister worked as an Immigration Counselor, some of her clients becoming lifelong friends. Sister Mary loved to travel visiting different parts of Europe, but it was during her final journey home to God that Sister said, “I was so blessed to have a vocation” and finally, “God is so good.”

Sr. Pauline Chirchirillo  (March 27, 1929 – June 12, 2016)

Sr. Pauline Jean Chirchirillo entered the Presentation Sisters in Newburgh, New York on February 2, 1948. On the occasion of her reception of the habit in August she was given the name Mary Olivia. As a young teacher Sr. Pauline taught at Holy Rosary, Our Lady of Solace and as a pioneer at St. Bartholomew School in Yonkers. After working for 25 years as a teacher, Sr. Pauline was one of the first women religious to serve as an associate in parish ministry working at St. Teresa Parish for many years. In 1991, Sr. Pauline accepted the position of Mission Education Coordinator for Propagation of the Faith, the agency she would later serve as Education Coordinator and, until her retirement in 2015, as their first female Director. On the Saturday before she died, Sister heard that a new Director had been found to continue her work. “Yes,” she said “We’ll talk on the phone – I’ll help her.” So close to the end, Sr. Pauline was going to continue helping others.
All Souls Remembrance

Please list the names of your loved ones that you would like the Sisters of the Presentation to remember in their masses and prayers during the month of November:

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Please return in envelope enclosed or mail to:
Sisters of the Presentation
Office of Mission Advancement
84 Presentation Way
New Windsor, NY 12553

Memorial Mass

Dear Friend,

How often we have heard the words of Saint James... “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.”

If you have lost a loved one here at Mount Saint Joseph in the past, we sincerely invite you to join us, the Sisters of the Presentation, in honoring the memory of your dear one at a Mass to be celebrated in our chapel on

Sunday, November 6, 2016 at 1:00pm

Luncheon will follow Mass. Hopefully you will be able to attend to pray with us for your loved one and share memories of her with our Sisters. It is important that you and we continue to remember Sister, her memory and the many gifts she shared with our community. You are also invited to visit our beautiful, peaceful cemetery where you loved one is memorialized.

Please join the Sisters in prayer for the following loyal friends who have recently passed away.

Thomas Bagley
David Ballantine
Patricia Biery
George Drahus
Mary E. Funk
Nelson Goguen
Joan (Sullivan) Kowalski
John J. Kuhn
John Marx
Stacey McNally
Sr. Angelina Panetti
Adele Peters
Anthony Porco
Juan Rodriguez
Bernice Rutkowski
Jeannette Sheridan
“The four Presentation Sisters moving into our convent by September 1, bringing to life again a once dormant building, underscores further a new spirit of hopeful optimism toward our collective future together. These sisters, representing many decades of spiritual experience, will come together to develop ministries for both the youth and senior citizen populations. The bilingual Sister Laura Urbano will reach out to our current young parishioners, plus the expanding Hispanic numbers in the surrounding neighborhood, as she takes charge of our religious education program alongside ministries with baptismal instruction and RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

God bless our initiatives.” Fr. Bill Damroth, Pastor

“I’m involved in a new venture at St. Thomas- St. Joseph Parish. I am helping parents share their faith with their children in their homes on a weekly basis. Families come to a reflection class monthly where they receive their materials with practical explanations and also some parenting techniques. We also have small group discussion feedback from the last month’s experiences. In addition students in Grade 1 also attend class at the same time as well as their older brothers & sisters. We currently have 58 families in the program.” Sr. Pat Reills, PBVM

“What gives me energy from the new beginnings at St. Francis Parish is the hope of expanding the parish’s outreach to those living in the neighborhood, especially to the Latino community. We will have our first monthly Spanish Mass on October 23, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. I recently went walking the neighborhood one Friday afternoon, didn’t go too far, because I talked with a lot of people, especially mothers waiting to pick up children from the bus stops. The majority were from Mexico and with great joy I was able to chat with them. We are trying to involve the Latino community in all areas of parish life; already some families have registered and are now participating in the religious education. Their one wish was a Spanish Mass close by now we are starting one. There is a lot of joy and excitement among staff members of the parish, seeing the way we can invite new members to our parish and working all together to make it reality. Sr. Laura Urbano, PBVM

What gives me energy.....

What gives me the greatest energy is our forming a new PBVM community here at St. Francis Convent. Although we each have many years in religious life, this is the first time all four of us have lived together. The blending of our different personalities and life experiences is a challenge and a gift. Our meal time, our prayer, and our conversations are enriching. We are blessed because of the care and commitment of the priests, staff, and people of St. Francis Parish. Sr. Virginia Wilkinson PBVM
On October 2, 2016  
Bishop Manus of the  
Worchester Diocese in  
Massachusetts presented  
Retired Religious Awards to  
Sister Joan Mary Mc Dermott,  
PBVM of Fitchburg, MA.

Sister Joan has lived a wonderful life, a life filled with great  
experiences and examples of the love of God and neighbor.  
She entered the Sisters o the Presentation of the Blessed  
Virgin Mary on Sept. 24, 1954. Her life has been charism-  
centered. She told me about the charism of her community  
and about Nano Nagle, the foundress of the Sisters of the  
Presentation. Sr. Joan said that it was by word and example  
that Nano Nagle encouraged other sisters to spend them-  
selves in service of the poor. Sister learned that the poor and  
destitute are found in all levels of society.  

Sister Joan served as a primary school teacher in MA and then  
she worked in Religious Education in CT. These assignments  
depthened her love for the poor. Her next adventure was to  
pursue a master’s degree in Religious Education at Fairfield  
University. This opened up a new call to care for the sick and  
frail elderly.  

It was at this time Sr. Joan came into contact with the  
International Family of Presentation Sisters. She took part in  
a program in Mexico, Jamaica and Trinidad. This deepened  
her love for the poor. She learned that a lot could be  
communicated through the language of the heart. Regardless  
of where she went she always felt the presence of God.  

Sister Joan Mary worked in New Hampshire for 18 years as  
the Director of Faith Formation. She always entered fully into  
whatever assignment she was given and loved her work.  
Today Sister Joan continued being a vibrant example of the  
charism of her community. She continues to visit some of the  
parishioners who are homebound and ill.  

How blessed the Diocese of Worcester has been to have the  
Presentation Sisters living and ministering there.
We, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inspired by our foundress, Nano Nagle, commit ourselves to the Gospel values of hope, justice, freedom, and human dignity. In union with one another, we pledge ourselves to act for and with the poor and oppressed of our world, and to care for the earth.