



THE MESSENGER

of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 3

JULY 2009

A WORLD VIEW

International Sisters join Americans in Concordia



Sister Griselda Martinez-Morales, for this month attending the "Bearers of the Traditions," talks about her new mission as the representative of the Sisters of St. Joseph to the United Nations.

A gathering this month at Manna House of Prayer has brought together 37 Sisters of St. Joseph from seven countries and eight U.S. states.

And while impressive, that's just the tip of the iceberg: The 14,000 Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide can be found in 55 countries, serving an extraordinarily wide range of missions.

A few examples from those attending "Bearers of the Traditions," a monthlong study of the origins and history of the St. Joseph congregations:

▶ **Sister Griselda Martinez-Morales**, of the Mexico Province of the Lyon congregation, has just learned that she will go to New York to represent the international Sisters at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

The Sisters' federation is one of about 3,000 "non-government organizations" that provide technical advice and consultations to the UN.

"We speak for the people," Sister Griselda explains. "Governments make decisions, and the

people have needs. Our mission is to bring those together."

▶ **Sister Alejandra Ortiz Padilla**, also of the Mexico Province, is now studying for her bachelor's degree in theology.

▶ **Sister Janet Speth**, of Canada's Toronto congregation, recently retired as a physical therapist, which took her to James Bay in what is now Nunavut Territory in northern Canada.

▶ **Sister Gracy Thomas**, who was born in Kerela, India, is in charge of the "Hospitality House" at her congregation's Motherhouse in Lyon, France.

▶ **Sister Jasleen Michael**, also of the India Providence, is part of a new mission to the Czech Republic. She grew up in southern India and then lived and worked with the so-called "untouchables" in other areas of India; she is now a pre-school teacher for children of the Roma, the ethnic outcasts often referred to as gypsies.

"There is need everywhere in the world," Sister Griselda says simply. "We go where there is need."



SISTER JASLEEN MICHAEL



SISTER JANET SPETH



SISTER GRACY THOMAS



SISTER ALEJANDRA ORTIZ PADILLA

Sisters of St. Joseph by the numbers

- ▶▶ First congregation founded in Le Puy, France: **1650**
- ▶▶ First Sisters of St. Joseph in U.S.: **1836**
- ▶▶ First Sisters of St. Joseph in Kansas: **1883**
- ▶▶ Congregations and Provinces in the U.S.: **19**

- ▶▶ Congregations and Provinces worldwide: **52**
- ▶▶ Countries where Sisters of St. Joseph serve: **55**
- ▶▶ Vowed Sisters in Concordia congregation: **160***
- ▶▶ Vowed Sisters of St. Joseph in the U.S.: **7,000***
- ▶▶ Vowed Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide: **14,000***

* Estimate

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Sister Marcia meets with 'visitator' in Chicago

When Sister Marcia Allen first learned of the Vatican's planned study of women's religious orders in the United States, she resolved to be a part of the discussion about our "quality of life," and the quality of our service to people in need.

As president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, and an acknowledged expert on the order's history and missions, she talked about the "apostolic visitation" in terms of opportunity.

"This will give us the chance to talk about our lives and our community and our work," she told the members of her order one day at lunch. "We can choose to be concerned — or we can choose to continue to be committed."

When Sister Marcia returned from Chicago where she met privately with the "apostolic visitator," Mother Clare Millea of the Rome-based Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she expressed the same quiet yet positive resolve.



During the June assembly at the Motherhouse, Sister Marcia Allen asked others in her order to pray with her before she left for Chicago to meet with Mother Clare Millea.

"(Mother Millea) said she is learning how passionately we love our communities ... how much we believe in our communities, and how selflessly we are applying ourselves to our mission," Sister Marcia wrote in a

letter to the Sisters of St. Joseph upon returning from Chicago in mid-June.

During her one hour and 15 minute meeting, Sister Marcia reviewed the report she had written for this phase of the apostolic visitation.

Some of the highlights were:

▶▶ A brief synopsis of the order's history, from its roots in France in 1650 to its arrival in the United States and founding in Kansas in 1883. Sister Marcia also briefly explained its tradition as a "far-flung enterprise" throughout the United States and, since 1963, in Brazil.

▶▶ The order's decision in 2006 to remain an independent congregation rather than to join other communities of St. Joseph. The Concordia order believes this decision allows its sisters to remain better focused on the needs of rural areas.

▶▶ Establishment in 2006 of the *agrégée* form of membership, which dates back to the order's 17th century founding in France, according to Sister Marcia. An *agrégée* has the full rights and responsibilities as a sister, except that she does not take the three canonical vows and is not financially dependent on the order.

▶▶ The creation in 2008 of

See "PRESIDENT," page 14.



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The official quarterly newspaper of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia

Publisher: Marcia Allen, CSJ, president

Editor: Sarah Jenkins
sjenkins@csjkansas.org

P.O. Box 279, Concordia KS 66901
785/243-2113, Ext. 1217 <http://csjkansas.org>

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What exactly is an 'apostolic visitation'?

In January the Vatican announced it had begun an "apostolic visitation," or comprehensive study, of women's religious orders in the United States.

The action was initiated by Slovenian Cardinal Franc Rodé, head of the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The announcement said the visitation would examine "the quality of the life of women religious" in the U.S.

That phrase has attracted concern among many members of women's religious orders because apostolic visitations have traditionally been launched in response to a perceived need for "corrections" within the church.

The last American apostolic visitation was completed in December, for example. In it, American seminaries were examined to consider root causes for the priest abuse scandals that erupted in 2002.

Then in March, the Vatican ordered an apostolic visitation of the institutions of the Legonar-

ies of Christ after disclosures of sexual impropriety by the order's late founder, Father Marcial Maciel Degollado.

As "apostolic visitator" for the study of women's religious orders, Cardinal Rodé appointed Mother Clare Millea, a Connecticut native who is Superior General of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, an international religious institute headquartered in Rome.

Since her appointment, Mother Millea has interviewed representatives of more than 125 American orders. Included among the 77 in-person interviews was one with Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, with whom Mother Millea met in June in Chicago.

The interviews are Phase I of the process.

Phase II, due to begin in August, will include sending questionnaires to heads of religious institutes.

There are nearly 400 apostolic religious con-

See "VISITATION," page 14.



CRYSTAL BORHANI



KELLY CONWELL



BRIDGET BAKER



JODY GIENGER



LAURIE PARKER

Bringing different voices to the discussion

CRYSTAL BORHANI, 24 and a native of Manhattan, Kan., graduated from Kansas State University in 2004 with a degree in marketing and international business. She is currently managing a public housing project for the Manhattan Housing Authority.

KELLY CONWELL, 22 and from Concordia, is a graduate of Johnson County Community College, and will compete at the American Culinary Federation convention for National Student Chef of the Year. Later in July, she is going to Germany for a year-long exchange program.

BRIDGET BAKER is 19 and lives in Morrowville, Kan. She is a sophomore at Kansas State University, majoring in horticulture. She has been active in Discover Camp and was a winner of the Sisters' 125th anniversary essay scholarship contest.

JODY GIENGER is 25 and a native of Cheyenne County, Kan. She is a graduate of Fort Hays State University and works as a soil scientist for the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service in Salina. Currently, she is conducting soil studies in Republic County.

LAURIE PARKER is a 28-year-old music teacher at St. Matthew's School in Topeka, where she grew up. She graduated in 2004 from Washburn University, with a degree in music education. She is pursuing her master's degree at Emporia State University.

Here are their thoughts on a variety of topics:

Their perspective on religious life

JODY: It's kind of a light for the world. When I read about it, I think, Wow! There is hope!

LAURIE: My perspective on the world is, Where is the truth? And there is truth and light in religious life.

BRIDGET: So much of history is about the clash of religion, but I think that has often been the scapegoat; there were other differences and religion was used as the excuse. A true religious life is about choices; when you come to a fork in the road, you make the right choice, even when it's not the easy choice.

CRYSTAL: I am not a religious person. But to me religiousness is not necessarily organized religion; it's about being a decent human, being hopeful and having faith in the humanness of others.

"Could you be a vowed Sister today?"

KELLY: We always went to church on Sundays, and we joined all the (church) groups. At 15 I took part in the Border Experience and that changed the way I looked at



After a presentation by members of the panel, at upper right, during the June assembly, Sisters of St. Joseph discuss what has been said and prepare questions for the five young women.

the world. I started to ask myself, How can I be a better person? How can I make a difference?

BRIDGET (laughing): The first "silent retreat" you made me do would do me in! That would be my true challenge. ... But through the hurdles I've faced in the last few years, I've truly learned that God won't give me more than I can handle.

JODY: (My family was) always active in church. When I went to college, I developed a thirst for what

'Slightly younger' women add different dimension

In a move viewed as both interesting and innovative, five young women spent two days talking to — and with — the Sisters of St. Joseph about their views of the world.

"They live in the world, as we do, but they are younger than we are — *slightly* younger," Sister Marcia Allen told the 140 or so Sisters attending the June assembly. "And they will also give us feedback on what they hear us saying."

All five, who ranged in age from 19 to 28, have had some connection with Sisters, whether through the annual Discover Camp, campus ministry, their churches or personal friendship.

As the assembly began on June 4, the five participated in a panel discussion and then answered questions from the Sisters. Through the remaining sessions on Thursday and Friday, they sat in on discussions in large and small groups and had the opportunity at the end of each to offer their thoughts.

They also add a chance to talk informally with Sisters over meals and in other free time throughout the two days.

Sister Marcia, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph, said after the assembly that in all likelihood other panels like this one will be invited to future meetings. "This time we might have crossed the threshold into something different," she said with a laugh. "We now know we need to do more of this."

See "TWENTY-SOMETHINGS," Page 14.

Documentary to be offered by ABC this fall

The award-winning writer and producer who is the creative force behind the upcoming documentary "Interrupted Lives: Catholic Sisters Under European Communism" says "no project has influenced me more deeply and personally."

But Judy Zielinski, who is a Sister of St. Francis of Sylvia, Ohio, knows she could not have had that experience without the 16 years of dedication and extensive research done by Mary Savoie and Margaret Nacke, both Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

Sisters Mary and Margaret first went to Romania in 1993, as volunteers to help the Church in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism. Over the next decade in many visits, they branched out to other Eastern European countries and built relationships with many of the Sisters who had survived behind the Iron



SISTER JUDY ZIELINSKI



SISTER MARY SAVOIE



SISTER MARGARET NACKE

Curtain.

In 2003, Sisters Mary and Margaret began serious research into the plight of those Catholic Sisters, eventually covering eight countries and the years spanning the rise of Stalin in Russia to the fall of the Berlin Wall.

That included numerous trips to Eastern Europe, interviews with the women they came to call "Sister Survivors" and extensive academic study into the local and Church history.

In July 2006, they planned and facilitated a conference in Lviv, Ukraine, bringing together sisters from eight former communist coun-

tries. The goal was to examine fundamental values guiding those Sisters who survived under communism and to explore ways those values can be integrated into the lives of American Sisters.

As a result of the work done by Sisters Mary and Margaret, hundreds of testimonies, photographs, books and other documents have been collected and archived at Catholic Theological Union's Bechtold Library in Chicago.

It was also in 2006 that Sisters Mary and Margaret hired NewGroup Media of South Bend, Ind. — which is where Sister Judy Zielinski works as a writer and producer — to create a documentary of the story of the



Sister Survivors.

"I wasn't convinced at first," Sister Judy concedes. But she made the trip to Belleville, Kan., where Sisters Mary and Margaret live and work, and spent two days talking with them and going through their materials.

"They had a huge amount of information, but they didn't have what's needed for TV," recalls Sister Judy, whose credits include the docu-

See "DOCUMENTARY," page 15.

Will you be able to see 'Interrupted Lives'? That depends on local station

The hourlong documentary "Interrupted Lives: Catholic Sisters Under European Communism" is scheduled to be offered by ABC Television on Sept. 13.

But whether you'll actually be able to see it on your local ABC channel hinges on the verb "offered."

Under a 30-year-old agreement between the three major American television networks and a group of faith organizations, religious programming is regularly created and then distributed nationwide.

Here's how it works:

The Interfaith Broadcasting Coalition was formed in 1980 to provide ABC, CBS and NBC with religious programming.

The five members of the IBC are the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches,

For more information on the Interfaith Broadcasting Coalition and its programs, go to:
www.interfaithbroadcasting.com

the Islamic Society of North America, the New York Board of Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism.

About 100 million people in the United States attend churches, synagogues and mosques represented by those organizations.

Each year the members of the IBC have the opportunity to help produce documentaries and liturgical programs that are then provided to the network partners.

▶ ABC's "Visions & Values" series gives the IBC four one-hour time slots.

▶ NBC's "Horizons of the Spirit"

also provides four hours.

▶ CBS produces the half-hour "Religion & Culture" documentary series four times a year in collaboration with the IBC.

Each network then offers the IBC programs to all of its affiliates by satellite. But each local station makes its own decision about whether to air a program, and when to air it.

As an example, "Native Nations: Standing Together for Civil Rights" is an IBC program offered by NBC in June. As of the end of June, it had been aired once in Kansas (by NBC-

affiliate KSNT in Topeka) and had not been shown at all by any of the 25 local NBC stations in Nebraska, Missouri, Colorado, Iowa or Illinois.

A search of both the NBC and KSNT web sites for "Native Nations" turns up nothing, so there's no way to tell if it will be aired again.

For the fall of 2009, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is providing "Interrupted Lives" to ABC as one of the "Vision & Values" hours. The IBC web site lists the documentary as being offered on Sept. 13, but there is no corresponding "Vision & Values" section on the ABC-TV web site.

Local ABC stations will make the decision whether to air it.

Viewers can contact the local network affiliate to ask that it be aired, and can check the IBC web site for other upcoming programs.

Just for kids: Missy Mania!

Girls and boys in the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grades can sign up now for a program Aug. 3-5 at the Motherhouse.

The fun is free each morning from 9 to 10:50, but enrollment is limited to the first 48 kids.

The deadline is registration is July 15.

For information or to register, call Sister Julie Christensen at 785-243-4428.

Upcoming events

- ▶ **July 18**, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., "Summer Spirituality: A Mini-Vacation with God," at Manna House of Prayer, Concordia. The summer heart needs time off from the daily routine. Come pray, journal, explore and play as you journey with God. Presenters: Sisters Liebe Pellerin and Janet Lander. Contact: 785-243-4428 or retreatcenter@mannahouse.org.
- ▶ **July 27-Aug. 1**, The Theological Institute, Manna House. See story on page 11 for details.
- ▶ **Aug. 8-15**, "Weaving with Threads of Love: A Lace Making Retreat," Manna House, Concordia. Experience and integrate the spirituality and the practice of making bobbin lace in a contemplative setting. No previous experience in lace making required. Presenters: Sisters Janet Lander and Ramona Medina. Contact: 785-243-4428 or retreatcenter@mannahouse.org.
- ▶ **Oct. 9-11 & Nov. 20-22**, "Quilting Retreats," Manna House, Concordia. Quilters find a time and space to spend quality time quilting in a relaxed and enjoyable place. (More dates have also been set for 2010.) Presenter: Sister Betty Suther. Contact: 785-243-4428 or retreatcenter@mannahouse.org.

Alums set to 'Celebrate Good Times!'

What might be viewed as a time to mourn the 20th anniversary of the closure of the much-loved Marymount College in Salina is instead a chance to recall all the memories of the school's 67 years of classes.



SISTER LUCILLE HERMAN, at '06 all-school reunion

In fact, the third Marymount All-School Reunion — set for July 24-26 on what was the Salina campus — has as its theme, "Celebrate Good Times!"

The all-school reunions began in 2003.

At the second event in 2006, about 1,000 alumni, faculty, staff, friends and family took part in at least some of the activities, according to Marymount's alumni director, Sister Lucille Herman.

This year's event may not draw as many participants — "We're all getting older," Sister Lucille noted ruefully — but it will feature activities that were well attended at the last two all-school reunions.

- ▶ A Saturday afternoon liturgy celebrated by Bishop Paul Coakley.
- ▶ A Sunday morning memorial service to remember those who have died since the last reunion.
- ▶ Tours of the Marymount Administration Building, the Fine Arts building and Antoinette Hall.
- ▶ Memorabilia displays all day Saturday.
- ▶ And informal gatherings of old friends and classmates throughout the weekend.

"I keep hearing from people who did not come to the first two, but who are eager for this one," Sister Lucille said.



During the 2003 Marymount All-School Reunion, Sister Margaret Ann Buser, Class of 1941, left, reviews old school newspapers with one of her former students, Mary Jo Meyer Turley, Class of 1963.

Register now to win a handmade memory quilt



The Sisters of St. Joseph are always thankful to hear from Marymount College alumni and friends. And we want to express that thanks with a door prize — a quilt pieced by Sister Betty Suther, hand-quilted by Sister Ann Glatter and filled with Marymount memories!

Stop by the Development booth at the reunion to sign up or register by email to cgarcia@csjkansas.org (We need your name, address, phone and your Marymount class year.) You need not be present to win.

"There are people who are coming back to campus for the first time — in at least one case, for the first time in 40 years."

For details and the complete schedule — and to see who is registered to attend — go to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia website: <http://csjkansas.org/index.php/marymount/>

Foundation helps start fundraising drive

The Community Foundation for Cloud County has given \$2,500 in its first-ever grant to a project of the Sisters of St. Joseph, as seed money toward the planned Neighbor to Neighbor center in Concordia.

Foundation chairman Bob Steimel presented the check during a "Pre-Construction Party" May 14 at the East Sixth Street building that will be renovated into a center to provide a wide array of services to women and women with young children.

Steimel and his wife, Lorene, praised the project as something the city truly needs as they gave the check to the three Sisters of St. Joseph who have



Sister Pat McLennon, left, explains plans for programs at the Neighbor to Neighbor center to Bob and Lorene Steimel on May 14. Bob Steimel presented a check for \$2,500 to the Sisters of St. Joseph to help with the new program.

spearheaded the effort — Sisters Pat McLennon, Jean Befort and Ramona Medina.

To learn more about Neighbor to Neighbor and how you can help, contact:

Martha Bryant Sister Carmel Garcia
mbryant@csjkansas.org cgarcia@csjkansas.org
785-243-2113, ext. 1225 785-243-2113, ext.1223

The Sisters purchased the building at 103 E. Sixth St. in late March and will essentially have to gut it, according to facilities administrator Greg Gallagher, who was also on hand for the check presentation.

When the center opens later this year or early in 2010, it will provide a wide array of services and be a resource center to help women find other services they need, said Sister Pat.

Services offered will likely include nutrition and parenting classes, workshops in healthy living and information on what help is available through other agencies.

Sister Ramona noted that services and volunteer opportunities will be added and developed as the need for them is identified.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia Development Office has taken charge of fundraising for the project, and executive director Martha Bryant was very grateful for the community foundation's early \$2,500 contribution.

"This mean so much to us, because it means the community is with us," she said.

OUR MISSION IN BRAZIL

Weekend course leads to ministry with terminally ill & their families

By **SISTER PAT NEIHOUSE**

This summer, when I return to Brazil, we will continue an emotional project that actually began with an unexpected turn of events for me last October.

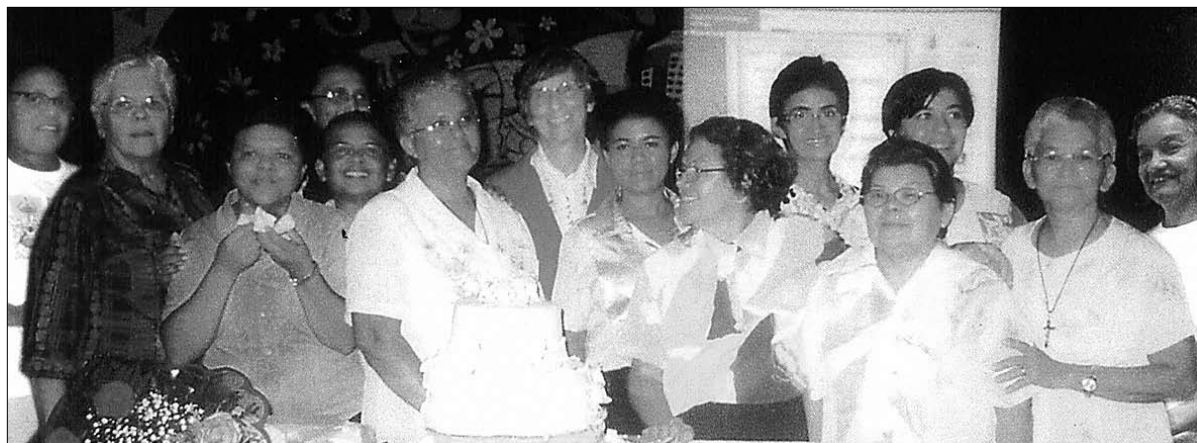
A friend of mine, Teca Sá, asked if I would like to sign up for a course that weekend; it was called Eschatology (the last things), and would be given by a lay theologian.

I was game for it because I needed a "perk-up" in the theology of death and afterlife. After being with my younger sister when she learned of her final disease, and the steps she went through as she accepted that reality, I especially felt this need.

We were a small group, but very

interested in the subject. Fernanda, a woman who had been in one of my Enneagram courses, felt very called to help those who had terminal sicknesses also, so we asked if there were any others wanting to do the same.

A group of 15 was the result, and we began to meet every Friday afternoon. We studied various articles and books and then began to visit those who were sick, to offer spiritual support both to them and to their families. We are now six in the group: a doctor, a psychologist, a social worker, two who work with



The Sisters serving in our Brazilian missions, including Sister Pat Neihouse, second from left, gather to celebrate the golden jubilee of Sister Donna Otter, center.

elderly and two teachers.

In March, we decided to make a pamphlet to help beginners in visiting those with terminal illnesses. Then we talked with the Eucharistic Ministers at the St. Joseph the Worker Church in the Vila Operária to invite them to join us. Eleven responded and gathered with us during May to prepare themselves to

walk with us in this ministry.

We will continue to meet monthly and talk about the various people we can serve in this very worthwhile endeavor.

► Sister Pat Neihouse lives at the Vila Operária in Piauí, Brazil. She is currently staying at the Motherhouse while she takes part in the "Bearers of the Tradition" seminar at Manna House of Prayer.



Discovering God at camp!



The three dozen girls from this summer's Discover Camp have departed, but it's almost as if the Motherhouse still echoes their energy. For the first time, the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade girls, along with their camp counselors and leaders, actually stayed at the Motherhouse rather than at Manna House of Prayer. This change allowed for more interaction between the girls and the Sisters who live here; it also allowed more girls to take part this year since they turned the Fifth Floor into something of a dormitory for their two nights here.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The banner the girls made the first night of camp; Sister Polly Kukula, right, calls bingo for the campers and Sisters, with assistance from Sister Shirley Meier, left; Sister Therese Blecha offers enthusiastic support during an evening relay race; the girls tour the National Orphan Train Museum Complex in downtown Concordia; one of the campers juggles to entertain both the girls and the Sisters.

