



THE MESSENGER

of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

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OCTOBER 2012

We welcome you!

Manna House to celebrate 35th birthday

In a meeting this summer to talk about plans to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Manna House of Prayer, Sister Janet Lander said, "Everybody's hungry — and everything we do feeds their body, mind and spirit."

And so a "theme" was born.

Throughout 2013, Manna House staff is planning special events to introduce people to the spiritual retreat center in Concordia — but while the "theme" is new, the idea behind it is not: Manna House has been feeding body, mind and spirit from the instant it was dedicated in April 1978.

Numerous sisters have served on the staff at Manna House over the years, and have offered a wide range of workshops, seminars and retreats.

In the early 1980s, the sisters at Manna House joined the Sanctuary

See MANNA HOUSE, page 5.



The east wing of the historic red brick building at Fifth and Olive streets in Concordia was added in 1916, to enlarge what was then St. Joseph Hospital. Since 1978, the original convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph has been home to Manna House of Prayer.



VATICAN II

Reflections on life a half-century later

Regardless of your interest, October 1962 was a memorable month.

Barbra Streisand signed her first recording contract and the Beatles released their first record. The devastating Columbus Day storm blasted across the Pacific Northwest, and the New York Yankees won their 20th baseball championship. James Meredith became the first African-American to attend the University of Mississippi, and President John F. Kennedy stared down Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in what has become known as the Cuban missile crisis.

Then there was Vatican II.

When Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council on Oct. 11, 1962, he said, "We have every confidence that the Church, in the light of this Council, will gain in spiritual riches."

Fifty years later, people

throughout the Catholic Church — and, in fact, the world — continue to reflect on those riches.

In this issue of The Messenger, we have four very different reflections.

They begin (on pages 8 and 9) with a theologian, Sister Catherine Michaud, who writes about the meaning of the Council and the changes it brought to the Church.

That is followed (on pages 10, 11 and 12) by three very personal reflections from Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. The question they were asked was this: *Who am I today compared to who I was as Vatican II began?* Or, another way of putting it might be, *How did Vatican II change the way I have lived and matured as a Sister of St. Joseph?*

In the January 2013 issue we will include more of the sisters' personal reflections as we all consider the power and promises of Vatican II 50 years later.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Catholic Youth 6 Bishop's Visit 7 Coming Events 13 Homecomings 14-15

‘LIVE OUT YOUR LIFE WITH ONE DESIRE ONLY —
to be what God wants you to be...’

— Maxim 73

Vatican Council II.

Was this a watershed event in the life of religious communities throughout the world?

In hindsight, at least, I would call it that, although there were many factors in both secular and church cultures in the decade or so prior to the Second Vatican Council that were calling for change. Two examples will serve to illustrate this.

The first was states' requirement for teacher certification: from 40-hour certificates to a college degree to qualify. This meant sisters had to return to college full time, which caused a challenge, if not a real crisis, in staffing our schools.

The second was Pope Pius XII's urgent demand in the 1950s that we abandon "outmoded" ways of living and modernize habits and schedules so as to be more effective in the contemporary milieu.

Then Vatican II itself (1962-65) precipitated even more rapid changes, and it has taken — and *is* taking — decades for real transition to happen.

The Council's documents urged Catholics in general to become more immersed in the world in order to become more effective followers of Christ.

For religious communities, the most important document was the "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life."

It mandated that religious women and men return to the sources of our lives: 1) the following of Christ of the

Gospels and of our founding spirit and charism; and, 2) the adaptation to the culture in which we were embedded and to which we were committed to serve. This renewal was to go forward under the direction of the Holy Spirit, which implied serious discernment.

As it turned out, communities discovered that renewal was neither an experiment nor a project that could be undertaken according to a five- or 10-year plan.

Rather, it was a process of conversion within each member and in the community as a whole. Both of these processes were long, arduous and not easily measurable. Fifty years later hindsight shows how this has happened through choice and circumstance.

This conversion was both pain-filled and consoling. It required a great deal of letting go of very dear customs and modes of living, and the taking up of unfamiliar and uncomfortable new "habits." Tradition was challenged; new traditions had to be created and embraced.

As we compare who we are today with who we were at the Council began in 1962, we barely recognize ourselves — on the outside, that is.

What about the inside of us? Who were we then? Who are we now? Has this changed? From our founding until today we Sisters of St. Joseph have lived by a set of 100 maxims known as the "Maxims of the Little Institute," written by our founder in the 1640s.

Committed to memory, they continuously lead us to

liberating self knowledge, a desire for closer union with God and an understanding of and commitment to our apostolic vocation. They are an ongoing challenge to grow and become who we are meant to be.

To meet that challenge requires a continuous personal and communal discernment so that we can remain not only attentive to what God desires, but also to what the world around us needs.

Thus, we are always on the path of conversion.

From century to century and from continent to continent we have changed and continue to change. Wherever and with whomever, our purpose has been the same: creating relationships in which union with God, others and self is possible. We have done this through "any work of which a woman is capable" — as our purpose was described in the original "Rule" of the Sisters of St. Joseph at our founding in France in the 17th century.

This purpose was underscored in a recommendation to Bishop Joseph Rosati, first bishop of St. Louis, who in the mid 1830s was looking for a religious community to work in his diocese.

A representative of the Propagation of the Faith in France reminded the bishop multiple times that the Sisters of St. Joseph had a Rule that enabled them to be flexible and adaptable to any situation. We could do any work, as long as it enabled those we met to find ultimate meaning in life, the wholeness that God desired for all.

So we have changed and not changed.

We still live the spirit of the maxims and are governed by the mission of creating wholesome relationships for the sake of union of persons with themselves, with others, with God.

We continue to do that in any way that is meaningful. For this reason we teach and nurse, and we minister to the elderly, the infirm, the physically and mentally challenged, the deaf, the blind, the imprisoned, the spiritually destitute, the trafficked and the immigrant, in direct service and through advocacy.

You will find us wherever there is need for healing and reconciliation, where the creative activity of the Holy Spirit is always stimulating new and renewed life within and among every kind of "neighbor" and with God.



A message from
Sister Marcia Allen,
president of the
Sisters of St. Joseph
of Concordia

CATCHING UP

Development Office stays busy

Those serving on the Development Advisory Board generously give of their time and talent by agreeing to be ambassadors and advocates for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

They meet four times a year — and at right is a group photo taken at our September meeting — and learn about our current ministries and projects, upcoming programs, community news and other events affecting religious life.

Returning to their homes, they share with others what the sisters are doing and encourage people to attend vocation events, retreats, fundraising activities and other endeavors. They also share their expertise with fundraising and advise us on our development efforts.

Thank you to each of the members for their service and belief in us!



SEATED, from left: Tim Gottschalk (Belleville, Kan.), Janet Whitehair (Abilene, Kan.), Brandon Vering (Marysville, Kan.). MIDDLE ROW, from left: Sister Jean Rosemarynoski, Gwyn Johnson (Abilene, Kan.), Alice Ruder (Hill City, Kan.). BACK ROW, from left: Sister Marcia Allen (president of Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia), Gene Pestinger (Beloit, Kan.), Mike Clark (Manhattan, Kan.), Holly Brown.

New chapel has honored name

The fourth floor of the Motherhouse is undergoing a facelift. We are designing a program where women can live in community for a period of time, joining the sisters for meals, prayers and other activities. These women can set their own goals such as work on spiritual growth, academic pursuits, artistic endeavors or other personal needs.

A family member of one of our sisters has made a donation in memory of her late husband to help cover the cost of the chapel we've added there, and we invite other donors to consider doing the same.

If you're interested in naming a part of the beautiful new space in honor or memory of a loved one, please let us know. (The Rose Room, with its spectacular round

Sacred Heart stained-glass window, as well as dining room and living areas, are still available.)

Introducing our new assistant director

You may hear a new different voice when you call — it will be that of Holly Brown, who has been named our assistant development director.

Holly has been in our office for a year now, and has clearly demonstrated her value in helping us help you.

She was born and raised in Hanston, Kan., and graduated from Fort Hays State University. She came to Concordia with her husband Kevin, who is a teacher here.

She was previously executive director of the local Big Brothers Big Sisters program for more than 10 years.

Memorial Mass set for Nov. 4

In keeping with the Catholic tradition of All Souls Day, we offer an annual Memorial Mass remembering all who have died during the past year. If you would like to attend the Mass or have someone you would like us to remember, please let us know.

The Memorial Mass is Sunday, Nov. 4, at 10:30 a.m. at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia. Everyone is invited to the noon meal following Mass. There is no charge for the meal but we do need reservations before Oct. 26.

Call Holly at 785/243-2113, ext. 1221, or email her at hbrown@csjkansas.org.

You can reach me at:
785/243-2113, ext. 1225 jrose@csjkansas.org
P.O. Box 279 Concordia KS 66901



A message from
Sister Jean
Rosemarynoski,
development director of the
Sisters of St. Joseph
of Concordia

A NOTE FROM A READER

I want to share a story with you: When Sister Elaine Dufresne (a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph who lives in Wichita) came home to Wisconsin to visit her sister, she brought with her the July 2012 issue of "The Messenger" with the article about the Little Dresses for Africa.

Her sister — and my mother — Theresa Martell is in a senior-living apartment and is suffering from early stages of Alzheimer's.

In the last three months we got her

sewing machine out and she is now happily sewing little dresses for the Africa project. Attached is a picture of my mother sewing (at right).

In less than three months, she has made over 80 dresses and continues to sew as long as we keep her stocked with fabric and the notions to sew them.

This was a wonderful project to bring to my mother. She has a purpose and is loving her new "job." Thank you for sharing this in your newspaper, and thanks to my aunt, Sister Elaine, for

sharing this information.

My dad passed away in January 2012 and this has been a difficult transition for Mom. This little project has been a prayer answered for us.

JOAN NEIDERMIRE
Chetek, Wis.

The original article is available online at:
<http://www.csjkansas.org/n2n-dresses/>
To learn more about Little Dresses for Africa, you can go to the organization's website:
<http://www.littledressesforafrica.org/>



THE MESSENGER

of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas

Mailing Label Update

Please make the correction on this form and return to:
The Messenger, P.O. Box 279, Concordia KS 66901

Attach old mailing label here
and print the corrected information below.

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Is your heart
big enough
to fall in love
with the world?

God so loved the world that God sent Jesus (John 3:16). Today, God still sends the very best — each of us — to be Christ in our world. . .

So, as St. Ignatius of Loyola would ask:
What have you done for Christ?
What are you doing for Christ?
What will you do for Christ?

Make your spring break
a soul pilgrimage with Christ!

Spend a week living and praying with us, deepening your relationship with God and with yourself.

March 17-22, 2013
Nazareth Motherhouse
13th and Washington
Concordia, Kansas

Registration (includes housing & all meals): \$125

For information contact:

Sister Beverly Carlin Sister Janet Lander
srbevcc@csjkansas.org janetmarycsj@yahoo.com
785/220-7996 785/243-4428

Alternative Spring Break:
A Pilgrimage for Your Soul

Veronica's Voice founder to speak about sex trafficking, exploitation

The woman who founded a Kansas City organization aimed at ending sex trafficking and exploitation will speak during a special presentation in Concordia Nov. 10.

Kristy Childs, founder and executive director of Veronica's Voice, will talk about her organization and "the reality of commercial sexual exploitation" in a program at the Nazareth Motherhouse that begins at 1:30 p.m.

The program is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph Trafficking Committee and comes during the sisters' annual November Assembly. But it is open to the public, and anyone interested in learning more is encouraged to attend.

Early in her life, Childs did not



KRISTY CHILDS

passion and vision.

She ran away from an abusive home when she was 12, and then was trafficked as a prostitute for more than two decades. She managed to escape the sex industry, and will bring that experience as a survivor to her presentation in Concordia.

seem destined to become a well-known advocate against commercial sex exploitation and trafficking, but since founding Veronica's Voice a dozen years ago she has received numerous awards recognizing her

In 2000, she started Veronica's Voice, named in honor of a prostituted woman who was murdered, Veronica Neverdusky.

Her organization is committed to ending commercial sexual exploitation through:

▶ Advocating for appropriate and effective criminal prosecution of people who buy sex,

▶ Advocating for public policies that increase the effectiveness of criminal and civil laws against sexual violence and exploitation,

▶ Presenting educational programs to raise awareness and connect the dots on the reality of commercial sexual exploitation and

▶ Connecting with victims of commercial sexual exploitation of all ages.

Weekend retreats set for younger women

Come explore your call at one of two special three-day weekend retreats (over the Martin Luther King Day weekend in January and the Presidents Day weekend in February).

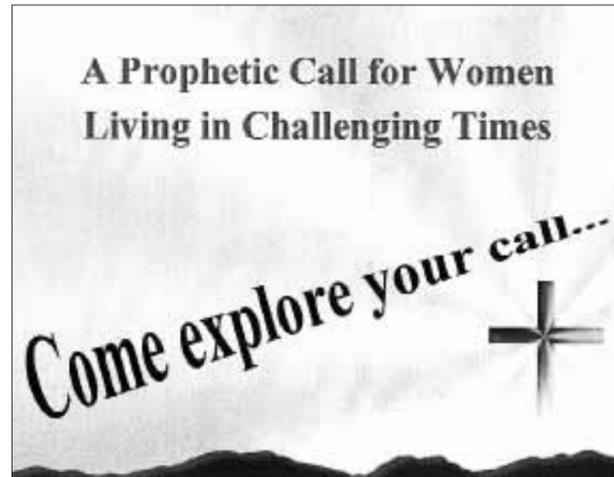
Designed especially for single, working women in their 20s and 30s, you will spend time with a vibrant group of Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

The weekend at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia will give you the opportunity to explore, pray, discern and experience the joy of community life.

Titled, "A Prophetic Call for Women Living in Challenging Times," these retreats are geared toward younger women who are seeking deeper meaning in their lives.

The registration fee of \$100 includes housing and all meals; scholarships are available. Just call 785/243-4428 for more information and to register.

To register online, go to mannahouse.org/a-prophetic-call-for-women-living-in-challenging-times for the January retreat and at mannahouse.org/a-prophetic-call-for-women-living-in-challenging-times-2/ for the February retreat.



Manna House

Continued from page 1.

movement and welcomed a family that had fled war-torn Guatemala.

By the mid 1990s, the sisters had established the Theological Institute at Manna House as a way to continue the long-standing educational tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia. The intensive seminar is held in Concordia each summer.

While always respecting the underlying mission of Manna House, the sisters and staff there continue to seek new ways to serve as new needs arise.

The Helping Hands program — funded solely from donations — offers emergency assistance to people who have no other resources. Through its small food bank and emergency financial assistance, Helping Hands was able to serve more than 350 families this past year.

Unfortunately, that need continues to grow: "Our pantry runs out of food almost on a monthly basis," reports the Manna House administrator.

Sisters at Manna House also respond to spiritual hunger, with a wide array of retreats and workshops as well as one-on-one spiritual direction. And for those who can't get to Concordia? The spiritual directors have adapted; now they can meet you via Skype over the internet.

All of that, we believe, is evidence of Manna House's promising future.

Other retreat houses and spirituality centers have closed in the past few years, but at Manna our sisters continue to adapt and move forward in the 21st century.

So check out the offerings at right and visit us at mannahouse.org.

Everybody's Hungry

LET US FEED YOUR BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

"God rained down manna for the people to eat, and he gave them the grain of heaven."

— Psalms 78:24

FIRST MONDAYS AT MANNA

Our sisters welcome you to 12 special monthly meals honoring our heritage. Come to one or two that appeal to your palate — or come to them all!

Tickets are \$10 per person and reservations are required a week in advance. Call 785/243-4428.

(First Monday meals are served 5:30-7 pm)

JAN. 7, 2013: A French meal celebrating our congregation's heritage

FEB. 4, 2013: A New Orleans meal for Mardi Gras

MARCH 4, 2013: An Italian meal in honor of St. Joseph

APRIL 1, 2013: Vegetarian fare for Earth Month

MAY 6, 2013: A Cinco de Mayo party & Mexican meal

JUNE 3, 2013: The 50th anniversary of our Brazilian Mission, featuring South American cuisine

JULY 1, 2013: Stars and Stripes — with salads and desserts in red, white and blue

AUG. 5, 2013: Experience a simple but delicious "retreat meal"

SEPT. 2, 2013: A Labor Day picnic

OCT. 7, 2013: A hearty German Oktoberfest meal

Nov. 4, 2013: Thanksgiving turkey with all the trimmings

DEC. 2, 2013: A Christmas party

ADVENT PRAYERS FOR PEACE: Join us in our chapel at 4 p.m. each Sunday during Advent.

"A PROPHETIC CALL FOR WOMEN LIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES." Two special three-day weekend retreats (over Martin Luther King Day and Presidents Day) for single, working women in their 20s and 30s who are seeking deeper meaning in their lives.

"DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROSARY:" A one-day exploration on Saturday, Feb. 23, of the meaning and mysteries of these powerful prayers.

"CATHOLICISM" BY FATHER ROBERT E. BARRON. For five afternoons during Lent, we'll show this magnificent series that has aired on PBS and EWTN, and then follow each presentation with a discussion. No charge; begins Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR: What arts and crafts feed your spirit? Our Quilting Retreats and Marathon, Lacemaking Retreats and new Scrapbooking Weekends allow both creativity and friendship to flower.

FOUR SEASONAL DAYS: "Seasonal Spirituality" retreats are held on four Saturdays, celebrating each new season — and yourself — as you move through the year.

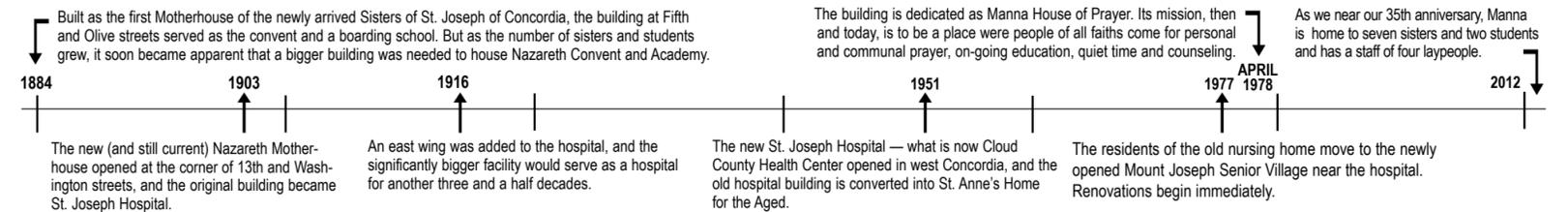
A HOLY WEEK RETREAT WITH FATHER DON LARMORE from the Diocese of Grand Island, Neb. Lay people are encouraged to take part in this powerful experience.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: Open yourself to a deeper understanding and discovery of God in your life, by meeting with a Spiritual Companion in confidential, one-on-one sessions. Can't make it to Concordia? No problem. Meet with us via Skype.

DETAILS ON THESE AND ALL OUR OTHER OFFERINGS PLUS ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT MANNAHOUSE.ORG

Consider the gift of a gift certificate for any of our offerings.
Call us at 785/243-4428 to learn more.

THE RED BRICK BUILDING AT FIFTH & OLIVE STREETS, CONCORDIA: 128 YEARS — AND COUNTING





Gathering for a group photo in Belize were, from left, Linda Haggerty, Megan Tenski, Johanna Glaser, Father Don Buhman, Principal Diaz (of the San Jose Palmar Primary School), Torilee Abraham, Anna Esch, Elizabeth Carraher and Sister Pat Eichner.

A mission trip to Belize

Kansas teens reflect on their foreign experience

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sister Pat Eichner and Father Don Buhman led a weeklong mission to the tiny Central American nation of Belize in July. With them were six high school girls and one other adult chaperon. The trip was funded by a gift from the Sisters of St. Joseph Ministry Fund, plus numerous fundraisers organized by the girls. Father Don is pastor for the parishes in Spalding, Greeley and Ericson, Neb., while Sister Pat serves as parish minister for those same communities.

These are two essays about the mission.

By **TORILEE ABRAHAM** and **LINDA HAGGERTY**
St. Michael Catholic Church, Spalding, Neb.

Our mission trip to Belize was a great experience we will never forget. We went to a school in San Jose Palmar and got to know the kids and got the chance to play with them. We also started building a bathroom for the preschool.

We attended the preschool and sixth-grade graduation. It was pretty cool to see the difference between the way we do graduations here in the U.S. and the way they do.

We also did some home visits and got to talk to some of the people in the community and shared our faith.

It was a real eye-opener to see where some of the people lived and how they had so little in material things but had so much faith in the Lord. It definitely makes you realize that you should be more thankful for what you have!

Those people never complained; they were thankful for what they had. We had amazing cooks



The nation of Belize is tucked below Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, to the east of Guatemala.

who fed us well. One of the cooks — a woman named Sophie — opened up her home to us and taught us how to make tortillas.

It was a great trip.

By **ELIZABETH CARRAHER**
St. Michael Catholic Church, Spalding, Neb.

I had never been out of the country before and was so excited about seeing another culture on our mission trip to Belize. Participating in fundraisers, preparing to pack and getting a passport were among a few of things we had to do to prepare for our trip.

My biggest challenge on the trip was the food, which was spicier than I am used to. I felt bad because I know the people there went out of their way to please us by preparing us food.

After reflecting on our mission trip experience, the single most significant moment of the trip was when I created animal balloons for the children. I made more than 140 and they still wanted me to make more. The children were so happy and I loved to make them smile.

I feel the trip changed me by making me more aware of how God helps those who help others.

I definitely want to participate in another mission trip because it made me feel good that I could help others. Maybe next time it will be in the United States so I won't have to worry about the food so much.

RECOGNIZING CATHOLIC YOUTH

Micayla Magdeline Pachta

SCHOOL: Republic County High School in Belleville, Kan.

GRADE: Sophomore

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: Republic County 4-H Ambassador (attended Citizenship in Action Youth Forum in Topeka), Discovery 4-H (vice president and president, Junior Leader for foods projects, helped coach Junior Gavel Games team, participated in 4-H Chorus, volunteered at Blood Drive Canteena), and Republic County High School FFA (Stuco representative for 2012-13 school year, Chapter Star Greenhand, Food Science and Technology SAE winner).

Also, a volunteer with Blair Theatre in Belleville, Belleville Afterschool Program, Turning Pointe Dance Academy and the Summer Library program.

Also, member of Republic County High School KAYS, RCHS Buffalo's Actor's Guild, RCHS Forensics Team, and RCHS Pep Band, Marching Band, Flag Team and Concert Band.

As a member of St. Edward's Catholic Church: member of CYO (attended NCYC in Indianapolis and Kansas CYO convention in Salina), helped with toy and food banks, helped organize games at Fall Festival, cantor at Youth Masses, usher/greeter and a member of the choir.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

What motivates me to volunteer and help people in my community is the joy I get after helping them and the joy they get from receiving the help.

Even though it may be tough at times, I enjoy keeping myself busy and keeping God in my life by helping others. All the work that goes into helping them just makes me happy knowing I helped another.

I am very fortunate to be able to help share God's love with other people and hopefully in return they will share his love with other people they know.

PARENTS: Garry and Jenny Pachta of rural Belleville, Kan.

In each issue of The Messenger, we want to introduce our readers to a high school or college student who merits special note. If you know a young person — male or female — you'd like to recommend to be featured in The Messenger's "Recognizing Catholic Youth," please let us know by contacting:

Sister Beverly Carlin
785/220-7996 srbevcc@csjkansas.org

Sisters welcome new bishop with warmth & hospitality

In what could have been a perfunctory courtesy call, the new Bishop of Salina spent much of Monday, Aug. 20, visiting the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

But formality gave way to warmth as Bishop Edward Weisenburger "got schooled" (his phrase) by Sister Rose Marie Dwyer on ministering in rural Brazil, exchanged stories about his mother's hometown in Ellis County, received a "prayer cloth" knit by one of the women who visits the Neighbor to Neighbor center and ate cookies that he conceded were not allowed on his diet.

In February, the Vatican announced that then-Monsignor Weisenburger, rector of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City, would succeed Bishop Paul Coakley as head of the Diocese of Salina. On May 1, he was ordained a bishop in ceremonies at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Salina.

Since then he has been getting to know the sprawling diocese that stretches north to Nebraska and west to Colorado. But this was his first opportunity to visit the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia and the only Motherhouse within the Salina diocese.

In addition to celebrating Mass, with the assistance

of the Motherhouse chaplain, Father Jim Hoover, he also toured the historic landmark building and had dinner with the sisters who live here.

Sister Rose Marie Dwyer, who served for almost 40 years in Brazil and who is today retired from active ministry and living at the Motherhouse, took the opportunity to tell Bishop Weisenburger about the challenges and rewards of life on a foreign mission.

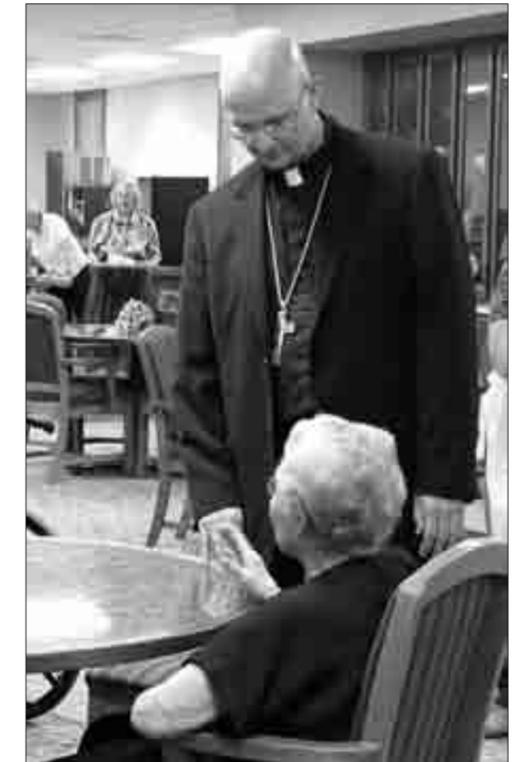
"The bishop got schooled by the sister," he said, laughing.

Later in the day, Sister Marcia Allen, president of the Concordia congregation, took the bishop to the sisters' administrative offices and then to the Neighbor to Neighbor center and Manna House of Prayer.

At Neighbor to Neighbor, the center for women operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Bishop Weisenburger had the chance to meet several of the women who visit.

Ann Barnett of Concordia offered him a "Prayer Cloth," which she knits and makes available for free, as reminders of "the comfort in faith and prayer." Bishop Weisenburger picked a blue cloth and said he would keep it in his pocket.

"We can all use prayer," he told Barnett.



Sister Rose Marie Dwyer, who served almost 40 years in Brazil, tells the new Bishop of Salina, Edward Weisenburger, about her experiences during his first visit to the Nazareth Motherhouse Aug. 20.

Franciscan theologian challenges Concordia audience

In 16 hours of lectures stretched over four days, author and noted theologian Sister Ilia Delio traveled 3,000 years into the past — and then speculated on what it will all mean centuries into the future.

With her on the journey were the nearly 100 participants in the 2012 Theological Institute held July 26-29.

The annual educational forum is usually held at Manna House of Prayer, but the record turnout required more space so it was moved to the Motherhouse auditorium.

More than a quarter of the attendees were lay people, with participants from as far away as New Mexico, Texas, Georgia



SISTER ILIA DELIO

and Wisconsin.

Delio's presentation was titled "Evolutionary Christianity: Hope for the Future" and drew from her 2011 book, "The Emergent Christ: Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe."

As a senior fellow in science and religion at Woodstock Theological Center, within Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Delio is uniquely qualified to discuss both the history of theology and the newest

developments in quantum physics. She holds doctorates in pharmacology and in historical theology, and is a Franciscan sister whose previous books include "Simply Bonaventure," "Franciscan Prayer," "The

Humility of God" and "Christ in Evolution."

For the Theological Institute, Delio began with a discussion of the roots of Christian beliefs, starting with the Greek idea of a well-ordered universe. Layered onto that, she said, was a theology that comes from the 13th century — with the earth at the center and humans as the pinnacle of creation, as the image of God.

Despite scientific discoveries in the ensuing centuries — and particularly in the 20th and 21st centuries — she argued that Christianity is "still hung up on heliocentrism. Forget about dealing with evolution."

But for Christianity — and Catholicism — to be relevant in today's world, she argued, Christians have to realize that "science has opened new windows for us."

With humor, clarity and quotes ranging from French philosopher, paleontologist and priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

to the lyrics of Led Zeppelin, Delio allowed her audience to look through many of those windows with her.

She traced physics back 13.7 billion years to the Big Bang, and came forward through Charles Darwin to Albert Einstein, touched on chaos theory and then explained the so-called "God particle" — the subatomic Higgs boson — that has just been discovered.

Through it all, she explained the advanced physics while maintaining the spiritual connection.

All the complex explanations and connections, Delio insisted, come to one simple conclusion: "God is love, the fountain fullness of love, the unstoppable love of love itself, always in the process of becoming more love."

Delio's seminar was the 22nd annual Theological Institute sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

VATICAN II

Fifty years after the Second Vatican Council was convened in Rome, a theologian and sister reflects on its significance

My mother was the one who helped me — then a youngster in my early teens — understand the importance of the Vatican Council II.

The new, kindly Pope John XXIII moved and inspired her, and I listened and watched as news reports and discussions about the Council buoyed my mother's spirit and gave her a new outlook on her church and on the world. Pope John's death on June 3, 1963, so soon after the Council began, made her deeply sad, but she trusted that the on-going work of the Council would be infused with his spirit and with the Holy Spirit whom he invoked for a "new Pentecost."

Years later when I joined the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, I found my mother's enthusiasm among the Sisters — in classes with Sister Liberata Pellerin on the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in the congregational meetings to learn how to incorporate the Council's *aggiornamento* into our lives; even in the struggles about how we postulants and novices were to be "formed."

Now, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Council's opening, we must thank the many respected theologians and Council analysts for helping us remember it.

John O'Malley, SJ, is one who has contributed eloquently to our Catholic corporate memory of this epochal event. His work springs from his conviction that "[w]hat is true for individuals is true for a social body. What such bodies choose to remember from their past makes them what they are." How we, the Catholic people, choose to remember and interpret Vatican Council II will shape the Church's identity in ages to come.

Karl Rahner, SJ, who served as a theological advisor to bishops at the Council, believes that the history of Christianity has unfolded in three epochs, with Vatican II ushering in the third.

The first epoch was very short. Rahner described it as the Jewish-Christian epoch for its focus on Jesus' mission among and for his own religious community, the Jewish people; it ended with the Council of Jerusalem some 20 years after Jesus' death.

That Council was convened to settle some pressing theological and cultural concerns, namely, whether the Gentile — meaning non-Jewish — Christians should be required to become Jews before being baptized as Christians. Should the men be circumcised? Should the Gentile Christians be required to keep the Sabbath and Jewish dietary laws? The answers to these questions did not come easily.

The transition from Jewish Christianity to a Christianity of Gentiles "introduced a radically new period in Church history."

So the second epoch, inaugurated by the decisions



SISTER CATHERINE R. MICHAUD, CSJ, will lead next summer's Theological Institute — titled "Understanding Vatican II" at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia. To reserve a spot in the residential program that is set for July 25-28, 2013, go to mannahouse.org

Sister Catherine is a former professor of theology at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minn. She earned her Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the Toronto School of Theology of the University of Toronto, and has lectured and written extensively on Vatican II.

For more on Sister Catherine and her work, go to www.theologyaftervatican2.net

made at the Council of Jerusalem, lasted almost two millennia and comprised many sub-epochs or transitions — among them two great schisms and the Protestant Reformation.

It serves as historical proof that theological breaks and shifts in the Church's identity are not unprecedented; the Church does change. This transition also cemented the Catholic Church in history as the Roman Church, an institution that modeled its leadership style on the Roman emperors starting with Constantine in the fourth century, and it governed its members with laws and rules.

The third epoch, according to Rahner, began with Vatican Council II, when the bishops proclaimed that "the sphere of the Church's life is in fact the entire world."

This opening out to the world is reflected in the ecumenical direction of the Council set by Pope John XXIII, in the Council's attention to the Church's responsibility to work for a just and peaceful world, in the Church's relations with other Christians and other religions, and in the Council's worldwide voting membership.

Vatican II marked the first time in history that the European bishops were outnumbered at a church council. There were 1,089 bishops in attendance from Europe, while 1,722 came from other parts of the world (489 from South America; 404 from North America; 374 from Asia; 296 from Africa; 84 from Central America; 75 from Australia, New Zealand, Oceania and the Solomon Islands).

By contrast, a total of 737 bishops, most of whom were from Europe, attended Vatican I.

Until Vatican II, the Roman Church "exported" Christianity to other nations. It established itself in the rest of the world by exporting its liturgical rites, language (Latin), canon law and much of its European ecclesial tradition.

The resulting "uniformity" was intended to ensure "continuity" with the past and preserve the "deposit of faith" understood as having been handed down apostolically — that is, through duly appointed bishops and elected popes.

But Vatican II shifted the emphasis from a "unity" enforced by laws to unity based on respect for cultures and for peoples united by their baptism into the one Body of Christ and ordination into Christ's mission.

Just as the transition from the first epoch of Christianity to the second met with resistance and fear that the essence of Jesus' message would be diminished and perhaps lost in sharing it with

"outsiders," the transition to the third epoch is meeting resistance — resistance that was evident within the Council itself. Nevertheless, every vote on every Document was passed by an overwhelming majority.

And yet differences persist, and they can only be overcome by a conversion to a vision. "This, then, is the issue," Rahner asserted, "either the Church sees and recognizes the[se] essential differences of other cultures for which she should become a world Church and with a Pauline boldness draws the necessary consequences from this recognition, or she remains a Western Church and so in the final analysis betrays the meaning of Vatican II."

Rahner was aware as he wrote his warning that efforts were already in motion to exert "pressure on the bishops and on public opinion in order to make a case for rethinking the approach to Vatican II" and to lay blame on the Council for the "crisis" of post-Vatican II Catholicism — the decline in priestly and religious vocations, the drop in numbers of Catholics regularly receiving the sacraments and the increased numbers of Catholics leaving the Church.

This is the question that I regularly encounter as I speak about Vatican II in parishes and with church groups: Why have we Catholics not received a clearer understanding of the Council's meaning?

It leads me to wonder how the spirit and the teachings of Vatican II can be "received" by the Church if its members have only a vague understanding of what happened at the Council?

Dedicated Catholics frequently ask where they can find the meaning of the Council that Popes John XXIII and Paul VI intended? To whom should they listen?

Pope Benedict is promoting his belief that understanding Vatican II is a matter of the "hermeneutics" — the "interpretation" he applies to the Documents produced by the Council.

(The word "hermeneutics" is often defined as "interpretation," but it has the added important meaning of "interpretation of a text in its context.")

Pope Benedict's "hermeneutics" seems more accu-

ately to be an "interpretation" that rejects any suggestion that Vatican II made any "changes," and it brands "change" as "rupture" and departure from tradition ("discontinuity").

But scholars of the Council like Joseph Komonchak explain that the Documents alone do not tell the whole story; they need to be kept in their historical context.

Komonchak and others remind us that Vatican II was "a particularly dramatic *event*" (emphasis, mine) and those "texts did not drop down from heaven, but resulted from a process of conversation, confrontation, compromise and conciliation. Knowledge of this legislative history is necessary in order fully to understand and appreciate what the council wished to say — and chose not to say — in its final texts. In other words, history and hermeneutics (interpretation) go together."

The Church's identity for the future will result from the way we read and interpret the Documents today.

Ormond Rush, the Australian theologian, believes that an "adequate interpretation" of the Council requires "three complementary strategies:"

(1) Learning how the Documents developed over time within the Council — learning the history of the texts;

(2) Taking note of the final form of each Document with attention to its style. Past Councils used a "legal rhetorical style" almost exclusively, while the Documents of Vatican II, for the most part, are written in a style intended to inspire and invite the reader to an ideal, indeed, even to prayer. This style is consonant with the spirit of the Council itself; and

(3) An "adequate interpretation" of the Council requires consideration of how the People of God have read the Council's teachings and how they have appropriated them. Rush refers to this as the "hermeneutics of receivers."

Thinking about Rush's third point on the "hermeneutics of receivers" brought back memories of conversations I had with my father while I was working on my doctoral dissertation on Vatican II.

My father did not share my mother's enthusiasm about the Council.

Without ever looking at the Documents, he had rejected Vatican II as a mistake and questioned my decision to make it the focus of my advanced-degree studies. So many of the changes in the Church after the Council were incomprehensible to him, and worse, they had shattered the predictability and the "mystique" of his religion.

During one of our more challenging conversations I asked, "Dad, have you read any of the Documents? Have

Prayer, ministry, lifestyle: An evolution 'with eyes wide open & a heart for life'



SISTER MARILYN WALL was born in Aurora, Ill., and was received into the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia on Aug. 14, 1961. Today she lives in Washington, Kan., and ministers in rural Washington County.

I have long wanted to articulate my experience of post-Vatican II religious life. I have always considered myself blessed to live in this time in history with its challenges, upheavals and revelations.

I entered religious life before Vatican II and have been able to evolve into the religious life of today with eyes wide open and a heart for life and those with whom I share it day by day.

These are the areas that have most affected my life as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia:

PRAYER has become presence to both God and the "dear neighbor" in a stance of reverence and service. The Gospels have taken on ever-new significance in both lifestyle and discerning issues and ministry. Eucharist is the central reality of my life — receiving Jesus and taking him to those I meet, serve and love, both as sacramental presence and in my person transformed by love.

I have come to know God as nearer to me than I am to myself — the "ground of my being," the source and fulfillment of my dreams and desires.

MINISTRY is not a job. It is a lifestyle of presence, availability and willingness to be led by God to those I am to serve. In addition to my tasks at the parish, ministry is being present in the communities such as at civic and school events. And ministry extends to everyone, church and unchurched alike.

VATICAN II FIFTY YEARS LATER



Sister Marilyn Wall poses for a snapshot with Alice and Lenhardt Homeier during a celebration in Wilson, Kan., of her 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia.

Many people will not make an appointment if they have a question or a problem, but will talk when they meet me in the grocery store or at a game. Only yesterday I had two significant visits in the drug store, one

of which I would not have anticipated. In all of this I have been touched, changed and inspired by the people I have encountered. They are the face of God for me.

My **LIFESTYLE** supports and exposes my ministry. Currently I live alone in a rectory, and I am free to be where I need to be at any given time.

The monastic lifestyle, which we lived prior to Vatican II, was not part of our founding charism, and could not accommodate our contemplation in action.

Today my lifestyle must also model respect for our earth and wise use of resources. That is especially important in a

rural community where people seek to both use and enrich the earth with compassionate care in order to preserve it for future generations.

All this brings to mind the story of a social worker who was visiting a school for the blind, housed in a huge English mansion. The students were to take her on a tour of the building, which included all sorts of steps and corners and other architectural obstacles.

Before the tour began, though, the blind students were reminded, "Be sure to turn the lights on — she is sighted!"

In our interaction with other people we see how true the story is. We are involved in the evolution of the cosmos, but our senses limit our perception; we cannot see the whole picture.

This half-century since the opening of Vatican II is significant to us, but it is only a small piece of the whole of time. We are being lured forward by a God we can't begin to imagine.

Sister Catherine

Continued from page 9.

you read your Church's Constitutions?"

He admitted he had not, even though he was an avid reader. So for his birthday that August I sent him a large-print edition of the Council Documents.

He did not mention receiving this gift until Christmas, when he said, "Remember that book you gave me for my birthday? I read it. All 16 documents."

"So, Dad," I said with some surprise, "what did you think of them?"

Pausing for a moment, he replied, "I think they are beautiful. Especially "The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World."

He later told me how touched he was to learn about his "vocation" as a lay person as he read the Document on the Laity and "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church."

My father turned 91 this August and over the years his soul has been enlarged and sweetened by his growing understanding of the Council, its "holy" spirit, and what it means to be Church.

Perhaps the best representative of the theologians at the Council was Yves Congar who offers what he considers to be the two most important factors in understanding and implementing the Council: (1) "an historical sensibility" and (2) "a sense of the delay needed to understand, develop, apply and mature things. It is necessary to give ourselves the time to digest Vatican II..."

The gifts of the Council yet to be fully received are the spirit of renewal, new life, and claim on our new identity as "world church."

'A new vision of the Church in the world'



SISTER PAT NEIHOUSE was born in Salina, Kan. She was received into the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia on March 18, 1955, and today continues to live and serve in Teresina, Piauí, Brazil.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia answered the call made by Pope John XXIII to reach out beyond our borders to serve our "dear neighbors" around the world.

There were four of us in the spring of 1963 who went to northeast Brazil: Sister Margarida Boucher, Sister St. David Stenger (whom we called "Davi"), Sister Rose Dominic Vaughan and me, Sister Jonella (now Pat) Neihouse.

Just before we arrived in Teresina, where we would base our mission, we received the news that Pope John had died. He had opened the Church — through his call for missionaries and the opening of the Second Vatican Council — to find new ways to reach the world by radiating the light of our great hope in Jesus Christ.

As I look back upon my years here in Brazil, I find myself, along with others, in the midst of a new vision of the Church in the world.

How many times the local Redemptorist priests and we sisters studied the documents as they were being completed during Vatican II. We were very excited about trying to put in practice what these documents meant for us and the people of God.

At the same time, Brazil was in a dark phase of her history; the Revolution of 1964 was a coup that marked the beginning of more than 20 years of military rule.

The people were becoming more and more aware of their right to an active role in the making of their government, but they were not allowed to do so; they were called communists, and many were put in jail and were killed.

Neither I nor the other sisters really understood all the serious implications of military government.

Instead, we concentrated on the renewal in the Church and religious education in the parishes.

We found a catechism published in December 1963 that could help us as we reconsidered Catholic Christian teaching, and we asked some of the other sisters in Teresina to help. Sisters from other parishes began

to give courses, too, so by 1966 the Archbishop asked me to help develop a program to give classes and prepare other catechists in rural communities. From that, in 1967, grew the Catechetical Institute, to provide training to the catechists in the city of Teresina.

At the same time, I was helping out in the St. Joseph the Worker parish. With a group of youth from the parish, I formed a team to teach the liturgical changes and to translate the new hymns into Portuguese.

During these renewal years, religious life took on a new meaning. I had a clearer understanding of myself as a daughter of God, as God's missionary. I was able to share the love of our charism with others and help them to live it in their everyday lives. I became more enthused with the

formation of laity who would continue their growth, both physical and spiritual.

In the process, I found ways of working together with other groups.

I especially remember the town of Amarante, Piauí, south of Teresina. I worked with lay people to take a census of the parish, to identify the poorest areas. How could we help them better their lives?

Together with the director of the Brazil Bank in Amarante, a very good man, and the leadership of a Workers Group, we conducted a campaign to receive money and food for those who were needy.

In the Escalvado neighborhood, we were able to pay for an agriculture expert to teach residents and help them plant a community garden, and in this way help themselves. Even today, they are planting and selling vegetables. In a rural community of Morrinhos we restored a dam that the community used for water, and helped them cultivate fish that they could eat and sell.

Each mission called me to new challenges, and a renewed need to reconsider my life.

Eventually I went to a priest friend who lived in Sobral, Ceará, to help me psychologically and spiritually. This indeed was a turning point for me! I was helped to look outside of myself and to give more of myself.

That would lead to more of a focus on spiritual direction and formation, and even congregational leadership.

The next challenge was going to the southern part of the state of Pará, to the town of Nova Esperança. I was



During a visit to Concordia in the summer of 2009, three of our sisters from Brazil — from left, Sister Donna Otter, Sister Pat Neihouse and Sister Maria Nair de Sousa Lima — dance to folk music one evening at Manna House of Prayer.

with three of our sisters, and together we worked with nine basic communities.

Pará was a land of no law and little infrastructure. We sisters lived in a thatch roof house.

Little by little the people discovered what it meant to have rights and responsibilities, and to be Catholics, members of the Church. We had little, but we had lots!

We studied as a diocese, as land reforms were being put into place and a new Constitution was being written.

Looking back over the last 50 years, the Church continues to help create new ways of responding to God's appeals, but she has a tendency to be clerical!

The challenges of today are leading us to work together with other groups that have gifts to help human beings. And we continue to work in all our various ministries.

Today's world has brought with it new needs: a need to accept one's self and to live the now, to exercise the acceptance of God's love within us, and with discernment do what is possible, together with others, to help change things for the better.

Today I continue spiritual direction and with the Enneagram courses, help leaders with Bible groups and facilitate meetings or conferences when called upon.

'... In a spirit of personal *aggiornamento*'



SISTER REGINA ANN BRUMMEL was born in Pilot Grove, Mo., and was received into the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia on Aug. 14, 1962. After completing a four-year term on the congregation's Leadership Council this summer, Sister Regina Ann is now Academic Dean at White Earth Tribal and Community College in Mahanomen, Minn.

In this my 50th Jubilee year, it seems fitting to reflect on how Vatican II has influenced my life from the Council's opening days to the present as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas, and how I am celebrating and envisioning the future.

Vatican II was and continues to be formative for me. Although various forces within the Church seem focused on reversing the Council's message, I continue to be encouraged by the freedom it gives to own responsibility for my response to the Spirit, for the authority I have to shape my life as a Christian woman.

I had barely entered adulthood when I joined the CSJs, all without a real sense at that time of what the life entailed. All I knew was that I was called.

My first years in religious life were very regimented, but I somehow rose above that and was ready to give it a try.

In the backdrop of all we were being taught back then, I heard bits of news about John XXIII's invitation to open the windows of the Church to the modern world to let in the wind heard and felt at Pentecost, the wind which brings new life.

Like many, I had no way of knowing what this *aggiornamento* would mean, but it appealed to my youthful craving for rightness and adventure.

The news that Vatican II urged religious communities to explore our history and the spirit of our founders further excited me, and while at Marymount College in Salina I listened to Sister Francis Ellen Riordan — my French instructor and later colleague — describe her participation in research on 17th-century CSJ history, documents, and purpose.

VATICAN II FIFTY YEARS LATER



In June 2011 — a year before her own 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia — Sister Regina Ann Brummel, at left, leads a choir of sisters during the Jubilee Celebration at the Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia.

From her reflections, I soon realized that Ignatian spirituality was a match for my view of life.

I have come to realize that I would not be truly myself were I not a member of the Ignatian-inspired CSJ community of Concordia. I love Ignatius of Loyola's promptings that we, Jesus' adopted sisters, are partners in all his endeavors, especially bringing unity, justice and peace to all people and to creation itself.

I love that we CSJs of Concordia have our roots in the prairie, and that our spirits are inspired by the wind that blows constantly over the land wherever we are, carrying new seeds of

leadership and life to so many towns and communities near and far. Somehow our charism — that we love God and the dear neighbor without distinction — fits so well.

The spiritual wind that blows constantly, engendering creativity as at Pentecost and as Vatican II took shape in our consciousness, may be what has inspired me to take every opportunity to learn about the world.

My educational searchings in international politics, French language, and multicultural education have taken me to many communities in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and North America.

For several years I have served as an educator in inner-city schools and in remote Native American reservation schools and colleges.

Now, after a term on the Concordia CSJ Leadership Council, I have returned to the tribal college that I have helped to form over the years on the White Earth reservation in northwest Minnesota, serving again as the Academic Dean.

In so many places I have witnessed the effects of oppression and poverty, all the while being inspired by the resilience of the human spirit and peoples' service to one another in the midst of great suffering. People wherever I've lived have inspired me by their joyful example.

As I celebrate my 50th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kansas, I reflect daily on what it means to follow Jesus, each day meeting the challenges of walking with people whose lives are precious to him.

Only he knows what impact my work may have, just as he alone knows how the messages of Vatican II will be lived out among the People of God throughout the world.

As for me, I will strive to continue in a spirit of personal *aggiornamento*, of being constantly open to the world around me as it speaks to me of the great love of God and of the dear neighbor.

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE

Before you write that boring check, consider this

Let's say that each year — probably in December — you make a charitable donation to an organization that's important to you. You sit down, write a check and drop it in the mail. Or maybe you go online and make an "e-donation" on the organization's website.

Either way, it's easy to do, and very, very much appreciated by the organization, and you probably have a good feeling about helping in a cause you care about.

But frankly, it's just not that much fun. Christmas Tree Lane... Now *that's* fun!

You can come be part of the ticket-only "preview party" on Friday, Nov. 30, or come to the Christmas Open House at the Motherhouse on Saturday, Dec. 1. At either (or both) you can look over the 12 Christmas trees decorated by local nonprofit organizations and then bid on your favorite.

Organizations taking part in Christmas Tree Lane 2012

- » Cloud County Health Center
- » Cloud County Health Center Auxiliary
- » Cloud County Resource Center
- » North Central Kansas Down Syndrome Society
- » Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas
- » National Orphan Train Museum
- » Manna House of Prayer
- » Big Brothers Big Sisters
- » Brown Grand Theatre
- » Relay For Life
- » NCK Paws
- » OCCK Inc.



This year you'll even be able to check out the trees online.

As soon as they are delivered to the Motherhouse on Nov. 28, we'll post photos on our website — www.csjkansas.org — and then you will be able to call or email the organization to make a "proxy bid."

If you *keep* bidding, you may be the one who takes the tree home at the end of the

event Saturday.

Then you'll have made a donation, helped one of a dozen great causes, felt good about being generous — and had fun in the process.

Oh... and you'll have a beautifully decorated Christmas tree as a special bonus!

In 2011's inaugural Christmas Tree Lane, 11 organizations took part, with each

one decorating a 4½-foot tree and then receiving all the proceeds from ticket sales to a preview party, donations during the event and the total amount of the winning bid in a silent auction for the trees.

The trees are provided free through a grant from the Community Foundation for Cloud County.

The Sisters of St. Joseph host the event as their gift to other local organizations that struggle with fundraising even as need for their services increase.

The 2012 Preview Party at the Motherhouse is set for 7 to 8:30 p.m., Nov. 30. Tickets are \$25 each and are available from any of the participating organizations.

The next day — Dec. 1 — the public is invited to view the trees, and make bids, as part of the sisters' annual Christmas Open House from 1 to 3 p.m.

COMING EVENTS

» **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19** — "Reading with Leaders" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., Concordia, begins at 10 a.m., featuring "The Velvet Rabbit" with Dr. Bonnie Cramer. Storytelling for children ages 3-5, and a free book for your child to take home. Registration is required: Call Sister Pat McLennon at 785/262-4215.

» **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27** — "Finding God in the Ordinary Experiences of our Lives," at Manna House of Prayer, 323 E. Fifth St., Concordia, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Through prayer, personal reflection and sharing you will identify God's footprints in your own life experiences. This day will enhance your spiritual insight and provide you with new perspectives. Presented by Sister Marilyn Wall. Registration: \$45 (includes lunch).

» **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4** — Annual Memorial Mass, 10:30 a.m. in the Sacred Heart Chapel at the Nazareth Motherhouse, followed by dinner with the sisters. In this special Mass, we remember and honor all those who have died within the past year. If you plan to attend, please contact Sister Jean Rosemarynoski at 785/243-2113, ext. 1217, or jrose@csjkansas.org.

» **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9** — "Reading with Leaders" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., Concordia begins at 10 a.m., featuring "Harold and The Purple Crayon" with Cheryl Lyn Higgins. Storytelling for children ages 3-5, and a free book for your child to take home. Registration is required: Call Sister Pat McLennon at 785/262-4215.

» **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10** — Kristy Childs on sex trafficking and exploitation, at the Nazareth Motherhouse, 1:30 p.m. (See story on page 4.)

» **NOVEMBER 16-18** — "It's in the Bag" Quilting Retreat, at Manna House. Guest teacher Janice Carroll will demonstrate how to make a great multipurpose tote. Registration: \$45; room & meals: \$100. Non-refundable deposit: \$25.

ATTENTION, MARYMOUNT ALUMNI: Your college education is worth even more! You get a special discount when you register for any program at Manna House of Prayer — 15 percent off multi-day retreats and workshops or \$10 off one-day workshops. Make sure you mention it when you register by phone or check the box during online registration.

» **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24** — "Christmas Show & Sell" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Art created by women at the center will be on display, and lots of handmade crafts will be available for sell. All proceeds benefit the craftswomen and artisans.

» **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30** — "Reading with Leaders" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., begins at 10 a.m., featuring "Guess How Much You Love Me" with Marilyn Johnston. Storytelling for children ages 3-5, and a free book for your child to take home. Registration is required: Call Sister Pat McLennon at 785/262-4215.

» **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1** — "Guided Writing" at Manna House, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Come to this day of meditative writing to enhance your awareness of life's experiences. If you haven't kept a journal, this day will teach you how simple it is. Sister Liberata Pellerin will show you how writing can help us appreciate, accept and give clarity to our days. Registration: \$45 (includes lunch).

» **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14** — "Reading with Leaders" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., begins at 10 a.m., featuring "Santa's Little Helper" with Richard Palmquist. Storytelling for children ages 3-5, and a free book for your child to take home. Registration is required: Call Sister Pat McLennon at 785/262-4215.

» **JANUARY 2-6, 2013** — Quilting Marathon, at Manna House. Need a break after the holidays? Take time to finish some UFOs! Starts Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. and continues until Sunday at 1 p.m. The Tumbler Quilt is an optional class during the Marathon for no additional cost. Registration: \$50; room & meals: \$200. Non-refundable deposit: \$50.

» **JANUARY 4-6** — Tumbler Block Quilting Retreat, at Manna House. Guest teacher Lynda Brittingham will guide you in making a tumbler quilt using

the Accuquilt Go Fabric Cutter system and tumbler block die. Bring your fabrics and get ready to cut your tumbler blocks with the fabric cutting system. Begins Friday at 5:30 p.m. and ends Sunday at 1 p.m. Registration: \$45; room & meals: \$100. Non-refundable deposit: \$25.

» **FRIDAY, JANUARY 11** — "Reading with Leaders" at Neighbor to Neighbor, 103 E. Sixth St., begins at 10 a.m., featuring "Dancing Feet" with Jason Martin. Storytelling for children ages 3-5, and a free book for your child to take home. Registration is required: Call Sister Pat McLennon at 785/262-4215.

» **JANUARY 11-13** — Bobbin Lace Workshop at Manna House. Participate in a peaceful weekend creating beauty by making bobbin lace. Sisters Ramona Medina and Janet Lander will provide patterns and instruction. This workshop is for beginners and advanced lace makers. Begins Friday at 5:30 p.m. and ends Sunday at 1 p.m. Registration: \$45; room & meals: \$100 (meals only \$30). Material needed: Lacing pillow and bobbins (available to rent for \$10 or purchase for \$80).

» **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2** — "Winter Spirituality: God's Valentine" at Manna House, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. You are God's Valentine, so spend a day allowing God to say, "I love you." The day will include contemplative writing, time for personal and communal prayer, input and creative process. Presenters are Sisters Liberata Pellerin and Janet Lander. Registration: \$45 (includes lunch).

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS NOW AVAILABLE
FOR PROGRAMS AT MANNA HOUSE OF PRAYER!

Go to mannahouse.org

Or, for details on any program, call 785/243-4428
or email retreatcenter@mannahouse.org.

Sister Susan Kongs: March 12, 1917-Sept. 11, 2012

VIGIL: Sept. 12, 2012, Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia

EULOGIST: Sister Margaret Rourke

At her birth, Susan Kongs could have said, in the words of Meister Eckhart, "In my flowing out I am entering creation." And when she breathed her last on Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2012, she was able to say, "In my Breakthrough I re-enter God." Susan has come full circle since her entry into creation and now her re-entry into life with God, and we celebrate her life as a wonderful creation of God.

She was born March 12, 1917, on a farm at Seneca, Kan., the daughter of Louis and Mary Kramer Kongs. She was baptized the next day with the name Susanna Bernadine.

She was the third in a family of eight children. Her surviving siblings are Rita Feldkamp, Dorothy Ronnebaum and Louis Kongs. She was preceded in death by three brothers, Father Vincent Kongs, Walter Kongs and Donald Kongs, and her dear sister Lela Tangeman.

In Susan's life story she revealed that she, on a few occasions, was too inquisitive. When her father backed the Model T Ford out of the garage, he soon realized that he had run over something and, of course, it was Susanna, who always liked to go places with him. But a trip to the hospital proved no broken bones so the next day she was back on the farm.

Some months later she tells, "I made my way through a hole in the fence. My objective was to pet the new calf. But the mother cow, being protective, bounced me up into the air several time before I was rescued by my mother."

Susanna's grade school education was at St. Mary's School in St. Benedict, Kan., a small Catholic community of about 125 families.

As an eighth grader Susanna felt that God was touching her life and calling her in a way that she didn't fully understand. She was reluctant to follow this call, but it was evident to others that she was being called to God.

At age 20 she made contact with the Sisters of Charity and also inquired at the Benedictine Sisters in Atchison. Then she received a letter from Mother Mary Rose Waller who assured her that God was calling her to be a Sister of St. Joseph of Concordia, Kan.

Susan entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on Sept. 14, 1938, and she says she knew immediately that God called her to this congregation. There were six girls in that band, and they received the habit on March 19, 1939. She received the religious name Sister Ann Louis, from her mother and father's names.

From 1940 to 1943, Sister Ann Louis attended high school classes at the Motherhouse and then graduated — ready for her first mission.

St. Vincent Parish in Silver City, N.M., was opening a school and needed teachers. She was part of the 1944 faculty that arrived there to find extreme poverty and meager accommodations. She says it was quite an experience "as we were the poorest of the poor and yet quite happy." A sister from El Paso sent three cots and another from St. Mary's Academy often left sacks of groceries on the kitchen table.

She wrote that at one time she had a strong desire to be a nurse, but after teaching for one year and feeling quite successful, her thoughts focused on becoming a good teacher. And the beautiful letters of gratitude and praise she received from her former students often verified that she did.

Sister Ann Louis said that during her ministry of teaching, "I felt God had gifted me with the tools of an educator: the ability to understand and enjoy teenagers, a sense of discipline, the ability to impart values — both religious and secular — and an aptitude for organization." Those tools made her teaching days pleasant ones.

I can vouch for her competence as a principal and teacher as I experienced her down the hall from me for



HOMECOMINGS

six wonderful years in Leoville, Kan. She not only met the needs of students, but she was a strong support for the teachers and in dealings with parents.

We were the only two sisters on the grade school faculty most of those years so we got to know each other pretty well. We still laughed heartily when we recalled the time we were preparing for some event that required changing the furniture in the lunchroom. To make more space, we decided to carry the piano bench down the basement stairs and leave it there.

As we were about half way down the stairs she said, "Now don't break you back," and I said, "It's not my back that's breaking; it's my will." And we set the bench down right there and laughed and laughed.

Sister Ann Louis said her teaching in Leoville, Chicago and Manhattan, Kan., had been a source of deep satisfaction. Working with students at the junior high level, she said, "was always a challenge and I loved every minute of it."

She attended Marymount College and graduated cum laude in 1965 with a major in English and a minor in history. She also attended Creighton University and Webster College in St. Louis.

She often spoke of her years in Chicago in the 1960s. They were challenging times with the changes from Vatican II and the unsettled spirit in the whole culture. She was superior in a house of 19 sisters, of whom 16 were very young.

To quote her, "Those changing times made deep marks and scars on the lives of these young sisters. It was my faith in God that helped me during and through those years after seeing so many of our young sisters leaving our congregation. I have kept in touch with some of them and there are evidences of great pain and suffering in their efforts to cope with the problems they faced as lay women."

Quoting from Susan's journal:

"During my years as a religious, I have often reflected on the Lord's goodness to me, his giftedness, his constant care of me. I know God accepts me as I am and sends blessings needed for the journey. I know that finding God in all things is what life is about. I thank God for the times of prayer and silence when I can reflect on my own life in the light of the Gospels and grow daily in a deep personal oneness with God, with others and with self."

"As my years rolls on, I feel and look over the past and reflect how good the Lord has been to me through the years. My daily prayer as a Sister of St. Joseph is apostolic; it is being present to God, to myself, to my students and to the world. I have seen my life blossom from a tiny bud to a full blossomed rose with, now and then, a petal dropping off to indicate that the aging process is already on its way."

Susan's teaching career reached a high point in 1988 when, from among 1,000 entries, she was named Kansas Teacher of the Year.

In 1990, Susan took a year sabbatical at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash. "It was then that something surfaced in me that led me to work with and touch the lives of the poor," she wrote.

She spent four years at St. Clare House and another four years in Junction City, Kan., at the Open Door, a refuge for homeless families. "Truly the virtue of compassion had surfaced in my life," she wrote. "Many times as I lay my head on the pillow at night, I could say with St. Paul, 'Except for the grace of God there goes I.'"

While at Junction City living in a small home, Susan and her companions became a hospitality house. It was a joy to visit there.

Susan was an avid reader and she made time for that and for prayer and also her daily piano playing and a catnap in the chair.



Sister Generosa Walker: Sept. 6, 1920-July 12, 2012

VIGIL: Sunday, July 15, 2012, Nazareth Motherhouse, Concordia

EULOGIST: Sister Jean Rosemarynoski

When Sister Generosa asked me to give her eulogy, I asked her if she had any special request or anything in particular she wanted people to know. She said she had only one request: Keep it short.

That was classic Generosa. The request came from her humility and from her consideration of others. Those characteristics were thoroughly Generosa.

In her funeral directives, she said she would like a sister to be present at her deathbed to pray with her — but only if it was convenient; otherwise she understood.

The day before she died, I was visiting her and asked her if she was hungry. She said that she wasn't but if I thought she needed to eat something then she would. Generosa — always willing, always gracious, always encouraging. Sister Anna Marie Broxterman was there also so she got some apple juice and a straw. Generosa was in bed so Anna Marie put her arm under Generosa's head to gently lift her and make it easier for her to drink. Generosa drank a few sips and then it began to run down her chin. She looked at Anna Marie and said, "Sister, you gave it a very good try." All those characteristics that endeared Sister Generosa to so many were just part of her DNA.

Sister Generosa was born on Sept. 6, 1910, on a farm near Mayetta, Kan. She was the fourth of seven children and the only daughter of Christopher Bartholomew and Mary Isabel Gooderl Walker. She was baptized Gertrude Cecilia at St. Francis Xavier Church in Mayetta.

She attended Holton High School and graduated in 1927 as salutatorian, ranking second highest in academic standing.

Then she went to Plainview, Texas, for a year to attend Wayland Baptist College. The following year she returned to Kansas and attended Marymount College in Salina, operated and staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia.

After Marymount she returned to the Pottawatomie reservation to teach for three years and then entered the Sisters of St. Joseph.

She has reflected that she had felt for some time that God might be calling her to religious life. She believes the inspiration began with reading copies of the Sacred Heart Messenger that her mother saved. Later, it was the example of the sisters at Marymount that inspired her to ask to join them.

On March 19, 1934, she received the habit along with 15 other young women and was given the religious name, Mary Generosa. She professed temporary vows on March 19, 1935, and final vows on Aug. 15, 1938. Of those 15

women, Sister Jane Guenette is now the only surviving member.

Sister Generosa often composed songs for various occasions. During the novitiate she wrote what she called a parting song just before the band made first vows. It was sung to the tune of "Memories." Part of the words are:

Through your gate, novitiate, 'ere long we'll pass from you. Happy days, glad memories, have been your gift so true. Fleeting years, smile and tears, we've watched them come and go, offering each one through Mary's dear Son, to fill them with heaven's glow.

The day after her first profession she was sent to Aurora, Kan., during a dust storm to help teach high school. Her teaching career spanned almost four decades and included assignments in Aurora, Park, Concordia, Tipton, Leoville, Junction City, Salina and Beloit, all in Kansas; and St. George, Ill., Grand Island, Neb., and Boonville, Mo. Teaching religious education during the



HOMECOMINGS

summer months took her to many additional towns. She taught first grade through college, teaching mathematics at Marymount College during the summers.

After she left teaching, she was a bookkeeper at St. Mary's convent for many years and became adept at handling bank accounts, payroll, taxes and so on.

Sister Generosa was an avid baseball fan following the Royals closely. She could name players, give you all their statistics and recall scores of games. In one of her letters dated October 1985 she wrote with her inimitable mischievous humor, "Our favorite team, the Royals, have enthusiastic supporters here at Nazareth Motherhouse. They won the western division title after a victory over Oakland. Some sisters listened late into the night. What is this world coming to?"

Generosa had a delightful sense of humor and playfulness, much of it at her own expense. She tells the story of her brothers and their spouses — Louis and Rachel, Orval and Margaret, Christopher and Ethel — coming to visit her in November 1985 when she moved from Junction City to the Motherhouse. She said, "My room on fourth floor met with their approval and they agreed I have a splendid north view. I didn't tell them that this was the neatest my room had looked since I moved in last July."

And she was never bothered by her age. After her birthday she was "working on the next year" — for

example, she was presently working on her 102nd year. While in her 80s she said that the increasing wrinkles were not premature but rather were earned! After all, she said, who would want to have a long, busy life without having something to show for it. She was just eight weeks shy of her 102nd birthday when she could have started working on her 103rd year.

She was so proud of her family. We kept up with the adventures of nieces, nephews and the greats and the great-greats! She beamed with joy when talking about any member of the family.

Her huge volume of correspondence was legendary. She faithfully was in touch with family, community members, friends and numerous former students. When she received a card or letter, she said she would give it a little kiss and offer a prayer for the sender. A student she taught in first grade in Park, Kan., in the 1940s continued to write to her until his death a few years ago and then his widow starting writing because Generosa had been such an influence on her husband.

Sister Generosa was infinitely compassionate and prayerful. She was always concerned about anyone who was suffering in any way — from relatives, sisters, former students, current news stories — anyone, anywhere needing prayer and Generosa was on it. She could not get enough of the spiritual life.

One of Sister Generosa's favorite pleasures, besides playing Scrabble with Sister Margaret Schreck, was ice cream. Those who played Scrabble with her knew she had an impressive vocabulary. When describing something, if she could not find an adjective that fit she would simply make a new one — as in superscrumptiousdelicious for ice cream. She liked pre-Lent ice cream parties and often encouraged others to "bank up on the ice cream for Lent is coming!"

In writing to sisters who were on mission about deaths in the community, Sister Generosa always made it a point to note what number the death was. She shared that there were only 70 graves when she entered community and she liked to keep track. Sister Generosa, just so you can continue keeping track, your death brings the total to 631.

I hope this fits your definition of keeping the eulogy short, Generosa, because there is no way that any length of time can do justice to your rich life teeming with such goodness and gratitude, brimming over with love and laughter, radiating faith and friendship, teaching us about humility, compassion and zeal. We thank you, Generosa, for your life among us and we thank God for the gift of you.





Sisters of St. Joseph
PO Box 279
Concordia KS 66901

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All the news that didn't fit
Snapshots of events at the Motherhouse and Mamma House of Prayer



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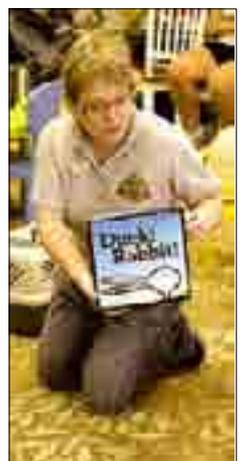
OCTOBER 2012

LEFT: Next time you think to yourself, "Oh, I'm too old to learn that," remember Sister Celestine Ruder, who at 95 spends a portion of each day in the Motherhouse computer room and has become an avid Facebook friend.

ABOVE LEFT: As part of the Relay for Life "survivors' lap" Aug. 18, everyone gathers in the parking lot at Concordia City Park and releases balloons together. In Cloud County, the annual event raised nearly \$22,000 for cancer research. The 32-member Motherhouse team won the honor of Top Fundraising Team with a total of \$5,742.

ABOVE RIGHT: During the Marymount College reunion in early August, Dahx Marrs explains plans for the continuing renovation of what was the foyer of the Marymount Admin Building. Marrs' father, Donnie, has been redesigning the "castle on the hill" into condominiums, and alumni had the chance to tour the building as part of the reunion.

RIGHT: Anita Butler from Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure in Salina was the first "guest reader" in the new Reading with Leaders program offered for preschoolers at Neighbor to Neighbor in downtown Concordia. The 12-session program is funded through a Kansas Health Foundation grant and is coordinated by the sisters' Neighborhood Initiatives office.



Keep track of all our events & projects at <http://www.csjkansas.org>