



Mercy Mosaic

A Newsletter for the Friends of the Sisters of Mercy
VOL. 10 NO. 2, FALL 2016

Sisters Minister to Reduce AIDS in Africa

Sister Mayon Sylvain, RSM, has two quotes that inspire her life and her faith: Her motto, “Yes!” which is inscribed in the ring she received at final profession and the handwritten quote that is taped to her computer, “Try unconditional love today!”

When she said yes! to her current ministry as an associate director at the All-Africa Conference: Sister to Sister four years ago, she felt God was nudging her to use her public health background to help religious sisters who deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa on a daily basis.

With a PhD in public health and 25 years of healthcare experience, Sister Mayon focuses on five countries in Africa—Cameroon, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—and helps comfort the sorrowful and be present to people in distress, especially women and children. She works with four other Sisters of Mercy from the U.S., founders Sister Margaret Farley, RSM, and Sister Eileen Hogan, RSM, development director Sister Joanne Lappetito, RSM, and Sister Rosemary Jeffries, RSM, who will be joining the conference as the executive director in September, 2016.

Together they minister in a “sacred space” in Africa for religious sisters from all over the continent. The “sacred space” is not an actual place, but annual gatherings of women religious working and living in Africa to develop ways to educate, influence and empower each other to help reduce the devastating prevalence, and ultimately



Sister Mayon (left) with Sister Mary Magdalen Ndawala T.S. and Sister Joanne Lappetito, RSM at the International Conference in Malawi in August 2015.

eliminate, this deadly disease. In these meetings, the sisters pray together, network, share resources, connect spiritually, and explore the role of faith and culture in this pandemic. “Their faith sustains their work,” says Sister Mayon. “They often find God in the difficult, challenging work that they do.”

When not in Africa, Sister Mayon works in a former convent in the Bronx at the offices of the All-Africa Conference, planning and evaluating conferences, providing support for sisters in Africa, and helping to raise money to continue the program. “This program brings sparkle to the eyes of others through the works of Mercy and helps people in need realize their own giftedness in spite of their country’s poverty, discrimination and violence and the stigma of their disease.”

One of nine children, Sister Mayon grew up in Guyana in South America and developed the passion to serve others at an early age from her father. “My dad worked two jobs to support our family. An electrician and a

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A Message From the President



Dear Friend,

"Whenever we do something together, something good, something beautiful, everyone changes. All of us change in some way and this does us good."

How well we know these words of Pope Francis to be true, as we continue to reach out to do something good together.

The Year of Mercy has encouraged us to move out of our comfort zone, as Catherine McAuley did. We look to make mercy happen not only in our own neighborhoods and in the familiarity of our own home, but wherever the need is greatest and unmet.

In these pages you will read about such a work of mercy, begun by Sisters Margaret Farley and Eileen Hogan. The *All African Conference: Sister to Sister* addresses the need for the empowerment of sisters in Africa to improve the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS. You will see how this program gains its strength from sisters supporting one another.

During this Year of Mercy we celebrated when four young women, Sisters Jennifer Barrow, Mary Beth Berretta, Danielle Gagnon and Marjorie Tapia, professed vows as Sisters of Mercy. Rejoice with us as we celebrate their commitment to Mercy and see Mercy continue to grow into the future.

Finally, we thank each of you for your friendship and support, for your fidelity to the Sisters of Mercy and the mercy you practice in your daily lives. We believe the motto of the Year of Mercy has carved itself in all of our hearts as we continue to be merciful as our God is merciful.

In mercy,

Sister Patricia Vetrano, RSM

Sister Patricia Vetrano, RSM
President

Sisters Minister to Reduce AIDS in Africa

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butcher, he was forever doing things for others," says Sister Mayon. "He provided free meat to people in need and gave away his entire government pension to build a road that was needed in our town."

After graduating from Ursuline High School in Guyana, Sister Mayon knew she had a religious vocation, but could not decide what congregation to enter. "Every day on my lunch hour, I would go to church to pray for the wisdom to decide what congregation to join," says Sister Mayon. "I decided on the Sisters of Mercy because of their incredible joy and commitment of service to others." She entered the novitiate in Guyana, but later moved to Dallas, PA, outside of Scranton, to study nursing at Misericordia University.

Today, working with other Sisters of Mercy, she has helped to provide needed services to over 300 religious sisters in five countries in Africa and given unconditional love every step of the way.

PRAYER TIME

Loving God, you have heard the cries of your suffering people.

Open our eyes to see the immensity of your love for us and the wonder of what you have done for us.

Give us the courage to be your hands and hearts for those who are in pain.

Give us the wisdom to speak out for justice and righteousness.

May your will be done in us today and always. Amen

(Taken from International Women's Day prayer)

Four Women Profess Temporary Vows

Four women recently professed their first vows as Sisters of Mercy in the Mid-Atlantic Community at the chapel at Mount Saint Mary in Watchung, NJ.

Sisters Marybeth Beretta, RSM, who serves on a school administrative team, Jennifer Barrow, RSM, an attorney, Danielle Gagnon, RSM, an executive director of a non-profit, and Marjorie Tapia, RSM, a geriatric nurse practitioner, professed temporary vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and service to people in need.

Over 370 sisters, associates, friends and family members gathered on Sunday, June 12, 2016, for the Eucharistic liturgy. Reverend Kevin DiPrinzio, OSA, from Villanova, PA, presided over the liturgy. Sister Patricia Vetrano, RSM, the president of the Mid-Atlantic Community, presided at the profession ceremony and questioned the women regarding their vocations and received their written vows.

These women first encountered the Sisters of Mercy in various ways. Sister Jennifer Barrow, a Boston College alum, spent a year in Laredo, TX, with Mercy Volunteer Corps, serving as a bilingual case manager in the Hachar-Cigarroa Women's Clinic. She currently ministers at Brooklyn Legal Services, specializing in issues concerning housing.

Sister Marybeth Beretta, RSM, currently serves as the dean of students at Gwynedd-Mercy Academy



Sisters Marjorie Tapia, RSM, Danielle Gagnon, RSM, Marybeth Beretta, and Jennifer Barrow, RSM, recently professed temporary vows as Sisters of Mercy.

High School in Gwynedd Valley, PA. She first encountered the Sisters of Mercy while attending Salve Regina University in Newport, RI.

Sister Danielle Gagnon met the Sisters of Mercy when she worked for Medicines for Humanity, a non-profit organization that operates maternal/child health projects in

developing countries. She now serves as executive director of St. Patrick's Center in Wilmington, DE, a non-profit center that provides emergency services for people in need.

Sister Marjorie Tapia discovered the Sisters of Mercy while attending Mount Saint Mary Academy, a private Catholic girls' high school, in Watchung, NJ. During high school, Margie volunteered at McAuley Hall, the sisters' retirement facility on the school's campus. A graduate of Boston College's nursing school, Margie became a Mercy associate in her junior year of college. A geriatric nurse practitioner and a nursing home administrator, she now serves as director of healthcare/aging services for the Religious Teachers Filippini in Morristown, NJ.

For the next three years, these four women will work in full-time ministry while continuing discernment and living in community. This is the last step on the journey to becoming a Sister of Mercy prior to making final vows.

We Remember...



"Credo, Spero, Amo
Te, Per Mariam."

Sister Mary Claude Damico, RSM

In her early ministry, Sister Mary Claude taught Latin at Notre Dame High School in Trenton, NJ, served as vice principal of St. Mary High School in Perth Amboy, NJ, and was supervisor of secondary schools for the Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey in Watchung. She held a bachelor's degree from then Georgian Court College, master's degrees from Rowan and Georgetown universities, a doctoral degree from Rutgers

University and a law degree from Temple University. As humble as she was brilliant, she was generous to all she met.

April 29, 1931 – December 2, 2015
First Profession: March 9, 1952



"For Thee and in
Thee, Jesus,
through Mary."

Sister Mary Little, RSM

Sister Mary served in varied ministries from 1933 to 1997. As a novice in the Worcester, MA, diocese, she cared for toddlers in an orphanage. She also taught in both elementary and secondary education. She served as the administrator at both Mercy Center for special children and St. Joseph Home for Women, and, in her later years, was a religious educator and a home health aide. Sister Mary was known for her extraordinary talents as a calligrapher and as a seamstress.

May 21, 1914 – May 4, 2016
First Profession: August 6, 1936



"All things turn to
good for those who
love God."

Sister Helen Anne B. Ebbitt, RSM

A teacher in the Brooklyn and Rockville Center dioceses in New York for 18 years, Sister Helen Anne also served as principal at St. Edward the Confessor in Syosset, NY, for nine years and at St. Patrick's in Huntington, NY, for 15 years. She had a genuine passion for education. In spite of having a physical disability for the past 17 years, she reached out to many, especially her associates. Sister Helen Anne was Mercy and Brooklyn to the core!

May 20, 1933 – July 2, 2016
First Profession: September 5, 1953



"Lord, You know that
I Love You."

Sister Joanne Tarpey, RSM

Named "Teacher of the Year" in 2003 by the Diocese of Trenton, NJ, Sister Joanne was a master teacher at the elementary school level. An innovative educator, she taught at the Sisters Academy and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Asbury Park, NJ, and several parishes in the dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, and Trenton. Using the Scriptures as a basis of spirituality in her life, she lived the Works of Mercy. In quiet and unassuming ways, she charmed and inspired those who knew her.

May 29, 1943 – July 2, 2016
First Profession: August 17, 1964



"To live in Christ, to
die is gain."

Sister Lois Joan Keller, RSM

Sister Lois served as president of the Brooklyn Regional Community in New York from 1984 to 1993, and as their community life director from 1980 to 1984. She held a doctorate in biology from St. John's University and a Canon Law degree from St. Paul's University in Ottawa, Canada. A creative, thoughtful and caring woman who loved a good laugh with her sisters and her friends, Sister Lois dealt with her disabilities with humility, courage, and faith in God. She held a special devotion to Mary, our Blessed Mother.

July 3, 1933 – July 3, 2016
First Profession: September 5, 1953



**"That in All Things
God May Be Gloried."**

A Sister of Mercy for over 71 years, Sister Mary taught in many schools throughout New Jersey, including her alma mater Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, NJ. In June of this year, Sister Mary received the Pontifical Cross of Honour, the highest papal honor, for her exemplary faith, loyalty to the Church, humility, kindness, and the desire to help anyone she could. She previously received the Regina Nostra medal in 2011 from the Diocese of Metuchen in New Jersey for her "outstanding service to God and His people."

January 30, 1928 – July 18, 2016
First Profession: April 23, 1948

Sister Mary Kerwin, RSM



**"He must increase;
I must decrease."**

Initially an elementary school teacher, Sister Catherine Marie joined the faculty at Marian High School (now St. Peter/Marian High School) in Worcester, MA, and became the chair of the business department for 14 years. She served as coordinator of the religious education program at Sacred Heart Parish in Milford, MA, for 26 years, and ministered as the Bishop's liaison to the Charismatic Renewal Program in the Diocese of Worcester. Sister Catherine Marie loved to share her personal experience of a God of faithfulness.

April 6, 1931 – July 24, 2016
First Profession: July 1, 1957

Sister Catherine Marie Walsh, RSM



**"My soul magnifies
the Lord."**

Sister Anne M. Kelly, RSM

A Sister of Mercy for 71 years, Sister Anne was a gentle, quiet, unassuming teacher, principal and religious educator. Forty-one of those years were spent among the people of St. Patrick's parish in Bay Shore, NY, where she was a beloved teacher, counselor and friend. Sister Anne lived a life of service and patiently endured the illness of the last three months with grace and serenity.

September 27, 1926 – August 3, 2016
First Profession: September 7, 1948

Sister Mary-Theresa McCarthy, RSM



**"Dominus Meus et
Deus Meus."**

A graduate of Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, NJ, Sister Mary-Theresa initially taught for 12 years at elementary schools and high schools in New Jersey. A Fulbright Scholar at University of Paris and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at University of Chicago and Princeton University, she completed her doctorate in French at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. She became a French professor at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, NJ, and chairperson of their Modern and Classical Language department.

August 13, 1927 – August 17, 2016
First Profession: April 23, 1948



"Fiat Voluntas Tua."

Sister Mary Raymond spent most of her 75 years as a Sister of Mercy as a chemistry teacher at New Jersey diocesan high schools. Among her many accomplishments is the creation of the Environmental Club at Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains, NJ, which continues today. In 1998, under her leadership, the club received the U.S. Region 2 President's Environmental Youth Award at the White House. Her final years were spent providing friendship, support and a prayerful presence to the parishioners of St. Michael's Parish in Cranford, NJ.

March 27, 1922 – August 18, 2016
First Profession: July 8, 1944

Sister Mary Raymond Alkazin, RSM



Mass of Remembrance, New Jersey and New York

Please join us as we celebrate our annual All Souls Day Mass of Remembrance on Sunday, Nov. 6th, in the New Jersey area at 2:30PM, in the **Chapel of the Immaculate Conception**, Mount Saint Mary, Watchung; in the New York area at 1:30PM, in the **Marian Woods Chapel**, Hartsdale, New York.

This special Mass is celebrated in memory of our deceased family members, friends, Mercy Associates, former members and Sisters of Mercy, especially those Sisters who died this past year.

Please let Sister Marlene know if you will be attending the Mass in New Jersey, she can be reached at 908.756.0994 ext. 4007 or email mfritz@mercymidatlantic.org; please let Jacqui Williamson know if you will be attending the Mass in New York, she can be reached at 914.328.3200, ext. 416 or email jwilliamson@mercymidatlantic.org. Also contact either Sister Marlene or Jacqui to provide the names of any persons you would like remembered at this special Mass. The names of those who have passed away since November 1, 2015 will be inscribed in our Book of Remembrance, which will be placed in the Sanctuary during the Mass. (You may send in the names of your beloved deceased whether or not you are planning to attend the Mass.)

(Following Mass, light refreshments will be served.)

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2 members choose to remain anonymous

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22nd Annual Golf Classic

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

Spring Lake Golf Club
Spring Lake Heights, NJ

Mass of Remembrance

Sunday, November 6, 2016

(See details inside)

Two Sisters Receive Papal Award

Mid-Atlantic Sisters Lisa Gambacorto, RSM, and Mary Kerwin, RSM, the current and former directresses of Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, NJ, are recipients of the Cross of Honour, for distinguished service to the church and the Diocese of Metuchen.

They received the “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” on June 13 at a special evening prayer service at the Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi in Metuchen, NJ. This was one month before the death of Sister Mary. Earlier this year, Bishop Bootkoski of the Diocese of Metuchen, NJ, petitioned Pope Francis to bestow pontifical honors on members of the clergy and laity “whose work and witness have been especially valuable to the mission of the church” during his years as its fourth bishop.

Coincidentally, Sister Mary, taught Sister Lisa theology when she was in high school at Red Bank Catholic. Both sisters have been very active in educational ministries, serving as teachers and administrators. Sister Mary volunteered in various diocesan offices after she retired from educational ministries. For the past ten years, Sister Lisa served on the Diocesan Commission for Catholic Education and is currently the chair.



Papal award recipients, Sister Mary Kerwin, RSM, (left) and Sister Lisa Gambacorto, RSM