

Servants of Mary
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Fall 2011

Servite Sisters Today

A Newsletter for Our Families and Friends

Former Motherhouse One Year Later

Last year we sold our motherhouse to Indianhead Community Action Agency (ICAA). When we first began exploring possibilities for our Ladysmith property, we committed ourselves to pursuing options that would promote stewardship of our mission and enhance the quality of life of the people in the area, attentive to those most in need. At the time of the sale I said that we couldn't have hoped for a better match than ICAA, whose mission of compassionate service is so similar to our own.

Indianhead took possession of the building on July 1, 2010. They installed a new heating system and central air-conditioning. Minor structural changes were made. The entrance was remodeled to include a reception desk. Some ceilings were lowered and lighting was updated. The large room on second floor that once served as our novitiate was divided into smaller rooms for a finance office. Within a few months, our former motherhouse became ICAA's administrative headquarters for some 60 staff members who coordinate health, housing, education, transportation, and other programs serving the needs of people in Northwest Wisconsin.

On June 17 this year, the day before we celebrated sisters' jubilees in Ladysmith, Brett Gerber, CEO of ICAA, invited the sisters to lunch and a tour of our former mother-

house. We found that, by and large, the building was totally recognizable. Rooms that had been bedrooms are now offices. The kitchen and dining room remain a kitchen and dining room. The kitchen will be used for chef training and by a pizza-making company, which will share proceeds with ICAA. The former recreation room will be used as an exercise room for staff members. What was the chapel is now an auditorium open to the public and will one day house a heritage exhibit highlighting the history and contributions of the Ladysmith Servite Sisters.

President's Message

The former library is the ICAA board room. Two rooms off the board room are meeting rooms, which are also available for public use. One is called the Riverview Room and the other is called the Justice Room. The latter was so named because it was our former Justice and Peace Office and we hadn't removed the sign above the door.

During the tour, ICAA tour guides were as interested in knowing how we had used the rooms as we were in knowing how the rooms are now being used. One guide found a skeleton key in her new office that had a tag that said "Sister Katherine." She had the key hanging on her bulletin board and wanted to know about Sister Katherine.



On the second floor of the former motherhouse, sisters' bedrooms have been transformed into ICAA staff offices and the room that housed the novitiate is now the finance office.

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Former Motherhouse One Year Later *Continued from page 1*

ICAA has graciously given us an office in the building for our administrative assistant and a room for our archives. They also provide mowing of our cemetery property. In return, we left ICAA our dining room furniture, chapel chairs, and grounds equipment.

Today, after having toured the building and hearing an overview of ICAA's annual report, I can say with even greater conviction that we couldn't have hoped for a better match than Indianhead Community Action Agency, whose mission is to assist individuals achieve self-sufficiency by developing healthy families, sustainable communities, and strong local businesses through dozens of social services in Wisconsin's rural areas.

S. Theresa

Sister Theresa Sandok, OSM

Indianhead Transit Services driver Dave West points out his route to Baby Cali Rose, who stopped in with her mother for a visit. The Transit Services office is located in the former motherhouse chaplain's quarters. Servite Sisters in Ladysmith ride the ITS bus to the grocery store and doctors' appointments. Sister Mary Lucy Daniels serves on the advisory board.



The former motherhouse library is now the ICAA board room.



Sister Rosemary Mayer, left, received a personal invitation to attend a retirement party in honor of Representative Dave Obey of Wisconsin on Sept. 22, 2010, at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, DC. She has been a longtime friend and supporter of Congressman Obey, a liberal Democrat who served in the House for 48 years.

An Interview with Sister Sean Fox, OSM, Attorney at Law

In the mid 1970s when many sisters were moving from the traditional ministries of teaching and nursing into religious education and pastoral care, Servite Sister Sean Fox turned to law. Servite Sisters Today interviewed Sister Sean, now an attorney for over 30 years, to find out what drew her to the practice of law and how she views it as a ministry in today's church and world.

SST: You have a bachelor's and master's degree in education. You taught for 16 years. What led you away from education to seek a law degree?

SSF: I enjoyed teaching. The last classes I taught were comprised of predominantly African American children whose parents had taken advantage of the Johnson Poverty Program in the late 60s and early 70s to get away from Chicago's public housing high crime areas. I began to see justice and peace pursuits in terms of legal issues. Initially, I worked with local community organizers on the south side of Chicago regarding redlining, a method by which mortgage lenders would "redline" an area and deny mortgage applications, often on the basis of race. In 1973, I was a member of Network, a Washington, DC, lobby founded by women religious to promote justice and peace. Network offered its members summer internships with members of Congress. I applied and spent the summer of 1973 as an intern for then Senator Adlai Stevenson, III, in his Chicago office. As an intern I assisted veterans in need of VA services, and also did some consumer assistance work. During that time I witnessed a steady flow of lawyers in and out of his office relating civil rights stories and legislative issues to support them. I began to be attracted to more direct involvement with legal matters promoting justice and peace.

SST: What types of law have you practiced?

SSF: I started out working for a criminal defense attorney, then a legal aid agency, and then went into a solo general practice with a focus on divorce work, thinking that by assisting clients through this raw time of their lives, equitable settlements would foster peace. Sometimes that was the case but sometimes it wasn't. I eventually opted to focus on probate and real estate matters, and work with the elderly and parents of disabled children. The latter involves setting up special needs trusts for the disabled children so they are not disqualified from receiving public benefits. Special needs trusts protect inheritances so they can be used for the extras that public benefits do not provide.



Sister Sean Fox

SST: The practice of law is most often considered a secular profession, and sometimes a questionable one. How are you able to help people see it as a ministry?

SSF: Indirectly this is done by exhibiting compassion to the family when a family member dies, taking extra time to listen, guiding the elderly or seriously ill as they prepare to pass assets on to their children or other family members, and in general, clarifying and resolving legal issues which impact the personal and emotional aspects of life's challenges.

SST: In 1980 when you started practicing law were there many other women religious in the field?

SSF: There were approximately 300 women religious throughout the United States known to be practicing law, and I'm sure the number has grown significantly. Most of those at a gathering in the early 80s in Bethesda, Md., were newly licensed within about a three-year period. It seems that the civil rights movement of the 70s motivated those who pursued a law license.

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Kateri's Kids Helping Kids



Sister Kateri

Sister Kateri Guske's first grade class at Holy Rosary School in Medford, Wis., went into business again last November to help other kids, as her first graders have done for nearly 20 years. They call it "Kids Helping Kids Snack and Resale Store."

It started as a snack sale to raise money to help less fortunate kids. The snack sale lasted about five or six years, and



then evolved into a sale that included the addition of toys, books, and games. From there it grew into a room full of all sorts of items donated by parents and parishioners. Their customers were students from other grades who came to shop for snacks and Christmas gifts.

"It was the best little two-day nonprofit business in the area," said Sister Kateri, who used the sale as a lesson in giving.

Last year's class was named "Class of the Week" and was featured on Wausau's WAOW-TV Channel 9.

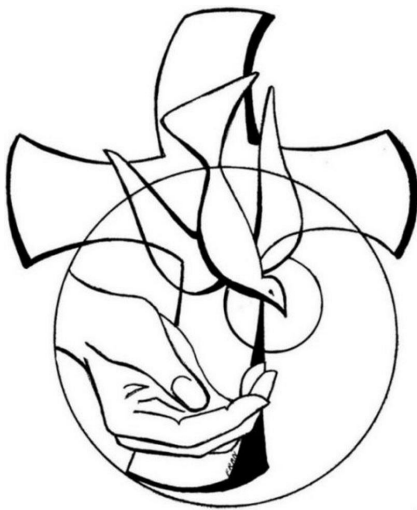
The kids did all the work from advertising, sorting, and displaying the goods,



running the sale, counting the money, packing, and cleaning up. They also decided together where to send the money.

Last year Kateri's Kids raised \$650. They kept some of the money for the Medford community and sent some to a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping less fortunate children. "At the end of the sale we were pooped, but happy," said Sister Kateri.

That may have been the last year for "Kids Helping Kids." Sister Kateri retired this spring after 49 years of teaching, 33 of which were spent teaching first grade in Medford.



Sister Alice Henke received the Founders' Award during the Rusk County Historical Society Christmas Party on December 9, 2010. The Founders' Award was presented by the Board of Directors of the Historical Society for her "great support and effort in the development of the Rusk County Historical Society. Sister Alice has continued that quick smile, those encouraging thoughts and words, and the fine example as one who continues to organize and preserve our history."



Missionaries Without Ever Leaving Home

We Ladysmith Servite Sisters are a small diocesan congregation. Strictly speaking we would not be considered a missionary community.

Yet, in the past twelve years we provided medical assistance and helped start farm and garden projects in Africa to assist orphans and AIDS victims. We helped build schools, libraries, hostels, and orphanages for children in India, Haiti, Africa, and Poland. We provided volunteer teachers in Central America and helped train nurses in Bolivia. We also reached out to needy people in Afghanistan, Mexico, Myanmar, and the Philippines.



Members of the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund Committee.

Seated from left, Sisters Sandra DeGidio, Rosalie Hennessey, Dolores Henke, and Sean Fox.

Standing, former Servites Cheryl Nordby and Joan Clarke

In the States we aided migrant farm workers in Oregon, Florida, and Ohio. Native American and inner city adults have been able to earn high school diplomas with our assistance. We helped provide housing for the homeless, emergency shelters for abused women and children, and counseling and further education for single teenage moms.

How is it that 50 sisters, most of whom are over 70 years old, have managed to do so much missionary work and be catalysts for change in so many home and foreign missions in twelve short years? It's all thanks to the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund.

In 1998 we transferred sponsorship of our continuing care retirement facility in Illinois to another religious congregation. We invested the proceeds from that transaction to create the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund, whose purpose is to provide assistance for human and societal needs, continuing the vision and ministry of the Ladysmith Servite Sisters.

We have ministered in education, health care, pastoral work, and social services since the founding of our congregation in Ladysmith by Mother Mary Alphonse Bradley and her companions in 1912. The ministry interests of the Fund include those same areas, with preference given to women, children, and families. Grant applicants must be known to and sponsored by a Ladysmith Servite Sister.

Since 1999 the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund has awarded 177 grants totaling \$2,720,640. "It's our way of living Gospel stewardship and extending the vision of our founder and the mission and ministry of our congregation," said Sister Sandra DeGidio, chair of the Fund Committee.

Three Servite generals named Theresa. The heads of three Servite congregations were among the more than 800 religious women from 75 countries who gathered in Rome for the plenary assembly of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), May 7-11, 2010. Pictured above, from left to right, are Sister Marie Thérèse Connor (Servants of Mary of London-Cuves), Sister Maria Teresa Ricci (Servants of Mary of Ravenna, Italy), and Sister Theresa Sandok (Servants of Mary of Ladysmith).



Four Sisters – 245 Years of Service

Four Servite Sisters celebrated jubilees of religious profession this year: Sister Mary Celestine Tremblay (75 years), Sister Mary Catherine Izral (70 years), Sister Bonnie Alho (50 years), and Sister Ann Marie Caporale (50 years).

Sister Mary Celestine Tremblay was born in Medford, Wis., on July 19, 1918, the fifth of seven children. She attended St. Mary's Elementary School



Sister Mary Celestine Tremblay

in Ladysmith, where she was taught by Servite Sisters. She entered the convent as a freshman aspirant in 1932 at age 14 and attended St. Mary's High School. She became a postulant in 1934 and professed first vows in 1936. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from St. Joseph College, St. Joseph, Minn. She ministered as a teacher and principal in parochial schools in Illinois, West Virginia, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Wisconsin for 45 years. She also gave music lessons and played the organ for children and adult choirs wherever she was assigned. Two older brothers and a younger sister also entered religious life. Sister Mary Celestine now lives with her sister, Sister Mary Eugenia, at Addolorata Villa in Wheeling, Ill.

Sister Mary Catherine Izral was born in Chicago, Ill., on April 30, 1919. She was the middle child in a family of six girls and one boy. The family moved to Catawba, Wis., when she was in first grade. After completing high school

she moved back to Chicago where she worked in the hosiery department at Sears and took evening classes at Loyola University College. She entered the convent as a postulant in 1939 at age 20 and professed first vows

in 1941. She earned a bachelor's degree from the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minn., and a master's from the University of Minnesota. She taught in parochial schools in Wisconsin, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Illinois for 35 years, and then taught religious education and did sacristy work for about 10 years. Her one brother is a priest. Since 2007, Sister Mary Catherine has resided at Regina Assisted Living in Hastings, Minn.

A Wisconsin native, **Sister Bonnie Alho** was born in Superior on Feb. 6, 1942. She has one younger brother. She entered the convent as a junior aspirant in 1958 at age 16. She became a postulant in 1959 and professed first vows in 1961. She earned a bachelor's degree from Mount Senario College in Ladysmith and a master's in religious education from St. Thomas University in Houston, Tex. Sister taught in parochial schools in Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New Jersey for 11 years and then served

as a pioneer member on the staff of the Office of Religious Education in the Diocese of Superior for 11 years. She spent 13 years as a parish director of religious education, and another 13 years as a pastoral associate. She retired in

2009 and now lives in Rice Lake, Wis., where she volunteers at the parish and hospital.

Sister Ann Marie Caporale was born in Chicago, Ill., on Dec. 12, 1942, the second of four children. She entered the convent as a freshman aspirant in 1956 at age 13. She became a postulant in 1959 and professed first vows in 1961. She received a bachelor's degree from Mount Senario College in Ladysmith and a master's in applied theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif. She is also a Certified Massage Therapist. She taught in parochial schools in Wisconsin, Illinois, New Jersey, and West Virginia for 21 years and served as a pastoral minister in Illinois for six years. She ministered as a hospice chaplain for 17 years, first in Indiana and then in Illinois, before retiring in 2010. She now lives in Chicago, Ill., where she serves as sacristan and sings with the Resurrection Choir in her home parish.

Jubilee!



From left: Sisters Bonnie Alho, Mary Catherine Izral, Ann Marie Caporale

2011 LCWR Retreat



Sister Mary Alice Willems (seated, third from right), member of the Servants of Mary Leadership Team, was among the 25 religious leaders who participated in the Leading from Within Retreat at the San Pedro Retreat Center in Winter Park, Fla., Jan. 16-21, 2011. Retreatants had opportunities to hear input, experience prayer and rituals, and avail themselves of individual and group spiritual direction. The retreat is offered annually by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).



Sister Theresa Sandok receives a gift in appreciation for her service as chair of Region 9 of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. LCWR is a national organization of leaders of congregations of Catholic Sisters. Region 9 encompasses the State of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. Regional chairs serve a three-year term and are members of the national board. With Sister Theresa from left to right are Region 9 Executive Committee members Sisters Diana DeBruin, OSF, Carol Thresher, SDS, Sharon Simon, OP, and Linda Szocik, SJ-TOSF.

Servite Lay Diakonia Established in the U.S.



Three families were admitted to the formation process of the Servite Lay Diakonia in a ceremony at St. Francis de Sales Church in Spooner, Wis., on Sept. 19, 2010. They are the Alan and Loree Nauertz Family, the Victor and Jacqueline Sacco Family, and the Curtis and Jacene Silvis Family. Sister Mary Dominca Effertz is their spiritual assistant.

These are the first families in Wisconsin and only the second in the whole United States to join the Diakonia movement, which began in Italy in 1982. The Ed and Mercedes Thrush Family of El Paso, Tex., was the first U.S. family to join the movement. The Thrushes completed their year of formation and made their profession on Feb. 13, 2011.

According to the movement's Rule of Life, the vocation of every Servite Lay Diakonia is to become "a true domestic Church, explicitly dedicated to Mary, chosen as a model for life, and to do so through welcoming and following the Incarnate Word."

Each Diakonia takes a name that reflects some aspect of Mary and that emphasizes the family's special charism, e.g., Diakonia of Life, Diakonia of Mercy, Diakonia of Joy.

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In Memoriam



Sister Mary Camillus Cote
1911–2011

Sister Mary Camillus Cote, 99, died on May 9, 2011, at Rusk County Memorial Nursing Home in Ladysmith. She was born on Nov. 17, 1911, in Beaverville, Ill., the fifth of seven children. She attended grade school and two years of high school in Beaverville and three years of high school in Ladysmith. She entered the Servants of Mary in 1933 and completed her last two years of high school at St. Mary's in Ladysmith. She ministered as a nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in Ladysmith until 1950, and then taught at schools staffed by the Servants of Mary in Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Wisconsin until 1967. She worked in nursing homes in St. Paul, Minn., for a couple years, and later, while living at St. Rose of Lima Convent in Roseville, Minn., she cooked the evening meal for the parish priests. At St. Rose's she had a cat named Kitty Cat Cote, who was royally spoiled. If Sister had chicken for dinner, so did Kitty Cat. Sister retired to the Motherhouse in Ladysmith in 2000. Two years later, following a heart attack, she moved to Rusk County Memorial Nursing Home, where she resided until her death.



Sister Rosalie Hennessey
1929–2011

Sister Rosalie Hennessey, 82, died Aug. 31, 2011, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Tampa, Fla. She was born June 29, 1929, in St. Paul, Minn., to Edward and Rosella (Francois) Hennessey, the second of four children. She grew up in Cylon, Wis., a small town near New Richmond, where she met the Servite Sisters who taught catechism there during summers. She attended two years of high school in New Richmond and then transferred to Our Lady of Sorrows High School in Ladysmith. She entered the Servants of Mary in 1947. She earned a bachelor's in education from the College of St. Catherine and a master's in counseling from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn. Her first assignment was to St. Rose of Lima School, Roseville, Minn., where she ministered for 16 years, first as a teacher and then as principal. She served in administrative roles at Mount Senario College, Ladysmith, for 14 years, and in congregational leadership for three of those years. She moved to Tampa in 1982 and served for ten years as executive director of Alpha House, a crisis pregnancy center. In 2001 Alpha named a new building "The Rosalie Center" in her honor. She served as director of grants and services of the Conn Memorial Foundation, Tampa, for eight years. She retired in 2000 and continued her life of service as chair of the grants committee of the Community Foundation of Greater Sun City Center and a member of the grants committee of the Mary Alphonse Bradley Fund.



Sister Mary Robert Semerau
1924–2011

Sister Mary Robert Semerau, 86, died on Feb. 19, 2011, at Addolorata Villa, Wheeling, Ill., where she was a long time employee and resident. She was born on Aug. 4, 1924, in Chicago, Ill., one of seven children. She was baptized at St. Gregory Church in Chicago and attended the parish grade school and high school. In high school she was captain of the girls' basketball team and played first saxophone in the band. She entered the Servants of Mary in 1947. She earned a bachelor's degree from College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minn., and a master's from DePaul University in Chicago. She also studied at the Graduate Theological Institute at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis. Sister taught junior high school in Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. She was vice-principal and teacher at St. Philip the Apostle in Northfield, Ill., and principal and teacher at Our Lady of Sorrows in Ladysmith. In 1987 she moved to Addolorata Villa, where she served as an accountant in the finance department until her retirement in 2003. Sister was as an avid roller skater, using school gyms as her skating venue when she couldn't get outside. After moving to the Villa she skated in the basement halls and large meeting room.



Sister Mary Bernice VanderLoop
1920–2011

Sister Mary Bernice VanderLoop, 91, died on Sept. 14, 2011, at Rusk County Memorial Nursing Home in Ladysmith. She was born on a farm east of Ladysmith on Jan. 28, 1920, to George and Alice (Reynders) VanderLoop, the fourth of 13 children. She attended Crabb Grade School and Tony High School. She enlisted in the army during World War II and rose to the rank of master sergeant. While enlisted she worked for a time in a top secret job at the Pentagon. In 1947 she entered the Servants of Mary, following in the footsteps of her sister Loretta (Sister Mary John). She earned a bachelor's degree in education from the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, and a master's in education from the University of Wisconsin-Superior. She ministered for 20 years as a teacher and principal in elementary schools in Minnesota, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. She taught in and chaired the education department at Mount Senario College, Ladysmith. In 1978 she was appointed superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Superior. Prior to that, the superintendent had always been a priest. She served two consecutive three-year terms as President of the Servants of Mary (1980–1986). She retired to the motherhouse in Ladysmith, where she gave generously of her time and talents to Servite Center for Life.

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- Goelz, Mr. Jeff**
In honor of S. Doris Ann Samens, OSM, Cleone Goelz
- Golat, Mr. Henry**



An honor guard presents the flag to Sister Mary John VanderLoop at the funeral of her sister, Sister Mary Bernice, who served in the Women's Army Corps during World War II.

— Photo by Tom Krajewski

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OSM, Dorothy Krajewski

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In honor of S. Bernice VanderLoop,
OSM, Dorothy Krajewski

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Sister Sean Fox *Continued from page 3*

SST: You have your own law firm. Was it difficult to establish that? How did you manage to do so?

SSF: It was a challenge. I first met with several attorneys and asked for suggestions about what to do and what not to do. All were really kind, gracious, and encouraging. I looked for advertisements in legal publications for available office space and eventually found three very fine attorneys in Oak Park, Ill., whose values were similar to mine, had available office space. They were willing to lease and they helped me get started, sharing legal sources, forms, and suggestions. I advertised in local papers and in a parish church bulletin. Gradually, word of mouth spread and the practice began to build.

SST: What aspects of the legal profession are particularly attractive to you?

SSF: Providing compassionate assistance in uncovering solutions to human problems which, I guess, we all strive to do.

SST: What is most rewarding for you in your ministry?

SSF: Observing clients' experience of relief and closure regarding whatever issue or problem brought them to the office.

SST: What is most frustrating?

SSF: Those who want trusts or wills prepared the day before they are leaving on vacation.

SST: When you are not practicing law, what do you enjoy doing?

SSF: I enjoy reading, taking walks, listening to music and bicycling.

Moving?

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