

futures



SPRING 2009 • VOL. XIV • NO. 1

Yes! *by Rosemary Steers*

Two friends sit together to reminisce and dream in a sun-drenched sitting room on the second floor of Marywood Health Center. Sister Marjorie Vangsness (formerly Sister Norbert), and Sister Irene Chrusciel (formerly Sister Marie Mark) are among the thirty-seven Sisters celebrating their jubilee this year—seventy-five years for Sister Marjorie and fifty years for Sister Irene. They talk about how the world has changed and how they have changed, about a deep feeling of gratitude for the opportunities they've been given and the joy that comes from serving others.

Both Sisters say that they came to the convent with the intention of staying, and would return home only if sent. They were not sent home. As many of the jubilarians, they had Dominican schooling. Both of them desired Dominican life and ministry. They, as do all the Sisters, faithfully embrace daily life in whatever form it takes; for it is there that they see the hand of God.

Life and mission have changed immensely over the years they have served. All the Jubilarians were engaged in education or work directly supporting that ministry for the greater part of their working life. Since Vatican Council II (1962-1965), the Holy Preaching/Teaching of St. Dominic has taken new forms and new venues: from retreat and conference work to lobbying for social justice, from pastoral work to midwifery, from chaplaincies to consulting, from Michigan and New Mexico to Eastern Europe, from Central to South America. That energy was reflected in their leadership, their teaching and their lives and now, at Jubilee, in their minds and hearts.

As the lives of Sisters Marjorie and Irene converged in values and goals, and grew into a friendship of jubilee proportion, so too the lives of all the Jubilarians reflect the depth of commitment to the congregation and all they served and serve. Jubilee is best relished with soul friends: our community, friends and co-workers, alumni and all God's people.

One of the startling discoveries of Jubilee is that all the Jubilarians were as touched as they were touching, as taught as they were teaching, as helped as they were helping, as well met with goodness as they tried to be good. One of the blessings of Jubilee is that it is not a solitary event, but is celebrated in community together with others. Jubilarians join the procession of those who have already taken joy and time to give thanks in this special way. They are among the long line of those who reflected upon the goodness of God and how God has worked in their lives. They all live in the hope that there will be more years and deeper joy, and that they will know better the One to whom they have professed their lives.

Sisters Marjorie, Irene, and all the Jubilarians of 2009 trusted in God that if something was to be done, God would give them the grace to do it. Affirming the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, they say, "For all that has been, Thanks; for all that is to come, Yes."



This reflection is the result of a conversation between Sister Marjorie Vangsness (l) and Sister Irene Chrusciel (r), two of our thirty-seven 2009 Jubilarians.

DOMINICAN



Class of 1929
80 years

DECEASED MEMBERS - CLASS OF 1929

- † ROSE CARLITA BREITENSTEIN
- † GERTRUDE ANN GOYETTE
- † MARY SIMEON STAUDEMAIER
- † DOROTHY ADAMS
- † LETITIA VAN AGTMAEL
- † FLORENCE AGNES KLINGLER
- † JOSEFITA GRIEGO
- † CYRENA HANSEN
- † JOHN MARIE BRONERSKY
- † JEAN DURBIN
- † ANTHONY CLARE ADOMAITIS
- † REGINA MARIE BEDARD
- † MARY DOMINICA VIESNORAITIS
- † MARY JOAN LA FONTAINE
- † CONSUELO CHAVEZ

Class of 1934
75 years

DECEASED MEMBERS - CLASS OF 1934

- † KATHERINE POWER
- † MARIE THERESE ROUSE
- † MARY MALACHI LAITHWAITE
- † JORDAN MARIE HOMOLKA
- † LEAH DORION
- † PETER VERONA KOLENDA
- † MARY ALVESTEFFER
- † LEONA LOYER
- † CECELIA POPP
- † DOLORES WENDLING
- † ELEANORE VAN DYKE
- † JAMES RAU
- † LORETTA MARIE WANNER
- † PHYLLIS CRIMMINS
- † MARY LEO MERGENER

Sister Marjorie edits *Futures* with other publishing committee members.



Marjorie Vangsness, OP –

The first thing I want to express is gratitude. Meister Eckhart said, "If we never said any prayer but Thank You, God," that would be enough.

I am thankful for my life, for my family, for my Catholic faith, for my Dominican vocation.

God has blessed me with many friends and many people who have influenced my life.





Juliana Barilla, OP –

“Who has given God anything so as to deserve return?” Romans 12:35

As I reflect on my past 75 years as a Grand Rapids Dominican Sister, I am filled with gratitude for all of God's gifts and blessings, the love and support of my religious community, family, relatives and friends. I came from Saskatchewan, Canada, where my grandparents settled over 100 years ago. I've had opportunities as a Grand Rapids Dominican sister as teacher, family service, Marywood executive housekeeper and missionary.



Sister Juliana ordering books on tape.



For all this and more – Te Deum.



Elizabeth Barilla, OP –

“God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him.”
1 John 5:16

I thank God for the gift of teaching. I always wanted to be a teacher. In High School I met Dominican teachers. I found my vocation. For 72 years I've enjoyed teaching in the US, Canada and Hungary.

Recently a prisoner wrote, “I thoroughly enjoy your class.” I praise God.



Sister Elizabeth is searched before entering the Muskegon Correctional Facility to teach a class.

(Photo by Johnny Quirin. Copyright 2008 *The Grand Rapids Press*. All rights reserved. Used with permission.)

Paschal Barth, OP –

“I will bless your name forever, Yahweh!” Psalm 145

Jubilee time is a time to give praise and thanks to God for family, Community and friends, for seventy-five years of service to God's people, for good times and hard times. They have all contributed to my growth and brought me to this milestone. May God bless everyone who has supported me along the way. Gratitude and joy fill my heart for seventy-five years of Dominican life – years of prayer, study and ministry.

Words from a hymn that have inspired me on my journey are: “I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have called you and you are mine.” Thank you, dear God.



Caspar and Sister Paschal are traveling companions.



Class of 1939
70 years

DECEASED MEMBERS - CLASS OF 1939

✠ CAMILLA USAKOWSKI ✠ STEPHEN BARILLA ✠ FAITH MAHONEY



Aurora Valerio, OP –
Rejoice with me as I give thanks for my seventy years of religious life. I give praise and thanks to God and also to all who have supported me along the journey of Religious Life.



A beautiful seamstress, Sister Aurora embroiders bags, placemats and vestments.

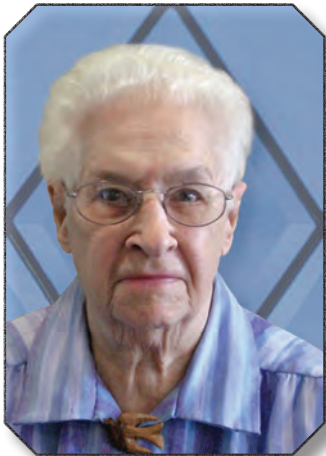


Emeliana Judis, OP –
My grateful prayers of thanks to God and you for seventy years in this loving Dominican Community.

The gifts of life, family, faith, friends and vocation are treasured, plus opportunities in ministry to grow in grace. What a joy! Deo Gratias!



Sister Emeliana is Marywood Health Center receptionist.



Elaine Mitchell, OP –
This is truly a blessed and happy milestone in my life as a daughter of Dominic! The years in service as teacher (classroom and tutor), receptionist, executive housekeeper, seamstress and “you name it” have been very fulfilling. God has blessed all these 70 years for me as a person from one big family! There are no words to describe these years. I just pray all the rest of my years will continue to be happy, blessed and holy.

A hug and prayer to all who helped me these years starting from 1920 to 2009. God hold all of you in His arms, smiling and blessing you.



Sister Elaine is an avid reader.

Class of 1939
70 years



Sister Karen prays with caller on the Prayer and Listening Line.

Karen Thoreson, OP –
 “My being proclaims the greatness of God; my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” Luke 1:46-55

Glory and praise to God for seventy happy years of religious life, and love and gratitude to my Dominican Sisters, family and friends whose love and support have accompanied me along the way!



Eileen Popp, OP –
 “I know what plans I have in mind for you – it is Yahweh who speaks – plans for peace and not adversity renewing a future full of hope for you.” Jeremiah 29:11

My seventy years in religious life have definitely proved the above passage to be true. I have had good experiences as a teacher, as a Religious Education Director, as a Pastoral Associate and as a member of the Prayer and Listening Line. Presently I am ministering in a program – Food For Kids. I decorate the lunch bags which are filled with the evening Meal. Each ministry is enriching and fulfilling. The years have been filled with challenges along with joy, happiness, the presence of God, and the love of my Sisters. It is with a grateful heart that I look back on the past seventy years as a Grand Rapids Dominican. Deo Gratias.



Sister Eileen decorates lunch bags that will hold a meal for hungry children.



Sister Antonita sorts cancelled stamps for fundraising sales.

Antonita Vigil, OP –
 “This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad.” Psalm 118

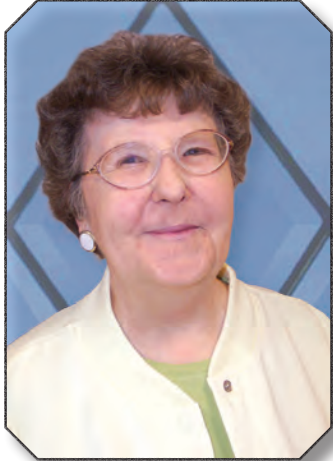
With a grateful heart I thank God for His blessings and graces to serve in our Dominican Life for 70 years. Also, I thank all our supporters as we care for each other.



Class of 1949
60 years

DECEASED MEMBERS - CLASS OF 1949

✠ JEAN PAUL TILMANN ✠ MARJORIE ANN KENDALL ✠ CHARLOTTE SCHAUB
 ✠ NANCY COYNE ✠ ANN FREDERICK HEISKELL



Edith Kahler, OP -
With heartfelt gratitude I give thanks to God for these 60 years spent as a Dominican in His service. I am blessed with a loving family, friends and community. I remember fondly my students and friends in Michigan and New Mexico. What a glorious adventure my life has been!



Sister Edith is receptionist for Marywood Offices.



Sister Mary Catherine plays flute for Mass at Marywood Health Center

Mary Catherine Brechting, OP -
 How good it is to make music to our God; how fitting to sing God's praise. PS 147
There is no more fitting way to express how blessed I have been with the support, encouragement and example of my community, family, relatives and friends during the past sixty years. Life continues to be filled with joy as I minister to God's people through music and volunteering in the health center.



Suzanne Eichhorn, OP -
As God is more the great mystery, the unfolding of sixty years is mysterious also. How could it . . . be so supported by God's presence and love. . . pass so quickly. . . hold so many good persons. . . contain so many blessings from call to community to meaningful ministry. . . ? As I ponder all of this, I'm moved to approach this event very simply and gratefully with contentment and joy. I pray this spirit will carry me into the days ahead.



Sister Suzanne is spiritual director for St. Francis Retreat Center, DeWitt, MI.

Class of 1949
60 years



Sister Marciana reads the newspaper every day.

Marciana Danielski, OP –
“My yoke is easy and My burden is light!” Matthew 11:30

It is with deep gratitude that I convey my thanks and appreciation to my community, family, friends and relatives on my journey of 60 years as a Grand Rapids Dominican. You are always in my prayers!



Jean Marie Birkman, OP –
As I reflect upon the past, I am humbled with the realization that God has always blessed me with the best people at the best time and in the best place for my life and happiness. May God continue to bless me, my family, our Dominican Order and many friends.



Sister Jean Marie ministers to homebound parishioners of Holy Name of Jesus Parish.



Sister Reparata is a Flint Catholic Parish Hospital Minister.

Reparata Faubert, OP –
60 years! As a Jubilarian I am grateful for God’s call and for all who have filled my faith journey with gift and grace, challenge and opportunity. With Mary’s guidance I find this time has deepened the love and purpose in my life to realize Jesus’ promise: “If you do the will of My Father, we will come to you and make our abode with you.” To finish the journey, I ask only “a willing spirit of adoration and service.”



Class of 1949
60 years



Marie Kathleen McCrackin, OP –
With heartfelt gratitude I give thanks to God for these 60 years spent as a Dominican in His service. I am blessed with a loving family, friends and community. I remember fondly my students and friends in Michigan and New Mexico. What a glorious adventure my life has been!



Sister Marie Kathleen serves as a sacristan for Dominican Chapel/Marywood.



Sister Rose Mary and the Sisters she lives with in Spring Lake, Michigan.

Rose Mary Belanger, OP –
“How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good God has done for me?” (Psalm 116)

I considered it a special grace when God chose me to be a Sister and a teacher. My heartfelt gratitude to God, my family, community and friends who have encouraged and supported me in reaching this milestone in my life.



Lydia Korson, OP –
It's a Jubilee Year and I THANK God for my vocation. I am CELEBRATING – Sixty Years of religious life. GRATEFUL – for my parents, family and Community Family whose love, prayer and friendship have brought me to this moment. BLESSED – to be a member of a special Dominican Order. CALLED – “This is what Yahweh asks: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God.” (Micah 6)



Sister Lydia sews for Sisters at Marywood Health Center.

Class of 1949
60 years

Nancy Ann Flumerfelt, OP –
Friends! Justice! Programs! Students!



Sister Nancy Ann loves the great outdoors.

This life is a circle of life to me – so many friends, so many calls to justice! Such love!

I have come full circle with friends – of the fruits of my work – of love. For all this I thank God.



Rosemary Homrich, OP –
O God, in response to your call, I thank you for Dominican Sisters and sixty years, most of them in New Mexico as nurse and midwife. By your grace and with the help of family and friends I have tried to be faithful to your word. Give me the grace to continue to be a witness of your love.



Sister Rosemary does cross stitching to relax.

Marie Michael Jacobs, OP –
Little did I realize sixty years ago where the road of religious life would take me. During these years I have experienced sorrows as well as joys. I am most grateful to God, family, community and friends for the happiness I've known over the years.



Sister Marie Michael strategizes with Karen Kania, a golf benefit volunteer.

My concern now, at this time of my life, is to be all God wants me to be with those I continue to meet on this journey.





DECEASED MEMBERS - CLASS OF 1949
✠ STEPHANIE HEITZ

**Celebrating 700 plus Years of Vowed Life
with the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids, Michigan**

With eagerness and anticipation, trepidation and conviction, forty some young women came to Marywood at 2025 East Fulton in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in September, 1958, to become 'sisters.' On May 30, 1959, we received new names and our first clothing of the Sisters of the Order of St. Dominic of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Now, fifty years later, we celebrate the decades of praying, loving, and serving. These blessings of God we accept and share among our sisters, our families, and the many communities in which we have been privileged to minister. With gratitude we continue the challenge of living the Word of God in our lives, and are committed to praising, blessing, and preaching among the people of God as Dominican Sisters.



Standing: Sisters June Martin, Mary Louise Stauder, Judith Ann Barber, Darlene Sikorski, Ann Mason, Irene Chrusciel, Joan Pichette, Irene Mary McDonnell, Janet Marie Heitz
Seated: Sisters Mary Katharine Courtright, Marie Rachael Guevara, Agnes Mary Wojtkowiak, Joan Foley, Kateri Schrems



Sister Irene Mary with a homeless man waiting for a hot meal at St. Anthony's in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco.



Sister Janet Marie prepares a festive tray in the Dominican Center kitchen.



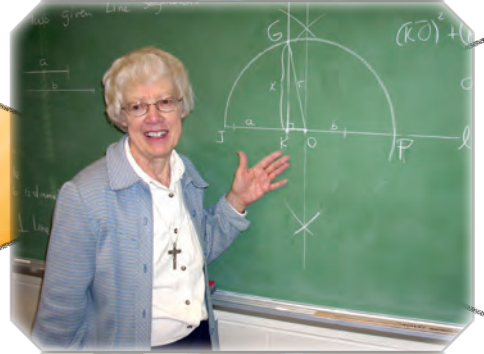
Sister Judith Ann is recognized at her retirement from the Salvation Army.

Sister Agnes Mary giving the Eucharist to one of her homebound.



Sister June tutors students in-home.

Sister Ann is professor of mathematics at Aquinas College.



Sister Darlene enjoys storytime with children.

Sister Kateri shares memories with a shut-in.



Sister Mary Louise coaches inmates preparing for their GED at Kent County Jail.

Sister Joan Pichette loves to bake and share sweet treats.



Sister Joan Foley does data entry at the CRxSP pharmacy in Saginaw, MI.

Sister Mary Katharine is receptionist at Marywood Health Center.



Sister Irene volunteers at the Michigan Community Blood Bank.

Sister Marie Rachael with her Spanish students at Henry Ford High School in Detroit, MI.



Class of 1984
25 years

Sister Justine working with Chicago Public School teachers who are planning their science lessons.



Justine Kane, OP –
I am profoundly grateful to my Dominican Sisters and Brothers, family, and friends for all the love, care, and support I have received and the opportunities I have been given to live and pray in community, study, and preach the Good News in many places and with many people. I live in the hope which only the Spirit can give and look forward to all that is to be.



Seventy-Year Jubilarians, Class of 1939, outside Marywood Health Center with Dominic: Sisters Aurora Valerio, OP, Karen Thoreson, OP, Eileen Popp, OP, Antonita Vigil, OP, Elaine Mitchell, OP and Emeliana Judis, OP.