

Sister ministers in many ways at St. Ignatius Parish

By Susan Gallagher

Sister Mary Stauder keeps pizzas and meatballs in the freezer. Just in case.

As pastoral assistant at St. Ignatius Mission Parish, she provides religious education and RCIA, takes communion to



Sister Mary Stauder, OP
(MT Catholic/Eric Connolly photo)

the housebound, attends deanery meetings and takes care of some of the needs that arise when the pastor is away at missions in Arlee and Jocko. Sister Mary also arranges for people to provide dinner for middle and high school kids who gather at St. Ignatius Mission Parish on Wednesdays. And if those arrangements fall through at the last minute, she can quickly get pizzas or meatballs to the table.

Sister Mary, who moved from Grand Rapids, Mich., to Montana in late 2009, is a Dominican with a master's degree in religious education. Previously she taught in schools, worked as a school administrator, provided GED instruction for inmates and taught English as a second language. She worked in several areas of Michigan, the state where she was born and raised,

share a house in St. Ignatius.

It was over lunch in Grand Rapids that Sister Margaret piqued Sister Mary's interest in coming to Montana. Access to Glacier and Yellowstone national parks was part of the appeal, said Sister Mary, who ranks outdoor pursuits and reading historical novels high on her list of favorites.

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-Sister Mary Stauder

She entered the Dominican order soon after high school and recalls multiple influences on her decision.

"When I was as kid I had an aunt who was a nun, and she was my favorite aunt," she said. "That was part of it." Also influential was a priest who spoke to her sixth-grade class about his service as a missionary.

Then there was her experience as a high school student. During Stations of the Cross, she said, "I had this overwhelming sense of being loved by God. I didn't become a nun because I was going to be self-sacrificing. I had a great sense of attraction."

She said that in Montana, her work and that of Sister Margaret has been aided immensely by Catholic Extension, which has provided multiple grants and had representatives in St. Ignatius last year as they were en route to Browning. They found the sisters "doing ministry and loving it," Sister Mary said

Catholic Extension bestows gift on St. Ignatius sisters

A gift of \$4,012 from the personal funds of Catholic Extension staff members and their families has been sent to the women religious at St. Ignatius Mission Parish.

As in previous years, Catholic Extension staffers and their relatives contributed to a monetary Christmas gift. After considering nearly 20 potential recipients from around the country, the staff decided the money should go to Sisters Mary Stauder and Margaret Hillary in St. Ignatius.

Catholic Extension said the money should be spent to achieve parish involvement in Jesuit-led workshops by bringing them to St. Ignatius, by sending some parishioners to workshops in Spokane, Wash., or by doing both; to restore the sisters' cable television service; and to help pay for construction of a garage at the sisters' home, if money remains after cover-

ing workshop and cable expenses.

"Thank you for all that you do to serve the people of Arlee, Jocko and St. Ignatius," Catholic Extension grants manager Joe Boland wrote the sisters, Dominicans who moved from Michigan to St. Ignatius in 2009. Last year they vacated old, crowded living quarters and moved into a new, manufactured home bought with a Catholic Extension grant as a major part of the funding.

Chicago-based Catholic Extension works to strengthen the Catholic Church's presence and mission in isolated U.S. communities short on resources. Around the United States, Catholic Extension has given grants for a variety of purposes, including religious education, salary subsidies in mission areas, church construction and repair, seminarian education, emergency relief and campus centers.