



Ventures

Turning Faith into Action since 1859

Spring 2005, Volume 1, Issue 2



For all of its 145 years of educating young women, St. Mary's Academy has followed a rich tradition with a student body representing many faiths and cultures. From left to right, Maya Attar (Middle Eastern), Nikki Azari (Iranian), Emily Tsoi (Yee Lam, Chinese, Hong Kong), Obse Muleta (Ethiopian), and Yanni Ma (Chinese) meet together to discuss life and school in Portland, Oregon. They find the work challenging, but rewarding, at St. Mary's.

Diversity is resource for life and a gift to share

From *THE CHRONICLES* —
St. Mary's Academy. November 6, 1860.
FIRST SCHOLASTIC YEAR.
Our classes for girls are opened and six pupils present themselves; of this number three are Catholics, Emma O'Brien, Annie Deilschneider, and Mary Clarke; two are Jewesses, Josephine and Clementina Mayer; one, Episcopalian, Emma Sherlock. May Our Immaculate Mother aid us in forming the hearts of these dear children.

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, St. Mary's Academy still serves a diverse group of young women. Long recognized for its stress on spiritual development, strong academic programs, flourishing athletic teams, and social justice commitment, St. Mary's has always had as its focus the development of each student's skills while encouraging her to remain uniquely herself. As a consequence, the various cultural and ethnic backgrounds enrich the entire student body, just as they did in 1860.

During the past school year the *Portland Oregonian* has featured two St. Mary's students as they celebrate religious obser-

vances, other than Catholic ones. Senior Kyla Raetz, in preparation for the Jewish High Holidays, told of the richness of her Jewish traditions, particularly those involving family participation. In the article she shared with the readers the symbolism and meaning of her beliefs. Rimsha Mahmood, who celebrates the Islamic faith, describes what it means to her to observe Ramadan, the month-long autumn fast in preparation for the feast of Id-al-Fitr (the feast of fast-breaking). She resists temptations, such as when she hears the rattle of potato chip bags or the smell of pizza, to the admiration of her fellow students. The understanding she brings to them about her faith strengthens their appreciation for it, and for their own backgrounds. Her headscarves, rather than separating her from the other students, are, as one envious classmate said "a fashion statement that I envy." But the deep commitment she brings to her faith impresses her classmates and leads to a further understanding between the cultures.

The struggles of some have spurred efforts by the student body to make St. Mary's truly a place for unique gifts and opportunities. Obse Muleta, after only four years in the United States and consequently only four

years of English language study, addressed several hundred at a Food for Thought Luncheon last fall, telling what St. Mary's means to her—and to her family. A native of Ethiopia, Obse is the daughter of parents who were professionals in their country, but who left their careers behind that their daughters might have a chance for a better education and life in the United States. She loves it here, "but, I didn't expect to find that being in America was a lot harder than I thought." She impressed the group with what she has achieved so far, and her hopes for the future, and she credits St. Mary's with making these dreams become a reality. She, like Kyla and Rimsha, finds St. Mary's an accepting and welcoming place.

It is not only the students who bring a cultural diversity and interest to the student body. Faculty members build bridges of cultural understanding and acceptance. Sister Mollie Reavis, mathematics teacher, meets monthly with other professional men and women as a member of the Institute for Christian-Muslim Understanding.

The experience of diversity and the appreciation for it, translates into action as St.

Continued on page 2.

Mary's graduates go out into their worlds, carrying on what they were introduced to through their families and school. Some have gone to India to work with Mother Teresa's sisters; some have found a place to help in Central America; others in Africa. But in quieter, no less demanding ways, right here at home, the threads of diversity stretch in many directions and weave together peoples of many cultures into a web of friendship and support.

A case in point: Sister Joan Maiers. A graduate of St. Mary's and a former faculty member there, Sister Joan continues to

St. Mary's Academy student Kate Edstrom finds a friend in the Mexican village where students came as part of a service opportunity through the annual Los Ambassadors program.



Sister Joan Maiers, second from the right, conducts creative writing workshops with Mary's Woods at Marylhurst residents, Ellouise Minter, Carol Lavelle, Rita Studd, Jo Anne Amato, and Rose Mary Bocek.

reach out to various new groups of friends, while maintaining contact with those from other times. Over 30 years ago a Sister from the African nation of Malawi came to study at Marylhurst College. After returning to her native country, Sister Perpetua Zitande was named to various demanding positions including charge of a health clinic, and principal of a high school, as well as administrative jobs in her religious community. All these came with little or no pay, and Perpetua learned that real help could come from the United States, and Sister Joan was one who could expedite it. Joan reminds her friends yearly that clothes, school supplies and medicine are needed, and she sends hundreds of pounds regularly. A pharmacist, Joan has kept up her national registration to help this project, allowing her to send medicines and supplies. More recently, after learning from a friend of the plight of the Haitians, Joan became an advocate for the Little Sisters of St. Teresa as they care for the very poor in that country.

A published poet, as well as an adjunct professor at Marylhurst University, Joan meets with groups of writers of all ages "from teenagers to some in the '90s—diversity of age is important, too."

The work that Joan does at Marylhurst University is echoed in a larger way in a program that Sister Cecilia Ranger set up when she chaired the theology department there, a doctor of ministry program which she established between Marylhurst and the San Francisco Theological Seminary, with components in spirituality, theology, scripture, psychology and pastoral ministry. Cecilia presented her vision to the bishops of various denominations, encouraging them to look into it for their personnel and explaining that candidates would need the approval of their superiors before admission. The first class of 13 students included a number of Catholic lay men and women, and members of various other Christian faiths, including a Lutheran, a Presbyterian, an Episcopalian, a member of the Metropolitan Community Church, and a United Church of Christ minister who was no stranger to Marylhurst University and the Holy Names Sisters, Norman Bengel.



Sister Marilyn Harris and Dr. Norman Bengel

Dr. Bengel's background is so varied, and his interests so wide, that only a book could do it justice. His college experiences included graduate study at Harvard, and a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. His ministry extended from the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska to Honolulu. Later, work with social justice issues led him into the field of education and his chosen work in organizational development. It was his involvement with the distribution of Title II funds in the city of Portland, that led to his long-standing friendship with Sister Marilyn Harris, a reading specialist at Sacred Heart, St. Ignatius and Our Lady of Sorrows schools.

Consequently, when Marylhurst University advertised its new program, he found an instant connection, leading to the degree of doctor of ministry, and last year to a formal association with the Holy Names Sisters as a covenanted Associate.

The ministry of the Holy Names Community has never made us cookie cutters turning out identical copies of the same kinds of students. The Sisters have cherished diversity, and sponsored it from their earliest history. In this they follow their models and exemplars, Jesus and Mary, who did the same.

Ministry grant awards make more possible

Your gifts to the SNJM MINISTRY FUND provides assistance to individual Holy Names Sisters and their collaborators as they work to meet multiple needs in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

2005 Grant Awards

Emergency Relief and Food Distribution, McKenzie Bridge – John Maureen Backenstos, SNJM



Ageless Multimedia Center/Library Program, Thailand – Rosalie Anderson, SNJM

Development of Lay Leadership, St. Ignatius Parish, Portland – JoJean Cavalli, SNJM

Senior Busing Program, Tutwiler, Mississippi – Maureen Delaney, SNJM

Hot Meals and Food Program, Ganado, Arizona – Francella Mary Griggs, SNJM

Housecall Providers, Inc., physicians and nurse practitioners providing in-home care, Portland – Benneth Husted, SNJM Associate

Kiln for Program Development, Depoe Bay, Ore. – Kathryn Knoll, SNJM

Centering Prayer Program, Portland – Shirley Krueger, SNJM

Women's Educational Writing Interests Portland – Joan Maiers, SNJM

Suncrest Retreat Center Ministry, Talent, Ore. – Mary Pat Naumes, SNJM

Fonkoze, investment for development, Haiti. Lucinda Peightal, SNJM, Province Justice & Peace Committee

Family Education Program of Adelante Mujeres, (Hispanic women), Forest Grove, Ore. – Barbara Raymond, SNJM

Extended Care Program, Holy Cross Area School, Portland – Mary Ryan, SNJM

Support Educational Program, St. Joseph School, Salem – Marilyn Schroeder, SNJM

Central Catholic High honors veteran teacher



Sister Frances Jacobs with the Central Catholic team mascot.

The newly renovated gym at Central Catholic High School in Portland will bear Sister Frances Jacobs' name and picture for the coming year. This honor comes to Sister as a veteran 14-year English and Social Studies teacher during the '60s and '70s. She accepts this honor happily in recognition of all her fellow educators and with good memories of the "scholars and gentlemen" who were her students.

From the Leadership

Dear Friends,

At the heart of so many of our lives is a quest for “something more.” More than what? More than who? What is this “more” that we desire?

We know we want more than appearance or material acquisitions. We want more than what current culture and events can offer us. We want more than the rush and clamor of the self-interested concerns that clutter and complicate our lives. In a time of violence and ambivalence, the “something more” we long for is meaning beyond ourselves. We want certainty, justice, authenticity, beauty, compassion. We are in search of what calls us to Life, and tells us that our lives are worth living. We search for spiritual values. We search for God.

For Holy Names Sisters, the “something more” is our journey into mystery and ministry. Ministry has at its center a deep desire to share the “something more” with others—to make it possible for every person to lead a fully human life, a life that is vital, not only physically, but intellectually, aesthetically, and spiritually, as well. Seeking God is about reaffirming faith and restoring hope; and the quest itself produces amazing energy, service and solace in a troubled world. Some of our many ministries are highlighted in this issue of *Ventures*.

We are grateful to you, our friends and co-workers, who so generously help us help others through our work and our prayer. Thank you, and may you experience deeply the “something more” in your lives.

Sincerely in Jesus and Mary,
Joan Saalfeld, SNJM
Oregon Province Director

In Memory

SISTER PATRICIA McCANN (Marian Patricia) once said, “I should have been born triplets because of all the things I want to do.” Her 63 years of ministry touched the lives of thou-



S. Patricia McCann

sands. She welcomed novice first graders just starting out in Northwest schools and made her home with shut-ins, seniors and the elderly poor in Astoria, where she advocated on their behalf with the Governor’s Commission on Senior Services and in Washington, D.C. Her voice and views were heard where it mattered. She is remembered for her kindness, ready laugh and wise advice. From the control booth of radio station KMUN in Astoria she interviewed older people and broadcast their wisdom, these folks “who have a wealth of wisdom and experience that young people can’t even imagine.”

The oldest girl in a family of six brothers and one sister, Pat’s earliest days gave her a life-long foundation as educator, caregiver, advocate. Her passion for the poor extended to her private life as well. In her “retired years” she cared for Lillie, an elderly shut-in while spending nights with Kay, confined to a wheelchair. Sister Pat responded to the personal needs of those God showed to her. At the same time she had the talent and know-how to pursue systemic change. We remember her as a woman who lived profoundly the spirit of our foundress, Blessed Marie-Rose. Both marked the world through their initiative, dedication, idealism tempered by practical wisdom. Sister Pat died on Sept. 24, 2004, at age 93. We celebrate her ascension into eternal life, but we miss the passion of her presence among us.

SISTER PATRICIA

ADAMS (Patrick Maureen) was a resourceful and determined primary and middle-school teacher. One of her students commented, “She just never let us quit. She knew we could master whatever she presented and she was always encouraging.” As



S. Patricia Adams

the youngest of a large, active and successful family, with five brothers and two sisters, perhaps she herself knew the struggle to find one’s place, Sister Pat followed a B.S. in Education from Marylhurst with an M.A. in Counseling from the University of Oregon. Counseling gave her a new outlet for her talents and her bent toward that child needing a special extra assist. For 17 years as counselor in California, she worked both in parishes and other settings with a focus on parents and children with learning disabilities.

In later years Sister Pat was attracted to the practice of centering prayer. A retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh, well-known Vietnamese Buddhist monk, offered her a way to deepen her life and her ministry outreach through the contemplative practices of acceptance, patience and extending oneself to others.

Sister Pat made her home a place of genuine hospitality. She loved company, her nieces and nephews, and her religious community. She could throw a party, cook up something delicious at a moment’s notice. And always, brew that cup of tea, which warmed and welcomed each visitor.

Sister Patricia died Nov. 13, 2004, at the age of 82. At her funeral, we blessed her with these words: “A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; she who finds one finds a treasure.” We are grateful for the wealth her life brought to so many.



OUR GIFT SHOP IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS! (See Web page on left) It’s easy to purchase Sister Joan Saalfeld’s new book, *Sister Mary Bertoli’s* cards and artwork, as well as Sister Mary Julia Steinkamp’s books online by visiting our new online Gift Shop at www.sistersoftheholynames.org/oregon/.

Sister’s book *Looking for the Song* published

Looking for the Song, written by Sister Joan Saalfeld, is a fable about a girl whose journey begins when she loses the spiritual experience that has been part of her childhood, and enters a period of darkness. She leaves her home in search of the Song that has made her young life so happy. Along the way, she meets various guides and challenges, finds her connection to the creatures of the world, and learns that she has been seeing things backwards. The transcendent Song for which she is looking is not only in far-away stars, or distant, mysterious lands. If she can only pay attention and listen, it is in the things and situations of ordinary life that she encounters

every day. The fable crosses cultures and religions to reveal a universal truth about the longing for spiritual fulfillment.

“*Looking for the Song* is a story for all ages—a moving tale that engages, delights, instructs, and inspires.... Beautifully written and illustrated, it is a wonderful resource for pastors and teachers, spiritual directors and retreat leaders—and the perfect gift for spiritual seekers everywhere.” Kathleen Fischer, Ph.D., theologian and author.

All proceeds from book sales directly support HOLY NAMES MINISTRY FUND.

You can purchase *Looking for a Song* online through our Gift Shop.

Property goes from playground to Pub

On Monday, Nov. 22, 2004, Old St. Francis School, a former ministry of the Holy Names Sisters, entered a new era...as hotel, restaurant and pub! This latest creation of the well-known McMenamin brothers, Brian and Mike, retains much of the charm, ambiance and memories of those earlier “school days.” One half of all proceeds from food and beverages sold during the evening were donated to the HOLY NAMES MINISTRY FUND. Brian and Mike were students of the Holy Names Sisters at The Madeleine School in Portland.



Holy Names Sisters Frances Harold, Frances Jacobs, Joan Flynn, Donna Van Laeken, Dolores Quinn, and Lois Morisky gather on familiar, but new, territory.



Fonkoze, a Haitian alternative bank, received a 2005 grant from the Holy Names Sisters. Fonkoze ('shoulder-to-shoulder' in Creole) is an alliance of peasant organizations, women street vendor groups, and others across Haiti. It is dedicated to the rebuilding of the economy by empowering people and organizations to engage in income-producing activities. It provides financial and educational services needed to help the poor of Haiti participate successfully in the economy.

Ventures: A Publication of the Sisters of the Holy Names

Ventures is a publication of the Sisters of the Holy Names (SNJM), printed tri-annually for the use of the Sisters, their partners in ministry and their various publics. It aims to support the vitality of the SNJM mission, education in the faith in all its forms, into the future.

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Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit No. 700



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A publication of the Sisters of the Holy Names

In this issue: HOLY NAMES MINISTRY

SPRING 2005

Spring arrives! With a cautious crocus poking through...looking for warmth and the sun's blessing. With eager gardeners eying pea packets on a retail shelf...looking for a frost-free spot, the feel of moist earth in their hands and tasting already the sweetness to come. Spring arrives with the promise of so much more!

In Spring's light, we each know that daily we look and long "for something more"...we want to be more happy, more free, more loving... more of who we know we can be. We want more, sometimes even the more we can't name. As Holy Names Sisters, our MINISTRY is about this "something more"... We facilitate the development of individuals, families, communities as they sink roots deep into the ground of their unique gifts, cultures and faiths... and grow!!! In this issue, read about these blossoming lives.

Spring 2005

March 6:

SALEM FRIENDSHIP BRUNCH. 10am Mass and Brunch at St. Joseph's Parish Center. Please call Debbie Johnston at 503.675.2466, if you would like to attend.

March 8:

International Women's Day - Oregon Province Day of Prayer against Trafficking of Women and Children

April 22:

Earth Day: "Earth, our home, needs us to ensure its survival. Women of the earth we participate in renewing the earth by recognizing our interdependence with all creation and establishing right and harmonious relationships; safeguarding the beauty and abundance of the earth." SNJM Statement 2001

April 23-24:

Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation III, Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seattle. For information, call Province Office at 503.675.2467 to request flyer.

May 23:

Beatification of Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher

Launching A New Venture: Salem, 1863

The Chronicles present handwritten accounts of the Holy Names Sisters in each of their missions. The Sisters arrive in Salem in 1863, experiencing the challenges of the times.

AUGUST 18, 1863. We are here since morning and as our future dwelling is not yet habitable, we stay at the home of Mr. Bell.

AUGUST 22. We have today taken possession of our new dwelling. ... As we are not pleasing to all the neighbors, and as our house is not very sure on account of the actual repairs going on, Father has thought it prudent to give us a guardian for some time, at least, to protect us, and our property during the night.

AUGUST 29. It has certainly not been a quiet week. On one side the noise of the carpenters' hammers, on the other a crowd of curious spectators.

SEPTEMBER 7. We have received over eighty day pupils. We were far from expecting such a grand opening... We thank God... and we hope to do good to those young girls who, for the most part, alas! have not the happiness to belong to our Faith.

DECEMBER 25. This great festival brings with it more than its usual significance as it is our first in Salem. The Catholic Church in process of erection not being completed, we have Mass as usual in our little convent chapel... The good Father is overjoyed at the solemnity which we give to the feast—the contrasts overcome him—before the Sisters came, he had to say Mass in a barn.

MAY 1, 1864. Bright smiling May greets us for the first time in the missionary field of Oregon's fair capital... Among the one hundred and thirty-two pupils whom we have under our supervision, only two are Catholics. ... This is indeed a great trial... it is heart rending... (we) feel entirely isolated... where a spirit of criticism and censoriousness is so prevalent. During this month we shall strive to fill our hearts with love and pure devotion towards our benign Mother and pour our sorrows and petitions at her feet.

JULY 5. The closing exercises of this first scholastic year... The room in the convent being too small to accommodate the friends of the Academy, the exercises took place in a large tent constructed in the yard for the purpose.