



Missionary Franciscan Sisters

USA Circle Newsletter



Winter Edition 2012

Sr. Lucy Flaherty's New Ministry

I have been the Director of Human Development at St. Margaret's since March 1 of this year and I like it very much. St. Margaret's is a very active, vibrant parish in Mattydale, New York which is just north of Syracuse in the town of Salina. The demographics are very diverse. We have a very large client base determined by those who use our food pantry. We have approximately 120 families using our pantry on a monthly basis.



The youth in the parish are filled with a love of their faith and a desire to serve others who are less fortunate. This past summer I contacted the **Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build** here in Syracuse to see if our youth could get involved and sure enough we did. St. Margaret's parish has now made a covenant with Habitat to continue work with the Interfaith Build. We raise money through our youth program and they go to the site on a designated day to help with the build.



The next thing that was very clear to me when speaking with the clients is that many of them still need to finish their high school education. I contacted BOCES, Board of Cooperative Education System in Onondaga County to implement a **GED** program.

They were quite happy to hear from us because there was no GED program available in this area. We worked with BOCES, and the Town of Salina Civic Center / Catholic Charities across the street for use of the building. The program began on September 11th and is under the supervision of BOCES with a wonderful, dedicated teacher. People can join the program whenever they wish. Presently we have eight people attending on a regular basis.

In January we will begin a support group for adults caring for parents, spouses, siblings who are ill and homebound. The theme of the group will be '**Give to your heart's content without giving yourself away.**' That's the title of the book we'll be using for the group. There will be someone visiting the homebound while the caregiver attends the group session. This seems to be another great need for people in the area.

Also in January, we will renew the already established **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. This group will continue to crochet or knit shawls for the sick, hospitalized, homebound parishioners and clients.

As any ministry with God's people, we have good days and some not so good days. There are so many in need as you all know. It's difficult to meet the needs of everyone. Just recently we had two homeless people die here in the city of Syracuse. So, needless to say, we are all quite concerned about those who are still out there, especially with our cold and snowy Syracuse winter season almost here.

As part of my ministry, I will be working with the parish team on programs coinciding with the **Year of Faith**. My focus for reflection opportunities will be putting our faith into action. The people here at St. Margaret's take their call to discipleship quite seriously. It is great to serve with them.

Sr. Josephine Quinlan's Casserole Ministry

Casserole Ministry evolved as the Parishioners of St. Mary's saw a need to bring dinners to the elderly and sick who live alone or who are not ambulatory enough to cook. This new ministry is part of being a stewardship parish where people reach out and care for each other.

A common quote I heard as I made my weekly visits bringing the Eucharist to those who were not able to go to church was: "I probably won't see anybody until you come again, Sister." This triggered a thought in my mind.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if parishioners made an extra meal as they cooked for their families. Then they could bring the casseroles, dated and labeled, to the parish freezer.



The inspired idea took root immediately and before I knew it several groups organized themselves under Stewardship Service. The casseroles are dated, the contents of the meal and phone numbers of donors are given. Then the recipients phone and chat with the parishioner to express their gratitude.

Surely this is one way I witness to the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy in action. It brings great joy to each one. They naturally love to get a copy of the Parish Bulletin so they can keep up with all the parish activities

Sr. Theresa Merwin's Short-Term Mission

My short-term ministry experience has truly been a very rewarding one and I am very grateful for it. When this invitation was first proposed to us at our Gathering in Tenafly in October 2011 following the General Chapter in Rome, our Leadership Team encouraged us to consider and to pray about the possibility of participating in some way. The idea appealed to me then and I began to wonder just how, when, where and if I could respond to it. The possibility evolved into reality when Noelle Hart asked for some help here at the Stillpoint House of Prayer.



Rather than repeat any of the interesting information that is already included in the beautiful Stillpoint brochure, I feel the need to comment on my sheer admiration for the wonderful team of very dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time and talents to Stillpoint! An absolutely essential assist to Noelle, they add so much to what Stillpoint is all about not only on our very busy Mondays and Fridays— but daily! A genuinely outstanding spirit of Christian care and concern is reflected in the very generous support (spiritual, material and monetary) that arrives weekly from the surrounding parishes. In addition, I am so impressed with the Publix food chain and other food contributors that make it a point to donate bread and other goodies to Stillpoint on a regular basis! It is always nothing short of amazing to witness how often when the food supply begins to wane and to border on 'depleted'precisely then (!) ... another car or truck arrives with yet more bread and food!



Having had the opportunity to share once again with the marginalized poor, but this time with the mostly undocumented Hispanic community, has served to remind me of my ongoing need to learn from this very impressive group of very convinced and convincing people. Their solid theology is indeed forged in and by their very challenging social reality and their deep faith and trust in God's fidelity and in his Word. Being with, listening to and feeling their contagious enthusiasm as they express that faith in word and in song on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays has truly been inspirational and unforgettable!

I must add that an absolutely delightful fringe benefit awaited me during my sojourn here! Una O'Donnell, who is a member of the pastoral ministry team at St Joseph's, one of our neighboring parishes, drove Noelle and myself to Englewood, Florida to visit with Monica Hayes and Eileen Hurley who is my classmate! It has been years since last I saw them and we all so enjoyed having some quality time to share — lots of laughter and reminiscences of the past. Monica and Eileen prepared a delectable Thanksgiving meal for us... with all the trimmings! They left Florida at the end of November, leaving behind such a legacy of truly dedicated Franciscan care and lasting witness. Monica and Eileen will be sorely missed by their many friends and the very grateful people to whom they lovingly ministered for so many years!

I would like to share a quote I found in the Sacred Heart Parish Bulletin of Nov. 11, 2012. The insightful message really captured my attention and it definitely captures as well my experience at Stillpoint.

“Christianity is the story of beggars who tell other beggars where to find bread.”

What's Happening with Elizabeth Hayes Grants...

Maureen Andrews:

The parish retreat, funded by our Elizabeth Hayes Grant and held on 25th August attracted a group of 25 people. This is quite a good result for a small town of 1,500 residents. The venue was the home of one of the members of our Sacred Heart Parish. The home is situated on acreage on the banks of the Warrego River—a very conducive place for prayer as people could walk along the riverbank or sit under the gum trees on the lawn. The theme of the retreat was “God loves you.” — a simple truth but so hard for many people to accept. All look forward to another such day in 2013. Dr Monica Nebauer from the Australian Catholic University in Brisbane was delighted to come to Charleville to facilitate a workshop on Healing Touch (Level 1). (This was a program developed by nurses in America.) Seven people attended the workshop and 3 of these were health professionals. Patricia Cordwell, one of our sisters who ministers in Toowoomba, assisted Monica. The group of seven have hopes of meeting each month to practice their skills and complete Level 2 in 2013.



Pat Coyle:



The English Language Learning Program at Cathedral Academy at Pompei (CAP) is funded by the Elizabeth Hayes Grant, Solvay Bank, and a McDevitt Grant. The program is free and open to CAP parents and the Northside neighborhood. Run by certified teachers, it meets on Wednesday evenings from 4:15 to 6:15 in the CAP library and technology center. The Elizabeth Hayes Grant allowed for the installation of a SMART Board to

be used by the adult English Language learners. Installed last month, the SMART Board serves to enhance international English Language Learning. This photo shows Sudanese and Vietnamese students, advanced in their learning, reading questions and writing answers. The program also provides a babysitting service. Our Vietnamese, Sudanese, and Burmese adults and children enjoy the delicious fresh fruit, cheese, popcorn, whole wheat crackers, and other nutritious snacks, all made possible by our Elizabeth Hayes Grant.

Maureen Coyle:

The Elizabeth Hayes Fund granted us \$2,200.00 (US dollars) which had the exchange of 2.70 soles. We were delighted with the exchange as today the dollar has fallen to 2.56 soles. However, the photocopier was more expensive than we thought as it cost 5,000 soles which is about \$1,851.85; the bookcase cost 700.00 soles or \$259.25 U.S. currency. The schools come to use our library or have workshops on the third floor of the Shekina so it is well used. We also have adult classes and they too have access to our printed materials. The photocopier was set up on the first floor and the people come in and have copies made. It has been great help in making copies of the Church bulletin and other Church documents.



Julie Franchi:

The Social Apostolate of Savannah was honored to have received \$2,500 for the purchase of boots and uniforms to help clients begin employment. To date we have helped thirteen individuals with work shoes (slip-resistant and steel-toed boots) and eight with nurse's scrubs and shoes, and have spent \$780.15 of the grant. Many of the clients who have benefited from this grant have been recently released prisoners who reentered the workforce. We have also partnered with Sojourner of Savannah, a free CNA program for women on public assistance. We provided the eight graduates of the fall session with the nurse's scrubs and nurse's shoes to begin the clinical part of their education. We now have a website, www.socialapostolate.org, for those of you who might be interested in seeing what we are all about.

**Jean Morrissey:**

We received from the Elizabeth Hayes Grant Fund \$2500.00 for books for the 5 departments of the UAC CARMEN PAMPA: Education, Agricultural Engineering, Rural Tourism, Nursing, and Veterinary Medicine. We are in the process of buying the books for these departments..

Noelle Hart:

In May 2012, we sought support from the two local agencies that provided the Diaper Program's seed money in 2011. In addition, we were fortunate enough to receive an Elizabeth Hayes Grant for \$2,500. In total, our funds for 2012-13 are \$10,000. Through the end of November 2012, Stillpoint has purchased and distributed \$6,390 worth of diapers and nearly \$400 worth of wet wipes. Diapers and wet wipes are purchased in bulk to maximize and stretch our purchasing power. Boxes of diapers are broken down into packages of nine, and wet wipes are distributed in zip lock bags of ten. We are happy to report that Stillpoint House of Prayer is the only entity in our community that is able to provide mothers with the correct size of diaper on a consistent basis. We have targeted a need overlooked by many, and provide a much needed service to the needy here in Bradenton. It is our intention to continue this program in the future through the continued support of our generous benefactors.

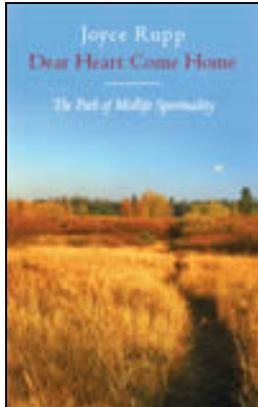


ON THE MOVE ...from Manet Road to Mount Alvernia Convent.....Monday, Dec. 17.....
More to follow.....



One of My Favorite Books . . . By Sr. Margretta Flanagan

I really enjoy giving things away, passing on or sharing what I have found enjoyable. Reflecting on this, it occurred to me that there is a book on my shelf that still remains. This is the first clue that it's a favorite of mine, the second clue being that the binding is broken, it is filled with markers and covered with highlighters of different colors from the assortment I've had over the years. You guessed it! It isn't new or current but one that I dip back into time and time again.



DEAR HEART, COME HOME, by J. Rupp is marketed for midlifers since the subtitle is: "The Path of Midlife Spirituality." I have been way past that stage for years unless I live to be way over a hundred. However, I find that the images, metaphors, poems, reflection questions, suggestions and basic common sense drawn from the wisdom and lived experiences of contributors continue to nurture my heart, mind and spirit.

If you're like me, I recycle through different experiences, moods, and stages (at a deeper level, I hope!) many times over and over. The shared experiences throughout these 205 pages continue to remain fresh and poignant even today.

An example is the appendix of responses to a questionnaire given to a large sampling of women. You can substitute any age over fifty and find that the wisdom is timeless. The importance of living with humor, forgiving yourself, learning to choose without apology, giving yourself to something you are passionate about and befriending ambiguity, are just a few of the reminders.

Prayers for healing, going deeper and 'simmering time' are helpful features included in the format. Quotes from various authors are sprinkled throughout the chapters.

Joyce Rupp: *"Hope doesn't need words or proofs or conditions. Hope doesn't pretend that I'll get all I want nor does hope deny that there will still be struggles down the road. Hope tucks promises of growth and truth inside the pockets of my struggles."*

Emily Dickinson: *"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all..."*

Sam Keen: *"I have learned one important thing in life—how to begin again."*

Maybe the appeal of this compilation of down to earth, distilled wisdom is the knowing that until I learn to come home to my true self how will I journey in hope? Joseph Campbell notes that we shall eventually "come to the center of our own existence" and "where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world."

Message from Sr. Donna

Greetings!

Every time we travel to Tenafly , we pass through Newtown, Connecticut. We have often commented on the name and it has become a sort of landmark that tells us we are only a short distance from our destination. It will forever have a new meaning for us.

Most of us have spent a good deal of our lives as school administrators and teachers. Somehow, we seem closer to the tragedy because we know the responsibility and care that goes with having these precious children and their well-being in our hands. I know I prayed every day, as we prepared the children of this generation for the possibility of such an event, that it would never become a reality in our school. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you who are involved in education, because this is particularly difficult for you and there just are no words.

This Christmas, let us remember the people of Newtown as they struggle to come to terms with this terrible loss.

Jesus came as a tiny child and for every person so that we would never be alone again, "Tidings of comfort and joy." In the quiet, stillness and in the darkness of the night, when every sound can be heard, everyone was listening as the music and the angel's songs began to resonate throughout the night.

Shepherds listened and went to spread the good news and all the people listened to them. The word spread that the Savior had come. Now, it is for us to be the shepherds of our time, to continue to listen as we spread the good news that Jesus is still with us today.

Christmas blessings to each one of you and may your new year be filled with all good things.

Love,
Donna

