

In

HARMONY

Sisters of Mercy, New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

Mt. Mercy president leads ‘second family’

Mercy high schools start 2009-10 school year

Sister Mary Ellen Twist has deep roots in Mt. Mercy Academy.

She, her two sisters and her mother, Rosemary, graduated from the South Buffalo school operated by the Sisters of Mercy. Mary Ellen taught there, served on its board of trustees and as its director of mission integration.

“The Mt. Mercy Academy community has always been a second family to me,” she said. “I love the people here and believe very strongly in our mission of educating young women.”

And now she has the chance to continue to advance that mission as the school’s new president.



Sister Mary Ellen Twist, president of Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo, greets incoming freshmen, Julia Sellers, left, and Bridget Jackson.

“I want to be a collaborator and unifier, looking to people in groups and institutions with

(See HIGH SCHOOLS on Page 6)

Gathering challenged to live so others can have a future

Sister Ray Maria McNamara, Ph.D., recalled the time in North Carolina when she enjoyed the heartwarming scene of a family with a fir tree tied to the top of their car. The live tree would be the centerpiece of their Christmas celebration.

Her feelings changed when she noticed sap oozing from the tree; she saw it as the tree’s lifeblood draining out.

“I started crying,” she told about 200 sisters and associates at St. Bonaventure (N.Y.) University during NyPPaW’s “Theology of a Merciful Heart” gathering July 17-19.

“That’s what education does to you,” she said.

And education was a major part of her talks promoting sustainability, which she defined as “living today in a way that ensures future generations will have enough resources.”

Ray Maria, a Sister of Mercy from the South Central Community, who is an associate professor of theology at the University of Portland, Ore., noted in a talk July 18 that all places on this Earth have been touched by pollution.

“We are a large group of women who are called to be leaders in this area by how we live in relation to sustainability,” said Ray Maria,

(See GATHERING on Page 4)





In Harmony

A bimonthly publication of the
Sisters of Mercy, New York,
Pennsylvania,
Pacific West Community

President

Sister Nancy Hoff

Vice President

Sister Patricia Prinzing

Councilors

Sister JoAnne Courneen
Sister Guadalupe Lumantas
Sister Geraldine Rosinski

Editor Principal Writer

Gary Loncki
Communications Director
814.824.3306
gloncki@mercynyppaw.org

Photographers

Peggy Biekowski
Jeanne Burvid
Gary Loncki
Sister Trish Tyler
Micaela Young

We had learned the way of the Mercies

By Sister JoAnne Courneen, NyPPaW Leadership Team

When I was a novice, our mistress of novices, Sister Mary Andre Ahearn celebrated her 25th jubilee. To us, 25 years was a lifetime, longer really than we had lived.

While we prepared the celebration for her and her companions, we discussed the possible scenarios that might play out in our lives as Sisters of Mercy. We mused about the various ministries in which we would serve, and how we would stand up to the wear and tear of the demands of community obligations and our service.



Sr. JoAnne
Courneen

Our 25th jubilee celebration seemed a long time off, and we wondered what would be next for those sisters we were preparing to honor. We even wondered what they would do when they retired. Now, well after 25 years have passed for me, I marvel at where the time has gone and realize that the first 25 years were only a beginning. As you can imagine, Sister Mary Andre didn't retire after that 25th jubilee celebration, and we didn't retire after ours. We had learned the way of the Mercies.

In this issue of In Harmony, there is an insert in which we read about other sisters who didn't retire after 25 years, who are still going strong. Our jubilarians are featured and with the brief sketch of their lives we see the many and diverse ways they have carried our mission to others. They have lived their lives for 25, 50, 60, 75, 80 years as our companions, friends and inspiration. And we join them in their jubilee celebrations giving thanks to God for their presence among us and the inspiration they offer to so many.

We also read about two of our sisters in the Philippines, Sisters Josefina de Guzman and Teresita Fernandez Magallon, who have professed their final vows saying "yes" to God's invitation to be Sisters of Mercy and to serve. Perhaps, they, too, now stand looking at our jubilarians and wondering what the future will hold for them.

The willingness of Josefina and Teresita to step out in faith and profess their vows for life takes courage and also inspires us. We are grateful to them for joining us in Catherine's journey of love and service, and we offer our love and support to them through the years ahead.

Both jubilee celebrations and profession ceremonies stimulate times of reminiscence when we relive our lives. Remembering the good times and stressful times, picturing those served, and the jubilees celebrated is a blessing. Think back to your early days in the Community when you observed jubilee celebrations and the years they represented.

Think of the blessings. Now, be grateful you didn't retire after 25 years!

COMMENTARY: Our violin crescendos for immigration reform

By Sister Gaye Moorhead

Here's an easy prediction: this season's virulent Town Hall Health Care Clamor is mere prelude to next season's vitriolic Immigration Clamor.

According to the latest Gallup Poll results, 50 percent of all Americans now believe that immigration should be decreased, and a recent survey finds that many Catholics are not only unmoved by bishops' and popes' exhortations to "Welcome the Stranger" but are also annoyed by the very idea of a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops "Justice for Immigrants Campaign" for *Illegal Aliens*. (*Illegal Aliens* is a curious pairing, isn't it? Since Scooter Libby's criminal conviction, ever hear anyone refer to him as Dick Cheney's "Illegal Chief of Staff?" Or to Bernie Madoff as an "Illegal Investment Advisor?")

So what do we Mercy Sisters and Associates do as the clamor builds? Illumine the lives and stories of the undocumented immigrants we know or know of — those who are the wealth and breadth of our Critical Concern. One encounter "with a detained or harassed Mexican parent of U.S. citizen toddlers, or with one aging Guatemalan farmworker laboring in our white-faceless fields, or with one exceptional Irish teen in Boston since infancy "shatters all formulaic branding. Bear witness to their plight. Support those who bear witness.

Chicago Mercies Pat Murphy (80) and JoAnn Persch (75) recently appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*. For three years, they've led weekly prayer vigils outside the Broadview Detention Center where, as Pat decries, "Immigrants have been treated inhumanely." Remarkably, last year,

they and their inter-faith collaborators were key to the unanimous passage of the Access to Religious Ministry Act "the first legislation in the country which allows religious persons to meet with and be present to immigrants in Illinois detention centers. As Pat said, "I believe the moments in that jail are sacred moments with people. We give them life ... and they give us life ... It's a human exchange, but I believe that God is present in that."

In response to the *Tribune* article, bloggers predictably reflected the national divide on both the immigration issue and our church's role. A sampling:

■ "Lawbreakers belong in jail. **Put away your violins!"**

■ "Thank you for taking the church to where there is a need... reminding people of their human dignity and value."

■ "The Cathelic [sic] Church is only looking at filling the phus [sic] with people with no skills or education."

■ "Keep up the good work, sisters! Immigrants and detainees being forced through that meat grinder that is the detainee process need all the help that they can get."

■ [*And adding a curious new subset of "illegals":*] "These nuns have put their focus on illegal migrant catholics who should not be here anyway."

Fortunately, witnesses to inhumane treatment matter, and human exchanges matter. Recently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) responded to exposés of shameful detention conditions and announced a nationwide overhaul.



Sr. Gaye Moorhead

Currently, ICE holds elderly women, families with young children and asylum seekers in jail-style facilities. Since they face only civil immigration proceedings, however, ICE will begin to separate treatment for them from those with felony convictions facing mandatory detention/deportation.

We citizens are also able to differentiate between felonious drug- and gun-toting human traffickers, cartels, gangs and terrorists ... and those hotel maids, strawberry pickers, nannies, gardeners and U.S. citizens' spouses/children/parents/grandparents who have committed the misdemeanor of unlawful presence in our country. In JUSTICE, we can exclude and remove criminals. In FAIRNESS, we can choose to first grant a path to citizenship to those who have patiently and at great personal cost complied with complex and harsh INS rules. Then, in MERCY, even as some penalties may be leveled proportionately, we can carve out second- or even last-place paths to citizenship for those who have been in our country unlawfully and peacefully.

With resounding crescendos, those of us who bear the name can strive to channel Mercy for those who will be last chosen, to help ensure that they will at least be last chosen.

Sister Gaye Moorhead is an attorney currently serving as Mission Services Liaison at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix. She was recently appointed to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration.

Gathering (From Page 1)

whose 2006 dissertation was titled, “Interdependence and the God Quest: A Christian Ecological Spirituality.”

“We have only a small window left to make an impact,” she said. “We have to change how our footprint appears on this planet.”

Ray Maria’s talks included time for sharing in small groups. The gathering included prayer, conversation and even a talent show.

Participants in the weekend also suggested ways in which they can practice sustainability. Suggestions included:

- “Take time to look at our possessions and see the difference between wants and needs.”

- “Become more conscious of what we consume, using our buying power to promote the use of more Earth-friendly products.”

- “Listen to God, the Earth’s cry, the cry of the poor, to each other and to the needs of people’s spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs.”

Sister Maura Smith of Erie who was recently honored by Mercyhurst College, Erie, for her many years promoting environmental concerns, was delighted that sisters and associates were hearing about sustainability.

“The planet is in trouble,” Maura said. “We have people starving all over the world and wars over resources. We have to understand that we cannot keep on meeting our personal wants while people are dying.”

Ray Maria said the term “sustainability” started out in the 1960s and ’70s as an effort to find ways the poor could catch up with richer nations to improve their lives. But if that happened, she noted, we would need four planets to sustain that standard of life.



Mercy Associate Margaret Oberst of Rochester performs a liturgical dance during an opening prayer service July 18 at St. Bonaventure University.

Today, she said, we must realize that how we live has a “ripple” effect across the planet.

She explained that the biosphere provides everything for us to live. Without trees as natural air filters our air would be unbreathable. Water is a non-renewable resource that we cannot live without, yet we pollute it. Soil provides us with all we need to survive, but degrading it has a negative impact on the food chain.

“We are the only species that gives nothing back. We are at the top of the food chain,” she noted.

She challenged her audience to learn how the natural world functions. She said both hurricanes and

earthquakes, though potentially dangerous, are necessary. She explained hurricanes distribute heat around the globe, and earthquakes are the shifting of plates inside the earth that have produced mountains, such as the Rockies and Alleghenies.

She drew laughs when she said that for some people experiencing nature means going to the shopping mall to see the plants.

“Take nature where it is, the good and the bad,” she said. “Listen to nature and be aware of how it works. Allow nature to be our teacher.”

She said people need to recognize that plastic used for bottled water is not biodegradable, and the fresh water used in bottled water often comes from poor countries where people are suffering from a shortage of fresh water for themselves.

She urged sisters and associates to ask their grocer where foods being sold come from, and who is suffering for it.

“We as a body can choose not to buy anything that has a negative effect on others. We Sisters of Mercy and associates – men and women – are not shy,” she said.



Sister Ray Maria McNamara addresses the “Theology of a Merciful Heart” gathering on July 18.

(See GATHERING on next page)

Gathering (From Page 4)

She suggested planting a tree where it will grow best not only where it will look best in a backyard.

She advised against trying to control nature, and said we need to learn how to live in balance with nature. "Change our lifestyles for the sake of the natural world and for those who are suffering," she said.

Sister Virgencita Alegado, local leader for the Philippines, said Ray Maria's message connected with her as she has seen firsthand the effects of strip mining and deforestation in her country. "She is saying what we need to hear. We need to regain a natural balance," she said.

Sister Rosemary Petrie of Buffalo said Ray Maria's presentation reminded her of an experience she had when visiting the Philippines several years ago when a Philippine sister slid a paper under an insect that was on a table and released it outside rather than swat it.

"We must be respectful of all things in God's creation," she said.

Sister Mary Edwina Butler of Elmira, N. Y., at 92, perhaps the oldest participant in the weekend, said the message conveyed is that "all things created by God are worthy of value and respect."

See You Next Year!

Sister Mary Rose Bumpus, Ph.D., will be the speaker at the next "Theology of a Merciful Heart" gathering July 16-18, 2010.

Her topic will be "Biblical Reflections on Mercy."

A member of the South Central Community, she is currently an associate professor of spirituality in the School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle (Wash.) University.



Sisters Guadalupe Lumanatas, front left, and Virgencita Alegado, front right, perform a Philippine dance during the "Theology of a Merciful Heart" gathering.



Sister Ann Driscoll of Pittsburgh listens as Sister Lucy Walawender of Rochester expresses her view.



Sister Jennifer Wilson of Erie makes a point about sustainability.



Sisters Joan Sherry of Buffalo and Dorothy Miller of Pittsburgh lead the gathering in song during a prayer service.



Sister Catherine Kanick of Rochester participates in a small group discussion.

High Schools

(From Page 1)

whom we can partner,” said Mary Ellen, who started the post July 1.

Already, she has helped steer a course toward formalizing a relationship of cooperation that has existed for years with Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School, an all boys’ school nearby in the Franciscan tradition. The boards of both schools have started to collaborate on a strategic plan.

“We want to develop new programs and services, explore new ways to work together to prepare students for the future and to better serve the mission of Catholic secondary education,” Mary Ellen said.

She noted the two schools already collaborate on advanced placement courses, joint marketing and admissions. The new phase will include holy day Masses together, joint fundraising and combined social events.

In another move, this September the two schools began a partnership with Catholic Health System to provide a Health Science career track for students interested in health care careers and the many professions which support the health system through shadowing, mentoring and internship opportunities.

Mary Ellen explained the partnership will fill a niche in Western New York



Mt. Mercy Academy teacher Nicole Ganzenmuller, standing left, and Sister Mary Ellen Twist welcome two freshmen students, who are seated in a classroom.

where, by 2020, job vacancies in health-related careers will approach 50 percent.

In the partnership, students of the two high schools will collaborate on their science and technology curriculum and offer college-credit courses in the health sciences. Catholic Health System will offer hands-on opportunities, such as shadowing, MASH camps and career days to give students a behind-the-scenes look at various health care careers.

In other plans, Mary Ellen said student leaders at Mt. Mercy will lead days of enrichment for students, offering a mix of inspiration and motivation “to be all they can be.”

Also, the school is providing scholarships for students whose parents have lost their jobs and/or have recently been victims of severe flooding in the area.

“We want to reach out to South Buffalo and other areas to keep them vibrant,” she said.

Like Mt. Mercy, other Mercy high schools in NyPPaW also are looking forward to the new school year. Here is a look at some of them:

Mercyhurst Prep, Erie

Sister MaryAnn Bader, Mercyhurst Prep president, said enrollment has held steady at 600 students.

“There is a very positive energy among the students. The seniors have been very active in planning welcoming activities for the freshmen and their parents,” she said.

She noted that MPS has added a language class in Chinese, is installing a new floor for dance classes, has new energy-efficient windows and drapes in the Information Center (library).

Also, the Middle States Associates of Colleges and Universities will visit the school in March. She explained that the school will develop a wellness initiative as one of its Middle States’ goals for the next seven years. Also, it will focus on math performance as a Middle States’ objective.

Mary Ann said an MPS alumnus has returned to the area and will work with students to plant an edible garden with the produce grown to be used in the school cafeteria in 2010.

“Students working on the garden will take a class in which they will complete interdisciplinary studies in sustainability and environmental ethics, agricultural economics, data collection and impact analysis,” she said.

Also, she said, MPS has submitted a grant for \$185,000 to Harvesting Energy Savings for Pennsylvania’s Communities to provide new lighting for the entire building. The funds are made available with federal stimulus monies.

“If awarded, this grant money will assist us in our five-year plan to make our school as energy-efficient as possible,” she said.

Notre Dame High School, Elmira

Students at Notre Dame will be able to take

(See **HIGH SCHOOLS** on Page 7)

High Schools (From Page 6)

an elective in Mandarin Chinese, said Sister Mary Walter Hickey, president.

She said financial assistance to students has increased this year thanks to a \$100,000 grant from Corning Enterprise. Also, the board of trustees is updating its overall strategic plan and has worked with the Diocese of Rochester to update its theology curriculum.

Technology is also a priority, Mary Walter said.

“One of our new goals will be the implementation of the updated technology plan and the renewed effort to assist our teachers to integrate technology in their classes,” she said.

Mary Walter also explained that Notre Dame is working with the Sartori Group to update its marketing plan.

“This group will help us develop a clear value proposition that defines the benefits of an education at Notre Dame High School and how the school contributes to every student’s success. After defining the target audience, they will assist the school to develop key messages specific to each audience segment,” she said.

Added Mary Walter: “Personally I am excited about a new school year in which we can introduce our faculty, students and par-

ents to the value of a Mercy education. It is my hope that everyone will come to know and love Catherine McAuley and help to carry on her work in today’s world.”

Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester

According to Suzanne Johnston, president, a portion of the third floor of the main school building was renovated to accommodate four, new state-of-the-art science labs and open up the original skylights.

“This new science environment is ideal for Mercy’s college-preparatory program and will certainly help our students to be successful both here at Mercy and beyond,” she said.

Suzanne said Mercy students rank very high in the Regents Exam program.

“This year we strive to continue to be successful and ultimately increase our mastery, which is a score of 85 percent or better, on these state level exams,” she said.

Suzanne said the school is continuing its relationship with the Rochester Institute of Technology, known nationally for the strength of its math, science and technology programs.

“Additionally, we are growing our Passport to Understanding program, which sets up volunteer opportunities within the community for our students,” she said.

Sisters’ visit to Jamaica reveals precious gem



Sister Trish Tyler, center, enjoys a visit with boys from the Alpha Boys School, a ministry in Jamaica of the Sisters of Mercy, South Central Community.

By Sister Margaret Park

Sisters Margaret Park and Trish Tyler (Erie) spend nearly a month visiting the Sisters of Mercy, people and ministries in Jamaica.

Jamaica: God’s beautiful Caribbean jewel! “If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.” (*Psalms 139*)

Early in the morning of June 9th, Sister Trish Tyler and I flew from Erie to Kingston, Jamaica, arriving after dark in this huge city on an island in the sea. Was it significant that I had just looked down on a rainbow? So began an experience of God’s Providence designed by the Master Teacher.

The Sisters of Mercy who welcomed us into their daily lives continue to enrich us in memory: Agatha’s steady wit and twinkling eyes; Angela’s quiet service; Carmen’s kind manner; Clotilde’s joy of heart; Colette Marie’s loving sensitivity; Marie’s insightful, tireless heart; Marjorie’s stories; Mimi’s energy for the health of her boys; Shirley’s passionate spirit; Susan’s courage and leadership.

Trish and I shared the good company of Claver Home’s retired sisters for an evening and experienced the closeness of Mercy as it encircles the globe. Daily breakfast brought the humor of Winnie and Pauline, two

(See JAMAICA on Page 8)

Jamaica

(From Page 7)

young women from Kenya, who renewed our hope for the future of the Sisters of Mercy.

We liked the boys; we know they liked us. They especially liked Trish's camera. Their thank-you card expressed gratitude for staying with them. Stay we did, enclosed with them by sturdy, locked gates. The police delivered

many of these boys to the school, finding them on the streets or in the courts of Kingston. Learning the skills of reading and a trade are essential to their hope for a better future. Trish and I spent most of our workdays cataloguing donated books to be placed on donated shelves that the boys and their teachers might enjoy a library. To this end, we honed our skills enough to catalogue 392 books before we left Alpha Boys School!

While Trish traveled to Ocho Rios with the famous Alpha band, I helped in the soup kitchen, St. Joseph's Daily Bread. Shaking gnarled hands and touring the ghettos were privileges for me. One of the most beautiful smiles I have ever seen adorned the face of a woman who welcomed me into her home – a few small rooms kept neatly for herself and her grandchildren. This home and three other attached dwellings formed a small enclave with the four families sharing one bathroom. The ghettos of Kingston house gangs, and gang warfare surfaces frequently and violently.



Sister Margaret Park, right, sorts clothes with Sister Marjorie Woods, a Sister of Mercy who coordinates St. Joseph Daily Bread, a soup kitchen in Jamaica. Later, they distributed the donated clothing to people in the ghetto.

Trish spent some sleepless early-morning hours listening to gunshots through her open window which faced the streets.

The boys of Alpha sometimes played late afternoon ballgames. Trish and I had not the advantage of being adapted to this beautiful island as we dealt with the humid heat. Too, we often experienced difficulty understanding the English accent of the people, which the boys combined with their dialects. Different foods and the uncertain availability of water challenged us. In many respects, we experienced ourselves as foreigners. Our comfort lay with the hospitality of others.

What can be learned by such a venture? That God's loving providence continues to be found no matter how far one roams; that God's gifts, such as water and home with its own weather systems become more precious; that service to others returns doubly to the givers; that hospitality to foreigners is one of the greatest acts of kindness; that joy continues to be contagious. For these refreshed learnings, thanks be to God!

Rochester center brings hope to working poor

It wasn't too long ago that Beverly, homeless and suffering from the scars of domestic abuse, walked into the open arms of the Mercy Outreach Center, Rochester.

The center offered her support and helped her to rebuild her life.

Today, Beverly is working full-time for the U.S. Postal Service, living in her own apartment, going to college and volunteering at the center.

"We were there for her," said Jodi Camilleri, completing her first year in September as the center's executive director. Beverly's story is only one of many that excite Jodi about the ministry offered at the center, located in an impoverished area of south Rochester.

"I love it here. The ministry and mission of the center is what brought me here and keeps me here," said Jodi, an energetic divorced mother of two high school-age daughters.

The center, part of which is a former corner grocery store, uses community resources and collaborates with professional volunteers by providing support staff and treatment facilities to meet the health care needs of the uninsured and underserved. According to Jodi, its vision is to make the highest quality health, emotional and spiritual care available to the center's clients.

The center actually started 32 years ago as a ministry of Corpus Christi Parish, Rochester. The Sisters of Mercy took responsibility of the ministry in 2000.

(See CENTER on Page 9)

Center (From Page 8)

“It’s so amazing here on so many levels,” Jodi said. “This is a safety net for the safety net taking care of people who have fallen through the cracks.”

Giving a tour of the center, Jodi proudly pointed out the many rooms in which doctors, dentists and other professional staff volunteer. Some rooms have the medical equipment needed to provide basic care. There are also rooms for massage, chiropractic care and for nurses to compile doctors’ notes and other required paperwork.

A multi-purpose room is used for meetings of the center’s staff and board. On Wednesday nights, an Alcoholics Anonymous group meets there; Saturday nights are reserved for the Narcotics Anonymous group.

The center rents space upstairs to the University of Rochester’s Babylove program where social workers work with teenage mothers.

Space also is rented – the first four months offered free of charge – to the fledgling Project Homeless Connect program which plans to offer an event at least two days a year at Rochester’s Blue Cross Arena to provide medical and support services to the homeless. Jodi saw the partnership as one that will help both the program and the center.

“Maybe some of the doctors and others who will be volunteering for the events will be interested in volunteering at the center. It’s a win-win,” she said.

It is volunteers – donating 7,000 hours yearly “who pump lifeblood” into the center, which annually works with about 5,500 clients and provides referrals or other services for nearly 4,300 individuals.

Joe Maxie, a retired counselor who had a private practice and taught at the University of Rochester, is one of them. He said he was impressed by the ministry performed at the center as his wife volunteered there.

“This seemed to be the right thing to do rather than go into private practice,” said Joe, who has been providing counseling services at the center for the past ten years. “It makes me feel useful in providing a service that is needed now more than ever for the underinsured and working poor,” he said.

Jodi said Dr. John Ventura, a chiropractor at the center for 25 years, brings with him students from the New York Chiropractic College, Seneca Falls, N.Y., to work with clients.

And then there is Dr. Robert Klein, a retired internist who has volunteered at the center for the past decade.

“Helping others makes me feel good about myself,” he said as he put on his sport coat, reached for his traditional black doctor’s bag and prepared to leave for the day.

Winking as he left, he added, “And it keeps me out of trouble.”

Back in her office where the tour began, Jodi explained that her background is in “operations,” but her other duties include program management and oversight, regulatory compliance, quality assurance, marketing, finance and human resource management. And add to the list development, public relations and information technology. She also trains employees and volunteers and has been develop-



Jodi Camilleri, right, executive director of the Mercy Outreach Center, Rochester, reviews materials with Joe Maxie, a retired counselor who volunteers at the center.

ing processes and procedures that will help sustain the center’s operations in the future.

She said that she sometimes puts in 70 hours a week, sandwiched into attending her daughters’ soccer games and other events, and the three of them rooting for the Pittsburgh Steelers of the National Football League. Plus, she rows to keep in shape.

“I feel badly because I wish it could be more; there is so much to do,” she said.

Jodi said reorganizing the center to make it more efficient and effective was her first priority.

“I saw that our resources needed to be used better,” she said. “I assessed the needs and worked to determine how we could be better stewards of our money.”

A down economy means fewer donations and grants. So, the staff of eight part-time workers became three, with the money saved going to the center’s programs.

Minerva Ortiz, assistant director, answered a phone in the center’s reception area as Jodi wrapped up a tour. Completing the call, she said, “The reorganization has put the right team together.”

Book Review: Walking with a pilgrim on his journey

By **Sister Patricia McCann**

Archbishop Rembert Weakland's memoirs enriched my summer reading. The former church history teacher in me relished detailed stories of politicking and intrigue in high places within the church. More importantly, though, I was deeply touched by the story of this man who served his Benedictine community and the wider church for six decades, much of that time in leadership. "A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church" is a book that all, who love the church and do not need to blind themselves to its weaknesses and faults in order to sustain faith, will want to read.

As I read, I remembered a very young Father Rembert teaching my sisters and me to play "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" on the piano when, as high school kids, we helped one summer to catalog music at St. Vincent College music department. That same simplicity and human warmth shines through the memoirs. Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds, editor of *Commonweal*, says it so well in her forward to the book: "But 'Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church' is more than a history of ecclesiastical life in the late 20th century. It is also a remarkable memoir. The person of Rembert Weakland comes through: intellectually serious, musically accomplished, religiously astute and pastorally energetic. He is a man of deep Catholic conviction unafraid to follow and express his well-tutored intuitions on what the faith requires, not only of him, but also of his episcopal peers in Rome and the United States."

In the first chapter, Archbishop Weakland tells of the very public scandal of his relationship with Paul Marcoux. What is profoundly moving is the honesty with which he relates

his personal growth in sexual self-awareness, his coming to maturity late in that regard and his acceptance of his homosexual orientation. He harbors neither anger nor blame; he reaffirms his commitment to celibacy with a new depth of understanding. In liberating words, Archbishop Weakland writes: "Throughout my adult life the question of my sexual orientation had been a question that I did not want to face. This fact must also be a part of my tale. Since my teen years hiding it had become a way of life. I feared even admitting it to myself. But eventually I did and now I had to accept that this fact was public information. Through prayer and reflection I had arrived at certain convictions. For example, I did not let this awareness reduce my sense of worth as a person. I had rejected as unhelpful, even harmful, the statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1986 that this orientation made me 'objectively disordered.' Since this orientation was not voluntarily acquired, such language was insignificant to me. Either God created me that way or permitted forces beyond my control to make me that way, so I felt no diminution of God's love. I did not see myself as a person defined by my sexuality."

Having become Abbot Primate of the Benedictines world-wide in 1967 and the Archbishop of Milwaukee in 1978, Rembert Weakland ministered in church leadership during three critically important decades. He watched a growing ecclesiological divide harden, making the implementation of



Sr. Patricia
McCann

Vatican Council II more and more difficult. The conflict documented in the memoirs between an ecclesiology rooted in ultramontanist centralization and that of a more collegial Vatican II "pilgrim church" continues to affect the church and its interaction in the public sector even today.

In one example of the struggles following Vatican II, Archbishop Weakland tells of the 1971 World Synod of Bishops in which he participated. Ordaining married men to priesthood was on the agenda, but subverted by power maneuvers of several Roman Curia officials who did not want it to be discussed. "If I learned anything from the way this topic was treated," he writes, "it was that issues which are not confronted clearly, openly, and thoroughly do not go away." This awareness recurs during his episcopacy in Milwaukee as he attempts to deal with Vatican Council II implementation around issues of lay leadership, women's roles and concerns, and outreach to former priests. I couldn't help but think about the message this learning carries for the church in the United States in 2009, as well as for religious orders grappling with reconfiguration processes.

The concluding chapter of "Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church" overflows with Archbishop Weakland's personal warmth, an even more powerful presence than his very powerful intellect. Now a man in his mid-80s, his faith and his deep love for the church, warts and all, continue to shine through every page. He has told the story. It is a pilgrimage, both for him and for the reader.

Sister Patricia McCann is archivist in Pittsburgh and writes on social justice issues.

News from Around NyPPaW

BUFFALO

Mercy Walk blessing



In the top photo, the Sisters of Mercy in Buffalo are joined by others during a blessing ceremony of the Mercy Walk at Mercy Center, Buffalo, on Aug. 20. In the photo at right, Nancy Rugnetta is pictured blessing the memorial brick for her cousin, Pattie Ann Hirsch Weakland. Families and friends of those whose names have been inscribed on bricks and pavers during the past year were invited to attend. More than 100 guests participated in the blessing ceremony. After a brief prayer, each group of family and friends blessed the stones of their loved ones. Guests joined the sisters for refreshments and enjoyed the beauty of the Mercy Walk following the blessing.



ERIE

Fun at the zoo



With a polar bear sunning himself in the background, Bianca Villages, left, and Kysie Morales enjoy a field trip to the Erie Zoo on July 2 sponsored by the House of Mercy, Erie. The two girls are members of the House of Mercy Kids' Club.

Celebrating 50 years



Trocaire College, Buffalo, closed the yearlong celebration of its 50 years on Aug. 29 with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Edward U. Kmiec of Buffalo, followed by a reception. Pictured participating in the event, from left, are: Sister Nancy Hoff, NyPPaW president; Bishop Kmiec; Sister Sally Maloney, director of mission and service and also chair of the 50th anniversary celebration; and Paul B. Hurley, Ph.D., Trocaire president.

ERIE

Health care reform discussion



U.S. Representative Kathy Dahlkemper held a town hall meeting at the Sisters of Mercy motherhouse Sept. 1 to discuss health care reform. Sisters, associates, residents of the nearby Mercy Terrace Apartments and others attended. Looking on is Sister Mary Mark McCarthy.

News from Around NyPPaW

ERIE

Sisters

enjoy toe tappin' concert

Stacey Fraterrigo and her children, ranging in age from 5 to 12, perform a concert for the Sisters of Mercy at the motherhouse in Erie July 29. The Fraterrigo Family Band from Attica, N.Y., stayed overnight at the motherhouse during a summer concert tour through New York and Pennsylvania. The show featured bluegrass, folk and traditional American music.



PITTSBURGH

New PMHS board member

Sister Linda McCutcheon was recently appointed to a three-year term on the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System Board of Trustees.

Linda, currently coordinator of administrative services for the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, has a background in education and social services. She worked as a master trainer for Echostar Communications where she developed training programs, mentored employees and supported students in the development of job skills.

Earlier in her career, she was a director at the Urban League of Pittsburgh. Linda also serves on the board of the Pittsburgh American Indian Center. She lives in Oakland.



**Sr. Linda
McCutcheon**

Cooper nominated for service

Readers of the New Pittsburgh Courier nominated Michele Rone Cooper, executive director of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System's McAuley Ministries, as a 2009 Women of Excellence in the "Community" category.

Chosen for her strengths, influence and contributions to the African-American community, Michele was honored at a luncheon on Sept. 3.

Sister Susan Welsh, president and CEO of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, said: "Michele's ministry in the Pittsburgh community is quiet, persistent and faith-based. As PMHS and Catholic Health East, we are honored to share in this recognition of her."



**Michele
Rone Cooper**

We Remember

Sister Judith Ann Kenrick (ROCHESTER) August 21, 2009

Sister Judith Ann, 72, ministered as a teacher, elementary school principal and pastoral associate in the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y. Born in

Ithaca, N.Y., she spent many years in pastoral work in the Southern Tier parishes including Our Lady of Lourdes, Elmira and St. Louis, Pittsford. She will be



**Sr. Judith Ann
Kenrick**

remembered for her all-embracing spirit and centeredness in God, strengthening those with whom she lived and worked. All who knew her were better for her friendship.