



# In HARMONY

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

## Winter 2011

**“We have ever confided largely in Divine Providence and shall continue to do so.”**

– CATHERINE  
McAULEY

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## Meeting lays groundwork for Assembly

A light December snowfall couldn't keep NyPPaW sisters from gathering in Erie on Dec. 10 to talk about how their religious community will be governed in the near future.

About 200 gathered at the Marriot Hotel's Ambassador Conference Center for a Governance Consultation Day to prepare for NyPPaW's

(See MEETING on Page 4)



Pictured from left, are Sisters Rita Brocke of Erie, and Carolyn Schallenberger and Fidelis McDonough of Pittsburgh listening intently to a small group discussion at the Governance Consultation Day in Erie on Dec. 10.

## Chapter process seen as blueprint for Mercy life

Institute President Sister Pat McDermott invited NyPPaW sisters and associates to use the Chapter process of contemplation, discussion and building consensus to move Mercy forward in community life and in the world they serve.

The timing for the process – employed in preparing for and participating in the Chapter – is perfect for NyPPaW's Assembly April 17-22, she said.

At the June Chapter in Chicago at which she was elected and the Chapter Declaration adopted, Pat



**Institute President Sister Pat McDermott speaks in Buffalo Nov. 12.**

said sisters sat in quiet with each other before God, a practice the Institute Leadership Team continues to use.

“This was a profound discernment on our part

that we needed God to lead us, and a great desire with a common heart of where we need to go,” she told sisters, associates and Mercy volunteers in talks in Buffalo, Nov. 12, and Erie, Nov. 13. She said that she came to NyPPaW to renew friendships, discuss the Chapter and its declaration, and listen.

At the June 20-30 Chapter, sisters talking with each other helped develop a profound respect and awareness that Mercy is lived differently

(See PROCESS on Page 5)

# Advent, a time to say, 'Jesus, let your light shine on us!'

By Sr. Guadalupe  
"Loly" Lumantas  
NyPPaW Councilor

*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."*

– Isaiah 9:2

Advent is the season to get in touch with our longing, our aching and our frustrations. It celebrates human longing which shapes the soul in many ways, particularly by helping create the space within us where Jesus can be born. Longing leads us to the stable and the manger of Bethlehem. In longing are the deep seeds of hope.

Everyday, our cosmos is confronted with demanding tasks, disasters, struggles, violence, earth degradation and other forms of mishandling

God's gifts. In the midst of these unpleasant realities, we still see people giving signs of concern in our world, and these make us hopeful.

In the Philippines, candles are lit in evening rallies, marches and protests against many forms of injustice as a sign of hope that one day justice, peace, love and harmony eventually will become reality. To light a candle, then, is to say that gentleness and graciousness are ultimately more powerful than threats, torture and guns and proclaim to the world that the real allegiance is given to someone beyond them.

Isaiah calls us to walk in the light of God. And we are called as a



Sr. Guadalupe  
Lumantas

Community to strengthen our determination and stand in support of a counter-cultural way of living so that people will see God's light through us. In line with our Chapter Declaration, do we welcome everyone regardless of skills or talents, skin color or language or immigration status? Let us be challenged in our being an international institute of women, desirous of bringing MERCY to suffering people. Do we trust God enough to wait for an end to racism and disrespect of Mother Earth? Earth cries out for a new way of thinking. We need contemplative dialogue to respond to so many injustices that must be addressed. We need to acknowledge that we can't do this work by ourselves; we need a nurturing, vibrant Community that must be nurtured, as well.

Christmas is near! It is the time to celebrate the "Word made flesh" and the goodness of physical creation since it is the feast of the Incarnation. Do we remember to say, "Thank you, Jesus," for being one with us?

Through the birth of Jesus, something new and wonderful happened to increase our unshackled participation in the world – "to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). Through the presence on Earth of this Child born to Mary, humankind would be saved from darkness, then called to love and serve one another and all of creation. As Luke (2:32) tells us in Simeon's words, Jesus would be a "light for revelation." Let us pray together that this light will shine upon us and will continue to shine for all of us, even beyond Christmas and into the coming years.

## In HARMONY



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New York, Pennsylvania,  
Pacific West Community

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## COMMENTARY: 'Accentuate the positive' in addressing social issues

By Sr. Patricia  
McCann

Winter in NyPPaW is challenging. Snow, ice, cold temperatures make one want to hunker down and wait for spring. World news in these final months of 2011 doesn't help to lift the malaise: worldwide economic crisis; paralyzing polarization in the U.S. congress; greed, avarice and Ayn Rand-rugged individualism driving our cultural values.

Church reality mirrors global reality with its own set of dire problems: seemingly endless revelations of sex abuse, pre- and post-Vatican Council II polarization, capricious use of authority by some in pastoral leadership. Only faith, optimism and an occasional "break-through of sunshine" keep one hopeful.

The meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 14-16 provided some hopeful bursts of sunshine. New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan, current president, opened the meeting with an upbeat call for church leaders to work together with political leaders toward the common good. The bishops' conference articulated stands on immigration issues, on American responsibilities to rebuild in Iraq, and on

religious liberty (including Muslims) that were clearly more grounded in Catholic social teaching than in political conservatism.

While it doesn't quite feel like the 1970s and '80s when pastoral letters of the American Catholic bishops provided guidance for social liberals of **all** faiths on issues of peace, racism and the economy, the Baltimore meeting builds hope that the bishops might again find their voice on the broader range of issues included in Catholic social teaching. It also suggests areas where we can work collaboratively with them.

A month or so earlier, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development – social mission arm of the USCCB – gave their Cardinal Bernardin Award to Rosabel Lopez, a young Hispanic woman law student at the University of San Diego. Ms. Lopez was selected as someone who exemplifies Catholic social teaching on the basis of her commitment to legal services with immigrants.

In mid-October, Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and



Sr. Patricia  
McCann

Peace, was quoted world-wide in a strong statement supporting principles behind the Occupy Wall Street movement currently challenging the social/economic status quo in the United States and throughout Europe. Catholic News Service reported that the Vatican agreed with the protestors that "the economy should be at the service of the human person."

These news clips hardly suggest a tsunami of liberal social thought sweeping Catholicism, but they do augur well for a climate supportive of commitment to Mercy Critical Concerns which we named in our 2005 Chapter and reaffirmed in 2011: racism, immigration, women, non-violence and environment. In such a climate, it is important that we Sisters of Mercy "accentuate the positive" (as the 1940s song proscribed). In regard to racism, immigration and non-violence, I think we, collectively, and the U.S. bishops, collectively, are pretty much on the same page.

For the sake of the common good which Archbishop Dolan urged all Americans to embrace, and which is bedrock to Catholic social teaching, it behooves us to work with the bishops on these issues in order to build programs

which have real potential to effect social change. This is not to suggest that we blind ourselves to areas of continuing concern in church life. Sexism, authoritarianism, a "fiddling while Rome burns" approach with recent liturgical language changes, and a too-cozy relationship with right-wing political conservatism continue to be serious problems hindering collaboration. If we can accentuate the positive, however, there is some hope of leveraging the pastoral authority of the bishops in ways that enable effective church leadership in social concerns. Mercy commitment to the Critical Concerns, and the good we can achieve in their regard, will benefit by such collaboration.

Poet Emily Dickenson wrote: "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul . . ." We will need all the feathers of down-filled quilts to weather the inner winter that these challenges provide at the moment. Commitment to the Critical Concerns – and hope of actually doing something about them – urges us to accept this fact and go forward.

*Sister Patricia McCann is archivist in Pittsburgh and a prolific writer on social issues.*

**Meeting (from Pg. 1)**

Assembly on April 17-22 in Buffalo. Those not able to make the meeting in person participated in special consultation conference calls on Dec. 15 and Dec. 16.

Key issues on the agenda included discussion on how many councilors the new leadership team will have, how NyPPaW will conduct community consultations and changes in the governance plan. Sister Sean Peters, a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet from Albany, N.Y., was facilitator for the day.

In the morning session, following prayer and faith sharing, sisters met in small groups to discuss the pluses and minuses of having three or four councilors elected to the next NyPPaW leadership. The aim was to develop a consensus in each group. Following discussion, sisters were invited to speak on behalf of their group.

Sister Sheila Stevenson felt that the number of councilors could be reduced to three.

“That’s because the current team began with few structures in place and had to work diligently at putting structures and people in place that would relieve the team of having to be involved in so many things.”



**Sister Audrey Clauss of Erie, left, and Sister Geraldine Rosinski of the NyPPaW Leadership Team participate in small group discussion.**

Others supporting three councilors suggested local leaders, who knew their sisters well, could be given more responsibility, and fewer sisters in leadership could mean more available for ministry.

Sister Jean Murin, addressing a leadership of four councilors, was concerned that the Philippines would not be adequately represented. Sister Kay Schwenzer said having four councilors would mean the gifts of more people could be used to serve the community and allow travel time so members and leadership could build relationships.

Sister Peggy Gorman favored spreading the workload among a president and four councilors as there is always plenty of work to be done and perhaps each would benefit if the workload were spread among five members. Also, new

members on the leadership team will have a learning curve in their roles and having five to do the work would help, she said.

Sister Nancy Hoff, NyPPaW president, explained that Community Leadership Team wanted members to decide the question about the number of councilors. “There are good reasons for both three and four councilors; you will have to determine what it best for you,” she said.



**Sister Sheila Stevenson of Rochester speaks at the meeting.**

Following discussion, members filled out response sheets to the questions. Sean conducted a “leaning” in which sisters raised green sheets of paper to vote on a leadership team of three or four councilors. Ballots were distributed to each sister for a formal vote on the number of councilors. Ballots were due back Dec. 19.

Sister Kathleen Ann Kolb, chair of the Assembly Governance Committee, said her panel would use the information gathered from response sheets and conference calls and provide results for members in January. Also, she said the revised Community Governance Plan would be brought up for a vote at the Assembly in April.

After lunch, members discussed the revised section of the Governance Plan on community consultations, which called for two large group consultations – much like the meeting members were attending that day – and consultations in each area. A leaning revealed that members felt the community consultations as described in the revision captured the essence of their conversation. Also, they discussed other changes in the NyPPaW Community Governance Plan.

**Process (from Pg. 1)**

in the United States, the Philippines and other areas in which sisters serve.

“We asked each other, ‘What is it like in your Mercy world?’ There was a sense of hospitality that makes our world larger,” she said.

Finally, ideas written on large Post-it notes were placed on a wall as part of the hard work of discernment, from which came the Chapter Declaration, written in part by Sister Sheila Carney of Pittsburgh.

The declaration asks God’s help in deciding a direction of Mercy. It reads, “God of Mercy, of Wisdom and Mystery, where do we need to be led now to come to both a deeper response to our Critical Concerns and a radical embrace of our identity?”

Pat said naming God as Mercy, wisdom and mystery says something of where the Sisters of

Mercy are and to what they are paying attention.

“We need to continue sitting with this and see what that is all about,” she said.

The declaration goes on to express the Sisters of Mercy’s deeper commitment to address the Critical Concerns of violence, racism, the environment, women’s issues and immigration. In it, the sisters say they are led to “deepen and make evident our Gospel-based spirituality through passion for service and vibrant community life, unmask and address the underlying causes of our Critical Concerns and the interconnections among them, liberate and redistribute our human and financial resources across the Institute and develop creative solutions to unmet needs acting in solidarity with impoverished people, and act in ways which contribute to a sustainable future for our

Institute, the Church and Earth.”

Said Pat of the declaration, “We say something about ourselves and our interdependence. We are a worldwide community (for which) our consciousness knows no bounds.” She said the declaration indicates the desire of sisters to grow with

each other in addressing needs.

“We have done something different with each other,” she said.

She noted that sisters are aware of different cultures within Mercy and have bonded with each other in a different way.

“We are becoming one, a gift as well as a challenge. That is what you as NyPPaW are trying to do for the Assembly,” she said.

NyPPaW sisters enjoyed Pat’s visit and her reflection on the Chapter.

“It was wonderful to have the president of the Institute with us,” said Sister Mary Anthony Schifano of Buffalo. “All of us must bring the chapter declaration alive, but first it must be alive in each of us.”

Sister Carol Ellis of Buffalo welcomed Pat’s hopeful tone.

“There was never anything in what she said that did not reflect that hope,” she said.

Sister Elaine Franz appreciated Pat putting flesh on the Chapter Declaration.

“She gave us a sense that it is our responsibility to study this document for its meaning, for me as an individual and for our



**Sister Lisa Mary McCartney, right, talks with Sister Pat McDermott during Pat’s visit to Erie.**

NyPPaW community, and then resolve some action. Her concept of leadership as “one Leadership” with different roles is a model for us so that we continue to become one within the NyPPaW community and stop thinking as geographic areas within NyPPaW,” she said.

After Pat’s Erie visit, Sister Bernadette Bell said sisters there enjoyed Pat’s “down-to-earth” manner as she met with them.

“The fact that she came to Erie at the very beginning of her term meant so much to the sisters,” she said.

Sister Lisa Mary McCartney of Erie welcomed Pat’s firsthand report on the Chapter and Declaration.

“Pat is a great model in showing us how the ILT hopes to create a contemplative stance on issues and address them with clarity and calm. Without asking, she encouraged us to do the same,” she said.



**Sister Mary Carmen Gualtieri takes in the meeting in Buffalo.**

## Baking helps Rochester theology teacher share delicious gift

As a young girl, Sister Karlien Bach loved to bake.

Her mom didn't bake, but Karlien and a childhood friend, Karen Stainton, spent hours mixing dough for cookies, pies and cakes. At 13, they baked applesauce and angel food cakes, apple and chocolate cream pies and spice and chocolate chip cookies to sell to their Rochester neighbors. The money went to the starving children in Biafra, today part of Nigeria in Africa.

"We raised \$36.18 and our parents doubled that," said Karlien, a theology teacher at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester, since 2005.

The Bach home rule was that those who turned 16 had to get a job. No surprise, Karlien went to clerk at the nearby Johnson French Road Bakery. In time, she came under the wing of an older co-worker who'd decorated cakes in her native Germany.

"I was really intrigued by cake decorating," said Karlien in a cell-phone interview while being driven to Philadelphia to visit her four-year-old great-niece, Rhyse Mahony, and bake her birthday cake.

The German mentor taught her how to create roses, petal by petal, a process that required a steady hand and patience.

"I would go into the backroom and practice

### *Before Mercy*

What our sisters did before they became Sisters of Mercy

during my lunch hour," Karlien said.

While a freshman at Pittsford's Nazareth College, majoring in theological studies, she became the "professional" cake decorator after her mentor left. From trial and error, she mastered the art.

She loved the job, riding her bicycle three miles from the college to the bakery daily. And she enjoyed the solitude of baking and decorating cakes mornings from two until nine.

Encouraged to eat the baked goods, she was able to make recommendations to customers.

"It's a good thing I rode my bike," Karlien laughed.

Her bakery career ended after college graduation. The example of the Sisters of Mercy who taught at Our Lady of Mercy High School lingered, and she entered the Community in 1979.

"I saw their passion and energy, and I wanted to live my life with that kind of Mercy," she said.

And as much as she enjoyed baking, teaching became her passion. She taught for 25 years in Rochester-area Catholic schools and today at her alma mater.

"Kids are good," she said. "I love them, and I



Sister Karlien Bach and her four-year-old great niece, Rhyse Mahony, enjoy decorating Rhyse's birthday cake.

want to help them become the best of themselves."

Serving at Rochester's inner city's St. Regis Food Cupboard, she still keeps an active life. From 2003-04, Karlien hiked incrementally 624 miles across New York State. In 2010, she bought a used bicycle and with a group biked 500 miles across Iowa.

"I rode to Catholic and Mercy convents and ministries and stayed at each. It was a great experience," said Karlien, who plans to bike around the perimeter of Lake Ontario.

And while she enjoys many varied experiences, it's baking – her hobby – that is a consistent thread through her life's tapestry.

"I love to bake because I am good at it," she said.

For years she baked and decorated wedding cakes for siblings and birthday cakes for nieces and nephews with popular cartoon themes and others in the shape of a three-dimensional soccer ball or

Teddy Bear.

"My niece liked the Teddy Bear cake so much she didn't want to cut into it," Kalien chuckled.

As the Community's baking artist, she's designed cakes celebrating professions of Mercy Sisters and birthdays for those marking 90 and 100 years.

"If you live to be 100, you get 100 roses on your cake, and I make them all," she said.

At Christmastime she bakes 30-40 dozen cookies.

But while she enjoys sharing sweet gifts, it is Mercy that flows from her heart. Recently, she said, she watched a film on the contributions of women religious in the United States and was greatly impressed with what those women accomplished.

"I just want to be counted in that number," she said.

See more of this story at [www.mercynyppaw.org](http://www.mercynyppaw.org)

## 'Dare' led to meaningful, joyful ministry in Philippines

"It was a dare," said Sister Margaret Ann O'Donnell.

She was a young sister in 1960 with a handful of years teaching in Buffalo-area Catholic schools. Sister Elsa Frawley and other Sisters of Mercy with whom she lived asked if she had volunteered to serve at the Mercy Mission in the Philippines. That night was the last on which to sign up. Margaret told them "the missions" weren't for her.

"Sister Elsa told me that I was scared, and I told her I wasn't," Margaret recalled. The others informed her that they had all volunteered, and she should join them. So, she signed up.

Margaret found out most of the sisters did not, in fact, "all" sign up, while preparing for this new ministry in the Philippines. Arriving, she encountered a very different culture and language, poverty that she never before experienced, and friendly, loving people who touched her heart.

This woman, who said the missions weren't for her, remained for 31 years.

"Sometimes, I think I am still there," said Margaret, honored Nov. 17 by Mt. Mercy Academy, her alma mater, with its Catherine McAuley Distinguished Alumna Award. The Buffalo high school cited her compassion, peaceful dedication to education and service to the poor in presenting her the award.

While in the Philippines, she taught and served as administrator for Mercy schools, was a catechist, worked with the poor and served in various positions in administration for the Philippine Community. Her final post was in the Pastoral Care Department of Makati Medical Center in Metro Manila.



**Sister Margaret Ann O'Donnell displays the honor she received from Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo, on Nov. 17.**

"The poor there are truly poor. They have no shoes. For some, homes are made of grass and tree branches. Often, families can send only one child to school at a time. Education is so important to them," she said.

In 1985-86, she marched in the People Power Revolution, which peacefully toppled the regime of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.

She recalled "being with the people" as 50,000 marched to a camp in Quezon City, Metro Manila, to support members of the government and military, advocating a peaceful change of power. Military helicopters even swooped in low over the marchers.

"We feared they would start firing at us; instead the soldiers waved. They were with us," she said.

She described when army tanks surrounded the camp, which were in turn surrounded by buses of anti-Marcos supporters, adding, "Children gave flowers to soldiers."

The standoff ended peacefully and, eventually, Marcos resigned.

"Being in the Philippines showed me that multiculturalism is beautiful; the more we are open to it, the more we can love each other," she said.

Margaret left the Philippines in 1991, and returning home after three decades of ministry there proved a difficult adjustment for her.

"Poverty in the Philippines is far worse than here. We are so affluent; we don't realize it," she said.

Readjustment was slow. Eventually, however, she served in a variety of ministries in Buffalo: a pastoral care person for AIDS Family Services, chaplain at Mercy Hospital, director of pastoral care for Mercy Home Care of Western New York and co-director of the Mercy Associate Program.

In 2007, she returned to the Philippines briefly to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sisters of Mercy there.

"It was a joyous time when I reconnected with so many of the sisters and people," she said.

Today, the Philippines continues to be close to her heart as she is co-director of the Mercy Mission Office, marketing items made in the Philippines and selling them to raise money for ministries there. She also continues to direct the Doula Program, which she began in 2003 to recruit, train and assign volunteers who take comfort and companionship to terminally ill patients.

From the front of the classroom to teaching and taking care of the poor of an island nation a half-a-world away to bringing dignity to those who are dying, Margaret has lived Mercy.

"So many times a day, I just say, 'Thank you, Jesus.'"

## Carlow produces DVD highlighting co-founder, Mercy spirit

It's 1952. Pittsburgh is the "Steel City" with steel mills' smoke hanging over neighborhoods inhabited by hard-working, immigrant families enmeshed in the city's fiber.

One follows an energetic Sister Regis Grace as she climbs in full, black habit the steps of Mount Mercy College where young women have found a Catholic education in Pittsburgh's Oakland section since 1929. She has a message for the student body.

"It all started with five," she says proudly to the camera, referring to those who started the college: Sisters Philip Mary McCarthy, Eustochia McCormick, M. Frances Xavier O'Reilly, Fides Shepperson and Mother M. Irenaeus Dougherty.

"I am struck by 'firsts' and scholarly accomplishments when an entirely different set of expectations are placed on women," she begins.

She tells students that although they may not have accomplished their "firsts" yet, she had confidence that they would make their mark "for you are now connected to this lineage of bold women. Visionaries. Risk-takers."

This is not the real Sister Regis, co-founder and first academic dean of Mount Mercy College, today Carlow University. Rather, it is Meighan Gerachis, a Chicago ac-

tress who plays the role in a new DVD titled "Most Unexpected Opening: Sister Regis Grace and the Founding of Mount Mercy College."

The 40-minute production, sponsored by the university, was the idea of Sister Sheila Carney, assistant to Carlow's president for Mercy Heritage, who wanted to share the compelling story of Mount Mercy's founding and Sister Regis' role in successfully shaping the institution.

"It was such a crazy thing to do when they did it, but they were driven by a sense of need that the Sisters of Mercy felt compelled to fulfill," Sheila said.

So, she contacted her niece, Megan Carney – a playwright, director and educator in Chicago – to research Sister Regis. Over the July 4 weekend in 2010, Megan and Sheila gathered material from school and convent archives for a script.

Sheila remembered Megan returning to the Convent of Mercy to read the script to a group of sisters, and some wept as they recalled fond memories of Sister Regis.

"Megan had captured the spirit of Sister Regis, guided in part by her letters," she said.

Sister Cynthia Serjak, an accomplished composer and musician, composed and performed the music



Actress Meighan Gerachis portrays Sister Regis Grace, cofounder and first academic dean of Mount Mercy College, Pittsburgh, in a film about the institution that is today Carlow University.

for the play and the production.

"The music evolved from time spent reflecting on the title and an effort to create a theme that would then develop in unexpected ways, just like the events portrayed in the play," said Cynthia, a former liturgical musical director for the sisters and for parishes in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Today, she is minister of the New Membership Office for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy.

On Sept. 21, 2010, Pittsburgh actress Kim Legler performed the one-woman play at Carlow University Theater under the direction of Steve Fatla. The three-stage performances were well received.

But Sheila wanted to spread the message further. So, she contacted Joe Wittkofski – a friend who owns Mind over Media, a Pittsburgh production company – asking if he was interested in filming

a stage performance. Not only was he interested but suggested it be filmed as a movie.

Megan, as director, enlisted Meighan Gerachis to portray Sister Regis. The project, filmed last July at the Convent of Mercy, included much of the indoor shooting being done in an office Sister Regis' actually used as motherhouse superior.

The Sisters of Mercy previewed the film on Sept. 24. and on Sept. 29, a red carpet was rolled out at the university's Kresge Theater for the movie's premiere that attracted about 200 patrons.

In the future, Sheila would like to see the film used at orientations so that new students, faculty and staff grasp a sense of Sister Regis, her spirit of Mercy tradition and values.

*See more on this story at [www.mercynyppaw.org](http://www.mercynyppaw.org)*

# Kenmore Mercy

## 60 years of healing, Mercy charism

Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Kenmore, N.Y. – founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1951 – celebrated six decades in a ceremony on Oct. 7 attended by hospital administrators and staff, friends and, of course, Sisters of Mercy.

The late Sister Mechtilde O'Connor, founding administrator of the hospital, was followed by the late Sister Ellen Mahon. Sister Mary Schimscheiner, chief executive officer from 1981-99, was the last Sister of Mercy to serve as administrator.

“I always felt gifted by God when I entered (Kenmore Mercy) and thought, ‘I am standing on holy ground.’ You are truly in the very special presence of God. The people with whom I worked were most professional and wanted nothing more than to see the hospital succeed through quality patient care. There was a family feeling at the hospital,” Mary Ann said.

Today, James Millard is president and CEO.

Here is a look at the celebration of ministry at the 184-bed facility:



The front entrance of Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Kenmore, N.Y. The facility has lived the Mercy tradition of compassion and taking care of the sick for more than six decades.



Sisters of Mercy sing, “Amen, We Affirm,” at the celebration. Pictured, from left, are Sisters Sheila Lederer, Eileen O'Connor and Mary Ann Schimscheiner.



JoAnn Cavanaugh, left, of Catholic Health System of Western New York, poses with Sister Carol Ellis.



Patrick Mang, right, Village of Kenmore mayor, announces a celebratory proclamation to James Millard, president and CEO of Kenmore Hospital.

### TIMELINE

**Oct. 7, 1951** – Doors open at the 100-bed hospital; Sister Mechtilde O'Connor is first administrator.

**1960** – North and south “Wings of Mercy” are completed.

**1969** – Renovations expand the Emergency Department and Outpatient Services.

**1975** – Three-story West Building is completed and houses the new 80-bed skilled nursing facility, Intensive Care Unit, and expanded Surgery, Pharmacy and Radiology departments.

**1993** – McAuley Residence, a new free-standing residential healthcare facility, opens.

**1996** – Extensive renovations are completed to the rehabilitation, diagnostic and emergency services.

**2004** – Knee and Hip Center opens.

**2006** – Hospital becomes a Designated Stroke Center.

**2009** – The Williamsville Diagnostic Center opens.

**2010** – SleepCare Center opens.

## Enneagram tool for spiritual journey, understanding oneself

If you are a “three,” you are a performer, motivator, achiever, producer or a status seeker.

Ones are perfectionists, reformers, judges, crusaders or critics.

And sevens tend to be entertainers, optimists, adventurers or rationalizers.

Numerology? Hardly. The personality types described are among nine that can be found in the Enneagram, an assessment tool that can be traced back to the ancient Sufis. It can be used to understand oneself and one’s relationships and, actually, it can be a companion on the spiritual journey.

“It shows how you act in the world and helps identify your motivations,” said Sister Margaret Mattle, a spiritual director at the Mercy Prayer Center, Rochester, who presented at the center a workshop on the Enneagram Oct. 21-23. “It’s really about our need for healing and our growth to wholeness,” she said.

She explained that Western thinking has us focus on our gifts. But in the ancient East, it was used to point out those things about us that we need to correct.

“With the Enneagram, we can discover our soul’s potential. We see our human condition as broken and self-centered, so we bring our confusion to the light of God, who trans-

forms us and leads us to wholeness and holiness,” she said.

She sees the Enneagram as a companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, which helps a person grow in relationship with God and see how God works in his or her life and in the world.

“Actually, it is God who transforms you, but you have to do your part. The Enneagram is about gaining insights and doing something with them,” she said.

One can take a “test” online or in one of several Enneagram books on the market. Depending on the test, questions can range from 40 to more than 100. Once completed, one can learn their Enneagram number and wings – numbers adjacent to your main number – as well as the centers of energy that empower us. Descriptions for each number can be found online or in books.

In general, here are the personality types: 1-Reformer; 2-Helper; 3-Achiever; 4-Individualist; 5-Investigator; 6-Loyalist; 7-Enthusiast; 8-Challenger; and 9-Peacemaker. Each has a list of qualities. Each number is placed on the outside of a circle with lines connecting certain points. Numbers can identify our strengths, weaknesses, coping strategies, things we’ll tend to avoid and our driving energies.



**Sister Margaret Mattle, a spiritual director at the Mercy Prayer Center, Rochester, explains the finer points of the Enneagram, a tool that can be used for one’s spiritual journey.**

“Jesus was the fullness of all of the points. Potentially, we are all of the numbers,” said Margaret, who has been teaching the Enneagram for 15 years. She first learned about it from a Jesuit priest and, later, from Sister Ruth Schlerer, a Sister of Mercy from Buffalo.

At her workshop, Margaret invited people who knew their Enneagram number well to share their personality type with participants and tell their story. She asked them to focus on three questions to help them work with their number. They are: How did you find out your number? What did you do with the information? How do you envision yourself *growing* into the person God dreams you can be?

According to Margaret, tools like the Enneagram can help us with our work in the world.

“We can’t accomplish our mission unless we are in touch with our true selves and how God is leading us,” she said.

She said those who use the Enneagram have to believe in the instrument and learn from it. She called it a means to make peace with yourself and others.

“We have a distorted sense of ourselves from childhood, and we must let God transform us into the fullness of our personhood,” she said.

To read up on the Enneagram, Margaret recommends these books: “An Enneagram Guide: A Spirituality of Love in Brokenness” by Eilis Bergin and Eddie Fitzgerald, Twenty-Third Publications; and “Enneagram Spirituality: From Compulsion to Contemplation.” by Benedictine Sister Suzanne Zuercher, Ave Maria Press.

## Divine Spirit Sisters find home with Sisters of Mercy in Erie

Four sisters, members of the Congregation of the Divine Spirit, have found a home in Mercy – literally. One often sees these sisters in their distinctive gray habits with dark blue veils greeting those they pass with a smile and kind word.

Sisters Colette Hilow, Martha Cadden, Rita Ouska and Mary Babik moved into their new living quarters at the Mercy motherhouse in Erie in August, following the sale of their convent in 2010 to Gannon University, which converted the former convent into student dormitories. After the sale, the sisters lived for nearly a year in a cramped apartment.

That is until Sister Bernadette Bell, Sisters of Mercy housing coordinator in Erie, invited the sisters to live in their motherhouse.

“We had the room and thought it would be a nice arrangement,” said Bernadette.

So in August, the sisters had their furniture and belongings moved to the Sisters of Mercy motherhouse at 444 E. Grandview Blvd.

“We are very happy here. The Sisters of Mercy have been very welcoming, and we feel very much at home,” said Sister Colette, principal



Pictured from left, Sister Bernadette Bell stands in front of Christmas trees outside the Sisters of Mercy chapel with Sisters of the Divine Spirit Martha Cadden and Colette Hilow.

at St. James. The other sisters staff this Catholic elementary school in east Erie.

She explained that years ago, the idea of sisters of one religious community living in the motherhouse of another religious community would have been unusual. But, she added, today these arrangements are more commonplace.

According to Bernadette, the NyPPaW Com-

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**“We are very happy here. The Sisters of Mercy have been very welcoming, and we feel very much at home.”**

*Sr. Colette Hilow, CDS*

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munity Leadership Team approved the arrangement that calls for the sisters to pay a monthly rent. The Sisters of Mercy also were consulted on the move and embraced it enthusiastically, she said.

The Divine Spirit Sisters live in the “Mercy 2” section of the motherhouse’s living quarters in an area offering six bedrooms, a dining room and kitchen area, lounge and office. They also have a private entrance.

“This has been great,” said Bernadette, who said the Divine Spirit Sisters have been invited to most activities the Sisters of Mercy have. You’ll find them in the dining room

for meals and feast day dinners and in the chapel.

“We are especially glad to have the chapel so close to us so that we can pray the rosary, pray with the sisters and participate in Holy Hours and Mass,” said Sister Martha, who assists with bingo at the motherhouse and helps the older sisters with their bingo cards.

The Sisters of the Divine Spirit also attend choir practice and have standing invitations to activities at the motherhouse and the nearby Mercy Hilltop Center and Mercy Terrace Apartments.

“We can’t get to everything, but we appreciate the invitations,” Sister Colette said.

She said the Sisters of the Congregation of the Divine Spirit were founded in Erie by the late Archbishop John Mark Gannon on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1956. Mother Patricia O’Connor was the first mother superior; Sister Michelle Beauseigneur is in that post today.

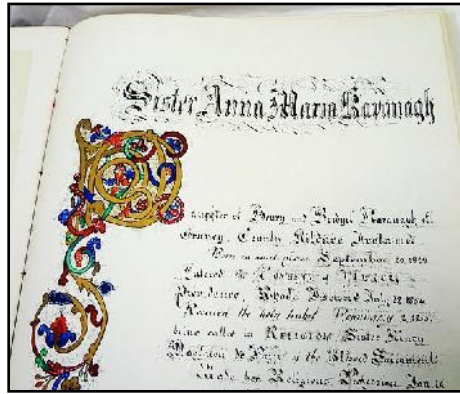
Sister Colette explained that the Canton, Ohio-based community focuses on aiding in the spiritual growth of the Christian family through Christian education and the ministry of the care of the aged.

## Rochester, Pittsburgh archives find home at Heritage Center

On the sun-drenched, breezy but comfortable morning of Oct. 25, Sister Jeanne Reichart stood looking out through a window in her two-room Mercy Center office at a truck preparing to leave with nearly a hundred cartons of carefully-packed history. Destination: the Mercy Heritage Center, Belmont, N.C., which eventually will house all archival material for the Sisters of Mercy.

"I wish I could have had more time to study, explore and enjoy some of the stories," said Jeanne, archivist in Rochester. However, she wasn't separated from her materials for long. Two days later, she was in Belmont to help unpack and catalogue the rich history of the Sisters of Mercy, who first came to Rochester in 1857.

For the past several months, important documents, artifacts and other archival items were readied for the trip to Belmont. Rochester is the second NyPPaW area to go through the process. Pittsburgh shipped its archives on April 27. Buffalo and Erie will make the transfer in spring 2012. The moves come from a decision by Sisters of



**Pictured is an "Early Register of Sisters Professed - with Artistic Illumination" from Rochester.**

Mercy archivists in 2004 to place archival materials in one location, and Belmont was chosen as the center.

Sister Patricia McCann, Pittsburgh archivist, said she felt Pittsburgh would have been the "right" place for a Heritage Center since that is where the Sisters of Mercy started their foundation in the United States. But she realized that Pittsburgh did not have resources that Belmont had readily available.

"I am confident that the Mercy Heritage Center is in good hands, and that it is in a beautiful space where our story will be preserved. In the long run, that is what mat-



**Sister Jeanne Reichert, Rochester archivist, stands ready for the movers who were taking items from the Rochester archives to Belmont, N.C., in October.**

ters," she said.

Sister Sheila Carney of Carlow University, Pittsburgh, prepared prayer services in both Pittsburgh and Rochester to help sisters bid farewell to artifacts headed south. "O, God Our Help in Ages Past" was one of hymns sung. In Rochester, Jeanne helped the sisters put their history in perspective. She told them about Sister M. Florence Sullivan, past principal of Our Lady of Mercy High School and in 1968 the first archivist in Rochester, who would scour old Rochester Newspapers for news about the Sisters of Mercy.

Also, she singled out the archives' published works of Sister Mary Sullivan, internationally acclaimed author; a 1928 dissertation by Sister M. Francesca Connor titled "Ethics and Federal Control of Education;" and a 1924 thesis by Sister M. Gregory Duris titled "Chaucer's Vision of Womanhood," both topics seemingly ahead of their time. She noted that Roch-



**Sister Jeanne Reichert, center, Rochester archivist, displays a certificate promising to preserve and care for the archives that have been transferred. On the left is Grant Gerlich, director of the Mercy Heritage Center, Belmont, and Sister Patricia MacDonald, who accompanied Jeanne to help unpack archival items.**

**(Continued on next page)**

ester sisters had unpublished poets, like Sister Mary Pierre Van Vliet.

“I hope that what isn’t lost, when these materials are placed on the shelf, are the talents that might be hidden in the files of deceased sisters,” she said. “I have mixed emotions about the move, but in the long run, it is the right decision.”

In Pittsburgh, Pat said the prayer service helped sisters appreciate the value of long-term preservation, but they felt the loss of revered treasures. “You could feel it in the chapel. I think, too, it created a deepened awareness of how history/church culture are changing.”

Pat said Pittsburgh has many, wonderful archival materials as it was the original Sisters of Mercy site in the United States. About 300 cartons of materials were shipped to Belmont, including:

- the diary which Sister Elizabeth Strange – one of the original founding sisters who came to Pittsburgh – kept on the ship coming to the United



**Mother Frances Warde’s personal writing desk is one of the items that was shipped from Pittsburgh. It accompanied her on the voyage from Ireland to America in 1843.**

States;

- a portable writing desk of Mother Frances Warde’s;
- about 30 calligraphy records of early members handwritten by Sister Elizabeth Strange;
- the original handwritten registry of early members covering 1843-1903 and telling where each went to new foundations;
- the charter from the Pennsylvania Legislature establishing the Sisters of Mercy legally in the United States;
- handwritten account books kept by Mother Frances Warde; and
- a chalice of then-Bishop Michael O’Connor.

Pat said all items of historical



**Sister Patricia McCann, Pittsburgh archivist, displays a certificate promising to preserve and care for the archives that have been transferred.**

significance were shipped to their new home.

“The only things kept behind were photos of early superiors and some gift mementos/awards to the community from over the years. We set up a Heritage Parlor at the Convent of Mercy to display these items,” she said.

According to Jeanne, among the items sent south were:

- the original incorporation papers for the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester, at that time, part of the Diocese of Buffalo, with much of the print faded;
- a beautifully inscribed book bearing the names of the early sisters in Rochester;
- Sister Mary Nolasco Lally’s birth certificate – in Gaelic; and
- a prayer book belonging to Mother Frances Warde.

Both Jeanne and Pat were among those helping unpack the items after they arrived in Belmont.



**Sister Clare Smith came from Pittsburgh to help unpack items from the Pittsburgh archives after they arrived at Mercy Heritage Center.**

# A Good Cup of Tea, Anyone?

Mix a spot of tea served in dainty cups with fun and Mercy spirit and you have nearly \$6,000 raised for the Mercy International Association.

The MIA invited Mercy communities across the world to gather for “A Good Cup of Tea” parties to raise funds for its ministries. Tea parties were held in Buffalo, Nov. 20; Erie, Nov. 27; and Rochester, Nov. 13. Pittsburgh had tea parties on Nov. 13 at the Convent of Mercy and at Carlow University.

According to Sister Patricia Prinzing, NyPPaW vice president: “In addition to raising money to help support the work of MIA, new friends were made and the Circle of Mercy was widened. Thanks goes to the NyPPaW Development office and all of those in our stateside geographic areas who worked to make the tea parties so much fun – and a success!”

Although there were no photos taken at the Pittsburgh tea parties, here is a look at get-togethers from other NyPPaW areas:



In Erie, Sister Timothy Kelley, left, and Mercy Associate Doris Adams, toast a cup of tea.



Sister Virginia Wilson, left, and Sister Ann Carpella, dressed as Catherine McAuley, enjoy the Rochester tea party.



In Buffalo, Sister Margaret Ann O’Donnell, center, pours a cup of tea for Gerry Pilat, right, as Jean Ormand watches. Both Gerry and Jean are Mercy Associates.



Pictured, from left, are Sisters Ann Hughes, Margaret Mary Hughes and Consolacion Briones enjoying the tea party in Buffalo.

# News Around NyPPaW

## NyPPaW

### Standing for justice



Mercy Associate Angie Giuffre, pictured in the center behind the banner, was among those who participated Nov. 19-20 in the annual vigil and protest at Fort Benning, Ga., to close down the former U.S. Army's School of the Americas. Now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, the school trained Latin American military officers, some of whom later were responsible for human rights abuses in their home countries. Activists at the protest included Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Associates, Mercy Corps Volunteers, and members of the Mercy vocations and justice teams.

### Mercy candidates at workshop



Nordia Brusola, left, a candidate for the Sisters of Mercy from Erie, was among the candidates in St. Louis Oct. 14-15 to attend a workshop titled "The Church and the Sisters of Mercy." During the workshop, candidates were invited to share and illustrate their personal stories and experiences of the church and Institute. Candidates pictured, from left, are: Nordia; Margie Tapia, Mid-Atlantic; Amanda Carrier, Northeast; and Angelica Reyes-Adame, West Midwest.

### Associates discuss Mercy life



NyPPaW representatives attended the annual meeting of the Mercy Associate Leadership Network (MALN) held Oct. 6-9 in Farmington Hills, Mich. Pictured, from left, are Carol Costello, Erie; Tom Pirrung, Buffalo; Sister Loly Lumantas, representing the NyPPaW Leadership Team; Sister Phyllis Marie McDonald, Erie; Liz Berliner, Rochester; Jean Galofaro, Rochester; and Sister Marilyn Brewer, Buffalo. Liz is the NyPPaW representative for the Mercy Associate Leadership Network. The conference explored the history of the associate movement and evolution of leadership. Also, associates decided on a process by which to keep the Chapter Declaration, Critical Concerns and Mission of Mercy central to associate life.

## ERIE

### Mercyhurst president visits Erie



Thomas Gamble, Ph.D., Mercyhurst College president, hosted on Dec. 8 his annual Christmas reception for the Sisters of Mercy. He is pictured with Sister Maura Smith, left, and Sister Bernadette Bell. Gamble and his wife, Mary, enjoyed time with the sisters at the motherhouse Community Room.

# News Around NyPPaW

## ERIE

### Taking back the site



Sister Natalie Rossi leads the “Take Back the Site” prayer service on Dec. 8 in west Erie where a man was murdered several days earlier. The Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania and the Erie Benedictine Sisters sponsored the vigil. Pictured in back of Natalie, from left, are Sisters Teresa Okonski, Rita Brocke, Bernadette Bell, Edith Langiotti and Benedictine Sister Phyllis Schleicher.

### Mercy Center for Women breaks ground for new wing



Mercy Center for Women, Erie, broke ground on Oct. 14 for a new addition. Pictured, from left, are Mary Machuga, chair of the center’s board; Christine Tombaugh, center director and a Mercy Associate; Kendra Tobin, whose mother was a client at the center; and Tina Rhoads, a center alumna who volunteers at MCW. The 2,100-square-foot Audrey Hirt Wing will provide a ramp for people with disabilities, space for three offices, a food storage room and a lobby/meeting room on the first floor. The lower level will feature a new children’s area and storage. The addition will be dedicated in the spring. The project will cost \$350,000.

### Sisters host annual Mass



The Sisters of Mercy in Erie on Nov. 8 hosted the annual Mass for deceased sisters and priests from the Diocese of Erie and members of the Erie chapter of the Serra Club in the Our Lady of Mercy Chapel. Pictured following the Mass, from left, are Sister of Mercy Natalie Rossi, Erie local leader; Sister of St. Joseph Mary Ellen Dwyer; Bishop Donald W. Trautman, celebrant; Sister Ann Wambach, prioress, Benedictine Sisters of Erie; and Sister of St. Joseph Nancy Fischer, Erie Diocese vicar for religious.

## ROCHESTER

### Buckets of Love



Mercy Associate Rita Kane of Rochester loads the back of a car with “Buckets of Love” to help those affected by recent flooding in the Village of Owego in Tioga County, N.Y. Mercy Associates in Rochester coordinated the effort to help flood victims. The associate program coordinated the effort to help those in the Southern Tier. Mercy Associate Cassie O’Gara distributed the items and a check was sent to Catholic Charities to further aid victims.

## News Around NyPPaW

### PITTSBURGH

#### Sisters, ministries recognized



Sister Marie Immaculée Dana, Pittsburgh local leader, speaks after accepting on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pittsburgh Urban League. The award was presented at the Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala in Pittsburgh on Dec. 2. The awards given at the gala honored outstanding individuals, organizations or corporations in the Pittsburgh area, who exemplify leadership in improving the quality of life for African Americans. Mary Hines, Ph.D., president of Carlow University, Pittsburgh, nominated the Sisters of Mercy for the award. The narrative accompanying the award cited the many accomplishments and ministries of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh and said the sisters “intend to continue to learn from the people of Pittsburgh ways to collaborate with their neighbors in creating an environment where the blessings of good health, education and well-being are shared by all in the city.”

#### Sisters ‘on ice’

Sisters on ice? Well, not exactly. But four Sisters of Mercy from Pittsburgh were guests of UPMC Mercy President Will Cook at a Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game at the Consul Center on Nov. 21. Pictured holding signs saying “Welcome Back SID,” from left, are Sisters Rosemarie Barrett, Mary Louise Simon, Joan Laboon and Carolyn Schallenberger. The signs refer to Sidney Crosby, the star Penguins player who played in his first game of the sea-



son after recovering for 10 months from a concussion suffered in a game last December. With the sisters help cheering,

the Pens defeated the New York Islanders 5 to 0 and Crosby had two goals and two assists.



#### Fun at the Reindeer Ball

Amid a balloon-filled room, Pittsburgh actor Michael Greer entertains guests at Pittsburgh Mercy Health System’s 8th Annual Reindeer Ball, a spectacular children’s holiday gala held Dec. 4 at The Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh. The festive event attracted more than 500 children and adults and raised approximately \$100,000 for A Child’s Place at Mercy, part of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy.

## We Remember

### Sr. Margaret Ann Coughlin Buffalo Nov. 8, 2011

Sister Margaret Ann, 71, the former Frances Lillian Coughlin, was a Sister of Mercy for more than 53 years. Most of her religious life was devoted to education and pastoral ministry. She taught in elementary schools in the Diocese of Buffalo and was pastoral associate at St. Bernadette and St. Ambrose parishes, Buffalo. Also, she served in the pastoral departments of Buffalo's Mercy Hospital and Mount Mercy Academy. She was director of spiritual services at Baker Victory Homes, Buffalo.



Sr. Margaret  
Ann Coughlin

Margaret Ann takes with her a tremendous gift of music, storytelling and humor from her many years of teaching primary grades. When she was at the table, it was a real feast of laughter and fun. She was the matriarch of her family, having lost all of her family to cancer, including her mother and father at a young age. Her nieces and nephews loved her visits home and at their special life and sports events. They all grew up knowing that she was there for them.

### Sr. M. Caroline Scheuermann Pittsburgh Dec. 2, 2011

Sister Caroline, formerly Helen Barbara, was 90 when she died. She was for many years an elementary

school teacher in the Pittsburgh and Greensburg dioceses. Then, she directed the Sancta Sophia House of Studies, a residence for religious women pursuing advanced degrees in Pittsburgh. When she retired to Mercy Hall at Pittsburgh's Convent of Mercy, she immediately took charge of the Arts and Crafts Studio.

For Sister Caroline, known as "a deeply prayerful woman with a warm smile," God's will was a strong, felt reality that led her to overcome any natural fear and to attempt ministries she would never have otherwise considered. Her creativity and patient encouragement of retired sisters in the Arts and Crafts Studio for the retired sisters produced sought-after items, such as clowns and Raggedy Ann dolls that were the hit of area craft shows. She shared her creative talents generously.

### Sr. Ruth Biemann Buffalo Dec. 8, 2011

Sister Ruth Biemann, 80, formerly Sister Mary Teresa, was a Sister of Mercy for more than 61 years. She was a Catholic elementary school educator in Western New York for 45 years and a pioneer in computer education for primary grades. After leaving the classroom, she continued to work in remedial reading and was assigned to Mount



Sr. M. Caroline  
Scheuermann



Sr. Ruth  
Biemann

Mercy Academy's Media Center, Buffalo. Sister Ruth spent the last years of her life in the prayer ministry. She was known for being a person who could make the best of situations through her gift of words and humor. It was not surprising to see "baby pictures" appearing with captions that were funny and appropriate.

### Sr. Mary Mark Long Buffalo Dec. 10, 2011

Sister Mary Mark, 93, the former Teresa Mary Long, was a Sister of Mercy who spent her more than 75 years of religious life in education, nursing and prayer. She taught at Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Buffalo and at Buffalo's Trocaire College. She was a registered nurse who also earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing.

Sister Mary Mark was one of the four original sisters who volunteered from Buffalo to open the Mercy Mission in the Philippines in 1957. Until her return to the United States in 1963, she served in education, nursing and as principal of the high school in Kolumbugan, Mindanao. She loved her ministry in the Philippines and people there today still ask about her. They remember the four "white" sisters – they dressed in the white habit – being carried from the boat to the shore. There were no docks, so the boat had to anchor away from shore.



Sr. Mary  
Mark Long