

## Your Generosity Our Service



Sisters Frances Kendrick, SNJM and Catherine Ferguson, SNJM prepare beds for a family arriving to new temporary housing.

### Inside:

What More Can We Do ..... p.2

Unlocking the Secrets  
of the Past .....p.4

Call to Vietnam.....p.6

And more!

# What More Can WE Do?



Sisters of the Holy Names find ways to care for the homeless, immigrants and refugees, and families in need. Here are some of their stories.



## At the Border

When a call came looking for volunteers, especially Spanish-speaking Sisters, to help greet migrants crossing the border in Texas, Sisters Mary Becker and Mary Ondreyco raised their hands. They journeyed from California to El Paso, where they stayed with the Sisters of Loretto and worked at Nazareth House.

Each day, when immigrants and asylum seekers are released from detention centers, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) buses bring them to locations like Nazareth

House, which welcomes about 50 new arrivals each day. Guests are given food, clothing, a hot shower and a place to sleep. All the guests carry documents from ICE that allow them to travel legally and have a hearing date – usually within two weeks – when they need to appear in a federal court as part of the asylum process. At that hearing, depending on the judge, they could be allowed to continue the asylum process or they might be deported.

Volunteers like Sisters Mary and Mary assisted with a variety of tasks, from helping with intake to preparing and serving dinner to sorting clothes. Both feel grateful that they had an opportunity to meet the brave families who fled violence and poverty in their home



Top: Sisters Mary Ondreyco (second from left) and Mary Becker (far right) helped serve dinner at Nazareth House in El Paso, TX.

Middle: Sisters Mary and Mary also helped prepare the food they served.

Bottom: Ann Dibble, SNJM Associate, supported families in El Paso as they seek asylum in the United States.

countries to start a new life in the U.S., bringing with them inner strength, hope and a desire to live in peace and to work and support their families.

SNJM Associate Ann Dibble went to El Paso a few weeks after Sisters Mary and Mary, helping to care for refugees until they can connect with family or friends.

## Caring for the Homeless

When St. Joseph's Parish in Spokane, WA, decided to participate in Family Promise, which supports families at risk of becoming homeless, the parish agreed to host a homeless family for a week at a time. When the parish started providing meals and overnight accommodations to guests, Holy Names Sisters looked for ways that they could support this need. Sisters Frances Kendrick, Catherine Ferguson and Karen Conlin helped to assemble cots and make beds so that the new arrivals would feel welcome.

## Using Resources Well

When the Sisters' convent in Albany, NY was built in 1961, it was designed to house Sisters from entry in the community until entry to eternal life. It also provided classroom space for elementary-age students of the Academy of the Holy Names Albany until its lower school closed a few years ago. As the nature of religious life

changed, Sisters moved out of the convent and into the communities where they served. As the community considered what to do with the building, a local nonprofit lost its facility due to a water main break and needed a new location to continue providing household goods and books to families in need. The Sisters welcomed Grassroots Givers into the former elementary school, providing a way to fill needs in the community while the organization looks for a new location closer to the families and schools it supports.

This year, as the Holy Names Sisters say goodbye to this building that has meant so much, there is great pride in knowing that it is serving the community until the end. ■



Sisters Catherine Ferguson, Karen Conlin and Frances Kendrick in the room they prepared for a family who will be staying at St. Joseph's parish in Spokane, WA.

Sister Bea Hall with items to be distributed by Grassroots Givers, including clothing carefully sorted by size and all kinds of household goods.



## An Ongoing Commitment to the Homeless and Immigrants and Refugees

In 2018, the Sisters' U.S.-Ontario Province Leadership Team established the Immigrant & Refugee Fund to support the work of Sisters, in partnership with other nonprofit organizations, to address the many needs of people coping with displacement. Individual donors are invited to partner with us by supporting our ministry programs or the SNJM Immigrant and Refugee Fund, ensuring that the Sisters will have financial resources to help those who are trying to make a new life for their families.

# Unlocking the **SECRETS** of the Past: The SNJM Heritage Center



**A phone call:** “Hello? I’m looking for a copy of my high school transcript. I graduated in 1956 from St. Mary’s High School in The Dalles.”

**An email:** “We have an adoption certificate for my grandmother from 1877 signed by one of the Sisters at St. Mary’s Academy in Portland. Do you have any further information?”

**At the door:** “My late mother-in-law had these scrapbooks about her student years at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Oakland. Do you want them?”

**Another email:** “I’m writing a book about the history of Windsor, Ontario and need a photo of St. Mary’s Academy.”

Those are just a few of the thousands of requests received over the past 13 years by Sarah Cantor, Director of the SNJM Heritage Center and Archives.

More than 300 people contact the archives each year. Five staff and a few steady volunteers connect researchers with information about Holy Names schools, individual Sisters and their own family histories.

The SNJM collections, dating from the Sisters’ arrival in Oregon in 1859, include administrative records of the Sisters in the U.S. provinces, school and student information, and files for each deceased Sister. They also include paintings, furniture, school memorabilia and other items that help tell the Sisters’ story.

Requests come from many directions. Often, schools with an SNJM connection reach out when they are celebrating a milestone, looking for photos, names of founding Sisters and principals, and historical highlights about school life. One Oregon parish wanted a list of all Sisters who had taught in the school over its 100+ year history in order to create a panel paying tribute to SNJM service in their community.

Common inquiries from professors and historians concern labor rights activist Sister



This page, clockwise from top right:

The SNJM archives are housed at the Holy Names Heritage Center in Lake Oswego, OR, built in 2007 thanks to generous donors.

Sister Miriam Theresa Gleason, SNJM, shown here prior to her entry into religious life in 1916, was a pioneer in the labor rights movement.

The class of 1937 at Academy of the Holy Names in Rome, NY.

Gabriella (circa 1934) a resident of the Christie School (Lake Oswego, OR).

Sister Marilyn Harris, SNJM with former student George Nakata from the St. Paul Miki School (Portland), 70 years after she was his teacher.



Miriam Theresa Gleason and the Sisters' role in the landmark *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* Supreme Court decision in 1925.

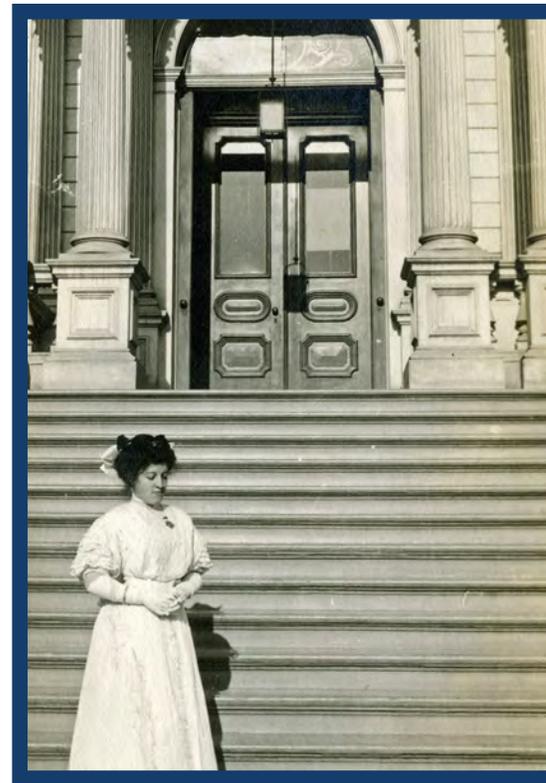
Another frequent request is for information about former teachers. Alums often want to thank or learn more about a teacher who made a difference in their lives. One man called wanting the burial location of a Sister who taught him in elementary school during the 1940s so he could send flowers to her grave. When he learned that Sister was in her 90s and very much alive and well, he was thrilled. When Sister was contacted to see about connecting her with a former student, there was a long pause and then she asked, "Who thought I was dead?" After hearing the response, she replied, "I remember THAT kid." Seventy odd years later, he was still making an impression.

Another time, a family was looking for a photo of their mother's alma mater, the Academy of the Holy Names in Rome, NY. She had graduated in 1937 and lamented the loss of her class ring. Using a photo found in the archives, family members had a duplicate made and later sent the archives staff a touching video of their

mother receiving her ring.

Some of the most meaningful requests relate to the Christie School, an orphanage the Sisters operated in Oregon from 1908 until the 1960s. More than once, family members have told Sarah that photos of Christie residents from the SNJM archives were the first images they had ever seen of their mothers or grandmothers as children. And once, the archives staff found data in the files to help a woman track down half siblings she never knew she had.

While not all inquiries lead to such dramatic conclusions, it is rewarding to see that the information safeguarded in the Sisters' archives can provide answers that make a difference in someone's life. Whether that means pride in a school's long history, the chance to thank a Sister who influenced a person's development, solving a genealogical puzzle or replacing a lost class ring, the archives' staff stands ready to help. ■



Mae Smith, class of 1906, Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (Oakland, CA). Photo courtesy of Jim and Judy Morton.

## SNJM Water Project Update

Sister Barbara Spears (far right) traveled to Brazil on behalf of the SNJM Water Project last fall. With training and materials from *Water With Blessings*, she delivered 15 filters and taught local women to use and care for them. Each filter can provide enough clean water for four families with children for at least 10 years. Your donations to the SNJM Water Project will underwrite the direct costs of helping God's thirsty children around the world have access to clean water.



# A Call to VIETNAM

One of the most thoroughly intercultural U.S.-Ontario Province ministries is A Call to Vietnam. Initiated in 2001 and co-directed by Sisters Kay Burton and Agnes Le, the program supports the ministries of a Vietnamese congregation, Lovers of the Holy Cross of Hue. Donated funds provide

scholarships to carefully selected students, augment outreach ministries to the poor and marginalized in Vietnam, and support a summer English program for younger Sisters. Holy Names Sisters and other volunteers have

traveled to Vietnam each summer to teach English, with the intention of ultimately enabling some Sisters from Hue to study in the United States and become proficient English speakers and teachers.

One hoped-for outcome of the collaborative ministry is

empowering Lovers of the Holy Cross to sustain their own English conversation program. This effort has borne fruit as several young Sisters from past summer English classes are now students in the United States. Sister Dung Nguyen (My Dung) and Sister Dung Huynh (Kim Dung) are jointly sponsored by Heritage University in Toppenish, WA and by the U.S.-Ontario Province. They live with members of the SNJM community and are enrolled at Heritage University, earning masters' degrees in Educational Administration and English Language and Literature respectively.

Both are diligent, successful students, taking full advantage of all available opportunities to master both conversational English and coursework that will enrich their Congregation's vibrant ministries. English is important for the congregation's preschool/ kindergarten curriculum as a unique offering that enhances their ability to recruit and enroll students. This is critical because preschools are one of the few revenue-generating ministries they are permitted to conduct. As a future principal, My Dung looks forward to introducing new instructional methods to her faculty. Kim Dung will meet other English language needs of her Congregation as a teacher and translator.

Understandably, being full-time graduate students absorbs most of their time, but both also have had opportunities to meet Sisters and Associates in various Northwest locations, become familiar with multiple aspects of U.S. culture, and explore some scenic highlights of the region. Engaging and adventurous, they bring a contagious spark to gatherings and have deepened the intercultural bonds which continue to characterize all aspects of the A Call to Vietnam Ministry. ■



SNJM Sisters Mary Ellen Robinson, Anne Herkenrath and Makiko Fujiwara welcome LHC Sisters Kim Dung and My Dung to Seattle.

During study breaks Sister Kathleen Hilton, SNJM, has helped My Dung and Kim Dung experience the beautiful Northwest and U.S. culture.

Studying in the Heritage University Library.

# A CENTURY of Ministry

What's in a hundred years? Sister Frances Harold (Karen Mary) celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in March and is about to celebrate 80 years as a Holy Names Sister.

Growing up in Portland, OR, the inspiration of her parents shaped her life. She reveled in her father's stories about his teen years during the Alaska gold rush. His resilience and resourcefulness impressed her, and her mother's deep faith and generosity informed young Frances for a lifetime.

Her sisters, Mary Jane (Angel Guardian) and Anne (Rosilda), joined the community before Frances. It was the charism of Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Names, which compelled Frances to enter.

She began as a music teacher, working not only on children's musical skills but on their love of music and its enrichment of the human heart. She was one of the first to attend the Institute for Spirituality and Worship at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. Sister Frances enjoyed 10 years in parish religious education in Canby, OR, followed by ministry in St. Helens, OR. The addition of youth ministry caused her to reflect: "These kids want skiing and beach trips and I am nearly 70. It's time for someone else to take over."

Retirement from parish work did not mean an end to her ministry, though. Sister Frances agreed to introduce the Retirement for Religious program to parishes. With companion Sister Andre Campau, SSMO, she crisscrossed Oregon promoting the fund drive in support of religious communities.

During the next 11 years, she was continually struck by the generosity of the Catholic people when they understood that Sisters who have served in education and health care do not receive retirement benefits from the Church, and their Congregations' struggle to support retired Sisters.

When she read a parish bulletin ad for a communion minister for the local hospital, Sister Frances thought, "I can do this. I can give a couple of hours a week." She volunteered there for 17 years, retiring at age 90.

Looking back, she cannot choose one ministry as her favorite. "I just loved all those things I did," she says. She still finds ways to volunteer, including helping to stuff envelopes for the SNJM Christmas appeal.

Although Sister Frances is shy of the spotlight as she passes her milestone birthday, she is grateful for God's special gift of 100 years of living, the abundance she has experienced and the continual generosity of family and friends. ■



Sister Frances with great niece Mary Frances at the 100th birthday celebration.

Sister Frances helped stuff the annual Christmas appeal in December, 2018.

The Nguyen family, who know Sister Frances from her days of ministry in Canby, OR, at her birthday celebration.



# In Memory

## Sister Barbara Gfeller, SNJM

Nov. 14, 1926–Nov. 28, 2018

A Holy Names Sister for 68 years, Sister Barbara Gfeller (Sister Marion David), age 92, died at Marylhurst, OR on Nov. 28, 2018. Daughter of Fred and Elizabeth Gfeller, Barbara grew up in Eastern Washington. From childhood she was fascinated with science and earned several science degrees, culminating in a doctorate from the University of Oregon in biology with a focus on developmental genetics.

While at UO dressed in full habit, she was interviewed by a reporter who observed that to some, a nun working in genetics might seem unusual. But for Sister Barbara, there was no contradiction. "I am a nun and I am scientist," she replied. "This is possible because both religion and science are supposed to be reaching toward the truth. If the two contradict each other, one must not be telling the truth."

In her long career, Sister Barbara taught at universities worldwide, including Oregon's Marylhurst College; Bethlehem University in Israel; Heritage University in Toppenish, WA; and the College of the Marshall Islands.

After retiring from teaching, she lived in The Dalles, OR, participating in the SNJM Associate program and volunteering with St. Vincent DePaul, St. Mary's School Library and Habitat for Humanity.

## Sister Virginia Schroeder, SNJM

Jan. 2, 1945–March 19, 2019

A Holy Names Sister for 53 years. Sister Virginia Schroeder, age 74, died at Marylhurst, OR, on March 19, 2019. Daughter of Al and Clara Schroeder, Virginia grew up in Salem, OR. After entering the community in 1963, she completed a B.S. in education and taught in elementary schools in Oregon. Later she earned her M.Ed. degree

and worked in secondary schools.

In a career change, she got a master's in pastoral studies and worked in several Oregon parishes as well as Mount Angel Seminary. The seminary honored her with the St. Michael the Archangel Award for commitment to the school's mission.

Until recently, she served as hospitality coordinator for the Sisters' guesthouse at Marylhurst and co-director of the SNJM Associate Program. She also volunteered at the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Office and St. Andrew's Emergency Services Center. In all she did, Sister Virginia brought an energetic spirit. If a helping hand was needed, she was there. She accepted each day as God's gift in whatever manner it unfolded.

## Sister Carolyn Jane Lord, SNJM

Nov. 13, 1934–April 15, 2019

A Holy Names Sister for 64 years, Sister Carolyn Jane Lord (Sister Alma Mary), age 84, died April 15, 2019, at Marylhurst, OR. Jane grew up in the Seattle area. After entering, she completed a B.A. in elementary education at Marylhurst College and taught in Oregon schools in Salem, Portland, Lake Oswego and St. Paul, where she was principal.

She completed a master's in religious education at Fort Wright College, Spokane, WA and moved into parish work in the Oregon communities of St. Helens, Cottage Grove and Sutherlin. She also served for a time on the religious education faculty of Marylhurst College and as an administrator of the Sisters' Care Center at Marylhurst.

Jane was a gracious, welcoming person with a warm smile and generous spirit. After retirement, she assisted with hospitality at the Sisters' guesthouse at Marylhurst, cantored regularly for services in the Sisters' Chapel and served as director of the Oregon Associate program.



Top to bottom: Sister Barbara Gfeller, Sister Virginia Schroeder and Sister Carolyn Jane Lord

# Golden JUBILARIANS

**W**hat is Jubilee time? It is thanksgiving, remembering, reflecting, celebrating and giving thanks to God for life, love, people, service and faithfulness. We are happy to present to you Jubilarians who are celebrating 50 years since they first professed vows as Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. You can read full biographies by visiting [www.snjmuson.org/about-us/jubilarians](http://www.snjmuson.org/about-us/jubilarians)

## **Sister Mary Dernovek**

Beginning her teaching career as an elementary teacher, Sister Mary Dernovek of West Linn, OR, went on to get her M.Ed. degree with a focus on fundraising for nonprofits. In collaboration with Salem, OR, development directors she founded Willamette Valley Development Officers (WVDO). While serving as president, she realized that many nonprofits could not afford consultants or training. In response, she formed Solutions for Nonprofits. She genuinely enjoyed meeting new development professionals, traveling to give workshops on the West Coast and in Canada. In 2000, WVDO awarded Mary its highest honor, the Barbara Stallcup Miller Professional Achievement Award. Mary feels especially grateful as she celebrates 50 years as a Holy Names Sister to be so richly blessed for all she has been given and the encouragement of her Sisters, friends, family and the organizations she has assisted.

## **Sister Kathleen Hepner**

Entering in 1966, Sister Kathleen Hepner of Lake Oswego, OR, responded to the call she had felt since she was 9 years old. She completed a B.A. in elementary education at Marylhurst College and went on to teach middle grades in Portland, Salem, Bend, Medford and Seattle and in summer vacation schools in Central Oregon. During this time, she obtained a M.Ed. degree from Western Washington University. When she retired from classroom teaching, Sister



Sisters Mary Dernovek, Susan Mitchell and Kathleen Hepner.

Kathleen became a traveling teacher, visiting schools in the Portland, Baker, Spokane and Yakima dioceses teaching about the arrival of the Holy Names Sisters in Oregon and Washington and the beginnings of Catholic education in the Pacific Northwest. She now serves as coordinator of the Chapel of the Holy Names at Marylhurst.

## **Sister Susan Mitchell**

After graduating from Marylhurst College, Sister Susan Mitchell of Portland, OR, taught for 18 years in elementary schools. She was introduced by a friend to L'Arche, an international federation of communities of faith that brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities to share life and create home. For the next 23 years, she lived and worked at L'Arche Portland, helping to open a second home and eventually becoming Community Leader/ Executive Director of the organization. She remains an active member of its extended community. She currently ministers as Community Life Coordinator for the Sisters living at Mary's Woods at Marylhurst. She is learning from the wisdom and example of her elder Sisters how to grow old gracefully, accepting the diminishment of aging while living life fully to the end.

# Parish Says Thank You

## Honoring 154 Years of SNJM Ministry in The Dalles

Celebrating 154 years of SNJM ministry in The Dalles, OR, 24 Sisters from throughout Oregon came together at St. Peter Parish on Nov. 18, 2018 for Mass and a reception. More than a hundred parishioners, friends, family and alums honored the Sisters, whose photos and ministry biographies were shared at the reception by St. Mary's Academy, The Dalles. Sister Barbara Gfeller, who died in November, spent many years in The Dalles and had been able to enjoy planning for the event. ■



Back row, L-R: Sisters Rosalie Anderson, Maureen Delaney, Margaret Kennedy, Arnadene Bean, Louise Tibbetts, Janet Ryan, Linda Patrick, Brigid Baumann and Fr. Joseph Levine, celebrant.

Center row, L-R: Sisters Janet Marcisz, Marian Watkins, Joan Flynn, Jeanette Wood, Pat McCrann, Farroel Richardson and Ida Van Hoomissen.

Front row, L-R: Sisters Mary Breiling, Lucinda Peightal, Guadalupe Guajardo, Beverly Miller, Helen Sandoz, Mary Courtman, Mary Sullivan, Mary Anne Jungblut and Wanda Jordan.

# WHY THEY GIVE: Partners in Mission

We know people have many reasons for being our Partners in Mission. We will tell a donor's story in each issue of SNJM Now. If you'd like to share your story, contact us at [development@snjmusun.org](mailto:development@snjmusun.org).

By Sister Mary Ann Farley, SNJM

For 35 years, Kay Foster was the beloved, competent, always trusted director of nursing at Convent of the Holy Names in Spokane, WA, retiring only when the last Sister moved to the retirement community now known as South Hill Village. She is a faithful member of Assumption Parish and an active and happy grandma. Kay and her husband Chuck have been monthly donors to the Sisters of the Holy Names for 39 years! When asked "Why?" the words just flowed from Kay.

"We give because of our personal relationships with the Sisters. We give because of who they are, what is important to them. In so many end-of-life conversations with the Sisters in the Care Center, I have heard why they chose religious life, what joy they have found, the fulfillment they feel and pass on."

"I just received the Jubilee announcement and smile as I remember interactions with the Sisters who are celebrating, and rejoice in who they are and how they live in the world. I resonate with your stance on refugees and immigration because that is close to my heart and I want that work to continue. I want to see the

ripple effect of the work the Sisters are doing become an ever-wider circle because I believe that makes a major difference in our world."

Chuck and Kay talk about how and where they want to donate when they receive so many requests and there is so much need. "We believe in consistently donating to or sponsoring organizations where we see the boots on the ground and know the hearts of the people."

Chuck and Kay, it is with deep gratitude that we tell your story. The sharing of hearts and minds and resources makes exponentially more possible than any of us could do alone. The ripples continue! ■



Among her many experiences as a nurse in the Sisters' Care Center, Kay (far right) helped Sister Jeanne Concannon (RIP), wearing pink, learn to use donated equipment that helped lift her to a standing position. Next to Sister Jeanne is author Sister Mary Anne Farley, wearing black and white.

Kay and Chuck Foster during a 2018 visit to Lourdes, France.



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**Among the Holy Names Sisters who are celebrating 60 years of religious life in 2019:**

Adjacent: Sister Mary Ann Farley (in blue) volunteers at the Maybelle Center for Community in Portland, OR, an organization that reduces loneliness and isolation among members experiencing poverty, mental or physical challenges, addiction or trauma. She is one of 19 Holy Names Sisters celebrating 60 years of religious life in 2019.

Left: Sister Eileen Dunn is part of 96-year tradition of Holy Names Sisters ministering at St. Gabriel parish in Washington, DC. She has served as Director of Religious Education since August 1989.



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