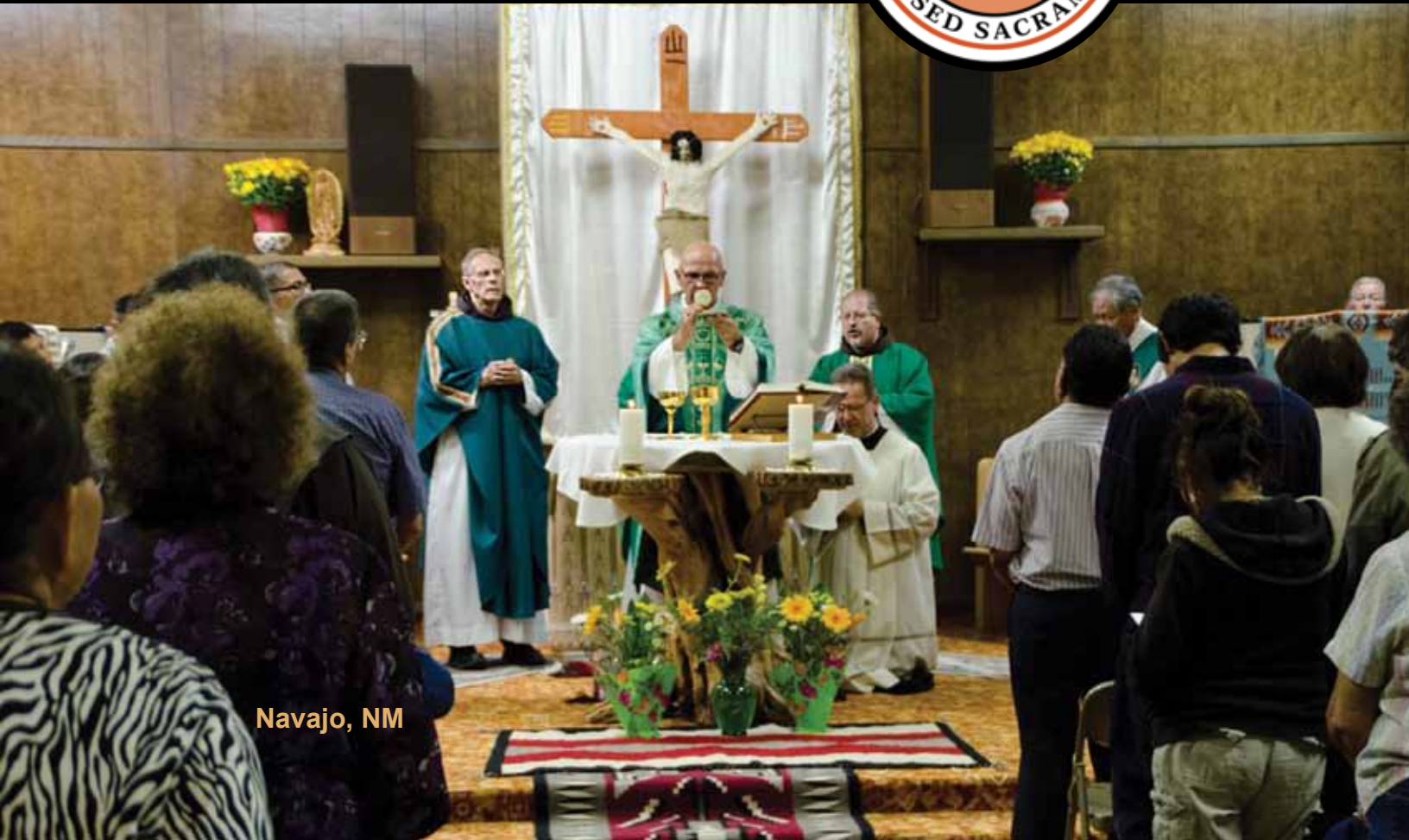


One Body in Christ

2014 LXXIX 3

# MISSION



Navajo, NM



Harlem, NY



# MISSION

LXXIX 3, 2014

## *Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament*

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The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, founded in 1891 by St. Katharine Drexel, is a congregation dedicated to the interracial apostolate in the USA, Jamaica WI, and Haiti. Today SBS serve in elementary and secondary schools as well as at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. They are also involved in a variety of other services including pastoral and spiritual ministries, social services, counseling, religious education and health care, primarily but not exclusively among Black and Native American peoples. The Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament is in Bensalem, Pa.

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pp. 6-11: Sr. Mary Franceline, except  
Resurrection (internet)  
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Back Cover: Sr. Mary Franceline Malone



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# Celebrating Our United Church Family

*The Lord, your God is in your midst, a warrior who gives you the victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love, he will exult over you with loud singing, as on a day of festival.* (Zeph 3:17)

In this edition two celebrations are highlighted — that of the combined parishes in Navajo, N.M., and that of St. Charles Borromeo in Harlem, N.Y. For one, the focus was on their jubilees and shared history. The other commemorated its patron's feastday and incidentally its 126th anniversary. What the two had in common was the enthusiasm, the joy generated by people working together. Groups planned ahead, others offered their talents. There were clergy, deacons, behind the scenes Sisters, altar servers, musicians, readers, cooks, parishioners and guests. Everyone came together rejoicing in being one family in Christ.

Other articles reflect on Christ's call — unique for each of us. Carole Blanks, our ASBS director, is actively involved in promoting the values lived by St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. She felt God calling her to a deeper relationship with Him. With the help of prayer and spiritual direction, Carole committed her life to God by professing private vows flowing from the charism of St. Katharine Drexel.

B. Maynard Shurley, a Navajo, recognized the call of Christ to embrace the vowed life of the Franciscans who have served on the Navajo Reservation since 1897. Wearing the brown habit, he brings the richness of Navajo prayer life to his commitment.

As a young woman, Sr. Lynn Marie Ralph struggled with God, argued with Him. Not me, Lord. Still, His calling HER NAME kept echoing in her heart. Finally she said, "OK, God. You got me." A deep peace came. That One calling her name really was God. And He won.

Spending 25 years off and on in Harlem, is a long time, but St. Jane Norton's life and ministry still energizes her. She has been a teacher, a principal, a parish minister in Philadelphia. Now she is back serving in St. Charles Borromeo Parish. She is getting older, yet believes she still has gifts to share with the people. "I get much more from them than I give," she claims. Sister sees the struggles and the deep faith that sustains the Harlemites.

Sr. Jane works along with many committed lay people: social workers, business men, musicians and laborers, adults and teenagers. They face the problems besetting the area — a changing population, poverty, police relationships, etc. They take responsibility, look troubles in the eye and depend on faith to find solutions.

**NOTICE** — this is the last edition of MISSION that will have a print issue. Even now, MISSION is available on the Communication page of our website: [www.katharinedrexel.org](http://www.katharinedrexel.org). Hereafter, MISSION can be read by downloading it in pdf form from on line.



*Before the Mass began, Franciscan Brother Maynard Shurley incensed the assembly and the sacred space with the smoke of local cedar.*

## **Celebrating Wedded Parish History**

**by: Suzanne Hammons**

St. Berard Parish in Navajo, N.M., is just large enough to seat a regular Sunday crowd, but people were packed shoulder-to-shoulder for the very special Mass in honor of the combined churches' Anniversaries.

Families from both St. Berard and its mission church of St. Francis in Sawmill, Ariz, gathered together to attend the Mass celebrated by Bishop James S. Wall and concelebrated by several Franciscan priests including Fr. Gilbert Schneider. Two Native American deacons, Wilson Gorman and Daniel Martin, assisted at the Mass.

Before the Mass began, Br. Maynard Shurley, OFM, blessed the church and the congregation with Navajo incense.

Two sisters – Srs. Zoe Brenner, SBS, and Sr. Maria Magdalena Studer, SC — bustled about making sure that the food for the dinner after Mass was properly prepared and presented; that the ushers had the right number of baskets; and that everyone had a seat for Mass.

"It is our great prayer and hope that this event, this beautiful celebration, will truly be a time of growth and renewal for our people and our parish," Fr. Gilbert Schneider declared to the congregation.

Fr. Schneider is the pastor of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament parish in Ft. Defiance, Ariz., but his duties have also included saying Mass at St. Berard and St. Francis churches for the past 11 years. Day-to-day, Srs. Zoe  
*Continued on p. 4*

**by Sr. Zoe Brenner**

"Great celebration!" was proclaimed and echoed again and again as people sauntered out of St. Berard Parish Hall on Oct. 11, 2014. It was the entwined Jubilee Celebration of St. Berard and St. Francis of Assisi Churches.

St. Francis of Assisi celebrated 60 years of existence and St. Berard 50. Their history is tied together.

St. Francis was originally a Quonset hut put there for the thriving community of Sawmill, named for the sawmill that gave the community sustenance. Later a hogan (8-sided Navajo structure) church replaced the hut, but the sawmill left Arizona and moved 25 miles across the state line to Navajo, N.M.

A church was built in Navajo to accommodate the community there. The  
*Continued on p. 5*



Sr. Maria Magdalena and Br. Maynard check to see if all the vessels are ready for the Celebration Mass.



The Jubilee Mass took place on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014. The article was published first in **The Voice of the Southwest**

*Hammons Continued from p. 3*

and Magdalena oversee the religious instruction of the parishioners and other church affairs.

Sr. Zoe has lived in Navajo for three years, and cares for the people there as if they were her own family. It's difficult to get a spare moment to talk to her during the dinner after the Mass — she spends most of the evening moving among the tables, stopping to speak to each family. She knows their names, their personalities, their backgrounds and happily speaks with each group before moving on.

"They're so open and caring, just being with them, I feel very close to all of them," she says. "You know, I get as much from them as they get from me — these are people of God."

Rita Bia is one of those "people of God" Sr. Zoe refers to. Raised in Sawmill, Ariz., and a member of St. Francis Church for most of her life, she volunteers at events for both churches throughout the year. She eventually became a certified religious instructor and describes how she enjoys teaching her faith to her people.

With Bia, too, it's tough to grab a few moments. She spends the evening talking and laughing with people as she stands behind the food line serving dinner, and eventually divides a giant cake into small pieces, making sure there is enough for everyone.

"When we all come together like this, it works," Bia says, in between handing out slices of cake. "Even our elderly, their kids — they're all here. You know each one by name. And all the Sisters and the Fathers that come through here, even the Deacons, to teach us our Faith — I'm grateful for them."

Sawmill was at one point the main parish. The town was established and named after a local lumber mill which functioned as the main economy for the town, and St. Francis church was built to serve the people there in 1953. After just five years, the mill was moved to Navajo, and most of the people went with it. St. Berard was built in 1964 and is now the main church, with Sawmill as a mission.

Despite population movements and fifty years, the people of Navajo and Sawmill are as close as ever. They are more than a community — as both Sr. Zoe and Bia say, and as any observer can see — they are a family.



Top down: Deacon Wilson Gorman of Sawmill incenses the assembly during the liturgy. Miranda Wilson proclaims the Word of God. Bishop Wall blows out birthday candles. St. Berard Parish Hall is filled with joyful laughter.



*Bishop James S. Wall surrounded by priests, deacons and youths who serve Christ at the altar and among the people. Father Gilbert is in the back row on the left.*

*Brenner Continued from p. 3*  
sawmill, however, closed and a small hogan church was erected in Navajo. Today St. Francis is a mission of St. Berard.

These two Church communities work together in many ways. Religious education taught for two weeks in July has catechists from both churches. GOF, an intergenerational program, is attended by both church families. We celebrate Christmas together. So sharing the anniversary celebration felt right.

The Jubilee Committee met and started planning. One of the first items on the agenda was to invite Bishop James Wall. It was with great joy that we found out he would be coming. An added joy — it was his 50th birthday!

The parishioners of the churches were concerned, “Would people come? How many should we plan for?” We planned for 150 and prayed the church would be filled.

Little did we know that there would be standing room only even before Mass began. Franciscans, sisters and many people came from the neighboring parishes as well as our own. The Committee was overjoyed that so many came to be with us.

Br. Maynard Shurley, OFM, and a former member of St. Berard Church started the celebration with a blessing of our Sacred Space.

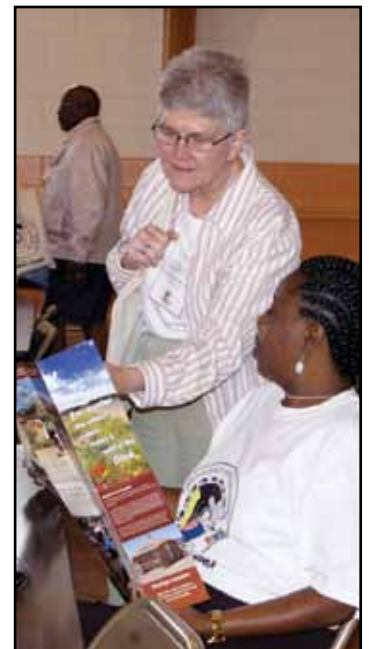
Fr. Gilbert Schnieder, OFM, the pastor for both churches, began by saying, “It is our great prayer and

hope that this event, this beautiful celebration, will truly be a time of growth and renewal for our people and our parish.”

After the Eucharistic Celebration talking and laughter filled the parish hall. Just as we were ready to start the food lines, Bishop Wall entered the hall and we all sang, “Happy Birthday!”

What a great celebration! Parishioners – new and old – working together to bring it about! People coming to celebrate with us!

For me the best part was the planning and the getting ready. It meant that we came together to work and to believe that all would go well. We had to support each other and to know that those who came to the celebration were those who were meant to be there. When God’s people come together celebrating His kingdom, it is Eucharistic!



*Sr. Zoe is definitely a people person. Photographer as well writer, Suzanne Hammons could not catch up with her to get a photo during the jubilee. This shot was taken at the ASBS Navajo Pilgrimage.*



*On Monday evenings Sr. Jane meets with parents and godparents of babies to be baptized. Gerard Blake and Jacqueline Wright are preparing to be godparents in the near future. They had to battle unusual early November cold, rain and traffic snarls in order to get to the meeting.*

## Energized by Harlem Ministry

Sr. Jane Norton was assigned to ministry in Harlem three times for a total of 25 years. Over the years she taught and was principal at St. Charles School, living in the convent on the fourth floor of St. Charles School at W 142 Street.

Sister now serves as a parish minister at St. Charles Rectory on W 141st Street. Since no SBS serve any more in the school, the convent is closed. Sister lives on the first two floors of the former rectory in the old Resurrection Complex built in 1907 on W 151st Street. The top two floors are occupied by female Jesuit volunteers who serve

for a year in various Catholic ministries in the city.

Old Resurrection School now houses a charter school. When the parish closed, it was incorporated into St. Charles. The church now is considered a Chapel. Two Sunday Masses are said there, one in Spanish. On Thursday at 7 p.m. an evening Mass is celebrated in Spanish.

Sister shares the first floor with a number of parish activities. There is a very large dining room and Sister's narrow

kitchen. Most of her living space is on the second floor where she has her bedroom, living room, chapel and a guest bedroom. The young women on the third and fourth floors have their own kitchen. When they forget and use both the toaster and toaster oven, they blow a fuse. Sister rushes to the fuse boxes on various floors locating the problem.

The living quarters though old, are comfortable enough. Problems come when Sister drives home from St. Charles and tries to find a parking space on W 151st Street. Occupied apartments line both sides of the street and cars

squeeze into every available spot. If Sr. Jane can't find one there, she circles around on the cross streets.

Aha! Someone is pulling out up ahead. Sister eases past the small free space, backs in, pulls up, turns the wheel and finally claims a space until early the next morning. Like other car driving New Yorkers, she has become adept at getting into unbelievably tiny spaces.

By 7 a.m. she is in hat and coat at the door, ready to head off to St. Charles to prepare the altar vessels for the 8 a.m. Mass. As part of the liturgy, she joins the priests and deacons praying the psalms.



## HARLEM'S

The island's highlands and lowlands, meadows and woods, streams and rivers provided all that the Manhattan Indians and other tribes needed to maintain their way of life in the early 1600s. Semi-nomadic, they hunted and fished, farmed the flatlands, adapted to the heat of summer and the snows of winter.

Then in 1637 the Franco-Dutch de Forest family established a homestead in the flatlands. Soon other Dutch immigrants settled along the Harlem River naming their town Nieuw Haarlem. The village was formally incorporated in 1660.

Four years later the English took control of New Netherlands. A "Harlem Line" marked the southern border of the village of Harlem.

During the Revolutionary War, the British set up fortifications in the southern part of Manhattan while George Washington made his base in Harlem. During the Battle of Harlem Heights, the American forces, outnumbered and ill equipped, defeated the English. However, the English returned with a vengeance. They drove Washington's forces out and left Harlem in a pile of ashes.



*After instruction in the rectory, the baptism class gathered around the baptismal font in St. Charles Church. Renneika Rezor (center) is the mother of baby Carly who will be baptized. Tanya Whitaker (right) will be Carly's godmother.*

When asked, "Why are you here, serving in St. Charles Parish?" Sr. Jane responded, "I still have something to give the people. I get much more from them than I give. My ministry is life-giving. My life here energizes me — the privilege of journeying with people, of sharing their lives, of knowing that people trust you, confide in you!"

Sr. Jane reflects, "The people of the parish think it is important that I'm here. However, I am realizing I can't be here forever. The pastor and I have talked about transitioning. For a variety of reasons, that hasn't happened."

Sister is impressed with the amount of activity in the parish. Father Gregory C. Chisholm, SJ., the pastor is very

concerned about adult faith formation. Father Marcel Amadi from Nigeria once a month explains the seasons of the Church year as they affect the Liturgy. Six or seven people are on the Committee for Adult Formation. There is a youth group, and at Resurrection there is an assigned deacon and a Director of Religious Education.

With so much going on, Sister keeps busy assigning places for meetings, classes, ceremonies, etc. She enjoys interacting with people, catching up on what is happening in their lives. Having been a part of the Harlem neighborhood for so many years, she often meets former students in the grocery store and on the street.

Sister is aware of the tensions that can come with city living, with poverty, with changing populations. Experience generates wisdom. When people confide in her, Sister can draw on that experience as she listens and offers advice.

People know her. This sister is not someone who flies in and disappears in a year. Like Christ, her Love and her Model, Sr. Jane is there to serve.



*Sr. Jane prepares the sacred vessel for the feastday concelebration at the 10 a.m. Mass.*

## Changing Face

Although rebuilding took time, the wealthy of lower Manhattan established summer homes in the Harlem area. When disease plagued the hot and humid city, they would head north to the healthier climate.

In the 1700s Blacks were already living in Manhattan and in Harlem. The Irish too were in both places, but the potato famine brought a large influx of poor Irish immigrants to Harlem. Some became squatters and were blamed for lowering the price of real estate.

After the Civil War, Harlem attracted increasing numbers of the poor, among them Dutch, German, Italian and Jewish immigrants. The city of New York annexed Harlem during the Panic of 1873.

Large numbers of row houses replaced mansions. Elevated Railroads reached Harlem in 1880. Urbanization developed rapidly. By 1893 apartment buildings became the norm.

After World War I many people from Puerto Rico and Latin America settled in East Harlem. In the 1920s the Harlem Renaissance produced many black musicians, writers and artists.

In 1910, Blacks made up 10 percent of Harlem's population. By 1930, the great migration from the South had produced a 70 percent majority. Black population peaked at 78 percent in 1950.

Since 2000, while central Harlem's population had grown, its black population is the smallest since the 1920s. By 2010 the percentage of whites had increased and the Hispanic population was at an all-time high.

Only 75 percent of Harlem's black population is American born. Immigrants from the Caribbean and more recently from Africa arrive in growing numbers.

### *Why the decline?*

- Some speculate Harlem's poor are under-counted in the census.
- Gentrification with its higher taxes forces people out.
- Only a minority of Blacks are area property owners.
- A sick economy and a lack of jobs do not put out a welcome sign.



# The Feast of St. Charles Borromeo

**November 2, 2014**

*a real celebration  
involving the whole parish*



To bring together the parishioners for the feast of St. Charles Borromeo, the pastor, Rev. Gregory C. Chisholm, SJ, combined the 9:30 and the 11:45 Masses into one Eucharistic Celebration at 10 a.m. Four priests — the pastor, Rev. Marcel Amadi, Msgr. John Meehan and Rev. Thomas Mestriparampil — concelebrated, assisted by Deacon Rodney A. Beckford and aided by teen-aged altar servers.

The combined choir filled the church with joyful praise, and the women's liturgical dance encouraged the congregation to lift their hearts in thanksgiving for the blessings poured out by God on the parish.

At the close of the Liturgy, everyone was invited to go to the auditorium for a hot meal. Parishioners were on hand to serve those in the long lines. Beaming smiles lighted up the room and proclaimed the sense of unity celebrating together created among them.





*On Nov. 2, 2014, the participants third meeting of the "Youth and Policing Adult Forum" gathered on the St. Charles stage as the celebration dinner in the auditorium was ending.*

## Youth and Policing Adult Forum

Harlemites are not a homogenous group. American-born Blacks still make up the largest piece of the pie. Then there are Hispanics, Chinese, African-born immigrants and a smattering of Whites. Educational, employment and income levels vary greatly. Personal experience with the police and media exposure influences how an individual feels about the police department and individual police walking the beat.

As Cassandra Frederiquis got the third Adult Forum going, the difference of opinion was evident, even in this small group. Some people feel safe with the police, want more of them visible in their neighborhoods. Then there are those with negative experiences who fear meeting a policeman. Media reports about Ferguson, about an unarmed man being shot by a policeman in a nearby park, and about the early morning NYC police raid in full body armor and with military style weapons of housing projects in June to round-up gang members build distrust.

Since the forum focused on youths' relationships with police, the moderator, provided insight into children's and teenagers' points of view by introducing Mya Garrett, a high school senior working with the National Action Network. Mya participated in "youth mood huddles" in various parts of the city. She affirmed that the young understood and whose feelings and opinions adults needed to recognize.

Huddling with the children, Mya found that some had no problem expressing themselves, while others held back, afraid to say anything. She discovered that some children feared not just policemen, but their own people.

As the adults joined the discussion someone pointed out that Harlem's rapidly changing demographics has led to feelings of mistrust. Another talked about telling a neighbor that she was going to the laundromat. The neighbor asked if she wasn't afraid to go alone. Although she often went alone unafraid, suddenly she felt scared! She feared parents also may "transfer their baggage to their kids."

Getting back to the police, a social worker present said, "Our own black police can be abusive." The NYPD, she added, "was the most diverse in the world."

Someone recalled that a policeman once warned her that when a policeman stopped anyone, that person should not look the policeman in the eye. It was considered rude. Instead, look down!



**Mya Garret is a senior at Preston High School, an all-girls Catholic college preparatory school in the Bronx, N.Y. Working with the National Action Network's local chapter in Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn, Mya "huddles" in conversation with mixed groups of children whose ages range from nine to 17 years.**

**"Some children are not afraid to say how they feel, while others are more reticent." Through these chats, Mya learned that "some children fear their own people."**



*Participants quite freely voiced their ideas.*

Stories about adult businessmen being accosted on a train or on the street, about the different way a policeman treated a poorly dressed woman and the same one well dressed, followed one another.

How to foster good relations was the next challenge. Someone suggested looking at our own biases. How do we see ourselves?

“There is a lot of self-hatred out there,” added Deacon Radcliffe. “We need adults to socialize the children.”

Sr. Jane related how a lawyer met with parents of the teen Spirit Group. Together they worked out ways to prepare the children to deal with a “stop and frisk” episode.

“We dismiss children,” said a woman. “We need to accept that young people are capable of getting it.”

“Youth have such a minimum of experience,” replied one man. “We listen to them, but guidance is necessary.”

Further comments agreed on the need to teach youth to respect themselves and others.

The above man added, “We need to teach the children respect for the reality of where they are.”

It was time to go. Yet as they donned their coats, each person knew this was not an end — just a start.



*Top down: Cassandra Frederiquis listens as Deacon Kenneth Radcliffe reminds the group that adults need to teach children social skills.*

*Father Gregory C. Chisholm, SJ, Arva Hollakes and Paulette Nixon listen attentively to what the forum participants share with the group.*

*Social Justice Committee Chair Tanya Douglas, Sr. Jane Norton, and recorder Dr. Martha Sullivan carefully consider Mya’s explanation of what she learned through her interaction with children and teens.*

## Notice to Subscribers

This is the last issue of **MISSION** published in a **print** edition.

It can also be downloaded on:

[www.katharinedrexel.org](http://www.katharinedrexel.org)

on the **Communications** page.

Future issues will still be published twice a year, and will be available for download in pdf form. (Adobe Acrobat is a free downloadable program enabling a person to read the pdf format. It is available for PC and MAC systems.)

We regret that we will be losing some of you, our readers, who do not have access to a computer. Your loving concern for our ministry has been much appreciated by the Sisters and we will continue to keep you in our prayers.

Your editor,  
Sr. M. Franceline Malone

## Hush! Hush! Somebody's calling my name, oh my Lord, what shall I do?

These words echoed in my mind for many years before I became a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament. I did not want to become a nun. In fact I kept telling God that just because you decided to make identical twins, you were calling the wrong twin to be a nun. It was always my sister, Patty who wanted to be a nun. I thought for sure that even God couldn't tell us apart. I kept convincing myself of that for many years.

I finally realized no matter how far I tried to run from what God was asking of me, I got tired. I was thirsty and I answered His call.

Little did I know at the time that my mother in her prayer of the faithful every Sunday would say, "for the increase in vocations to the religious life." She probably had no idea that that prayer



was meant for her daughters. However, since mothers know best, maybe in her own way she always knew that God was asking her to pray for her own daughters.

In 1983 I decided to go on a retreat at the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Motherhouse. I knew something was about to go down. I realized that when I finally

said yes to God. I stepped out on my faith and turned my life over to God and said, "OK, God, you got me." I started getting thirsty in new ways because I knew that God had some plans in store for me. The biggest burden I had ever felt was lifted up off of my shoulders. A sense of peace and freedom allowed me to rejoice about where my life was headed.

**by Sr. Lynn Marie Ralph**

Today, I continue to hear God's voice say to me, "It's not over yet!" I am talking about thirty years later, and God is still telling me it's not over yet. A few years ago I celebrated my 25th Jubilee as a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament and because I was a part of the Church of Saint Charles Borromeo, it was so good to see some parishioners there at my jubilee. It was even more special when a former student I taught in third grade did a praise dance during Mass.

Today when I hear the stories of the students I taught there, I am like a proud mama because they too believe in their own dreams. If you want quick responses in terms of how well someone is doing, you can't be a classroom teacher. You are only the gardener, and all you are asked to do is to water the seeds of the future.

I went to St. Charles in 1989 and was in ministry there for seven years. Not only did I minister there, but the people ministered to me as well and invited me to be a part of their church family.

It became obvious that God knew what He was doing when I was told I was going to Saint Charles Borromeo School and then got involved in the church as well — that brought me joy. I started a

## Somebody's Calling My Name

praise dance group in the church and even today, new generations have stepped up and stepped out in giving God praise and honor through their dancing. It was truly a blessing. There are no mistakes when God says, "I gotcha, I gotcha, I gotcha."

God calls each of us to a vocation, whether to a committed life, to become a priest or a religious sister. You may have doubts, but in the end, you will know what God is asking of you because you will experience a peace that surpasses all understanding. Don't let anyone take that joy away from you.

Your faith journey is not the same as the person sitting next to you. God calls each of us by name and when you get tired of running, know that God is right there ready and willing to give you a drink of His water from the fountain of your own faith experience.

Hush, hush! God called my name, and instead of me saying now, "Oh Lord, what shall I do?" I can say, "Oh, Lord, may your will be done." God, through others, I place my trust in you.

God is good all the time, and all the time God is good.

And let the church say, "Amen."

*"The offspring of this intensity of love for our Eucharistic Lord should be a consuming zeal for the gathering of souls into the fold of Christ."*

*St. Katharine Drexel*

## ASBS Director Makes Private Vows in the Spirit of St. Katharine Drexel

### *My Beloved to me and I to Him*

by Carole Blanks



Flanked by her two witnesses, Ada Martz and ASBS Joan Chisholm, Carole pronounced her vows. Before them and her spiritual director Father William Delaney, SJ, Carole signs her vow card.  
After the ceremony, guests went with her to the Crypt containing the tomb of St. Katharine Drexel where Carole led a tribute to St. Katharine Drexel on the 14th Anniversary of her Canonization.

Many years ago, after reading the *Biography of St. Katharine Drexel*, by Sr. Consuela Marie Duffy, I was deeply impressed by St. Katharine's devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and her life of service to the Native and African American people — her total gift of self.

I entered the SBS Novitiate, but due to family circumstances elected to return home. Through the years, I continued to serve in ministries that were similar to the charism of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and attended daily Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Something was still lacking. I continued to feel that God was calling me to a deeper relationship with Him in consecrated life.

In 2005, I participated in religious activities, prayer services and retreats with Our Lady of the Way Secular Institute in Los Angeles. After formation and training, the superior of the secular institute invited me to make solemn vows with them. While I enjoyed sharing community life with them, and wished to consecrate my life to God, the charism of Our Lady of the Way Secular Institute was not the charism to which I felt God was calling me. My heart has always been rooted in the Blessed Sacrament and the charism of St. Katharine Drexel.

A few years ago, I began to seek information regarding the procedure for making private vows. After spending a little more than a year in prayer, discussion and discernment with my spiritual director, we discerned that God is calling me to a deeper commitment in my spiritual life that would be expressed through private vows. My desire is that the charism of St. Katharine Drexel flow from these vows.

SBS Leadership asked the following question: What will it mean for you to have and live out private vows flowing from the charism of Saint Katharine Drexel?

My response: The most important aspect is living the spirit of the Eucharist, and that all that I do to serve God and His people emanates from the Blessed Sacrament. Specifically, I am drawn to St. Katharine Drexel because of her love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. I am drawn to her charism in the desire to bring all of God's people to the Eucharistic Table...to bring the Gospel to the poor and oppressed, to reach out in compassion and love to those who have been rejected by society, who do not have a voice and those who are victims of social injustice. This will be lived out through spiritual and corporal works of mercy among God's people. I am impressed by St. Katharine's deep humility and love... and her joy — so exemplary for us, and an inspiration for me. She was a true servant of God, and a servant to His people. I wish to be that flame that continues to light the world with Christ's presence, embracing those who have lost hope and feel rejected in society and help them to find peace and joy in Christ's presence.

## Sr. Mary O'Riordan

March 7, 1919 - April 25, 2014

*In Thy Will is my peace*

Born in Ballaugh, Ireland, on March 7, 1919, Mary was baptized the next day in St. Mary's church. Her father's first wife died after giving birth to twin boys. His second wife died when Mary was 11 days old! The third wife, Nora, bore eight children. All the children helped out on the farm. At age 15 Mary enrolled in the Sisters of Mercy Convent School. Mother Mercedes and Sr. M. Brendan visited the school in 1935, but Mary was helping at home. Urged by a Mercy sister, Mary contacted them in Dublin. When the Sisters returned to America, Mary was among the 14 young women sailing with them.

Mary became a novice called Sr. M. Bennett in 1939. On Aug. 25, 1941, she vowed her life to God. She left for Corpus Christi in New Orleans, where she continued taking college courses and became a U.S. citizen. In 1948 Sister went to Church Point, La., where few children came to school the first month. They picked cotton. In 1953 Sister received a BS in Education from Villanova. Her ministry took her to Harlem, N.Y.; St. Michaels, Ariz., where she taught primary children and was a dorm mother; Beaumont, Texas; Rayne, La.; St. Louis, Mo.; and the Pala Indian Reservation, Calif. Before reaching St. Martinville, La., in 1983, she had returned to her baptismal name. In 1992 Sister *retired* from classroom teaching, but tutored children, mentored teachers, taught First Communion classes and visited the sick!

Assigned to West Philadelphia in 2002, Sister fell on the convent stairs and was brought to the Motherhouse. In need of care by 2011, she moved to St. Michael Residence where she could be found praying in the chapel early each morning. On April 25, 2014, Sister awakened from sleep in the arms of her loving Father.



## Sr. Mary Grace Connelly

March 22, 1930 - June 14, 2014

*Come, Holy Spirit*

Mary was born in Philadelphia on March 22 and baptized at Immaculate Conception Church on April 6, 1930. She attended St. Vincent de Paul Elementary and Little Flower High School. After graduating, while working for Met Life,

she felt a growing attraction to religious life.

On Jan. 6, 1952 Mary entered the convent. She became a novice known as Sr. Mary Grace on July 16, 1952, and pronounced her vows on Aug. 3, 1954. Soon after she went to Corpus Christi in New Orleans where she taught for nine years. Meanwhile on Saturdays and during the summers she continued her college education. She earned a BS in Education from Xavier University of Louisiana in 1963. Sr. Mary Grace then served as elementary teacher and/or principal in Philadelphia, Pa.; New Iberia, New Orleans and Lake Charles, La.; and Cleveland, Ohio, then taught CCD in Pena Blanca, N.M. When she taught religion at Xavier Prep in New Orleans in 1986, a number of students brought her their troubles. Sister recognized the need for specific training. Soon after open-heart surgery in 1990, she was back teaching while studying school counseling. With an MA from Loyola in New Orleans, she began a career in guidance counseling in San Carlos then in St. Michael Indian School, Ariz.

In 2002 Sr. M. Grace was admitted to St. Michael Hall where she became confined to a wheel chair and eventually to a Gerry chair. She sat in the hallway praying and devouring one book after another. Hospitalized in late May, Sister returned home on June 10. Her condition deteriorated rapidly. On June 14, surrounded by her brother Jim, his wife Diana, and her devoted niece Eileen, Sister began her new life with God.

## Sr. Alice Marie Harkin

Feb. 6, 1927 - Sept. 15, 2014

*Love is repaid by love alone*

Although born in New York City, Charlotte spent her early years in Boston, Ma., where she was baptized in Holy Cross Cathedral on Feb. 19, 1928. Her mother died when she was three, She and her siblings were raised by her mother's sister as her father as a merchant marine

was frequently away. At Holy Cross Cathedral she received First Communion and Confirmation. From first to fifth grade Charlotte attended public school, then from sixth to twelfth Cathedral School. When she was a freshman, Sr. Consuela Marie gave a vocation talk and showed pictures of SBS missions. Meanwhile Charlotte developed an interest in the American Indians. For four years she corresponded with Sr. Consuela Marie and volunteered at the SBS Boston mission.

Charlotte entered the convent on Aug. 27, 1945. She became a novice known as Sr. Alice Marie on July 16, 1946. During her two year novitiate, both her aunt and her father died. Pronouncing

her vows on July 15, 1948, she proclaimed her love for God.

Like many SBS at that time her first mission was to Corpus Christi, New Orleans. Her pursuit of social justice through SBS educational ministry took her to New Iberia, Church Point, Lake Charles, St. Martinville, Carencro and other schools in New Orleans, La.; Beaumont, Texas; Philadelphia, Pa., Chicago, Ill.; St. Michaels, Ariz.; and Marty, S.D. Along the way, Sister continued her studies on weekends and during the summers. She received a BA from Xavier University of La. in 1960, in 1974 an MA from La Salle College in Philadelphia and in 1980 an MA in elementary education.

In 1989 Sister returned to the Motherhouse where she became sacristan of St. Elizabeth Chapel. Besides preparing for daily liturgies, she handled cleaning and decorating. She later claimed, "It was one of the greatest blessings of my life." During her free time she enjoyed crocheting and made beautiful afghans for the infirmary or the gift shop. After 17 years as sacristan, Sister moved to St. Michael Hall in 2006. As her health continued to decline and she became less active, Sister retained her pleasant smile. On returning from Aria Hospital in 2014, she was placed on hospice care. When breathing became difficult, she was put on oxygen, but Sister eventually succumbed to heart failure. She passed into eternity on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.



## Sr. Alma Marie Tivenan

Dec. 25, 1924 - June 30, 2014

*Thy will, my will*

God gave the Tivenans a special Christmas gift — their only child, Margaret, who was baptized in Transfiguration Church on Jan. 11, 1925. She later received First Communion and Confirmation and attended elementary school there. While at West Catholic High School, Sr. Consuela Marie Duffy gave a talk about the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. A seed was planted. After graduating, Margaret studied for a year at Immaculata College. Then on Aug. 15, 1943, she entered the convent. On July 16, 1944, she received the name Sr. Alma Marie and became a novice. On July 16, 1946, Sister's vows expressed her deep love for Our Lord and his suffering people.

Sister's education ministry began in Chicago and continued in Harlem, N.Y.; Fresno, Calif.; Cleveland, Ohio; Carencro, New Orleans and Rayne, La.; and Biloxi, Miss. While in Rayne she formed the men's gospel choir and encouraged integration by teaching white children at St. Joseph School and the black children of Our Mother of Mercy. Meanwhile in 1950, Sister earned a B.S. from Villanova and in 1964 an M.A. from Xavier University of La. From 1989 to 2010 Sister was a part of the faculty of Xavier Prep in New Orleans.

In 2010, Sr. Alma Marie discovered medical issues needing care. Assigned to St. Michael Hall, she enjoyed time to read, pray and keep in contact with people from her various missions. On June 8, 2014, Sister was admitted to Aria Hospital. When she returned home, she was placed on hospice care. On the morning of June 30, Sister's condition had worsened. While arranging for sisters to pray at Sr. Alma Marie's bedside, Sr. Carole Eden got word that Sister had already gone home to the Father.



## Sr. Alice Veronica McCabe

July 9, 1920 - July 28, 2014

*Behold the handmaid of the Lord*

Alice Veronica was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, and baptized two days later in Sacred Heart Church. By 1928 the McCabe family was living in Philadelphia and belonged to Our Lady of Mercy Parish where the six children attended the parochial school. Alice became a U.S. citizen in 1931. She graduated from Hallahan High School in 1938, then studied at Ladycliff College in New York. Back in Philadelphia, she took evening classes at Temple and Villanova.

Alice got to know the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament during retreats at the Shrine of the True Cross in Torresdale. On Aug. 25, 1947, she joined her sister, Sr. M. Alice Patrick, by entering the community. Becoming a novice named Sr. Maureen Immaculate (later returned to her baptismal name) on July 16, 1948, Alice professed her vows two years later. Her mission years were spent in New Orleans and Lake Charles, La.; Biloxi, Miss; Harlem, N.Y.; Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pa.; Atlanta, Ga.; and St. Michaels, Ariz. In 1952 Sister received a B.A. from Villanova and in 1972 an M.A. from Xavier University of La.

1989 brought Sister to the Motherhouse where she planned a variety of activities for the sisters. She engaged heart and soul in the pro-life movement — lobbying by letter and telephone and speaking at events and on the radio. Slowing down by 2010, Sister moved into St. Michael Hall. On July 20, 2014, difficulty breathing took her to Aria's emergency area. She was admitted and several times deemed too weak to be sent home. At 3:30 p.m. July 28, Sr. Anne Kelly went to be with her. She held Sister's hand while speaking and praying with her. At about 6:30, Sr. Alice Veronica peacefully passed from this life to life without end.



## Sr. Anne Doyle

April 14, 1920 – Sept. 23, 2014

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, now  
and at the hour of my death*

Anne was born in Tarberth, County Kerry, Ireland, one of 10 children. Three of the girls became SBS, Sr. M. Brigid, Sr. M. Imelda and Sr. Anne. Baptized in the local St. Mary Church, Anne also received her First Communion and Confirmation

and her grade school education there. She began high school at the College of Christ the King and after arriving in Bensalem on Aug 24, 1936, finished at Blessed Sacrament H.S. as an apostoline. While at Christ the King, Anne heard a talk by Mother Mercedes on the missionary call of the SBS among the Black and Indian peoples in the United States. Anne heard the call of Christ.

When Anne finished her high school studies, she became an SBS postulant on Aug. 30, 1938, and a novice named Sr. M. Basil (later returning to baptismal name) on Aug. 23, 1939. The novitiate was a time devoted to growth in the spiritual life through prayer, instruction on vowed life and some ministry experience. Sr. Basil taught a half year at Holy Providence on the Mother-

house grounds. On Aug. 25, 1941, Sr. Basil lovingly pronounced her vows to God.

Ready now for missionary work, her first assignment was to St. Ignatius in Philadelphia. From there Sister taught in Chicago, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Nashville, Tenn.; New Orleans, Rayne, New Iberia and St. Martinville, La.; St. Michaels, Ariz.; and Santa Fe, N.M. Her last mission was at St. Katharine Drexel Convent in Santa Fe where she volunteered at a local public school tutoring small children having trouble with math.

In 2009 she accidentally closed the car door on her leg causing a deep gash. Although she received on-going medical attention, the leg had to be amputated above the knee. Following rehabilitation in Santa Fe, Sr. Anne was flown back to the Pennsylvania where she became a member of St. Michael Hall (now Blessed Sacrament) community. One of her favorite activities was being an Honor Guard, taken in her wheelchair to Sr. Katharine Drexel's tomb where she would pray for and with visitors.

In January 2014 her condition deteriorated and she was placed on hospice care. In June she suffered pneumonia and gradually she grew weaker and was sleeping more and more. A St. Michael employee and the hospice nurse were with Sister before the 9 a.m. Mass when she passed peacefully into her Spouse's welcoming arms.



*Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament*

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In 1888 Fr. Charles O'Keefe established St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Harlem. He raised funds, purchased the lots and erected the impressive Gothic church to accommodate the mostly Irish immigrants in the area. The church was completed in 1904. The school served only Catholic students.

In 1926 pastor Fr. Patrick O'Donnell invited the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to run the school as the black population was growing. The school opened its doors to black families.

In 1968 faulty wiring caused a fire in the roof. St. Charles was rebuilt by 1972, but with a circular sanctuary design. Sr. Jane Norton, who has served in Harlem off and on for 25 years, now works for St. Charles Parish.



As I consider my future and pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance, I would like to know more about the life, mission and ministry of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament.

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*Please mail to:*  
**Sr. Amelia Breton,**  
**Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament**  
**1663 Bristol Pike**  
**Bensalem, PA 19020**

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