



# The Marianite

A publication from The Marianites of Holy Cross

Our

Legacy

in

Education



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Marianite educators – past  
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## a message from our Congregational Leader



*"A teacher affects eternity; you can never tell  
where your influence stops."*

Henry B Adams

Dear Friends,

Many years ago when I was studying at Our Lady of Holy Cross one of my sisters, Sr. Mary Carmel Murphy, MSC wrote the Henry Adams quote on my history essay as she handed it back to me with a note to try harder. That note was for me a turning point in my studies! Mary Carmel's words and her daily actions opened a door that encouraged me to do my best. She was tough and she was fair. I wanted to teach and I wanted to do my best.

When I consider the 176 years the Marianites have been educators, I smile with gratitude for the countless opportunities that have been afforded our Congregation and the influence that we have had in the lives of countless people through the years. Not all of us are teachers yet there is not a sister in the Congregation that is not influencing lives.

Our Mission Statement calls each sister to incarnate the love and compassion of Jesus through *prophetic presence*! The General Chapter of 2017 set a direction that challenges each Marianite to be in mission each day of her life. By our lives we influence people... it is in the simple actions of the day:

**A Smile, a Good Morning**

**A note of Thanks**

**A Prayer**

**An Invitation to Inclusion**

As you read this Education edition, I invite you to take some time to reflect on the many people who have influenced you but more especially to pause and consider how you are influencing others. God works in and through each of us. In the Book of Timothy we read *that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*. Let Jesus be our guide as we journey in life believing that who we are more than what we do makes a difference.

*Blessings,*

Sr. Ann Lacour, MSC  
Congregational Leader

## quotes worth remembering

"I love teaching because it calls forth both a give and take from me and from the students. I know that when I go before any group, I first pray and then prepare to do my best" — Sr. Pat Schladebeck, currently a counselor in New Jersey.

"Even though times have changed, the values the Sisters instilled in me make me a better teacher. Strict but gentle; understanding but persistent. Determined with a strong faith that I am making a difference in the lives of the children I teach," — Pat Crocker, second grade teacher at Holy Family School in Port Allen.



# Holy Cross Education – OUR LEGACY

Many times the word *legacy* is defined as “money or property left to someone in a will”. The word, however, can denote “something transmitted by or received from a predecessor”. To the priests, brothers and sisters of Holy Cross that “something” often refers to one of the most treasured possessions willed to us by our founder, Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau: *the legacy of education*. Father Moreau once described education as the “art of arts”.

In a paper entitled *Called by God, Faculty and Staff Formation in the Holy Cross Educational Legacy*, Joel Giallanza, CSC and Stephen Walsh, CSC developed four themes around which a group of Holy Cross educators from schools sponsored by the South-West Province of the Congregation of Holy Cross proposed to build a formation program for Holy Cross educators. These themes included *building respect, educating hearts and minds, being family and bringing hope*.

The Marianites, since their founding 175 years ago, have educated countless students at every grade level, from pre-school through university. Just as Father Moreau passed on his legacy of the value of Christian education to us, we have passed it on to countless students who have become educators themselves. We have taken the four themes as outlined by the Holy Cross educators, including an explanation of each as stated by Brothers Giallanza and Walsh, a quote from Father Moreau on the theme and a response from former students who share with our readers their recollections of their “school days” with the Marianites.

## BUILDING RESPECT

*Holy Cross education teaches respect for personal, social, racial, ethnic, political, religious, gender and linguistic diversity.* Respect for others is rooted in the dignity to which each human being has a right. That dignity expresses a basic truth of our creation: we reflect the image and likeness of God.

Father Moreau wrote in a treatise on Christian

Education: “Observe strict impartiality towards all... give all the students the same instruction, the same care, the same attention; respect the feelings of young people who are extremely sensitive and easily cut to the quick.”

*Carolyn Milstead*, who taught for 36 years in her own third-grade classroom at St. Francis deSales, Houma, writes how her Marianite teachers taught her love of God and love of one another. *Sr. Pam Weathersby*, who attended Marianite elementary schools and Holy Angels Academy, tells us that during her career as a teacher she “always wanted her students to feel special and to attach that to the love of Jesus for them as individuals”. Another Marianite graduate from Houma, *Donaldo Batiste*, who now serves as a Professor of Education at the University of Holy Cross, tells us that “these Sisters modeled for me the love and compassion that Jesus taught and expects from each of us on a daily basis”.

## EDUCATING MINDS AND HEARTS

There are often tensions between faith and reason, between heart and mind, between education and instruction in our school systems.

Holy Cross educators are well aware of Father Moreau’s belief that *the mind should not be educated at the expense of the heart*. He wrote, “While we prepare useful citizens for society, we shall likewise do our utmost to prepare citizens for heaven”.

Our responders mirror this philosophy in many of their statements. *Renee deGravelles Burke Stirling*, who spent her elementary and high school years at St. John Academy in Franklin, and became a successful para-professional in Title I program as a music teacher, speaks lovingly of her Marianite teachers and states that they will always have a special place in her heart. *Janice Quick Nadler*, educated at St. Cecilia School, Holy Angels and UHC, puts it succinctly, “In sincere words, Lucky Me!” *Debbie Barbier*, a first-grade teacher at Holy Family School in Port Allen stated, “Their core belief of educating the

heart and mind along with the importance of instilling Christian values and service to others is why I have chosen to teach in a Catholic school for the past 38 years.”

## BEING FAMILY

Holy Cross education nurtures an environment of collaboration, supported by a family spirit which touches and includes everyone associated with the school. Fr. Moreau



*The Associates Steering Committee - members of our extended family*



often used the image of Holy Cross as family.

He wrote in a letter to the Congregation: ... the one aim of the glory of God and the salvation of souls inspires almost all the members and gives rise to a oneness of effort which tends toward that more perfect union of hearts which constitutes its bond and strength."

These responders learned that lesson well. *Katherine T. Mouille*, spent eleven years with the Marianites at St. Francis deSales in Houma. She states, "Now that I have reached the great 'old age' of 79, my mind often goes back to those happy days at St. Francis. I felt safe, valued and loved by my friends and teachers. It was a wonderful time of my life!" *Judy Goodwyne-Miranti*, was educated at St. Julien Eymard School, Holy Angels Academy, and Our Lady of Holy Cross College, states how much she loves claiming OLHC as her Alma Mater. So, she states, "the charism of the Marianites is emblazoned on my heart." A former Marianite, she now serves as Professor and Associate Chair of the Division of Education and Counseling at Xavier University. *Sr. Barbara Claire Schreier, MSC*, writes of her experience at Trenton Catholic Academy in Hamilton Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. "In our school, we strive hard to be one family - a family consisting of African-Americans, Hispanics, Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Koreans. Regardless, we are united. We are one family. And being one family, we learn that we are part of a larger family -- God's family."

### BRINGING HOPE

Bringing hope engages us in service to others, calls us to think globally and act locally, urges us to an active citizenship and compassionate responsibility, gives us an awareness of the internationality of our mission and

of our links to others around the world who share this mission.

Father Moreau always insisted, no matter how many difficulties he encountered, that he "never lost hope in Providence or in your fidelity to the sublime vocation which God has given you".

Many of our responders echoed this hope. *Cheryl Fuselier*, a graduate of St. Charles Academy in Lake Charles, writes that she has always been fond of the Marianites who taught and nurtured her. "I do what I learned from them," she says. She quotes Parker Palmer in *The Courage to Teach*, "We become teachers for reasons of the heart ... we take heart, alone and together, so we can give heart to our students and the world - which is what good teachers do." *Joan Gremillion*, a graduate of Sts. Peter and Paul School and Holy Angels Academy, and, as a Marianite, Our Lady of Holy Cross College for two years, comments, "When you spend 15-plus years surrounded by Marianites it has to have an impact!" She writes that her time with the Marianites makes her think of Roots and Wings ... "In elementary school they planted seeds by providing a secure environment for growth/learning and they gave us all a deep sense of stability and family. They allowed us to try out our wings. In high school they continued to nourish and support us as we strengthened our wings by helping us take on responsibilities, develop values, thrive socially, progress academically, and find our talents, gifts and passions. I will always be grateful for their contributions to my development."



Religion topics are very interesting when discussed with students from multi-ethnic backgrounds.



Sr. Barbara and students prepare sandwiches for the homeless.



# Two Marianites Who Have “TAKEN ON THE WORLD”

Sisters Magdalen Broussard and Kate McCarney have come from very different backgrounds. Mag grew up on a rice farm in Southwest Louisiana; Kate in Belfast, Northern Ireland. However, they have something very interesting in common. Both of these Marianites are educators who have for many years devoted their talents to the education of individuals who have migrated to the United States.

Popularly known as Adult Education, Mag and Kate have specialized in English as a Second Language (ESL). Their students have come from all over the world and their classrooms often resemble a “little United Nations.”

Mag began her career in education as a second grade teacher (with 45 students and no aide, she is quick to point out!). After twenty-seven years in the classroom, she was engaged in Parish Ministry for twenty-two years. In 1999 until May of 2017 she ministered in PEPI in Iberia Parish in Louisiana. Progressive Education Program, Inc. (PEPI) is a program geared toward breaking the cycle of poverty through education. She has commented that she “transferred certain skills from one ministry to the other during these years. They were communication, organization, conflict resolution, creativity, ability to motivate others, attention to detail, and group facilitation. She states that although her students came from all over the world, they became family. They laughed and cried together. They took care of each other. Mag says this experience taught her to develop a deep respect for faith perspectives and traditions. She also says that her students taught her more than she taught them!

Kate is quick to agree. She began her teaching career in Hazlet, NJ at St. Benedict School, grades 3-8. Since then she has taught students from a great variety of backgrounds in a variety of New Jersey towns and cities including South Plainfield, Edison, Camden, Freehold and Asbury Park in ESL programs. ( She’s moved so often, she says, because when federal funding was cut she had to move where the funding was available.) When asked the countries which were represented in her classes, her response turns out to be a tour around the world! They’d come from Indonesia, China, Korea, Turkey, Greece, Poland, Italy, Spain, Haiti, Mexico, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria and the Ivory Coast. She describes

her students as “faith-filled” people who are good, law-abiding citizens. When she returned to Northern Ireland a few years ago she established an education center in which immigrants are assisted in learning and improving their English language skills.

Nelson Mandela is quoted as saying that education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. This is the legacy of these two dedicated Marianites. They have indeed changed the world, one student at a time.



*There are many ways to say “thank you” but the smiles say it all.*

## quotes worth remembering

“I walk around with the heart of a child but will be a mature adult when time sees fit. I am so thankful for these wonderful women in my life. I do not know who I would be without them,”  
— *Brian Bass*, physical education teacher at Holy Family School, Port Allen.

I’m a Holy Angels graduate. After 38 years as a high school teacher and still teaching – loving every minute of it. — *Karen Hewitt Mathews*



# Sr. Bernadette Larson *"Pays It Forward"*

I have been associated with the Marianites since July 4, 1942. Let me explain.

My dad died when I was 13 months old. My mother tried to take care of me but circumstances wouldn't permit it. Her brother, who was my godfather, told her about St. Vincent De Paul in Tarrytown, NY, where he sent his two children after his wife died. During my time there, I received a terrific education but I think what I remember most is the love and care I received outside of the classroom. There were teachers and non-teachers; the latter took care of us outside of the classroom. We children went to the chapel to pray with the sisters and I



She had a very kind heart and every once in a while, I would go into the kitchen and she would give me a slice of bologna and a glass of milk.

In high school, I kept in touch with the sisters as I would take a trip to Ridgefield, Connecticut to spend

Island, there were boarders. I would push the little ones on the swings and play games with them. I had the precious kindergarten at first. When they were upset and crying, I would just put my arms around them and hold them, just the way the sisters did for me.

When St Louis was scheduled to close, I was sent to Holmdel, NJ, to teach at St John Vianney High School. The student body was composed basically of blue-collar boys and girls from the neighboring towns. Over the years, we have become a much diversified community. We have about 42 "feeder" schools that cover many miles. Our emphasis is on being a family. We have our ups and down but during the rough times we all come together to support one another to try to find solutions to the problems that occur. I'll be at JVS 50 years in 2018. At reunions, I am thanked for doing things I often don't even remember. Our JVS family, present and past, truly lives the school's motto of Knowledge, Commitment and Involvement.

When they were upset and crying, I would just put my arms around them and hold them, just the way the sisters did for me.

absorbed their various devotions by osmosis. I learned how to do many things: play the piano, sew, knit and crochet and play lots of games.

The most important thing I remember is the care we always received. When I developed pneumonia, I had to be administered sulfur every hour. Sr. Onesimus took the day hours and Mother Victor (along with Tara her dog) took the night hours. When I had a vicious case of poison ivy over my entire body, Sr. Onesimus was my compassionate caregiver. I have fond memories of Sr. Anthony, the cook. She never called us by name -only "girlie".

the weekend with Sisters Edward, Celestine and Helen at St Mary's, a school which the Marianites established there. My mother and I would also take the train to Princeton to visit my friend, Sr. Louise. I was present for the blessing of the "Guest House", the novitiate building, and the cemetery.

Entering the novitiate on Sept. 15, 1956, was like going back to my days at Tarrytown as I was not a stranger to the routine. Sr. Ambrose taught me a lot about sports especially the New York Yankees! She always had the games on. When I was at St Louis Academy, Staten

## quotes worth remembering

"Over ten years ago I retired from the handbell choir at St. John, Franklin and it's still going strong." — *Renée de Gravelles Burke Stirling*, a para-professional in the Title I program and director of the choir at St. John.

Overheard in a discussion among educators, "As a child I was fascinated with film strips. What a challenge with all the technology available in the classroom in 2017 – computers, Promethean Boards, this and that, etc."

# Happy and Holy

Sr. Cheryl Porte

Mother Mary of the Seven Dolours became first superior of the women of Holy Cross. She was also collaborator of Basil Moreau in his mission of education; developing the mind while cultivating the heart. In 1849, in an effort to advance his vision for Holy Cross, as well as to promote Mother Mary's global leadership, Father Moreau sent her to Canada where she took on the responsibility of directing the boarding school at Saint-Laurent, near Montreal. It was during her fourteen years in Canada that Mother Mary demonstrated the best of her qualities as an educator and consequently earned the title "Mother of Educators" from the Canadian sisters.

Details from the chronicles demonstrate how Mother Mary made an impression on the first generation of Holy Cross educators in the New World. Two specific beliefs of hers regarding the educational process allowed this to happen: education must be enjoyable and education must lead to holiness.

Mother Mary believed that if you want to do good for someone, you must first make them happy. She held that this was necessary for both teachers and students, and her belief in happiness was practical. Sadness led to discouragement and was a poor witness to a faith that spoke of God's love and activity in our lives. Consequently, one of her first actions at the school in Saint-Laurent was to institute the "Feast of the Boarding School" to be celebrated on November 21 of each year. She also stressed that study was to be enjoyable because education was not only a matter of intelligence, but a matter of the heart. To that end, mid-term exams were performed in a little theater atmosphere, with students

giving recitations, dialogues, dramatizations. Chronicles tell us that everyone, parents and priests alike, were touched with the happy innovations.

The primary purpose of education in the Holy Cross tradition is to transform ourselves, both teachers and students, into the "Divine Model"; to become Christ in our life, our work and our play. This meant, to Mother Mary, to develop a lifestyle and an attitude of holiness. Consequently, she stressed that teachers were to witness esteem and affection for their students. All were to be shown respect and courtesy. Students were not to be addressed by teachers or by each other using nicknames, insults or even commands, but everyone deserved the dignity of the title "Miss" and a tone of prayer must be used when it was necessary to correct. With her emphasis on witness and encouragement rather than demand, Mother Mary instituted two practices to promote holiness among the students. Every Saturday, the "Cross of Honor" was presented to students who demonstrated the practice of virtue during the week, and an Association of the Children of Mary was established. Everyone wanted to join, but consideration for membership was determined by a blend of devotional practices, faithfulness to rules, and attitudes of respect toward others. Both provided a stimulus for the spiritual formation of the students.

These two conditions

of happiness and holiness are not the only qualities that Mother Mary saw as necessary to the educational process, but they are recognized by those involved in the school as having a profound effect on both teachers and students, and highly influential in promoting the mission of Holy Cross education. They also raise questions for all of us who are in any way involved in the faith formation of others: How do we bring happiness to others? How do we witness happiness? How are we images of Christ in the world? Does our holiness demonstrate itself to others?





# COMMENTARY...

Sr. Clarita Bourque, MSC

***"They (the Marianites) inspired us to know that women could do anything they set their minds to do and create".***

This is a quote from Catherine Boesch, a graduate of St. Agnes Elementary and Holy Angels Academy. She also stated that "the sense of service to others which I experienced inspired me as a teacher and school administrator". This brings up an interesting point. During Catherine's time as a student it was rare to see women in leadership positions. As recorded in these pages, they were wonderful teachers. They were also nurses, secretaries, store clerks, waitresses ... the list is endless. We note, of course, that few if any of these positions was administrative.

Things are different today. We have women as university presidents, school principals, hospital administrators, owners of their own businesses, executives of major corporations, governors and mayors of cities and towns, etc., etc.

How did this change come about? There are many reasons but perhaps Catherine has hit on a major cause for the change. She states that her Marianite teachers, by their example, showed her that women could do anything they set their minds to. Their constant encouragement motivated her. And, they taught her by example. Perhaps she visited Opelousas General or the French Hospital in New York, Dominican College in New Orleans, or she read about women who led large

religious congregations of women and who, in the face of great adversity, founded institutions which cared for the poor and forgotten along the American frontier. She saw women religious who were college presidents, school principals and hospital administrators when these fields were not open to lay women in the professional world. Like many another Catholic school girl, Catherine instinctively knew that women could competently fill these leadership roles.

Sandra Bonner, a graduate of Marianite schools in Morgan City, La., wrote to us, "As I sit here today, flooded by memories of the Marianites, I know that I am the woman I am today because I knew all of these wonderful and inspirational women. I know that my liberal, open-minded, tolerant world-view is a legacy of these women and I am forever grateful for their love and inspiration".

Maya Angelou once said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel". By word and example the graduates of Catholic schools learned that the infamous "glass ceiling" could be broken. If those nuns could do it, so could they!

Empowerment of women is certainly one of the proudest aspects of our legacy.

## Joni Brignac Duos Is Back in the Classroom

So many times I am asked the question, "Why did you go back into the classroom after being in education for 35 years?" There are many answers due to the rewards a teacher receives daily from her students, but the main answer for me is my heart feels the happiest there!

My professional years as an educator have included different paths. Eight years were served in the public school system as a classroom teacher. Nine years were in the Catholic school classroom and eighteen years were served as an administrator in the Diocese

of Lafayette. Every position was a blessing in that the experiences and amount of knowledge acquired from each was beneficial to my life story.

Being a student, teacher, and administrator of a Marianite school, Sacred Heart, Ville Platte, LA, has been valuable for the most important role in my life, that is one of a parent and grandparent.

Early on in my career, I was granted the opportunity to teach my daughter and unknowingly my future daughter-in-law in their elementary years at Sacred Heart Elementary. What a priceless gift to be blessed with that opportunity! Who knew that I would be given the opportunity to teach their daughters, my granddaughters, in Kindergarten on the same holy ground? So what does a grandmother always say? Nothing less than "Yes!"

So to sum it up, I am back in the classroom after 35 years in education, because my heart is filled beyond description!!!

*Joni & grandkids*





# Lessons from a Piano Bench ~ The Sparacios

A piano has a **keyboard** with 88 black and white keys. When a key is pressed down, the damper comes off the string and a hammer hits the string. It hits it very quickly and bounces off so that the string is free to **vibrate** and make a sound. When the player takes her finger off the key the damper falls back on to the string and the sound stops.

"The magnetic pull of the keys started with my mom who taught private piano lessons for 30 years. She was determined her children would have musical knowledge, too" said Lena Sparacio a 1975 Holy Angels grad who entered the field of education. In speaking of her teaching career she went on to say, "I was a special education teacher at the middle and high school levels and a regular elementary teacher. I enjoyed working with students in the inclusion program. I peer coached and mentored new teachers as a Master Teacher after receiving a superior rating by the LATEP program in 1992."

Lena's sister, Rosalie Sparacio Viau is a 1978 graduate of Holy Angels who began teaching in 1985 in Arabi, LA. Then from 1991 to the present she has been at Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Lake Charles, LA where she has taught Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and first grade.

In a phone conversation both Lena and Rosalie agree, "We are very proud to be AHA graduates and cherish the education we received from the Marianites, preparing us for college."

Without skipping a beat, Lena continues, "Our proudest moment was when our mother, Teresa Venturella Sparacio entered college at the age of 39, (the beginning of my senior year in high school) and graduated from Our Lady of Holy Cross College (now University of Holy Cross) as an honor graduate in 1979."



Row 1: my niece (Rosalie's daughter): Christina Engolia Burleigh, row 2: My parents Johnny and Teresa (Venturella) Sparacio (Holy Cross College Class of '79), row 3: Rosalie Sparacio '78 and her husband, Deacon Glenn Viau; Lena Sparacio '75 and my brother, Luke Sparacio

Teresa continued to give piano lessons even as a classroom teacher. Lena said, "My mother taught all subjects, but her greatest joy was First Communion Class."

All three, the "girls" and their mom, were close to Sr. M. Bartholomew who taught music. With her meticulous insistence on practice, students imbibed the rewards of a solid work ethic and genuine patience. Lena laughs remembering how Sr. Bartholomew would know instinc-

tively when they had been goofing off in the practice room while she went to the convent.

Since 2007 Rosalie is Director of Religious Education for the ICCS. Shyly she adds, "I have a Masters in Education and Masters in Pastoral Studies and have received certification in Spiritual Direction.

My daughter, Christina, attended ICCS and now my grandsons are here."

When sitting on the piano bench with fingers perched on the keys, true pianists feel "at home", even when hundreds of miles from their house. Playing piano, like thirty years classroom experience, gives a discipline and a confidence that motivates students to do their best.



Brian Bass and his students at Holy Family School, Port Allen, La.

## quotes worth remembering

"The spirit on the Marianites stationed at St. Francis de Sales, Houma, still walks the halls even though the sisters are not physically there"  
— Agnes Breaux Blanchard, former student and teacher

"While a student at Cabrini High School, Sr. Keri Burke, a Marianite, served as our Campus Ministry leader. Her religious influence on her students is beyond reproach, and has now led me to do the same by being a teacher," — Rachel Prange, teacher at Holy Family School, Port Allen, La.



# Notes From A Missionary

Sr. Joyce Hanks

In 1950, the Marianites opened a school for girls, Our Lady of Fatima, in East Pakistan. I remember the day I landed at the airport in Dacca. It was December 17, 1966. We drove to Comilla, dodging bicycle-drawn taxis, people, cows, and chickens. Our Lady of Fatima high and elementary schools at that time had several MSC's: Sisters Joan of Arc Arceneaux, Carolyn Langlois, Barbara Ritcher, Francesca Petrowsky, Annette Baxley and I. Sr. Janet Bodin had just left for the USA.

I walked into the classroom first day and said, "Good morning, children" to the 59 five-year-olds jammed into the classroom. Everyone responded, "Good Morning, children". After which they repeated everything I said. I soon learned that I had to demonstrate what I was saying until the children caught on and began to teach me the Bengali phrases.

Life in Bangladesh was very simple; we had a well for clean water, kerosene stoves for cooking, and ceil-

ing fans to help with the extremely hot seasons. Our Bengali cook did the shopping in the market place and did the cooking. We stayed out of the kitchen for many reasons!

Learning the customs was very important because you could offend people without realizing it. For example it was better to say, "I have given you much trouble" then just "Thank you very much". When I asked the difference, I was told, "Saying Thank you implied you have only done your duty". The other phrase indicated that you have gone beyond what was necessary!

In 1971 the country had a terrible civil war and separated from West Pakistan and became Bangladesh.

Knowing we would not be there forever, we began to train some indigenous sisters (an order founded by the Holy Cross Sisters) to take over the school in the 70's. Since then it has continued to flourish; classrooms even had to be added.

## Showing Her True Colors

The True Colors Personality Test proposes a way of understanding yourself and appreciating others. Are you Blue (Harmonious), Gold (Responsible), Orange (Adventurous), or Green (Curious)? Sr. Joel Miller, a True Colors facilitator, is raging orange. Growing up in Lake Charles, she was educated at Immaculate Conception and St. Charles Academy and was very much influenced by Sr. Collette Guidry.

Adventurous Sr. Joel has been a creative teacher, innovative principal and now an assistant principal at Our Mother of Peace, in Church Point, LA.

Sr. Joel takes pride in following an annual Scriptural Theme within her school community. Kids are often mesmerized by her classroom activities: "Research in a comic book or the newspaper funnies" ...; her athletic incentives: "If you win the football semi-finals game this afternoon, I will come to school tomorrow with my hair dyed blue." "When the volleyball season ends, I'll spend the day on the roof of the school IF our team wins more than our

losses." Teachers might hear, "Every month please call at least three families to tell them something good, go ahead brag on their child --- don't wait until there is a problem."

Under Sr. Joel's leadership, the faculty faith community might lead the student body in a hula hoop contest. And speaking of colors, she has purple and gold in her veins. Oh! This raging orange personality goes well with black; she encourages her staff to come in costumes for Halloween.

*"Top Banana", Sr. Joel Miller, is all decked out for Halloween.*



### quotes worth remembering

Having taken a vow of foreign missions, when I was missioned to Brockton, MA, my superior asked me, "Is this far enough for you?"  
— Sr. Margaret Cronley

"I learned so much from other superintendents and I witnessed the transformation among us from a competitive attitude to a spirit of cooperation." — Sr. Ann Lacour, a graduate of St. Mary of the Angels and Holy Angels, reminiscent about her years as a Diocesan Superintendent of Catholic Schools



## *We asked some of our graduates to share with us their proudest moments in teaching...*

I guess my proudest moment was standing in the Rose Garden at the White House as my school received the Blue Ribbon award for Excellence in Education from the President of the United States (Bill Clinton at the time).

*Gail Gelpi Murphy*

Recently, my daughter gave birth to premature twins. As they were taking her to the delivery room, her OBGYN doctor came into the room and asked me to pray with her. She reminded me that many years ago I prayed with her in class! I was so touched!

*Gail Galatas Siciliano*

A very proud moment in teaching was when I was attending a wedding of one of my former students. After the wedding, she said to me, "I will always remember how you told us to say 'My Lord and My God' when the Eucharist was uplifted at the Mass."

*Mary Gen Dauphin*

My proudest moment in my career was being selected a Counselor of the Year in Lafayette Parish in 2015. After Katrina I moved to Lafayette and began working in a public school. Up until that time I had worked in Catholic schools. In the public setting I was concerned that I would not be able to meet my students' needs without using my faith. I have found that I often ask my students if they go to church, or even believe in God. Those that have at least some sense of faith have responded positively to the suggestions to pray and use their faith as a foundation for decisions. It is in these moments that I am most proud of my Catholic education. I always thought I would only teach/counsel in Catholic schools, but God puts us where we belong

and I have found I can positively influence my students through my use of my faith in God.

*Bonnie Christman Smith*

In my career as a professor teaching graduate students at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, there have been many special moments, but one really stands out for me. One of the things I always do with my students' written assignments (and my fellow

I have recently retired as an educator after 32 years of teaching 6th grade science at St Ann School in Metairie. I loved and still love teaching a concept and watching the students 'get it'. The memories that my students shared with me made me work harder to help others each year. I was taught by Marianites from K-12.

Thank you for leading me to become an educator.

*Jean Weigand Barbe*

After 43 years in education there are so many proud moments, but here are a few of my personal ones:

- Former students who have themselves become educators/ administrators have told me that they were impacted by my teaching them in first grade. Their success is my success!
- The best is when that "hard to reach" student finally opens up, throws his arms around you, and says, "You're the best teacher ever!" Makes it all worthwhile!

*Laurie Hay Borden*

Federal legislation afforded me the wonderful opportunity to be the special education teacher of the first class of students with significant disabilities to receive an education on any public school campus of a local school system in Louisiana. Fast forward ten years ... I was the proud special education teacher of the first class of students with significant disabilities to receive an education on a public high school campus of this same Louisiana local school system. I was bursting with pride when these students graduated, already gainfully employed in jobs within the local community.

*Joan Doescher Guillory*

professors do not do) is correct and comment on grammar as well as content. A few years ago, one student came to me to challenge my grammatical comments. I stood by what I had written. She went to the public library, obtained a published book on English grammar and then came to me with it. She seemed somewhat stupefied and said that she apologized because the publication agreed with and supported my comments. Thank you, Marianites, and those somewhat pesky textbooks, *Voyages in English*.

*Carolyn Johnson*

those  
proudest  
moments!



# Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

(1 Samuel 3:10)

"Being a student again has made me a better teacher," said Denise Theriot speaking of her participation in The Institute for Lay Ecclesial Ministry (ILEM) at Notre Dame Seminary. A veteran teacher of twenty-two years, Denise loves teaching religion, "offering truth and passing on the faith". Prior to education she held several jobs in the secular world. But Paul Curry, a friend who knew of her weekly ministry in the Parish School of Religion and her involvement with the TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) Community, challenged Denise, "When are you going to stop messing around and go into full time ministry?" In August, 1995 she joined the Cabrini High School Family.

A graduate of St. Cecilia and Holy Angels (one of six on staff), Denise recalled a string of Marianites and lay teachers who influenced her personal thinking and style of teaching. "Sr. Emmanuel never judged us; she put all the art pieces on display." Denise continued, Jim Flatley and Debbie Kettering are still working wonders in the classroom. Sr. Mary David called us to a higher standard."

"I love exposing the girls to the traditions of the Church." The sacred space of prayer times and retreats, service projects, rosary making, are some ways we round out in-class sessions. Denise talks of teaching religion as planting seeds and watering them. "In most cases I won't be around to witness the harvesting...although social media and TEC offer some wonderful on-going contact." When students challenge her on what the Church teaches or why, she speaks truth; if she needs more information she does research. "I admire the way Pope Francis is changing the image of Church by calling us out of our comfort zones to really listen to the Lord and to serve for one another."



AHA grads went from MSCs (Marianites de Sainte Croix) to Cabrini's MSCs, (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart) and the family spirit continues. Pictured left to right: Melanie Theriot Heraty '76, Helene Fallon Tucker '72, Jean Turlich Montgomery '79, Carol Zulli Martin '68, Peggy Flynn Rizzo '66, Denise Theriot '76

## Tell It Like It Is

by Donaldo Batiste

Sister Ambrose (Sheila) was the sixth grade teacher of my sister, Joyce. Although she was never my actual physical teacher of record, it was she with whom I experienced a closeness of the "mind and heart" because of how she was able to motivate me and others who were newcomers to St. Francis in Houma, having transferred from the neighboring St. Lucy School, that was closing down because of integration. She did take me on as one of her students to mentor and coach me for the annual tri-parish (Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary) spelling bee. When I advanced to win that bee, having bested other 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade spellers, I believe people in Ireland could hear Sr. Mary Ambrose's shouts of joy and jubilation.

Sister Mary Ambrose was my "guardian angel" in elementary school, her counterpart in high school was none other than Sister Mary Melanie, the school librarian, who became my "mother hen". Sr. Melanie always was surrounded by boys and athletes. I can assure you she neither saw anything athletic in me, nor was I a sports enthusiast. When I asked her why she and I got along so well, she was quick to quip, "Why shouldn't I? You are a bright student, you are smart, and it's my role as both a Sister and a librarian to teach and to bring out the best in all of God's children". Sister taught me how to use the resources of the library to excel in debate competitions.

You see, I met these Sisters in the height of racial segregation and within the fringes of integration. And despite the prevailing tensions and expectations of those in society, these Sisters modeled for me the love and compassion that Jesus taught and expects from each of us on a daily basis, and this love and compassion have been clearly re-articulated by our current Holy Father to respect the life and dignity of all persons.



Dr. Batiste with participants in the Program in Executive Leadership at the University of Holy Cross

# The Academy of Music in Précigné, France

*I will sing of your love and justice; to you, LORD, I will sing praise! Psalm 101*

In June, 2016 Sisters Ann Lacour and Stephanie Brignac met with a young educator from Liesse, France, Vianney Chatillon, concerning his Academy acquiring the buildings in Précigné owned by the Marianites. Over the years, there had been many proposals made concerning the buildings. Basile Moreau Medical Center was moving to new buildings and the buildings that had served as a seminary, provincial house and hospital would be empty.

The meeting was filled with vision and the hopes and dreams that more young men would have the opportunity for an education that was grounded in faith, sound teaching and the pursuit of music and song. Mr. Chatillon left the Solitude for a meeting with the Bishop of the Diocese of Le Mans to receive his blessings. The Marianites donated the land and the buildings to the Academy of Music with two conditions:

1. That the vision would one day include girls.
2. That once the Academy acquired the land and the buildings it could not be returned to the Marianites.

Today, the second Academy of



Music is a reality. In September, 2019 the doors of the Academy will open and the sound of children will once again fill the halls but most especially each evening the students will pray vespers in the Chapel that was once the provincial gathering place for our sisters and the Family of Holy Cross in France. In a recent meeting with Vianney, he communicated that he hopes to bring a group of students to the United States to perform.

In the hearts of many, especially the Marianites, this is a **miracle**! Basile and Leocadie are smiling on this project which continues the mission of the Marianites in France. It is one of the many opportunities that shout legacy. Both hearts and minds will be filled with the sound of love and works for justice.

To learn more about the Academy go to the website: [www.fondationdesacademiesmusicales.fr](http://www.fondationdesacademiesmusicales.fr)

## How It All Adds Up

by Elizabeth Groves DeHarde

I attended the Academy of Holy Angels graduating in 1974. There were so many wonderful Marianites teaching at that time, it's difficult to identify the one person who inspired me. Srs. Monica Stelly and Stephanie Bourg were probably the two sisters who inspired me the most. Sr. Monica was the principal at the time encouraging love and friendship among all of the students. Sr. Stephanie was my math teacher instilling the love of mathematics in me.

I graduated from UNO in New Orleans in 1978 with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education with a concentration in Math. In 1982 I earned a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling.

I taught high school math (Algebra 1, Algebra 2,

and Geometry) for nineteen years at Chalmette High School in St. Bernard Parish. I was the department chair for the last few of those years. In 1997, I became one of the counselors at the same high school. I retired in 2008 with thirty years experience.

As an educator, my focus was to educate the students in their respective math subjects, as well as helping them to become productive contributing members of society. I still keep in touch with many of my former students through social media. They often say, "I could not have made it through without your help". The most rewarding part of my years as an educator was to have my daughter decide to follow in my footsteps and become a high school math teacher.



# A LETTER FROM PRISON

*St. Vincent de Paul, founded as a school/orphanage in 1861 in New York City was transferred to Tarrytown, NY, in 1922. It was closed by the Board of Trustees, August 1, 1978. Following are excerpts from a letter sent to Sr. Vincent Dornbush on January 5, 2016 by a boarder and former student at St. Vincent de Paul, Tarrytown.*

Dear Sr. Vincent,

I'm lying in bed, can't sleep, thinking about yesterday and the Legacy Letters Workshop we started three Thursdays ago at the prison. There are eleven of us on a five-week journey preparing letters of faith, hope, and love for special people in our lives. This week we are focusing on parents and how they blessed our lives. My work would not be complete without speaking of my precious surrogate mothers at St. Vincent de Paul, especially you, my dear Sr. Vincent.

A lot is said of God's special interest in orphans. My parents sent all five of us to St. Vincent before we were school age. What at first could look like abandonment really turned out to be a gift. Instead of a single mom, I inherited multiple moms, women from here, France, Ireland, all over. We called you "Sister" but in reality you were "Moms", responsible for our care and protection. In Spanish I would have called you "Madre", Mother.

What an awesome responsibility and what a courageous group of women you all are, surrendering your lives to service, bringing up someone else's children. What a challenge, what a blessing! You left your homes, gave up having families of your own, and consecrated your lives to God and His love and care for us children. I remember Sr. Patricia playing Irish records on the old crank-up player. Today when I hear Irish music I

recall her energy and gentle manner. What a blessing! ... I think Sr. Alphonsus favored us boys over the girls. I can't speak of her without noting her compassion and care of Thomas, a classmate with special needs. Another blessing! ... Sr. Onesimus was my dormitory mom my last two years at St. Vincent. I had a little room of



*Your lives exposed me to my God – compassion, love, discipline. I could not have asked for better moms.*

my own at the end dorm and was responsible for two younger children. Sr. Onesimus always watched out for the little ones.

With a full heart I say, "so many moms, so many blessings, and so many gifts that have carried me through life". Your lives exposed me to my God – compassion, love, discipline. I could not have asked for better moms.

Prayer was an important part of our lives then and an important part of my life now. I do believe your prayers have made all the difference. Thank you, Sr. Vincent, for the beautiful Christmas card and your blessings inside. I have it where I can see it each day, a reminder of your love. An eagle comes to mind, caring for the young and pushing them out of the nest and holding them up as they learn to fly. You sisters taught me how to fly.

Thank you, Lord, for placing me in the hands of your devoted Marianite daughters. Lord, continue to bless Sr. Vincent here and when she is ready, welcome her as your "good and faithful daughter".

One of your loving sons,  
*Manuel*

## quotes worth remembering

*Peter Brennan, a former teacher and principal, can call the names of all his Marianite teachers at Our Lady of Sorrows School, Trenton, NJ as easily as "calling bingo numbers".*

*"We bought pagan babies – politically incorrect after Vatican II, but it fostered in us a caring and outreach toward what today we call the Third World." — Sr. Marjorie Hebert, 1960 graduate of Holy Name of Mary, recalls the mission spirit*

# Praise the Lord

G.K. Chesterton, an English writer, poet, and lay theologian, once remarked, "We need to take things with gratitude and not for granted." Recently-retired religion teacher, Dora Alford, is the epitome of Chesterton's thought. Speaking of her years at Holy Family School, Port Allen, she gushes, "I have had the best job in the world – sharing my faith with my students."

"The Holy Spirit got me into this ministry," she said. A graduate of Holy Family herself, Dora remembers with fondness Sr. Mary Hubert and her hugs of encouragement with the alphabet or numbers. Since her family home was just three blocks away, Dora could skip off to Church and talk to the Blessed Mother because Sister said, "We go to Jesus through Mary."

As an adult, her own love of Scripture spills over into her classes. Dora credits her Uncle Karl, a Methodist, for introducing her to the Old and New Testaments long before Vatican II. In her religion classes, Dora desired that her students each have their own Bible, not just to know facts about Jesus, Mary, and the Saints but that they build personal relationships with them as friends and role models. Using a variety of creative, hands-on methods, with gratitude she accompanied her students on their faith journeys.

What makes her proud?... to see her own children or former students be active members of the faith community as lectors, extraordinary ministers of Eucharist, working with

outreach to the needy, etc., raising their own families in the Catholic religion.

In retirement, Dora volunteers with her daughter, Jennifer Alford LeJeune, Director of Religious Education in Holy Family Parish, sharing life and faith with the Coffee and Prayer study group and the Confirmation Class. "Being retired gives me more time to pray, participate in daily Mass, to be with my Jesus ... and do what I wanna do.."

And Dora does it all with praise and thanksgiving.



*Jennifer and Dora*



I feel so blessed to be an educator. Every day is an opportunity to help children grow and develop in all areas. I am the principal at Marigny Elementary School in St. Tammany Parish. It's exciting to see my pupils' progression from day to day. I am very passionate about early childhood education as well as mentoring teachers. I consider myself a lifelong learner and thrive on continuing to learn and implement strategies that will help students and teachers. I was inspired by the wonderful teachers and experiences I had at Resurrection and Holy Angels. Those special years in my life laid the foundation for the person and educator I am today.

*Leslie Cannizzaro Martin*

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Since we knew we'd have lots of printed matter for you this issue and because this legacy business is serious stuff, we decided not to include a photo of ourselves doing something outrageous.

Don't cancel your subscription; we promise to be back next issue with more of our foolishness.

Stay in touch at [www.marianites.org](http://www.marianites.org)

Order Guild cards.

See where Mass is said for you in Burkina Faso, Africa. Keep up with Marianite activities.

Like us on Facebook!



## Educators' Prayer to Mary

Father Moreau describes Mary's heart as a masterpiece of God's creation. Here is a heart that listens and protects, searches and accompanies, attends and accepts, hopes and heals. Such is the heart of a Holy Cross Educator.

Holy Mary, you were chosen  
to be Jesus' first teacher,  
to live the faith with him,  
to guide and comfort him,  
to prepare him for life and mission.

Blessed Mary, be for us and for our students  
patroness and protector,  
friend and family,  
mediator and mentor,  
companion and confidant.

We have been taught,  
"Pray and have confidence in Mary,  
And be assured that you are  
Where God wants you to be."  
Mary, show us the way to live that teaching,  
in all we do, from deep within our hearts. Amen.

*The Holy Cross Institute  
St. Edward 's University*

