

The Marianite

Winter 2021

A publication from
The Marianites of Holy Cross



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On the Cover

Sr. Joel Miller, known for her creative educational antics, demonstrates the art of bubble blowing.

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A Prayer for 2021 from Sr. Ann



Remember that you are **WATER**
Cry. Cleanse. Flow. Let Go.

Remember that you are **FIRE**
Burn. Tame. Adapt. Ignite.

Remember that you are **AIR**
Observe. Breath. Focus. Decide.

Remember that you are **EARTH**
Ground. Give. Build. Heal.

Remember that you are **SPIRIT**
Connect. Listen. Know. Be Still.

– Munshira Althaf



THE DECADE OF DAYS

(Recalling the anniversaries of death of Blessed Moreau - January 20, 1873 and that of Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors – January 29, 1900.)

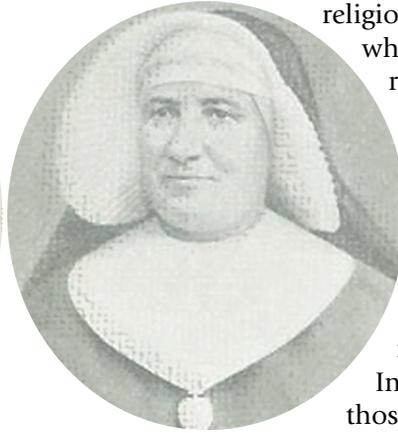
My dear friends,

This past year has been one full of challenges for all of you. Some of you have been faced with health issues, family issues, employment issues, political issues, religious issues or a combination of all of these. I have watched the days unfold, and I have seen and heard your questions and concerns, your heart aches and your grief, and have kept you constantly close to my prayer-filled heart. I write to you today not to offer answers and solutions but to lovingly raise questions that, hopefully, will lead you to where the Lord is beckoning....

Most often when we face challenges in our lives we pray for strength and courage and perseverance. We ask the Lord to lift our burdens and make things "right" again according to our agenda, what we think is best for ourselves and others. We are rarely comfortable embracing the cracks and crevices of our lives and yet the Scripture reminds us: "...we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the all-surpassing power may be of God and not from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Earthen vessels are vulnerable; they get cracked and broken. They can be repaired or the pieces can be created into something new and different. Have you noticed how tiny plants and flowers break through concrete? They stand tall and resilient in what otherwise seems a barren and impenetrable landscape. God's grace is like these surprises of nature. When we experience the cracks in the vessels of our lives – vessels of family, religion, government, economy, employment, status in life – it is a God moment

of possibility. It is a moment when through the cracks and broken-ness, grace can blossom into newness. However, God's grace works in and with our cooperation. God does not take away our free will. How do we cooperate with the God moment and the grace offered to us?



I offer a suggestion for some moments of reflection at the beginning of this new year. I suggest that each day for the next nine days, you choose a vessel which has been formed in your life and critically and lovingly look at it and acknowledge the cracks in it. Be courageous and steadfast in your reflections as you honestly examine each one:

1. Relations within the family
2. Relations with friends
3. Relations with an intimate significant other
4. Relations with church - local and worldwide
5. Relations with country - local and national
6. Relations with political systems
7. Relations with social networks and personal status in those networks
8. Relations with employment or ministry
9. Relations with the environment

On day 10, reflect on the interconnectedness of these vessels and how your interactions in one

affect your interactions in the others. Then ask for the grace to embrace the spiritual reality that the cracks and chips in the vessels are a necessary part of all aspects of our growth. I learned this lesson in my own life when I was unjustly accused of debt which others had caused; when colleagues and fellow religious plotted against me; when I was cast out of the religious Congregation I had founded; when the buildings and possessions of the Congregations were auctioned to the highest bidder; when physical decline limited my vision and mobility.

In the broken-ness of those vessels, I realized that I had all that I needed: a small bed, a chair, my prayer books, a roof over my head, the kindness of a few loving people; and, most importantly, the Providence of God. I was literally freed from all the vessels that I had fought all my life to create. The flower had broken through the concrete and now there was no barrier between me and the "One who called and Who is always faithful" (1 Cor 1:9).

I continue to hold you close to my heart and ask you to ponder these questions:

- At the end of your life, what will be the greatest gift you offer to God and others?
- Will it be a beautiful unblemished work of art?
- Will it be a cracked and damaged earthen vessel whose treasure is the all-surpassing power of God?

Sr. Mary Kay Kinberger "channels" Fr. Moreau during the Decade of Days.



Tessa Himel, Principal of OMP, and Sr. Joel

School Daze

Sr. Joel Miller

Since first grade in 1953 at Immaculate Conception School, Lake Charles, Louisiana I have been involved in Catholic education. Now in January 2021, I am still in Catholic education at Our Mother of Peace School, Church Point, Louisiana! I grew up with the Marianite Sisters who were wonderful examples to me and still are. After high school, I entered the community and attended Our Lady of Holy Cross College (now UHC) in New Orleans.

After receiving my Bachelor's Degree in Education, I began my teaching career at St. Peter and Paul School and then moved on to St. Rita's School. I loved teaching middle school and remained in that level for all of my teaching career. I moved on to St. John, Plaquemine, for five years and loved it so much. My Dad was not well so I moved home to Lake Charles for two years while teaching at St. Margaret's and my alma mater, Immaculate Conception.

My life took a new turn when I was asked to become principal in Franklin at St. John's. Being a principal opened a new chapter in my life with multiple new experiences: hiring a secretary, teachers, staff, interfacing with pastors, etc. Actually, I didn't even know where Franklin was until I started asking around! When one of my Marianite Sisters drove me to my new home I arrived wide-eye and willing. While principal in Franklin, I received my Master's Degree from University of Louisiana, Lafayette. Those were five wonderful years and I learned so much...I even went alligator hunting and ate alligator!

I spent a year in Oklahoma when my mother became ill. I then became principal in Port Allen, Louisiana at Holy Family School. I spent twenty-one years there with so many amazing people who became like family. I developed into a HUGE LSU fan, as many of you know! Back then, the bells in the church even played the Tiger Fight Song during football season.

From 2007-2012, I served my MSC Congregation in Leadership. It was a privilege and an education; I grew in appreciation of our "sisterhood" and our blessings! Next, I became principal at St. Edmund High School in Eunice, Louisiana for three years. Then with a good dose of prayer, after twenty-nine years, I felt it was time to "let go" of the principalship so I took an eight-month sabbatical. A wonderful phone invitation came from the principal in Church Point at Our Mother of Peace School asking if I would be interested in coming to join the faculty. I went to "check it out" and fell in love with everyone there on the very the first day. I love being part of Catholic educators who love teaching in a religious atmosphere.

National Catholic Schools Week, now entering its 47th anniversary, is a celebration of FAITH, EXCELLENCE, and SERVICE in the USA. Traditionally, it is observed during the last week in January.



The annual 5th-grade vegetable garden project.



A typical Seasonal Prayer Table

Portrait of a Marianite Volunteer

Sr. Joan Comeaux

Although this has been a very difficult year with COVID-19, hurricanes, flooding, and the nation divided along partisan political lines, there is still much to be thankful for. Near the top of the list are those groups and individuals who have volunteered to assist others who are in need.

Sr. Joan Comeaux is one of those individuals. She spends four days each week volunteering at Catholic Charities' food pantry. Located at the former St. Lawrence the Martyr School in Metairie, she is one of the volunteers who prepares packages of food for distribution. She also uses her computer skills for data entry. "There is always a steady stream of individuals and families who come each day. No one is denied access to the food supply", she says.

Joan states that she finds the work



"Live simply so that others may simply live."

very rewarding; she feels she is contributing where it is most needed at the present time. The work has proven to be very interesting with people of every age and ethnic background coming to the center. She says that although she can't speak Spanish a smile goes a long way when people are in need. She recalls the words of Gandhi quoted by Pope Paul VI, "Live simply so that others may simply live."

She is also a member of the St. Rita Parish Council. She feels that she can provide a unique perspective given her background. She serves as a Eucharistic minister and lector at Saturday Vigil Masses. *To feed the body and the soul ...* Sr. Joan Comeaux strives to do both as she feeds the hungry, administers communion and proclaims the Word of God.

... And a Child Shall Lead

Our nation's quest for equality has lately undergone dramatic advancements with the "Black Lives Matter" movement and with record-breaking numbers of minority people voting in our recent presidential election. We must not forget that these advancements did not happen overnight. In New Orleans we are familiar with Norman Rockwell's painting of six-year-old Ruby Bridges, escorted by federal marshals, as she integrated the all-white William Frantz School in our city sixty years ago.

Recently, San Francisco artist Bria Goeller created the artwork pictured above. Goeller has stated that she wanted to illustrate that Vice President-elect Kamala Harris did not get to the White House alone. "Her path was carved over decades by those, like Bridges, who fought for civil rights. The design symbolizes two powerful women in history who overcame the odds and stood with strength against everyone who didn't want to see them succeed," Goeller stated.

Sr. Clarita remembers that eventful day in 1960. She was teaching at Holy Angels Academy and a group of her sophomore students who walked each day from St. Mary of the Angels Parish to her class were late. When they arrived, she asked for an explanation for

their tardiness. "They were at first reluctant to tell me," she says, "but finally I got it out of them. As they were on their way to school a busload of very angry-looking women stopped and asked them for directions to Frantz School. They realized that the women were going to protest the school's integration so ... *they sent them in the opposite direction!*"

"I was so proud of them," she says. "And it was a great lesson for me: When you're confronted by bigotry and hatred, send it packing in the opposite direction!"



©"That Little Girl Was Me", Good Tumble

In Memoriam

We loved them in life; we revere them in their passing

SR. MARIE LORETTE BERNIER

1921 – November 24, 2020



Camille Bernier's mother died when Camille was nine years old. One of five children, her father placed the three youngest in an orphanage. She suffered greatly from the separation from her family. When she was sixteen years old, Camille was employed by the Marianite Clinic and felt a strong call to religious life. She entered the congregation in Precigne in 1940. She was given the name Marie Lorette.

She was then named Supervisor at the preventorium in Precigne. Until 1977 she remained with the children either in Andouille or in Precigne, caring for them as an older sister. In 1983 she began ministry at St. Marthe where she provided daycare for children and visited the elderly in the parish. Upon her retirement she served as a catechist, visited the homebound, and was a member of a music group which brought joy to the elderly in nursing homes. In 2005 Lorette joined the retirement community at the Solitude. She continued to bring joy and peace to everyone. After suffering a stroke, she died peacefully in her sleep.

SR. ENDA EILEEN BYRNE

1925 – October 27, 2020



Born into a large Irish family in Carona, New York, Sr. Enda Eileen entered the Marianites and pronounced her final vows on August 11, 1946. Her life is the story of an educator par excellence. After receiving degrees in Education from Tulane and Southern

Mississippi Universities, she taught in elementary and secondary schools staffed by the congregation. She received a Doctorate in Education from the University of Southern Mississippi and served as President of Our Lady of Holy Cross College from 1972 to 1978.

In her later years of ministry, Sr. Enda Eileen taught Special Education classes in the public schools of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana and English as a Second Language. She also volunteered as a counselor in a hospice program and was an active Minister of Communion to those in nursing homes. Her students of all ages were quick to point out that she made learning not only challenging but also exciting and that she was always eager to assist them not only academically but also with any of life's problems which they may be experiencing. To celebrate her life, a visitation and Mass of Christian Burial were

celebrated on November 2 at the J. Garic Schoen Funeral Home. Her burial took place at the Marianite Mausoleum in New Orleans.

SR. MARIA LUZ CERVANTES

1928 – November 28, 2020



She had a very interesting early life. At twelve years of age, her parents sent her to the boarding school at Holy Angels Academy. At that time, Maria Luz didn't know a word English and deeply missed her family and country. However, in four months with her resilience, courage and the help of the Marianites, she spoke English with her beautiful Guatemalan accent. As she learned the language and grew to love her new home at Holy Angels, she also grew in love and appreciation of the United States!

Maria Luz entered the Marianites of Holy Cross on November 2, 1947 and was given the name Sr. Maria Paz. She received her college education at Holy Angels Academy and at Loyola University in New Orleans. In 1972, she earned a Master's Degree in Spanish from Incarnate Word College in San Antonio, Texas. She spent most of her teaching years at Holy Angels. From 1986-2015 she ministered to Hispanic communities in Manchester, New Hampshire and in New Orleans. Due to health issues, she became a resident of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in 2016. She was buried at St. Landry cemetery in Opelousas.

Sr. Maria Luz loved life and joyously shared that life with others. As sister, friend, relative, teacher – she taught us the vast richness of various countries, personalities, languages, life styles, and cultures.

SR. AUDREY FONTENOT

1928 – February 29, 2020



Sr. Audrey entered the Marianites in 1945. After completing her novitiate, Sr. Mary James, as she was then known, taught in elementary schools throughout Louisiana. After obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Education she continued her studies and received a Master's Degree in Special Education from Cardinal Stritch College in Wisconsin. After teaching Special Education classes in Houma, Louisiana she served as Assistant Superintendent of Special Education for the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana. Her sisters in religion agreed that she was perfectly suited for this ministry. Her spirit of

kindness and compassion, her enthusiasm and joyous demeanor were the gifts so needed by these children whom she loved dearly.

Sr. Audrey would later serve in pastoral care and in spiritual direction in three parishes and at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home. In 2010 she became a resident of the nursing home and continued to share her joyous spirit with everyone. Her Mass of Resurrection was celebrated in the chapel at Our Lady of Prompt Succor on Friday, March 6. She was buried in St. Landry Cemetery in Opelousas.

SR. SHARON FRIEDRICH

1943 – April 25, 2020



Sr. Sharon, a native of New Orleans, spent her life's ministry as an educator, teaching in elementary schools in Louisiana and in Mississippi. She served as principal in three of the schools. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Our Lady of Holy Cross College, New Orleans, in 1961 and a Master's Degree in Education from Our Lady of the Lake College, San Antonio, in 1974. A popular teacher, many of her students remained in contact with her for years after graduation. During her years as principal, she often welcomed older Marianites to join her in ministering in the schools as their abilities and health permitted. In 2008 she was assigned to St. Rita School, New Orleans, where she became an assistant and served wherever her skills were needed.

In 2012 she entered Our Lady of Wisdom Health Care Center. She participated in activities with great enthusiasm, especially when dancing was involved! She was described by staff and residents as vivacious, always smiling, and generous. After a lengthy illness, she died at age 77. To celebrate her life, a private graveside service was held at the Marianite Mausoleum in New Orleans on April 29.

SR. REGINA LACROIX

1924 – October 29, 2020



Born Marie Rachel LaCroix on June 21, 1924, Sr. Regina entered the Marianites of Holy Cross in January, 1949. She made her novitiate at Princeton, New Jersey and perpetual profession on September 26, 1953.

Regina was known for her quick wit and willingness to serve. She was active in ministry at hospitals in Lac Mégantic and Mont Laurier. Upon her retirement she was active in parish life at St. Agnes Church.

In 2014 she moved with the Marianites to Village Harmony and was surrounded by people with whom she had worked at the hospital and in the parish. Her radiant smile was a testimony to the goodness of God that she experienced in each person she met.

SR. CHERYL PORTE

1950 – April 17, 2020



Sr. Cheryl was born in New Orleans on September 2, 1950. She died at the Team Gleason House, part of St. Margaret's at Mercy Care Facility in New Orleans. In her battle with ALS, she displayed the courage and faith that were characteristic of her life.

Blessed with a keen intellect and a thirst for knowledge, she obtained degrees in Elementary Education from Our Lady of Holy Cross College, a Masters in Adult Faith Formation; Sacred Scripture from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas and completed her Doctoral Studies in Historical Theology from St. Louis University. Sr. Cheryl ministered as a junior high instructor, in adult education and religious education at Our Lady of Holy Cross College and in pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. During her final years of ministry, she was a member of the adjunct faculty of Theology at St. Louis and Maryville Universities in St. Louis, Missouri.

Her unwavering faith, her devotion to Our Lady Undoer of Knots and her generous spirit were evident during her last days with us here on earth. To celebrate her life, a private graveside service was held at the Marianite Mausoleum in New Orleans.

SR. FATIMA ROBICHAUX

1930 – October 17, 2020



A native of Houma, Louisiana, Catherine Robichaux entered the Marianites in 1948.

She received a Bachelor's Degree in Education, a License in Practical Nursing, and a Master's Degree in Religious Education. Sr. Fatima was involved in elementary education at schools staffed by the Marianites. She also served as a nurse in the congregation's infirmary and as a member of the formation team at Our Lady of Holy Cross provincial house in New Orleans, in parish ministry and religious education in Gibson and Morgan City, Louisiana and on the pastoral care staff at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home. Health issues caused Sr. Fatima to become a resident of the nursing home in 2017.

Sr. Fatima was passionate in her ministry wherever she served. A cheerful, upbeat person by nature she brought a caring presence to all whom she met. Even after suffering a stroke which left her paralyzed on the right side, she showed the faith, determination and joyful spirit which characterized her whole life.

Her wake was held at Sibille Funeral Home in Opelousas followed by a prayer service. She was buried at St. Landry Cemetery in Opelousas.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN OUR "NECK OF THE WOODS!"

Saw the doctor and going home with medications

News from Yalgo, Burkina Faso ...

Since our last update (December 2018) growth continues in Yalgo. Officially the name of the medical center is "Centre Mèdico-Chirurgical St. Jean Paul II" because we now perform surgeries at the Center on a regular basis. Surgeons come for consultations and operations as scheduled. A cardiologist and a gynecologist also come weekly.

There has been an influx of displaced persons due to the terrorist attacks in surrounding areas. This has increased the number of patients we minister to daily. (Total number in 2018: 7,828; in 2019: 9,705; as of October 2020: 11,038). There are no coronavirus cases in Yalgo but this year's malaria season (August-October) brought 5,030 persons to the Center for care. Malaria is the cause of many deaths, especially among the very young who don't realize they are sick and don't seek treatment soon enough. Grants have been approved and we await construction to begin on buildings to expand services for maternity, pharmacy and

emergency. This will complete the full plan for the Center.

We've had a good rainy season so crops were plentiful, especially providing peanuts and sesame used to prepare enriched flour for nourishing food for infants. We also enjoyed fresh okra, corn and all kinds of leaves used for local sauces!

Since the 2019 patronal feast of our parish, Holy Family, we are now using the "new unfinished" church building. It is nice to have space inside for almost everyone on Sunday! The Marianites donated the crucifix for the church. Basil Moreau Elementary School

reopened after being closed due to the coronavirus threat. All the students returned and welcomed thirty-nine new ones to first grade. With the retirement of Bishop Thomas Kaboré, who invited us to the Diocese, Bishop Théophile

The crucifix donated by the MSC's in our unfinished church building. We live here in so many ways "with things unfinished" as said in our Constitutions.



Guess Who?



First graders at Basil Moreau School.

Naré was appointed for the Diocese of Kaya. We just completed a peaceful reelection of Burkina's President, Roch Christian Kaboré.

Continuing our spirit of hospitality we once again welcomed a Missionary Daughter of St. Rita to live with us for a few months and experience community and ministry in a rural village area. One of our MSC Associates spent her vacation with us and helped in the pharmacy. Recently Pascaline and Suellen visited with Pascaline's family and our Associates in Koupela. We enjoyed a great celebration of



Waiting to register for the Echography exam

Pauline's 75th birthday. All of the Medical Center's staff joined in the festive supper - and dancing, of course!

Growth and life continue in Yalgo and so does our mission "to provide quality care for all without exclusion, in a spirit of compassion and respect of the uniqueness and dignity of each person."

Sent with love and gratitude for our Marianite Community and the many benefactors who help us to carry on the mission!

Your Sisters, Pascaline, Pauline, and Suellen



Friends visiting

Our Main Purpose in Life Is to Melt into God ...

Sr. Rochelle Perrier, MSC



My spiritual journey began over 70 years ago when I was a child. My parents were cradle Catholics and products of Catholic schools. They wanted that for their children. Thus, we were privileged to have had religious sisters teach us throughout our formative years. It was during those years that I

learned about God's love for all of us and how God wanted a relationship with me/ us.

Throughout my elementary and high school years, I always found myself looking for a quiet space where I could talk with God. (I grew up in "shotgun houses" where it was difficult to find a space to be alone.) I believed that during those times, both happy and difficult ones, I began to long for my relationship with God.

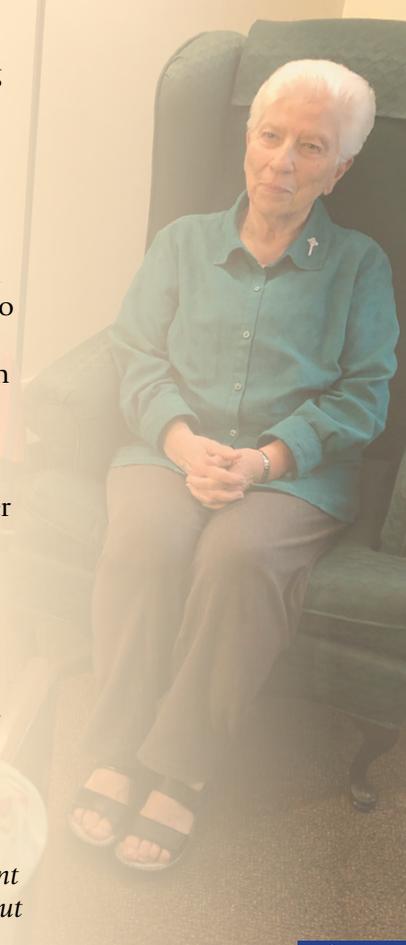
During my last years in elementary school and throughout my high school ones, I began to consider becoming a sister. I was taught by the Marianites from Grades 6 to 12. I witnessed their joy, prayerfulness, playfulness and willingness to give of themselves to others. I wanted that for myself and hoped God did also. Thus I took the next step in my spiritual journey; I entered the Marianites of Holy Cross in 1964.

Throughout my years in ministry that included

teaching in elementary schools, serving in Catholic parishes as a Director of Religious Education and Pastoral Associate, Marianite formation and leadership positions, Catholic hospital ministry as a Vice President of Mission Integration and chaplain, and now as a spiritual director, I have and continue to deepen my relationship with God and strive (not there yet!) to bring God with whom and to whom I minister.

Presently, I serve as a spiritual director and member of the ministry team at the Archdiocesan Retreat Center (AKA the Cenacle). I continue to share my spiritual journey with my spiritual director who guides and challenges me in seeking God's Will for me in my everyday life. How blessed I am to be loved by a God Who first loved me and invites me into a relationship!

Editor's note: the "shotgun houses" to which Sr. Rochelle refers are very common in New Orleans. Their floor plan is such that you could shoot a gun through the front door and it would exit the back door without hitting anything! There is, therefore, very little privacy.



msc|associates



Rev. Tom Ellerman, SM

We Have Mary Covered!

Marist priest, Father Tom Ellerman, now 80 and living in Atlanta, is one of our few official Marianite Associate clergyman. He served as chaplain and professor at Our Lady of Holy Cross (now UHC) from January 1977 until August 2001. But it was in 1968 when he personally met Marianite Sisters as a young curate at Holy Name of Mary Parish in Algiers, Louisiana. As a history buff, Fr. Ellerman was quick to add, "The Marist Fathers assumed the administration of the parish in early June of 1865. The Marianites followed the Sisters of the Third Order of Mt. Carmel as teachers and administrators of the school. The parish continued under Marist administration until June 1999, at which time it reverted back to the Archdiocese of New Orleans."

"I was teaching at Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans," he says, "and the request came from the Provincial that I consider getting a doctorate degree and then return to teach at the seminary. It just made no sense to me – the time, effort, money and I'd be doing the same thing. I respectfully declined. I did spend many happy years on faculty there."

It was inimitable Sr. Mary Carmel Murphy who extended the invitation to Fr. Ellerman to teach at OLHCC. His eyes glaze over in recalling persons and events of those wonderful twenty-five years. "Daily student Masses in the chapel. Shared trips with the delightful Sr. Laura Melancon bringing French

students to the Solitude in LeMans. Working with perceptive Sr. Kathleen McCarney on a proposed 'rule of life' for Marianite Associates. Interacting with sisters in the MSC administration. Laughing at lunchtime with those sisters eating in the refectory... so many names and faces come to mind."

After leaving OLHCC, Fr. Ellerman ministered in Formation work for the Marists in California for fifteen years. Currently he is a resident at the Marist School Rectory and serves on their Board of Trustees, involves himself with intermittent discussion clubs and prayer groups. He keeps as active as possible, using a cane as needed. Recently he enjoyed acting as a travelling

...my mind and heart can never be absent from Fr. Moreau's vision.



Rev. Tom Ellerman, SM

companion for a road trip that included New Orleans.

When asked to compare the Marists (Society of Mary) and the Marianites of Holy Cross, Fr. Ellerman replies, "We are named for our Blessed Mother. Although Marianites have a spirituality of the cross and pray the Seven Dolors of Mary, I believe their spirituality is a lived experience more than a devotional one. Marianites are willing and able to live like Mary in fidelity to her Son in his suffering and in humanity now."

Fr. Ellerman paused, then continued, "In our Marist Congregation we seek something similar, that is to live like Mary as she was in Nazareth and at Pentecost. We propose to be Mary to the Church today as she was to the Church of the Apostles." With that typical, mischievous wink he says, "Between the two of us, we have Mary covered. Being an MSC Associate and walking the path

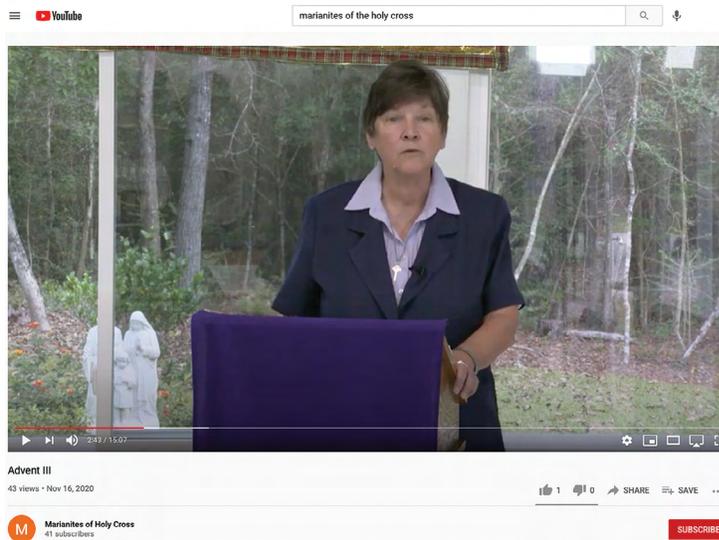
– even when at a geographical distance – my mind and heart can never be absent from Fr. Moreau's vision. I look at life as a hand woven cloth. So many Marianite threads have been woven into my life cloth that I can truly say that the cloth of the life of Tom Ellerman would be significantly different if those Marianite threads were not in it. Without those threads I would not be the person I am. In my mind and heart we are still together every day."

“...the mustard seed becomes a tree.” – Mt. 13:32

Faith development is a perennial reality; we are constantly invited into an ever-deeper relationship with God. For almost 20 years, the Marianite Associate Steering Committee has arranged for Advent and Lenten Retreats for our MSC Associates, sisters, and friends. Traditionally, we've moved the venues to areas where there are larger "branches" of Associates: Covington, Franklin, New Orleans, Opelousas, Port Allen, etc. That way the same women and men are not always travelling.

2020 presented a challenge in light of the important CDC

guidelines on social distancing. So guess what? Like so many other types of meetings, we went virtual and posted Sr. Kathleen Stakelum's presentations on the "O Antiphons" and Mass with Fr. Joseph Moyer, CSC on YouTube.



In the Old Testament, the prophets declared in the urgency of the O Antiphons, the Messiah will come. We are aware of God's presence and saving action in our own lives today. Times of retreat, prayer, and reflection call us to put our faith into action on behalf of the marginalized.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Don't tell Mayor Cantrell but there will be a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans!

With the help of Google, Clara designed the Krewe of Chateau de Notre Dame. As you can see, Judy and Clara got dressed for the parade watching on St. Charles Avenue. *"Throw me sumpin, mista!"* (Clara is having a very bad "hair day." She's been out on the parade route entirely too long!)



Stay in touch at www.marianites.org

Order Guild cards. • Keep up with Marianite activities. • See where Mass is said for you.
Like us on Facebook!

Is this person no longer at this address? If so, please email us at data4msc@gmail.com.

Well, I survived 2020!

Charmaine Cretin



I made it, but what a journey it's been...

I'll begin back in March, when I first heard the COVID-19 restrictions. I wondered how I would ever weather such a storm. With my daily routine pretty much shot, I was at a loss for how to fill my days. I looked to busy work, like cleaning closets

and getting rid of what I didn't need. I separated and discarded and uncluttered. And I realized I had been holding onto so much that was unnecessary. In letting go of the excess, I found a new appreciation for simplicity. Amazingly, my restrictions had become wings.

Being motivated by my cleaning and clearing, I then decided to tackle the attic. I dug out boxes from my parents that I had stored and hadn't touched since their passing years ago. Digging through old envelopes revealed old photos, many that I had never seen. I spent hours reminiscing about the people that I loved so dearly. My parents were in photos from their dating days. My grandparents appeared as a young couple— a life I wasn't familiar with, but found fascinating. There were photos of my childhood with my siblings during holidays and family vacations. What treasures had been waiting for me! I finally had the time to discover them.

Being in touch with significant people from my past made me more aware of how much I missed my family and friends in the present. The time that I spent with great-

nieces and great-nephews was gone. Visits with my brother and sister and their families was limited. Regular dinner gatherings with friends pretty much disappeared. Those social interactions that fed me, not only with food but with a sense of belonging, were scarce. I found myself hungry. I missed the hugs and the laughter, and simply being with *my* people. I valued that belonging like never before.

It was then that I rediscovered my belonging to something that was even bigger – Life itself. Spring brought flowers, birds and butterflies. Evening breezes blew the tops of tall trees. And I had all the time in the world to sit in my backyard, gaze at the clouds and tree tops, and soak it all in. I ate meals outside; I enjoyed reading books outside; I just rocked in my rocking chair and let my imagination take me on my own journeys. I sat in the peace of dusk and listened to the sound of the cicadas at nightfall. It was during these evenings that time disappeared and there was a real sense of a oneness with all things. And in that stillness I was touched by the Sacred.

2020 is just a memory now. But when I look back on it, I realize that what time was offering me was really a gift. I was reminded of the value of living more simply. My appreciation for family and relationships, even old ones, grew immeasurably. And I reconnected with the peace and oneness found in nature, and with the Source of all.

The new year 2021 beckons each of us, with the promise of a mixed bag for a new journey. No matter what you face on your journey, take the time to look carefully in that bag. In the midst of it all, there are treasures to be found.

Happy New Year!!! Happy Journey!

Charmaine is a Marianite Extended Member ...

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