IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE WE ALL COUNT
Dear Friends,

On August 4, 1841, Leocadie Gascoin, our first Superior General, said YES to Fr. Basil Moreau, CSC in an unfolding vision that we know as the Marianites of Holy Cross. One hundred eighty years ago, this young woman accepted the challenge of walking into the unknown yet trusting that God would do great things. She was given the name Mary of the Seven Dolors and lived those dolors with faith and courage.

It really hasn’t been that long and yet I proudly reflect on the holy and strong Cloud of Witnesses that have shaped who the Marianites are today. Ours has been a journey of being the face of Jesus as we incarnate love and compassion for a world that desperately needed a response. Be it care of orphans, education, health care, counseling, evangelization, the Marianites stepped forward. Like every family, we look back and smile, shed a few tears, tell stories, but in the end, we pray to all who have gone before us that we might continue to Dream!

In a few months, nine to be exact, we will convene our 28th General Chapter. It is a time of prayer, reflection and most importantly, setting a direction for the future. Our theme: “Yes, God does great things for us,” and our response is the Legacy that we will leave for generations to come. At the recent LCWR gathering our response to prayer was – “May it be so!”

I believe with all my heart that this is what Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors prays with her daughters each day, that we might be freed to continue to open our lives to a God who wants only good and calls us to respond with Gratitude and Hope. In a world crying for hope, we are called be a prophetic presence. I invite you to pray with us – God of yesterday, today and forever, free us to embrace our emerging future.

May you be safe and free to dream,

Sr. Ann Lacour, MSC
Congregational Leader

Mark ya calendars:

ADVENT RETREAT with Fr. Mark E. Thibodeaux, SJ
December 4 – New Orleans
December 11 – Port Allen
Sponsored by Marianites and Associates
More info to come!
Feast of the Seven Dolors
A meditation for our time …

by: Sr. Clarita Bourque

Certainly one of the most appealing things about Christianity is the ability of the average Christian to relate to the God and to the saints to whom they pray. Those who have been betrayed by friends and persecuted for their beliefs can look to Jesus as a model of patience and forbearance. Those who have been shunned by their families and those they love for embracing their faith can look to a great number of saints who suffered in this same way.

Perhaps this is why the Seven Dolors of Mary has always had such an appeal to Christians of all ages and from all walks of life. The Feast of The Seven Dolors, a special devotion of the Marianites of Holy Cross, is celebrated each year on September 15.

At Chateau de Notre Dame, I recently began meeting with residents to look more closely at how their lives paralleled that of Mary. With each Dolor there were questions for reflection. For example …

First Dolor: The Prophecy of Simeon… Do you remember when bad news was given to you? How did you handle it? Was there an “Anna” in your life to help you through it?

Second Dolor: The Flight into Egypt… Have you or a loved one ever been in danger? Have you had difficulty relocating at any time during your life?

Third Dolor: Jesus Is Lost in the Temple… Have you lost loved ones through death, drugs, loss of faith or misunderstandings? Do you feel that you have ever been “lost” in mind or spirit?

Fourth Dolor: Mary Meets Jesus Carrying His Cross… Have you ever “walked the journey of intense suffering” with anyone? How have you met your own pain in your life’s journey?

Fifth Dolor: Mary Stands Beneath the Cross of Jesus… Have you stood with another person in his/her suffering? Where did you get the strength to stand beneath your own crosses?

Sixth Dolor: Jesus Is Taken Down from the Cross… Have you ever felt like a living “Pieta”?

Seventh Dolor: Jesus Is Laid in the Sepulcher… How did you feel as you buried a loved one? Were there other “endings” between you and loved ones?

In order to incorporate the trials and sufferings of people throughout the world, a pamphlet on the Seven Dolors authored by Sr. Cheryl Porte was distributed to class participants. For example, those suffering war and destruction in the Middle East; victims of earthquakes and other calamities; missing loved ones through wars, human trafficking, imprisonment; persons suffering from severe malnutrition; a growing division between rich and poor were also included in the discussions.

We invite our readers to reflect on the Seven Sorrows of Mary as this feastday approaches.
Greetings from the University of Holy Cross!

by: Dr. Stanton McNeely

On behalf of the UHC students, faculty, staff, alumnae and alumni, it is a dear pleasure to write for this edition of The Marianite. Especially with The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, (the Feast of Holy Cross) on September 14, it is wonderful to share with you that the University is fully living the celebration of the Cross as the sign of salvation. Ave Crux, Spes Unica: “Hail to the Cross, our only Hope.”

True to our founders and sponsors, the Marianites, the University is starting the 2021 Fall semester united in Mission. As one of the eight colleges and universities in the Holy Cross family in the United States, we, along with other Holy Cross educational ministries in elementary and secondary education are committed to providing the Hope of the Cross in our ever-changing world.

This commitment is especially true as the nature of our current challenges put the students who embrace our Mission most at risk for not being able to continue. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted the students the most who take the leap of faith to aspire to a Holy Cross educational experience, but they may not have the resources to continue. Our University has been working diligently to make certain that these students can achieve their dreams and grow as holistically-formed persons at UHC through the education of both the mind and the heart.

We are blessed that, despite the pandemic, the University has been able to expand our reach through living our Marianite-inspired Mission and demonstrating creativity to meet the needs of our world. With the challenges come opportunities. For...
example, mental health Counseling has been a long-standing degree program at the University of Holy Cross, including with the Fr. Thomas E. Chambers Counseling Center on our campus. When the pandemic shut down that facility, we actually increased and expanded our services to the community through tele-mental health counseling by our master’s degree students in Counseling. Where before the pandemic our campus-based counseling services were primarily focused on the population of the Westbank of Greater New Orleans, now these counseling services are provided statewide across Louisiana. Additionally, the enrollment in Counseling has increased dramatically and across the country, with master’s and doctoral students from California to Georgia, including more geographically diverse areas of the entire state of Louisiana. And, in cooperation with WLAE-TV in New Orleans and Louisiana Public Broadcasting, the UHC Counseling Department has a weekly television show, “Coping During the COVID Crisis.” University of Holy Cross Counseling has blossomed as a shining light of Hope!

The Counseling example provides a great testament to the full commitment of the University to living the Mission of the Marianites. There are many other examples, including by our Nursing and Health Sciences students and graduates in the hospitals, by Education graduates in the classrooms, by our Business graduates operating small businesses that are important for their neighborhoods and communities - and many more. By living the Missions of the Marianites and the University and meeting the needs of an ever-changing world, the University of Holy Cross is providing Hope.

Spes Unica,

Stanton F. McNeely III, EdD
President, University of Holy Cross
Congregational Chapter
by: Sister Joyce Hanks

I’ve been attending congregational chapters since the 1970’s and it’s been interesting to see the transitions. Delegates were elected to represent the various provinces from France, New Jersey, Louisiana, and Canada. At first the meetings were held in France and eventually alternated between France and the USA. The number of delegates depended on the number of sisters in each province. This was not always well received by the smaller provinces. In the 80’s we decided to use the congressional model – each province got 2 (super delegates) and other delegates according to population. We have finally reached a point where most sisters who want to be delegates are able to attend. There was and still is the challenge of translations and different cultures. I remember when the Americans were opening windows to get a little breeze; the French sisters were closing them because of the “courant d’air” (draught).

Committees presented proposals that were tweaked ad nauseam and finally voted on. Decisions ranged from minor things to approving our Constitutions, creating a vice-province, writing a mission statement that still challenges us today . . . “to confront exclusion in all its forms and to be a prophetic presence in an ever changing world.” In these past few years we have moved more into contemplative dialogue in discerning the road ahead.

Chapter may sound foreign to some people. My crazy brother always asks, “You’re still not finished writing that book?” While I laugh at his statement, in a sense “Chapters” are like a book; a book about the life and mission of the religious community. In our Chapter gathering next summer, we will be engaging in prayer, study, contemplative dialogue, communal discernment, and decision-making about our life and mission. We will reflect on the past five years and search together for where and how God might be calling us forward.
“in an ever-changing world”. While the actual meeting is scheduled for June 16-22, 2022, prayer, study, and conversation will be going on throughout this year.

Our congregational chapter is not just for our community, but for the church and the world as a whole. We are part of an ever-widening circle of relationships. As such, decisions we make about ministry, the use of our properties, our personal and financial resources, the way we share life with one another and others. These issues have ramifications far beyond ourselves. During our chapter we will also be asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we discern together who among us is being called to lead us in implementing the results of our chapter deliberations.

When we come to the “final chapter” of the “Marianite book of our life and mission”, we hope that even though it might not be a “best seller”, it will have made a difference in the life of the People of God. And that the legacy we leave will encourage others who have been touched by our lives, to write and live a “sequel” to the Marianites of Holy Cross.

Our theme this chapter is “God Does Great Things for Us”. We invite you to join with us in prayer, that the “God of yesterday, today, and forever will free the Marianites to embrace their emerging future!”

All photos are from 1989, last Chapter hosted in LeMans, France

The Wearing of Masks

When will it ever end!

by: Sr. Clarita Bourque

Are you sick and tired of putting on that miserable mask every time you leave the house? Do you wonder if “it will ever end”? I know I do. So, the other day I wondered if it would help if I learned a bit more about mask-wearing throughout history. With the help of my trusty computer, I googled the history of the mask!

It was quite a revelation. Did you know that the early use of masks was for rituals and ceremonies, and the oldest found mask is from 7000 BC? These early masks, found in West Africa were made of wood and with great skills. Since then, masks have been used for both ceremonial and practical purposes.

Do you remember when King Tut came to town in 1977? (In typical New Orleans fashion, he was quickly dubbed the Bayou Pharaoh !) Anyway, he wore a mask. That was probably a good thing since he’d died in 1324 BC.

Death masks were one thing, but the mask has also been used in theatrical performances (some had small microphones hidden within them to help the actor project his voice).

Some masks are used for medical purposes. There are oxygen masks, surgical masks, face shield and CPR masks. Deep-sea divers wear them as do high-altitude pilots. Welding masks protect the welder’s face from sparks created while welding. And, if you’re planning to rob a bank – or the corner grocery store, a mask will come in handy.

They’re popular in sports too. Football players wear helmet face masks; baseball catchers wouldn’t be caught behind home plate without them; they’re used in fencing, in field hockey and the Japanese use a mask in Kendo, a sword-fighting martial art.

In our country, they are still popular today at Mardi Gras, especially among float-riders and at Halloween when children go trick-or-treating.

So you see, we’re part of an age-old tradition. Will that help you next time you have to put on that miserable thing? Probably not! But, when all is said and done, the fact remains – the mask will help us all survive. There are signs by the elevators at the Chateau which remind us that our wearing a mask protects our neighbor and their mask protects us. Now there’s the real reason for wearing it …. 
Emotional Whiplash
by: Chris Laughlin and Friends (Rene Ronquillo, Terry Smith, Sr. Kathleen Stakelum)

During the original height of the COVID pandemic, I found myself muttering as if I were Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*… “it is the best of times/it is the worst of times.” The author astutely sums up how any point in our lives can be both dreadfully challenging and yet contain happiness.

It was going to be a relatively normal school year. That was before the whiplash of the Delta variant. Yes, whiplash from a jolt, an assault that hit us hard and fast. Herein, I propose we spend personal and communal time to focus our gaze more intensely on our ordeal. Together we can seek meaning, maybe even understanding, through COVID-19 experiences. Dare we apply our insights to our life-long journey? With this in mind, the editors invited a cross-section of our wonderful readers to share their insights and perspectives:

“Better when it’s over”… Over these past eighteen months, like many, I have been faced with just about every challenge life can present: a pandemic lockdown, homeschooling an active seven-year-old boy, health challenges, relationship challenges, work challenges, and the passing away of my father – all while finishing a Master’s program. It’s been a ride to say the least! Like many - I’m sure - I found myself all too often saying, “I’ll be better when this is over…” – whatever “this” or “that” was at the time. When I catch myself, however, I realize that I’m wishing time away. What I really need to do is turn to God and my faith and ask, What is the moment teaching me? What does time in quarantine teach me about patience and the gift of solitude? What does death teach me about life, trust, and purpose? What do health challenges teach me about the miracle of our bodies? The one who created me, who knit me together in my mother’s womb (Ps. 139), is continuing to do work in me and what a shame it would be if I just wished that time away. “Better when it’s over” might make me happy for the moment, but it doesn’t actually make us better; it doesn’t foster spiritual growth. What I’ve learned (but maybe have yet to master) is that this moment is all I have – with all its challenges and joys every moment of my life is sacred. I pray never to wish another moment away but always to offer thanks and be open to how God is calling me, by grace, to be more, to be better. Rene Ronquillo

The Devil Is Busy, Isn’t He?… I hear by mother’s voice, every time I utter these words, “the devil is busy.” It seems the entire world has “gone to the dogs.” But as these negative thoughts creep into my mind and the actions of others, I reflect on what I am grateful for: 1) family, 2) friends, 3) a roof over my head, 4) employment, 5) and my sanity (sometimes I question this one!). I have always been grateful for family, they sustain me. I’ve known for a long time how blessed I am. But I’ve also discovered coworkers who have morphed into friends. Family, friends, and most importantly, the God who put them in my space have nurtured me during these times. A phone call from a sibling, just when I am at my lowest, like there is some kind of radar that propels them to call me at that moment in time is precious to me. Whatever the reason, I am
COVID-19: challenge and opportunity

thankful, beholding, pleased, appreciative because, all is well with my soul . . . Someday, we will understand the why of these times. *Terry Smith*

**Changes, Adaptations and “Normal”…** Consider: Are we anything like we were when the pandemic started? Transformation is defined as any change in form, appearance, nature, or character. Some transformations occur with no personal choices, but as we have witnessed or experienced, many are forced or suggested to us. Suggestions: shut down, slow down, lock down, reassess, reset, reprioritize, keep a social distance, sanitize, vaccinate, and restart. Our “normal”, with the addition of the many new adaptations and crosses, will not bring us back to what our lives were before the pandemic. ZOOM alone has changed us and has changed the social beings we were. It has altered our appearance, even if it is only from the waist up. The biggest change came to us through our attendance and participation at the Sacred Liturgy. Visual is better than nothing, but not receiving the Eucharist was extremely hard. It was amazing to realize what the true Body and Blood does for us - physically, psychologically, and mentally. ‘Spiritual Communion’s did help me to experience the Grace of God and His many mercies. Grace, Mercy, and the Word can truly aid us in our personal relationship with our Creator. Old “Normal” will never return; new crosses and the new adaptations will forever alter our “normal”. But God is with us always and His Faithfulness never leaves us. We must remain faithful to God’s call through our prayer and always remember - Everything is in God’s Control. *Chris Laughlin*

**A Challenge and An Opportunity…** COVID 19 has been a challenge and an opportunity in multiple ways. For me it meant quarantine and all my ministry activities came to a screeching halt. Walking, reading, reflecting, and praying for nursing home residents and frontline workers focused my energy. God led me to on-line retreats, and Zoom conferences on Racial Justice, Ministry to the LGBTQ community, Spirituality of Aging, Causes of Poverty, and other topics which allowed me to listen to the stories of marginalized people from many states. The Marianite Associate Online Advent Retreat was my debut as a virtual presenter. I’m so grateful for God’s presence during the pandemic and for the emotional support from community, family, and friends. Once I received the vaccine, I returned to spiritual direction ministry and am working with Louisiana Spiritual Directors’ Board to plan virtual conferences and gatherings. I volunteer once a week at *Healing House*, an agency which assists grieving children. Like so many people I was ready for the pandemic to end, but instead we find ourselves called to stand at the foot of the cross with those who are sick, to enter the empty tomb with those who are grieving losses, and to walk with the risen Jesus who leads us into new life. *Sr. Kathleen Stakelum*

**“There’s a jungle out there”…** It’s movie night at the Dreamland theatre and tonight, my favorite action series fills my young heart with thrills of anticipation. Nyoka, the queen of the jungle and her friend, a brilliant biologist, move through the jungle enjoying the beauty and peace of the land. Soon, however a noxious deadly vapor covers the jungle, and they are faced with death in a short time. How will they escape? How will they survive? Return next week to see if Nyoka lives. As the saying goes, “There’s a jungle out there”, and we are faced with the faceless terror of a deadly virus we cannot see but feel the repercussions of its insidious invasion. How do we face this dilemma? Do we have a brave Nyoka and a brilliant biologist to render the viral invasion defeated? Not an easy to answer question, but today, we have many Nyokas wearing lab coats, scrub suits and even Hazmat suits. They are accompanied by scientists in many fields. Will we be saved? Will our future unfold in a life-giving panorama? Much depends on each of us. It also depends on our reliance on our Divine Biologist who puts solutions before us. We gratefully await the result of our quest for health and wholeness. *Anonymous*

So even amid the headaches, fatigue, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, etc. of the Emotional Whiplash inherent in this pandemic, we can choose to journey forward with God’s grace and the CDC guidelines. Reflection leads us to appreciate the fact that our physical/mental health and happiness are closely intertwined and the importance of a holistic approach to body, mind, and spirit well-being is clear.
A KNAPSACK OF BLESSINGS

With collaborators in an active Steering Committee

by: Sr. Judith Gomila, MSC, Director of Associates

There is a time for everything … A time to begin and a time to step aside … A time to roll up one’s sleeves and work harder than ever and a time to admit it is beyond us … A time to pursue new visions … A time to let go and a time to let come … At no time do we stop praying … At no time do we cease giving thanks! (Ecc. 3 ~ Adapted)

“After 25 years of faithful stewardship of the national NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATES and RELIGIOUS’ mission (NACAR), it is with heavy hearts that we report to you that in March 2021, our Board of Directors affirmed the decision to move away from the present NACAR corporate structure and to begin the process toward the dissolution of the corporation effective June, 2022. The pandemic, social and political unrest and climate change have heightened the sense of uncertainty.” Thus wrote Jeanne Connolly, President of the Board of Directors for this national office.

NACAR’s mission as a membership organization acted as a catalyst to serve, empower, and promote the Associate-Religious relationship. That will cease. What will not cease is the movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of Associates and their various community relationships across the USA and Canada. Perhaps something new is waiting to be born.

In spite of the loss of the NACAR organization as we knew it, we carry what we have learned as our common faith-journey continues. Our knapsacks are full of blessings for the pilgrimage. As a long-time member of the organization, of course it saddens me to say farewell to NACAR and all that it has embodied. But I will forever be grateful for the relationships formed with other religious and laity, creative ideas, charism, and spiritualities shared among those who believe in the Associate Movement.

We are less than 100 Marianites Sisters in 2021. I can testify that those women and men who embrace Holy Cross spirituality as our Associates (approximately 150; yes, they outnumber the nuns) strive to be people of prayer and compassion by living “revolutionary love”. Is that not what Scripture asks of us? Is that not what Blessed Basil and Mother Mary have modeled for us?

Together, we are pilgrims on a journey and the CROSS is our compass. Jesus is our true North. May we be people of Active Hope, never forgetting to trust Divine Providence.

(You can learn more about the Marianite Associate relationship and see photos at our website www.marianites.org under the ASSOCIATE TAB)
In Memoriam

In a recent issue of *The Marianite* we included the obituaries of eight of our Sisters. However, shortly after the publication of that issue, Sisters Mary David Hecker and Lurlie Boudoin passed away. We remember and honor them today.

**SR. MARY DAVID HECKER**
**1924 – December 20, 2020**

She was born into a large, very Catholic family. During her seventy-nine years as a Marianite Sr. Mary David served in a variety of capacities – she was a secondary and elementary school teacher, director of novices and a missionary. Her enthusiasm for ministry was evident throughout her long and varied career. She spoke fondly of her eight years in Talagante, Chile at the Hogar de Ninos San Jose Orphanage where she ministered with several other Marianites. Deeply devoted to Rev. Basil Moreau and Mother Mary of the Seven Dolors, she was an active member of the Holy Cross History Conference and it was at her prompting that the annual Decade of Days was instituted. Sr. Mary David became a resident of Prompt Succor Nursing Home in 2011. For the next nine years her prayerfulness and simplicity endeared her to the staff and residents. Her funeral was held on December 22 in Opelousas, followed by burial in St. Landry Cemetery in Opelousas.

**SR. LURLIE BOUDOIN**
**1927 – December 23, 2020**

A native of Creole, Louisiana, Sr. Lurlie entered the Marianites on September 8, 1944. Early in her teaching career, Sr. Peter, as she was then known, taught in Marianite schools throughout Louisiana. She also ministered as a patient representative at St. Patrick’s Hospital in Lake Charles, Louisiana and later, in the business office for the Marianites and as a staff member of Our Lady of Holy Cross College.

Sr. Lurlie was a woman with strong opinions about many areas of life including politics, her Creole heritage, and her family connections. In 2006 she moved to Prompt Succor Convent in Opelousas and, due to declining health, she became a resident of the nursing home on November 9, 2020. She was a woman of prayer. Even as her health diminished, she was present in the chapel with her rosary beads and books in hand. She passed away on December 23. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a private funeral service was held Tuesday, December 29 with burial in St. Landry Cemetery in Opelousas.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

Our editors were ready and eager to attend this year’s Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans. Here they are all dressed for the occasion. Unfortunately, it has been cancelled due to COIVD-19. Guess they’ll have to wait another year to hear the Rolling Stones and Irma Thomas and to enjoy that delicious Cochon de lait and Crawfish Madeline. Keith Spera wrote in our daily paper that “usually Jazz Fest is a 24-carat experience”. Well, we have the carrots anyway!

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

Order Guild cards. • Keep up with Marianite activities. • See where Mass is said for you. Like us on Facebook!
Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a central element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God’s special love for the poor and called God’s people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came “to bring glad tidings to the poor . . . liberty to captives . . . recovery of sight to the blind” (Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with “the least of these,” the hungry and the stranger (Mt 25). Many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is constitutive to our faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, “To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren” (# 1397).

The seven basic themes of CST can be written clearly and concisely. What must transpire is our personal prayer and reflection on the ramification of these themes in our daily choices.

1. **LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON** – Created by God, every human life is sacred from womb to tomb.
2. **CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION** – The person is sacred but also social; organize society to care and help one another.
3. **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** - Human dignity can be achieved only when rights are protected and duties and responsibilities are met.
4. **OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE** – A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable are faring for food, housing, health, community, etc.
5. **THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS** – The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Working conditions, jobs and pay should be fair.
6. **SOLIDARITY** – We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.
7. **CARE OF GOD’S CREATION** – Care for people and the planet have fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that must not be ignored.

Do you believe that our commitment to act for Peace and Social Justice is at the heart of who we are as Catholic Christians? How do we share that more effectively? In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human dignity around the world, the Gospel mandate to peace and justice ought to be proclaimed with new clarity, urgency, and energy.

Resource: USCCB. Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions. 2017