Dear Friends,

The calendar year is fast coming to a close, which provides a wonderful opportunity to stop and reflect on what really matters to us. This year, the Sisters of the Holy Cross have been busy celebrating the wonder of the founding of the women of Holy Cross 175 years ago, and the grace of our ongoing service to God’s people around the world. We also have tried to listen and respond to the challenge and privilege of Pope Francis’ invitation to live a Year of Mercy with joy.

Wherever we serve, the situations we encounter impel us to consider how we can creatively and faithfully respond to today’s reality. That reality has a shadow side which gives rise to increased violence, war and incivility toward others. However, it also has a brighter side that reveals people on a search for meaning, and people who invest themselves in selfless acts of love and care that build a society of justice and peace.

Reflecting on this global reality and crafting a daily lived response has uncovered for us new ways to embody more concretely the corporal works of mercy we learned early in our catechetical training: to feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty, to shelter the homeless, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick and imprisoned, to give alms to the poor and to bury the dead. These activities are tangible ways we express the spiritual works of mercy — compassionately alleviating suffering by instructing, advising, consoling, comforting, forgiving, praying and bearing patiently with others.

This issue of inSpirit tells the stories of our sisters, associates, volunteers, colleagues, employees, friends and benefactors as they live and celebrate God’s mission with joy and compassion. I pray you find hope, inspiration, courage and insight as you share in their responses to today’s reality.

In Holy Cross,

Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower), CSC
President, Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross

© 2016 Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Indiana. All rights reserved.
Donor’s passion ignited by love of family and good works

Blessed to give

Few treats equalled the delight that hit the Davy kids when their Aunt Patty came to visit in New York. A Sister of the Holy Cross, Aunt Patty — Sister M. Carmen (Davy), CSC. — would regale her young nieces and nephews with fantastic tales and exotic gifts from her overseas missions.

“We just adored her,” Dianne Davy Shuntich recalled. “She was always so much fun, so full of love.”

Dianne would listen spellbound as Sister Carmen described how people on the other side of the globe lived. “The stories she told of the plight of people around the world — it made it real,” Dianne said.

Inspired by her Catholic education and her favorite aunt, Dianne has always found a way to give to those who are less fortunate. It’s a passion, Dianne discovered, that is fired even further when she hears how her donations are making a difference.

While serving in Bangladesh, Sister Carmen “would tell me how they were able to send a child to the hospital because of my help and it saved his life, or a starving child who was given food and nutrition,” said Dianne. “It’s very motivating to get feedback like that.”

Sister Carmen now lives in the New Life Community at Saint Mary’s. Dianne continues to give, with her funds earmarked for the people her aunt “absolutely loved.”

“Many people in Bangladesh are desperately poor,” Dianne said. “What you can buy with American dollars there is amazing” and includes vital goods like milk for babies, medicine for patients, and operations or emergency treatment for those who are ill or injured.

In fact, Dianne recently learned from Sister Taposi Gomes, CSC, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, that 14 infants are now receiving milk every week thanks to her donation. Sister Taposi wrote Dianne, “Babies are getting healthy because of your sacrifice and generosity.”

For her part, Dianne reflected, “I feel very blessed that I can connect in this way with people who are doing the work, as opposed to a charity with which I have no personal connection. It adds meaning to my giving, and I feel so much better about it.”

To help support the sisters’ ministries around the world, visit the Congregation’s website at www.visitcsc.org.

International Women’s Day this year marked an important milestone for Sister Michael Mary (Nolan), CSC, and her work to support women prisoners, particularly those in Brazil. On March 8, 2016, Brazil’s National Council of Justice officially published a Portuguese translation of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, more commonly known as the Bangkok Rules. As the president of the Instituto Terra Trabalho e Cidadania (ITTC), Sister Michael Mary participated in the ceremony marking this historic event.

Securing a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules has been a priority for Sister Michael Mary, the ITTC (a human rights organization that works to eradicate gender inequality, guarantee rights and combat incarceration), and the National Prison Ministry in Brazil.

“The Bangkok Rules are the most important international document on the situation of women in prison,” Sister Michael Mary explained. “It was adopted by the United Nations (U.N.) in 2010 and addresses the rules for the care of women prisoners as well as providing alternatives to prison for women offenders.”

Brazil is one of the nations that participated in the adoption of the Bangkok Rules. However, since Portuguese is not an official language of the U.N., there has not been a document available in the official language of Brazil. The translated document gives guidance to policy makers, legislators, sentencing authorities and prison staff to reduce the imprisonment of women, and to meet the specific needs of women in cases of imprisonment.

“Brazil has the fourth largest population of women prisoners in the world,” stated Sister Michael Mary.

“It is important to note that a special section of the rules is dedicated to indigenous and minority women,” she added. “The document clearly recognizes that mothers with small children do not belong in jail.”

Sister Michael Mary and Heidi Ann Cerneka, who is vice president of the ITTC and a Saint Mary’s College graduate, have been participating in the development of the Bangkok Rules for at least 15 years.

“Our experiences of Human Trafficking,” Sisters of the Holy Cross, April 2012

*Many women are in jail because they were used by drug traffickers to work as “mules,” or people who transport drugs. The majority of these women are young single mothers who have very few ways to earn a living to support their children. – Excerpted from “Our Experiences of Human Trafficking,” Sisters of the Holy Cross, April 2012

Bangkok Rules

Improving care for women in Brazil’s prisons

Sister Michael Mary (Nolan), president of the Instituto Terra Trabalho e Cidadania (ITTC), and Minister Ricardo Lewandowski, president of Brazil’s Supreme Federal Court and the National Council of Justice, mark the official publication of a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules at an event on International Women’s Day.

Photo courtesy of the Brazilian National Council of Justice

Securing a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules has been a priority for Sister Michael Mary, the ITTC (a human rights organization that works to eradicate gender inequality, guarantee rights and combat incarceration), and the National Prison Ministry in Brazil.

“The Bangkok Rules are the most important international document on the situation of women in prison,” Sister Michael Mary explained. “It was adopted by the United Nations (U.N.) in 2010 and addresses the rules for the care of women prisoners as well as providing alternatives to prison for women offenders.”

Brazil is one of the nations that participated in the adoption of the Bangkok Rules. However, since Portuguese is not an official language of the U.N., there has not been a document available in the official language of Brazil. The translated document gives guidance to policy makers, legislators, sentencing authorities and prison staff to reduce the imprisonment of women, and to meet the specific needs of women in cases of imprisonment.

“Brazil has the fourth largest population of women prisoners in the world,” stated Sister Michael Mary.

“It is important to note that a special section of the rules is dedicated to indigenous and minority women,” she added. “The document clearly recognizes that mothers with small children do not belong in jail.”

Sister Michael Mary and Heidi Ann Cerneka, who is vice president of the ITTC and a Saint Mary’s College graduate, have been participating in the development of the Bangkok Rules for at least 15 years.

*Many women are in jail because they were used by drug traffickers to work as “mules,” or people who transport drugs. The majority of these women are young single mothers who have very few ways to earn a living to support their children. – Excerpted from “Our Experiences of Human Trafficking,” Sisters of the Holy Cross, April 2012

Bangkok Rules

Improving care for women in Brazil’s prisons

Sister Michael Mary (Nolan), president of the Instituto Terra Trabalho e Cidadania (ITTC), and Minister Ricardo Lewandowski, president of Brazil’s Supreme Federal Court and the National Council of Justice, mark the official publication of a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules at an event on International Women’s Day.

Photo courtesy of the Brazilian National Council of Justice

Securing a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules has been a priority for Sister Michael Mary, the ITTC (a human rights organization that works to eradicate gender inequality, guarantee rights and combat incarceration), and the National Prison Ministry in Brazil.

“The Bangkok Rules are the most important international document on the situation of women in prison,” Sister Michael Mary explained. “It was adopted by the United Nations (U.N.) in 2010 and addresses the rules for the care of women prisoners as well as providing alternatives to prison for women offenders.”

Brazil is one of the nations that participated in the adoption of the Bangkok Rules. However, since Portuguese is not an official language of the U.N., there has not been a document available in the official language of Brazil. The translated document gives guidance to policy makers, legislators, sentencing authorities and prison staff to reduce the imprisonment of women, and to meet the specific needs of women in cases of imprisonment.

“Brazil has the fourth largest population of women prisoners in the world,” stated Sister Michael Mary.

“It is important to note that a special section of the rules is dedicated to indigenous and minority women,” she added. “The document clearly recognizes that mothers with small children do not belong in jail.”

Sister Michael Mary and Heidi Ann Cerneka, who is vice president of the ITTC and a Saint Mary’s College graduate, have been participating in the development of the Bangkok Rules for at least 15 years.

*Many women are in jail because they were used by drug traffickers to work as “mules,” or people who transport drugs. The majority of these women are young single mothers who have very few ways to earn a living to support their children. – Excerpted from “Our Experiences of Human Trafficking,” Sisters of the Holy Cross, April 2012

Bangkok Rules

Improving care for women in Brazil’s prisons

Sister Michael Mary (Nolan), president of the Instituto Terra Trabalho e Cidadania (ITTC), and Minister Ricardo Lewandowski, president of Brazil’s Supreme Federal Court and the National Council of Justice, mark the official publication of a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules at an event on International Women’s Day.

Photo courtesy of the Brazilian National Council of Justice

Securing a Portuguese translation of the Bangkok Rules has been a priority for Sister Michael Mary, the ITTC (a human rights organization that works to eradicate gender inequality, guarantee rights and combat incarceration), and the National Prison Ministry in Brazil.

“The Bangkok Rules are the most important international document on the situation of women in prison,” Sister Michael Mary explained. “It was adopted by the United Nations (U.N.) in 2010 and addresses the rules for the care of women prisoners as well as providing alternatives to prison for women offenders.”

Brazil is one of the nations that participated in the adoption of the Bangkok Rules. However, since Portuguese is not an official language of the U.N., there has not been a document available in the official language of Brazil. The translated document gives guidance to policy makers, legislators, sentencing authorities and prison staff to reduce the imprisonment of women, and to meet the specific needs of women in cases of imprisonment.

“Brazil has the fourth largest population of women prisoners in the world,” stated Sister Michael Mary.

“It is important to note that a special section of the rules is dedicated to indigenous and minority women,” she added. “The document clearly recognizes that mothers with small children do not belong in jail.”

Sister Michael Mary and Heidi Ann Cerneka, who is vice president of the ITTC and a Saint Mary’s College graduate, have been participating in the development of the Bangkok Rules for at least 15 years.

*Many women are in jail because they were used by drug traffickers to work as “mules,” or people who transport drugs. The majority of these women are young single mothers who have very few ways to earn a living to support their children. – Excerpted from “Our Experiences of Human Trafficking,” Sisters of the Holy Cross, April 2012
cup at a time

A coffee shop created with the purpose of building a connected community

"When you're starting something new — something that feels big and daunting — what you need is to have some infusion of support," said Mike Griffin, one of the volunteer managers of The Local Cup coffee shop in the Near Northwest Neighborhood of South Bend, Indiana. "The Sisters’ support was that for us. We could not have done this without their belief in the project and the funds they provided."

The Local Cup isn’t like other coffee shops. It’s a place with a purpose that extends beyond coffee. It was designed to bring together the diversity of the Near Northwest Neighborhood and build connections between neighbors to create a strong community. At The Local Cup, neighbors have a place to meet, greet and form relationships every Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon.

"When this was in the planning stages," explained Kathy Schuit, executive director of the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., "we were looking for a way to get more involvement. As a community development organization we are constantly looking for ways to get people more involved with each other. In the U.S. especially, we find that we don’t have the social fabric in place that allows us to connect with and support those that live around us."

"Before long we had several teens who wanted to participate," added Sister Mary Turgi, CSC, vice-president of the Board of Directors for Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., "The teens came to us, they came in and wanted to help. She was very interested in being a part of what we do here with The Local Cup."

"We’re a part of this neighborhood. Helping with a project like this gives us a way to put into practice our strong commitment to our community," stated Mike. "But we don’t do it alone. We couldn’t have started this without the Sisters’ support. The teens in our program have helped us expand our reach with music events and poetry readings. Everyone who comes in for coffee also helps us further our goals for The Local Cup and the community."

The funds provided by the Sisters of the Holy Cross for the Youth Leadership Development Program pay the teens for their work in the coffee shop on weekends as well as for weekly development meetings and team-building activities. "Everyone is welcome and served. Anyone can participate regardless of income level. Everyone is comfortable and it shows," Kathy continued. "This project has turned into exactly what we were looking for, but we’ve gotten so much more as well."

Shortly after The Local Cup opened in 2015, its goals expanded to include a special Youth Leadership Development Program. "The fantastic thing is the teens came to us," said Mike, who also serves as a volunteer leader for the youth program. "That first day we opened, one of the neighborhood teens whose family came to this neighborhood through the Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc., low-income housing program, came in and wanted to help. She was very interested in being a part of what we do here with The Local Cup."

Mike and Catherine Griffin together with John Horton and Brook Hardy give of themselves and their time each week to provide an inclusive and welcoming experience for this diverse neighborhood. "We’re a part of this neighborhood. Helping with a project like this gives us a way to put into practice our strong commitment to our community," stated Mike. "But we don’t do it alone. We couldn’t have started this without the Sisters’ support. The teens in our program have helped us expand our reach with music events and poetry readings. Everyone who comes in for coffee also helps us further our goals for The Local Cup and the community."
Extending mercy to the people of Chittagong Diocese

The poorest of the poor

Located in the southern part of Bangladesh, the Chittagong Diocese is home to 34.9 million people squeezed into an area about twice the size of New Hampshire. While the city of Chittagong is prosperous and generates 60 percent of the country’s revenue, in the outer areas of the diocese 25 to 35 percent of the families do not have enough food to meet the energy and nutrient needs of all of their members.

It is to these poorest regions that Sister Nita Rozario, CSC, was called to minister. At first the people were resistant and didn’t want to listen to anything she had to say. Year after year she persisted, conducting awareness programs throughout the region on health issues the people say. Year after year she persisted, conducting awareness programs throughout the region on health issues the people encountered.

Slowly, slowly, attitudes changed. Today, people are much more aware of their role in health care for themselves and for their families. They know how to care for the health of their children, and feel free to share their questions and problems. In areas where volunteer doctors are available, they are very happy for the opportunity to receive a health checkup.

As coordinator of the Diocesan Health Commission for Specially Challenged Children, Sister Nita is glad to see that, instead of refusing to let their special needs children leave the house, parents are recognizing that these children “are also God’s children, and they can do so many things if they get the chance and [some] help.”

Sister Nita received Ministry With the Poor funds for health awareness programs, medicine, doctors’ fees and a program to combat malnutrition at Father Bourdeau’s Medical Centre, a diocesan facility for children living with disabilities in Patharghata. She said, “From the bottom of my heart I express my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to you for the great support and prayer for the poor people in Bangladesh, especially for [those in] Chittagong.”

Would you like to help those in need? Read more about the Congregation’s Ministry With the Poor fund at http://www.cscsisters.org/ministries/Pages/Ministry-With-the-Poor.aspx.

The poorest of the poor

Located in the southern part of Bangladesh, the Chittagong Diocese is home to 34.9 million people squeezed into an area about twice the size of New Hampshire. While the city of Chittagong is prosperous and generates 60 percent of the country’s revenue, in the outer areas of the diocese 25 to 35 percent of the families do not have enough food to meet the energy and nutrient needs of all of their members.

It is to these poorest regions that Sister Nita Rozario, CSC, was called to minister. At first the people were resistant and didn’t want to listen to anything she had to say. Year after year she persisted, conducting awareness programs throughout the region on health issues the people encountered.

Slowly, slowly, attitudes changed. Today, people are much more aware of their role in health care for themselves and for their families. They know how to care for the health of their children, and feel free to share their questions and problems. In areas where volunteer doctors are available, they are very happy for the opportunity to receive a health checkup.

As coordinator of the Diocesan Health Commission for Specially Challenged Children, Sister Nita is glad to see that, instead of refusing to let their special needs children leave the house, parents are recognizing that these children “are also God’s children, and they can do so many things if they get the chance and [some] help.”

Sister Nita received Ministry With the Poor funds for health awareness programs, medicine, doctors’ fees and a program to combat malnutrition at Father Bourdeau’s Medical Centre, a diocesan facility for children living with disabilities in Patharghata. She said, “From the bottom of my heart I express my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to you for the great support and prayer for the poor people in Bangladesh, especially for [those in] Chittagong.”

Would you like to help those in need? Read more about the Congregation’s Ministry With the Poor fund at http://www.cscsisters.org/ministries/Pages/Ministry-With-the-Poor.aspx.

These Sisters of the Holy Cross were called home to God since the last issue of inSpirit. While we feel their loss, we rejoice in their newfound lives. To read more about them or to make a memorial contribution, please visit http://bit.ly/1KKPugN.

Sister M. Ignatius, CSC
(Margaret Christina Schumacher)
June 6, 1914–June 18, 2016
Entered from Wild Horse, Colorado
Initial profession on January 6, 1934

“Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.” Pope Francis began his encyclical, Laudato si’: On Care for Our Common Home, with these words. Sister M. Ignatius (Schumacher) lived this prayer of praise for 102 years as a daughter of Wisconsin farmers and for 85 years from her entrance into the Congregation. She taught for over 35 years in Catholic elementary schools in Indiana, Nebraska, Utah, Idaho, California and Nevada. The next 35 years she spent tilling the soil at Saint Catherine by the Sea, Ventura, California, where the orchard was both Garden of Paradise and convent food pantry. Her green thumb was legendary, and she became known as the “Jam Sister” as her jam and preserves won prizes at the Ventura County Fair and were sought-after and who produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.” Pope Francis began his encyclical, Laudato si’: On Care for Our Common Home, with these words. Sister M. Ignatius (Schumacher) lived this prayer of praise for 102 years as a daughter of Wisconsin farmers and for 85 years from her entrance into the Congregation. She taught for over 35 years in Catholic elementary schools in Indiana, Nebraska, Utah, Idaho, California and Nevada. The next 35 years she spent tilling the soil at Saint Catherine by the Sea, Ventura, California, where the orchard was both Garden of Paradise and convent food pantry. Her green thumb was legendary, and she became known as the “Jam Sister” as her jam and preserves won prizes at the Ventura County Fair and were sought-after

Anna Louise Neuland was born in Washington, D.C., and ministered many years in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia after entering the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1948. She was known as Sister Richard Marie when she was a teacher or principal in Catholic elementary schools for more than 20 years in the East and in Texas. In the late 1960s, she returned to her baptismal name. Sister Anna served several years in congressional leadership in the East and later was education supervisor in the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia. From 1980 onward she helped prepare teachers and administrators for justice and peace education in Catholic schools, was involved in direct community services/social work, and was an earnest legislative advocate. Sister came to Saint Mary’s Convent in 2004 in ill health. Her ministry of prayer and 68 years as a religious were a cry from the heart, that all persons be treated with dignity. Sister Anna’s life story is intertwined with Holy Cross’ response to the Second Vatican Council’s call for renewal in the Church. She was educated by Holy Cross, became an educator in Holy Cross and stood by the cross as her life brought difficult situations. We are grateful for Sister Anna’s life with us.

Sister Jeanette Lester, CSC
August 23, 1918–July 9, 2016
Entered from Toledo, Ohio
Initial profession on August 15, 1970

When Jeanette Lester entered the Sisters of the Holy Cross in 1967 at 49 years old, she already had a career in the civil service, working for the federal government as a personnel administrator in Toledo, Ohio. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, and a master’s degree in business administration and a doctoral degree in education from the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio. She remarked that her life prior to entering the Congregation was socially active, but she had been “busy with so many things that I often lost sight of the one important goal — to improve as a disciple of Christ and a witness to him.” The Indiana native, born in Bluffton, joined the faculty of Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1967 as an assistant professor, teaching in the departments of education and business administration/economics. Thereafter, she was assistant dean of freshmen, then directed the institutional research office at the college for 16 years. In retirement she ministered in the South Bend, Indiana, area at Holy Cross Parish and volunteered at Saint Joseph Medical Center. Since 2007, Sister Jeanette resided at Saint Mary’s Convent, devoted to a ministry of prayer. At 97 years old, she died in the Lord’s embrace.
The following remarks are excerpts from Saint Mary’s College President Carol Ann Mooney’s farewell address to the college’s Board of Trustees on April 15, 2016.

We are on holy ground. This campus is holy ground. It has been our holy ground since 1855 when we arrived here, having traveled down from Bertrand (Michigan) with our modest buildings on the back of wagons.

The four years I spent as a Saint Mary’s student shaped the rest of my life. Those four years were a gift born of sacrifices made by my parents as well as of the labors of the Sisters of the Holy Cross who built and ran this place. The gift was given also by my classmates and friends, and by the full Saint Mary’s community, whose pride in the place was clear to me even then.

During my student years, I thought the most important thing I was doing here was studying English Literature. I knew I was receiving an education that would stack up well against the best in the country. I learned to think more deeply and critically than ever before. I learned to see the gray in the answer to most questions. I learned that my worldview was not the only one.

But when I was looking in one direction other more important things were happening to me. I came to Saint Mary’s a very devout Catholic with little knowledge of what that meant. Here I learned to live a life of hope because God sent his only Son to redeem us. Here it became very clear that loving my neighbor means working to improve our common life and to ease her burdens. Here I learned that the sacramental nature of our faith helps us to experience the sacred in our everyday world. Here I understood that we need faith precisely because we doubt.

It took many years for me to recognize that all of that had roots here. But it did. My parents had done a wonderful job of raising their children, but we had work to do on our own to shape our adult lives and Saint Mary’s helped me to do that in profound ways.

As president, my deepest concerns have been about ensuring that Saint Mary’s remains a place that helps young women mature in ways that allow them to recognize the transcendent, to find purpose and meaning in their lives, to live for others, and to find joy in the life God has given them.

We share this place with the Sisters who came before us, and with the Sisters now present with us, and we will pass it on to others, perhaps none of whom have taken vows as members of the Congregation of Sainte-Croix. This is our place; we, too, are Holy Cross. We, too, have the responsibility to ensure that more happens here than meets the eye.

The only word that came to my mind concerning what happens here is MIRACLE. I am usually able to dissect a situation and analyze its components and then understand how it works. But the miracle of Saint Mary’s has confounded me, so Saint Mary’s has now taught me that it is OK that there is mystery. I am usually able to fully articulate reasons for the actions we must take. But I remain utterly unsure that we are doing all that we should to ensure that Saint Mary’s is doing what must be done to continue this holy work. So Saint Mary’s has taught me that we must move forward in our uncertainty and trust that trying counts.

I know that you, the Board, together with incoming President Jan Cervelli, will do your best, and Our Lady and her Son will help the miracle continue, and Saint Mary’s will be here for your daughters and granddaughters and their daughters, too.

Dr. Carol Ann Mooney served as president of Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana, from 2004 until her retirement in May 2016.
Sister Jacinta Katusabe, CSC, knows the hopes and needs of the people she works with in Kirinda, Uganda. Together, they share their daily life, and their past. Sister Jacinta grew up in neighboring Fort Portal and recalls her country's history of strife, as well as the hardships she and her family endured. She also recognizes her country's progress and continuing cultural challenges. "I know who they are, and what they go through," she said.

In her role as headmistress of the Congregation's Moreau Primary School in Kirinda, she feels she and her fellow sisters are helping the community build a brighter future by teaching children and adults "how to be better for the next generation." Key to that formative process, she said, is promoting understanding of the value of women in society. "We empower [women and girls] in our ministry, we encourage them to take on leadership roles, and we impart the value of faith in their lives."

Her work follows a clearly-marked trail, well worn by the presence and influence of Holy Cross sisters who ministered to the country and its people decades before. February 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the Holy Cross sisters' ministry in Uganda. The benchmark occasion invites opportunities to reflect on the past as it helps sharpen the focus on things to come.

An auspicious beginning
Holy Cross Sisters M. Catherine de Ricci (Bartels) and Patricia Gantz arrived in the East Africa nation at the request of Bishop Vincent McCauley, CSC, of the Diocese of Fort Portal, in 1967. His intention for them was to establish a new Holy Cross mission focused on educating local diocesan sisters, many of whom had not received secondary schooling. Sister Mary Louise Walter, CSC, who currently serves as Area of Africa councilor, soon followed, and together the three founded and led teaching at Saint Maria Goretti School in Fort Portal. The ministry experienced swift success, and expanded its work to include instruction for local girls and sisters from other congregations.

Sister Catherine, who was appointed superior and headmistress of the school, also started an outreach catechetical program. Every Sunday, students carried their lessons out to the village churches to teach catechism to primary school children. The Congregation further developed its ministry with the provision of health care. In 1968, Sisters Patricia Burke, CSC, and Mary De Nardis, CSC, came to the country to serve as nurses in a Bundibugyo government hospital. Sisters of the Holy Cross would remain in Bundibugyo until 1987, even through the dangers and hardships of government upheaval and civil war.
Triation and commitment

The 1970s marked the beginning of 20 years of war and deep economic depression for Uganda. In 1971, Idi Amin was seated as president — his rule marred by corruption, political oppression and violence. In 1973, the United States government urged all Americans to exit the country after the United States Embassy’s closure. The option to leave was put before the Holy Cross men and women serving in the country, Sister Mary Louise recalls, and “each of us wanted to stay.” Despite the living situation, lack of food and threats of violence, “there just was no doubt,” she added. “We decided to stay and be a support to the people, to offer them compassion and give them the encouragement they needed.”

By 1978, other congregations had stopped coming to the strife-torn nation, yet 60 Holy Cross women and men remained. After the overthrow of Amin’s government, a coup placed Milton Obote in power, leading to a new wave of economic depression, human rights abuses and terror. The number of Holy Cross women and men in Uganda declined over the next few years, and by 1982 only six sisters were still serving in the country: Sisters M. Edward Ann (Wenzel), CSC, and M. Leonella (Moe), CSC, who were teaching at Saint Maria Goretti School; Sisters Patricia and Mary at the government hospital; and Sisters M. Jane Chantal (Method), CSC, and Mary Alice Bowler, CSC, at Fort Portal’s Virika Hospital.

During both harsh and good times, said Sister Mary Alice, “relationships sustained us.” The sisters united with the people of Africa, with Holy Cross and other communities of religious women and men, and with other Americans working in the country, she recalled. “We coalesced and supported one another with our presence.”

The Congregation’s ministry persisted, and as the civil war came to a close with Obote’s deposition, the sisters expanded their mission work to the capital city, Kampala. There, Sister Mary Alice stepped in as the director of the clinical laboratory and laboratory training program at Rubaga Hospital. To serve the area’s rural poor, the sisters also opened a health clinic in Busaru, which remained open until 1998.

A new direction

Though the Congregation initially answered the call for education and health care in Uganda, it could not deny the desires of local women to join the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Given the time of relative peace in the country, the sisters started their first formation program in Fort Portal in 1986, with Angelica Brungu (now Sister Angelica Brungu, CSC) among its first candidates. Then in 1991, Sister Eileen Dewsnup, CSC, and Sister Mary Alice opened a ministry house in Jinja at the Holy Cross parish of Bugembe. One year later, Sister Patricia Gantz, novice director, and Sister Mary Louise moved the formation house and two novices to Jinja. There, Sister Mary Louise went on to establish Holy Cross Lake View Senior Secondary School, where she served as headmistress.

The formation program continued to develop under the direction of Holy Cross Sisters Patricia Gantz, Madeleine Marie (Clayton), and Brenda Cousins. By 2009 the program at Jinja included both candidacy and novitiate programs which received women from Ghana and Kenya as well as Uganda. Reflecting back on 50 years, Sister Mary Alice said she is grateful for the part she and the many other Holy Cross sisters played in building up the Congregation’s presence in the country. “It is fulfilling knowing that our younger sisters will carry on the mission,” she said.

Ministries continue

In 1998, the Congregation founded the Kyembogo Holy Cross Health Centre, where sisters offered primary health services and taught literacy courses, craftwork and other income-generating skills to local women. Today, the women’s development program, guided by the early leadership of Sisters Edward Ann and Mary Ann Uebbing, CSC, continues to provide support and benefit to the village through the uniform project, whereby local women make school uniforms for students attending schools in the district.

The work at the health center ballooned, and in 2001, the Congregation opened the expanded and renamed Holy Cross Family Centre, which currently includes the Kyembogo Holy Cross Health Unit, the uniform program, and Moreau Primary School.

Under the development and direction of Sisters Angelica, Mary De Nardis and Elisabeth Tusiime, CSC, the health unit broadened its health services offerings. Today, residents can receive AIDS and HIV education, counseling and treatment, as well as maternity, prenatal, outpatient, laboratory and home care services. Ugandan Sister Daisy Kabuleta, CSC, the center’s administrator and finance director, is pleased with the successes of the center, the community and the Congregation, and is eager to forge ahead. “We have touched and saved many lives,” she said. “We hope to expand the center and services at the clinic, especially services such as immunizations, health education in the schools, and antenatal care.”

In 2008, the vision for the Holy Cross Family Centre was completed with the opening of the Moreau Nursery School. The school, now called Moreau Primary School, enrolls 564 students. Distance prevents some families from sending their children to the school, and in response to that need, the Congregation hopes to build dormitories to house students from distant locales. “It has been a joy for me serving the people of God in this area,” said Sister Daisy. Looking forward, the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Uganda anticipate the next 50 years of ministry secured by hope and the example of their predecessors. “The sisters who came before us offer us their wisdom and experience and challenge us,” said Sister Jacinta. “We are able to stand on their shoulders, and as we go forward, there will be others who will need our shoulders to stand on. I ask myself, ‘What kind of foundation am I building for those who come after me?’ They deserve a strong foundation.”

To read more about the Congregation’s ministries in Uganda visit http://www.cscsisters.org/ministries/Pages/uganda.aspx
Interfaith dialogue
a sacred exchange

Madeleva Lecture honors 175th anniversary of Holy Cross women

While assisting with relief efforts in Sandwip Island, Bangladesh, which was devastated by a cyclone in 1993, Sister Marianne Farina, CSC, had an experience that deeply influenced her appreciation for interfaith relationships and dialogue. Hearing that the island was in the path of another storm, she and another sister kept shelter overnight with many Muslim women and children. As night fell, all began to pray — the Muslim women reciting the Qur'an, the sisters praying the rosary and meditating silently.

In the morning, word arrived that the storm had turned and missed the island, and the sisters learned that the Muslim women had remained awake through the night. When asked if they had kept vigil to comfort their children, the women said that was true. They also replied “that they remained in the prayer circle because if that night was to be their last they wanted to...”

Finding commonality fosters connection

Forming right relationships with God, with other human beings and with all of God’s creation, said Asma Afsaruddin, Ph.D., first requires the transformation of the individual human heart. A professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, Dr. Afsaruddin shared her comments in response to Sister Marianne Farina’s Madeleva Lecture presentation.

Echoing the sentiments of her colleague, Dr. Afsaruddin stressed the importance of finding pathways for interfaith dialogue and highlighted similarities among the teachings of Christianity and Islam. Preminent importance on the transformation of the inner self, for instance, is shared by both faith traditions.

“Transformation of the human heart occurs by making it receptive to God’s will and becoming filled with God-consciousness,” Dr. Afsaruddin said. She described God-consciousness, termed “taqwa” in Arabic, as an inner piety that shapes and informs interactions with God and others, and likened it to the Christian experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This personal inner conversion, she added, “endows even mundane actions with greater meaning and depth.”

By recognizing our commonalities, noted Dr. Afsaruddin, we are able to engage in dialogue with “the proper spirit.” Entering sacred conversations with humility and hospitality, which are also regarded as essential virtues in Islam, reminds us of our interconnectedness and “common responsibility to uphold and promote what is good and prevent what is wrong as part of our stewardship of Earth,” she said. “Sacred conversations help to keep this compact among ourselves alive and relevant.”

Analogy of the Bee and the Pulley

by Sister Eva Mary (Hooker), CSC

Just as the bee pulls the line, hind legs low, flying in free air, its back curved to lift the plank of missing words:

( I called and called
and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me) —

just so, fierce knowing prints Wisdom upon us,
the center of our common gravity,
and pulls us to her
and holds us fast in cords, tenderly, heart-root of grace:

( I called and
called
and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me) —

just so the pulley, her formal courtesy and practical radiance,
is made to draw
us up to the mirror of Wisdom —

( reflection of eternal light) —She,
whom we are able to take into our hands.

Mirror of moons: a goostly beholding of grace taught from within the mystery—

heart-root veiled.

Dr. Asma Afsaruddin, Ph.D.
Sister Marianne Farina, CSC

Sister Eva Mary (Hooker), CSC, left, was commissioned by the Saint Mary’s College Center for Spirituality to create the poem below and other original works commemorating the 175th anniversary of the founding of the women of Holy Cross.

Sister Eva Mary (Hooker), CSC, left, was commissioned by the Saint Mary’s College Center for Spirituality to create the poem below and other original works commemorating the 175th anniversary of the founding of the women of Holy Cross.
...sustaining these friendships across cultures and religions, we become stewards of the mystery. And as stewards of the mystery, we are disciples of a vision larger than ourselves.\n
— Sister Marianne Farina, CSC

with great zeal and joy, because the joy and the hardships that you struggle with yourself are a kind of humility and hospitality. We can go out because we have lived it.

Equally important, she continued, is understanding that dialogue is the “opportunity to present to the Spirit.” While finding common ground may result, she added, such conversations are not about reaching conclusions, but rather about “realizing God has been with us, encouraging us, giving us a sense of joy and communion.”

Again, Sister Marianne reached back into the Congregation’s history for examples of its relationships with other faiths and cultures, and gave special focus to its mission in Bangladesh. There, she said, is clear evidence of its three-phase approach to “crossing boundaries of cultures and religions”:

First, as Holy Cross, “we go in as students of the culture, paying attention to culture and context.” Secondly, “we befriend the culture by developing wonderful friendships with the people.” That ideology is evident in the Sisters’ Constitution and Statutes and within Holy Cross’ history of close lay associations. “The friendships reveal the face of God before you.” Lastly, in sustaining these friendships across cultures and religions, “we become stewards of the mystery. And as stewards of the mystery, we are disciples of a vision larger than ourselves.” When Mary and John stood at the foot of the cross, she added, they were stewards of the mystery. “We talk about Pentecost being the birth of the church, but as was the birth of the church at the foot of the cross.”

Sister Marianne noted that many of the ideas from the Christian faith are also evident in Islam. For instance, “the notion of reconciliation of hearts — we are called to be sacrament to one another, to witness to God doing something among us, with us and for us.” Similarly, in Islam there is a concept called “isham,” which means, doing all things as if you see God, and if not, know that God sees you. “This is known as ‘doing the beautiful,’” she said. “That’s being stewards of the mystery.”

Crossing those borders with one another, Sister Marianne added, “allows us to go out in apostolic mission of the mystery. And as stewards of the mystery, we are disciples of a vision larger than ourselves.”

We offer many remembrance cards throughout the year including birthday, jubilee, get well and memorial cards. When prayers are the perfect gift, think of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Current designs can be seen on our website, www.cscsisters.org. simply click on Support Us on the top menu bar and select Memorial & Honor Cards. Proceeds benefit the Ministry With the Poor fund unless you designate otherwise.

Send someone you love a card

Save canceled stamps

Even though email, texting and online payments are reducing the number of postage stamps that appear in your mailbox, every one of them counts. Trim the paper around the stamp to a ¼” or more margin and send it to the stamp ministry where our sisters and volunteers will process and repackage them for stamp collectors. All proceeds benefit the Ministry With the Poor fund.

More ways to pay it forward

In the last issue of inSpirit we mentioned several ways that you can use your God-given gifts and abilities to further the mission of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Here are a few more ideas — some involve cash while others take a little effort. There is something for everyone of every means, age and proximity! Please know that we are deeply grateful to you, our partners in ministry, and we hold you in prayer.

Like us on Facebook

Help spread the news about the Sisters of the Holy Cross. To access our page, click on the Facebook icon at the bottom of the home page of our website at www.cscsisters.org.

Apply for your employer’s matching gifts

Some companies will match donations made by their employees. Ask your human resources department if they match gifts to religious organizations. Then be sure to fill out the paperwork and send it in. You might be able to double the impact of your gift!
From violence to peace

Even before entering the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, Sister Patricia Rodriguez Leal, CSC, wanted to serve the people of her home country of Mexico through the formation of children. For this reason she chose to become a teacher.

After working for more than 10 years in various school systems, Sister Paty (as she is called) wanted to do more. Recognizing that the people of Mexico are desperate for justice, peace and forgiveness, she became very excited to see “…how the mission numbers, marketing, policies, etc.” But after enrolling in the U-ERRE program Children for Peace program together, she considered the possibility of this would take many people working especially for peace education. Since the mission of Holy Cross is to promote nonviolence, right relationships, justice and everything that helps to give liberation to the people, she considered the possibility of through the program Children for Peace. She said, “If we start educating the children in recognising their dignity as God’s children through these values, we are contributing to a gradual systemic change. … The mission of Holy Cross is to promote nonviolence, right relationships, justice and everything that helps to give liberation to the people. I believe education is the way to find that freedom and transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace.”

SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS
Back to school
Nuevo León, Mexico, Sister Paty has classmates from different countries, which she also finds exciting, “Sharing with people from different places helps to broaden my understanding of education, culture, (bringing a) variety of experiences…writings, and thoughts.” Upon graduation in late 2016 or early 2017, she will earn a degree in school administration. Sister Paty is currently putting her passion for peace education into practice — with adults through workshops known by their Spanish acronym, ESPERE (Escuelas de Perdón y Reconciliación or Schools of Forgiveness and Reconciliation), and with children through the program Children for Peace. She said, “If we start educating the children in recognising their dignity as God’s children through these values, we are contributing to a gradual systemic change. … The mission of Holy Cross is to promote nonviolence, right relationships, justice and everything that helps to give liberation to the people.”

IRA charitable distributions

Permanent! Last year the IRA charitable distribution provision was made permanent. It allows donors who are at least 70 1/2 years of age to make distributions directly from their IRAs as charity. These distributions, which count toward the donor’s required minimum distribution, are not counted as taxable income and are not subject to withholding.

Making a charitable distribution from an IRA rather than from other assets may be appropriate for you if:
• You do not itemize deductions;  
• You itemize deductions, but will not be able to use all of them because you expect your total charitable gifts for the year to exceed 50 percent of your adjusted gross income;  
• You may lose some of your itemized deductions because of your income level; or  
• You are required to take distributions, but do not need them for living expenses.

Important!
• You must instruct the IRA trustee to transfer the funds directly to the Sisters of the Holy Cross (or other charity), not to you.  
• Please let us know that you are making an IRA distribution so that we can provide the proper documentation for your tax records.

This type of charitable giving has benefits that vary from person to person. Please talk to your financial or tax advisor about whether it is right for you.

Timing matters at the end of the year
The timing of a gift—when it is given, received and considered for tax purposes—is critical and varies depending upon what is being given and how. According to the IRS, a gift is made on the date it is unconditionally delivered.

Checks
The postmark (not the date of the check) indicates the date of the gift and therefore the year in which the gift is deductible.

Credit cards
The gift is made when the credit card is processed. If mailing a credit card donation in December, please mail early in the month. We process credit card donations on the date we receive them, but mail delivery can be very slow, especially toward the end of December. To protect your 2016 tax deduction it may be wiser to make the donation online (www.cscsisters.org and choose Donate Online) or by telephone (574) 284-5641.

IRA charitable distributions

Permanent! Last year the IRA charitable distribution provision was made permanent. It allows donors who are at least 70 1/2 years of age to make distributions directly from their IRAs as charity. These distributions, which count toward the donor’s required minimum distribution, are not counted as taxable income and are not subject to withholding.

Making a charitable distribution from an IRA rather than from other assets may be appropriate for you if:
• You do not itemize deductions;  
• You itemize deductions, but will not be able to use all of them because you expect your total charitable gifts for the year to exceed 50 percent of your adjusted gross income;  
• You may lose some of your itemized deductions because of your income level; or  
• You are required to take distributions, but do not need them for living expenses.

Important!
• You must instruct the IRA trustee to transfer the funds directly to the Sisters of the Holy Cross (or other charity), not to you.  
• Please let us know that you are making an IRA distribution so that we can provide the proper documentation for your tax records.

This type of charitable giving has benefits that vary from person to person. Please talk to your financial or tax advisor about whether it is right for you.

Timing matters at the end of the year
The timing of a gift—when it is given, received and considered for tax purposes—is critical and varies depending upon what is being given and how. According to the IRS, a gift is made on the date it is unconditionally delivered.

Checks
The postmark (not the date of the check) indicates the date of the gift and therefore the year in which the gift is deductible.

Credit cards
The gift is made when the credit card is processed. If mailing a credit card donation in December, please mail early in the month. We process credit card donations on the date we receive them, but mail delivery can be very slow, especially toward the end of December. To protect your 2016 tax deduction it may be wiser to make the donation online (www.cscsisters.org and choose Donate Online) or by telephone (574) 284-5641.

IRA charitable distributions

Permanent! Last year the IRA charitable distribution provision was made permanent. It allows donors who are at least 70 1/2 years of age to make distributions directly from their IRAs as charity. These distributions, which count toward the donor’s required minimum distribution, are not counted as taxable income and are not subject to withholding.

Making a charitable distribution from an IRA rather than from other assets may be appropriate for you if:
• You do not itemize deductions;  
• You itemize deductions, but will not be able to use all of them because you expect your total charitable gifts for the year to exceed 50 percent of your adjusted gross income;  
• You may lose some of your itemized deductions because of your income level; or  
• You are required to take distributions, but do not need them for living expenses.

Important!
• You must instruct the IRA trustee to transfer the funds directly to the Sisters of the Holy Cross (or other charity), not to you.  
• Please let us know that you are making an IRA distribution so that we can provide the proper documentation for your tax records.

This type of charitable giving has benefits that vary from person to person. Please talk to your financial or tax advisor about whether it is right for you.

Timing matters at the end of the year
The timing of a gift—when it is given, received and considered for tax purposes—is critical and varies depending upon what is being given and how. According to the IRS, a gift is made on the date it is unconditionally delivered.

Checks
The postmark (not the date of the check) indicates the date of the gift and therefore the year in which the gift is deductible.

Credit cards
The gift is made when the credit card is processed. If mailing a credit card donation in December, please mail early in the month. We process credit card donations on the date we receive them, but mail delivery can be very slow, especially toward the end of December. To protect your 2016 tax deduction it may be wiser to make the donation online (www.cscsisters.org and choose Donate Online) or by telephone (574) 284-5641.
A simple drawing of the Holy Family at the manger in Bethlehem graces the front of the 2016 Christmas remembrance card. Nieves Lidia Ortiz Galván, a candidate of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, contributed her talents. In honor of her Mexican origin, the verse from Luke 2, which proclaims Christ’s birth, is featured in Spanish and English. The card will be personalized to tell your recipients that you have given a gift in their names and that they will be remembered in prayer throughout the year. (The amount of your gift is not revealed.) Your tax-deductible donation will help support our Ministry With The Poor fund.

You may order cards by phone (574) 284-5641; website: www.cscsisters.org, or choose Memorial & Honor Cards; or mail use the form below.

Card given by: _________________________________________
Address  ____________________________________________
City  ________________________State  _____  ZIP  ________
Daytime telephone _______________________________________

Send a Christmas card to:
Recipient’s Name  ____________________________________
Address  ____________________________________________
City  ________________________State  _____  ZIP  ________

Method of Payment - Christmas Cards

- Amount $ ____
- Check payable to: Sisters of the Holy Cross
- Credit card:  
  ✔ Visa  ✔ MasterCard  ✔ Discover  ✔ American Express

Card #: __________________  Expiration Date

Name on credit card (please print): _______________________

Signature for credit card: _______________________________

(Place list additional recipients on separate paper.)

Mail to: Sisters of the Holy Cross, Development Office – Saint Mary’s, 407 Bertrand Hall, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-5000; (574) 284-5641

2016 Christmas remembrance cards

Alleluia! Spring appeal update

The enthusiastic and generous response to our appeal for a new wheelchair van was amazing! You made it possible to purchase the new van that Saint Mary’s Convent needed to safely and comfortably transport sisters to their medical appointments. In addition, the fund for general retirement needs was given a big boost. THANK YOU!

Milestones on the journey

These sisters have celebrated milestones on their walk in Holy Cross this year. Join us in joy and thanksgiving as we mark important events in their lives!

Initial Profession: Seven candidates were received into the International Novitiate at Saint Mary’s in June: left to right, Dolly Joya Tozu, Lydia Nakimuli, Nilu Suting, Nancy Rose Njeri Njoroge, Lina Mrong, Megan Elizabeth McIvery and Sakhi Chiran.

International Novitiate: Seven candidates were received into the International Novitiate at Saint Mary’s in June: left to right, Dolly Joya Tozu, Lydia Nakimuli, Nilu Suting, Nancy Rose Njeri Njoroge, Lina Mrong, Megan Elizabeth McIvery and Sakhi Chiran.

Ongoing Formation: Two groups of Holy Cross sisters, below and right, who recently professed perpetual vows gathered at Saint Mary’s this summer for a five-week intensive educational, spiritual and experiential formation program.

Initial Profession: Holy Cross Sisters Teresa Rebeiro, left, and Riitha Mymsong made their initial profession of vows as Sisters of the Holy Cross on May 28 in the Church of Our Lady of Loretto at Saint Mary’s.

Left to right, front row: Sisters Jacinta Mueni Munyao, Renuka Pegu, Shibanlin Nongsiej; back row: Sisters Noylí Margot Ríos Manzo (group coordinator), Elizangela Matos dos Santos, Isabel Cristina Camacho Torres and Promila Gomes

Taxes: Itemize your deductions!

Much sooner than we care to admit, it will be time to start preparing tax returns. If you would like a summary of your donations made in 2016, let us know. We will be happy to send you a year-end summary by the end of January. Once you are on the list, we will automatically send a summary every year. To order, call (574) 284-5641 or email development@cscsisters.org.

Left to right, front row: Sisters Joyeline Mary Lyngkhoi, Elmdin Lyngkhoi, Rose Mary Manggar; middle row: Sisters Patricia Rodriguez Leal, Mary Louise Wailer (group coordinator); back row: Sisters Vanessa Cruz Ferreira, Miriam Noheri Arize Paredes and Jacinta Katsusabe

Left to right, front row: Sisters Jacinta Mueni Munyao, Renuka Pegu, Shibanlin Nongsiej; back row: Sisters Noylí Margot Ríos Manzo (group coordinator), Elizangela Matos dos Santos, Isabel Cristina Camacho Torres and Promila Gomes

Alleluia! Spring appeal update

The enthusiastic and generous response to our appeal for a new wheelchair van was amazing! You made it possible to purchase the new van that Saint Mary’s Convent needed to safely and comfortably transport sisters to their medical appointments. In addition, the fund for general retirement needs was given a big boost. THANK YOU!
Celebrating 175 years

A historic moment

Six Congregation presidents shared highlights of more than 30 years of Holy Cross heritage at a special panel discussion on July 15, 2016. Their presentations offered an opportunity to be grateful for the past, celebrate the present and find hope for our future in mission. The event was part of the 175th anniversary celebration of the founding of the women of Holy Cross.