Sr. Mary John travels to China as an Education Delegate

Sr. Mary John O’Rourke recently returned from Beijing, China, in February after being invited as principal of St. Gregory the Great in Danbury, to take part in a delegation from the Diocese of Bridgeport. The group was invited by the Beijing International Education Exchange (BIEE) for the promotion of Sino-American education exchanges between educators of the two countries. The aim of the visit was to enhance the international promotion of the Chinese language and Chinese culture and to mutually seek an understanding, enrichment and exchange of cultural ideas for the learning of each others’ language and customs.

The educators in Beijing had been searching for an appropriate school system for the promotion of education exchanges between the two countries. They were particularly attracted to the schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport by its strength in science, technology, engineering and math education and the high number of national recognized Blue Ribbon Schools.

During their time in China the delegation visited public and private schools, held conferences with educators, and participated in linguistic consultations. One meeting led to a follow up exchange in which it was agreed to have the pre-K four year olds at St. Gregory talk to their counterparts at the school in China this May. “Chinese is a difficult language, but children at that age are sponges,” said Sr. Mary John. “They soak it right in.”

As a result of the trip, the delegation realized the importance of their students to have an understanding of the language and culture of the country. There are also talks about the possibility of an exchange program during the summer. The decision to integrate Chinese language into the curriculum of the diocesan school, starting at the pre-school level, was finalized after the trip. This would be an enrichment program and would be in addition to the current Spanish program already taught throughout the school system. In addition to Sr. Mary John, the delegation included Dr. Margaret Dames, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport, John Cook, deputy superintendent of schools, and Dian Tung, director of instructional technology and three other representatives from the diocesan schools.

One of the benefits of this international connection was illustrated by Dr. Fang Weibo, executive director of the BIEE. “Our connection can underline the peace that the world needs,” Dr. Fang told the delegation at the close of the delegation meeting. Introduction to the Chinese language and culture at the elementary school level is currently being planned for the next school year.
Dear Friends of the Ursuline Sisters,

As I look outside I am amazed at everything that is in bloom. It seems that we were fortunate in the North East to escape winter this year with its cold, gray and dreary skies. Mother Nature gave us the gift of an exceptionally early spring to enjoy all the beauty, color and new life that comes with it. Robert Frost says it well in the first verse of his poem, “A Prayer in Spring”:

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
            And give us not to think so far away
            As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
            All simply in the springing of the year.

Since I am not a lover of winter, I count this early spring as an additional gift of our gracious God this year. I would like to suggest that you allow the beauty of this gift to lead you to the beauty of God and to the beauty of others. In this issue of our Newsletter there are stories of our Sisters, those recently deceased and those still ministering to God’s people. As you read, enjoy the beauty of each of them and whatever memories their stories may evoke in you. May we always be people who can relish beauty and “all good gifts around us”. Know that we remember you in our prayers.

In harmony and hope,

Sister Catherine Talia, OSU
Provincial Superior

Sr. Catherine Talia

Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk News
Vol. 3, No. 1  Spring 2012

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Councilors
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Valerie Heinonen, OSU
Barbara Gooding, OSU

81-15 Utopia Parkway
Jamaica, NY 11432-1308
(718) 591-0681

Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk News is a publication of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk, US Province.

Development/Mission Advancement Office
Development and Communications Manager
Hope Motreuil - ext. 2003
hmotreuil@tildonkursuline.org

Special Events Planner
Elizabeth Wilson - ext. 2060
lwilson@tildonkursuline.org

186 Middle Road
Blue Point, NY 11715
(631) 363-2422

website: www.tildonkursuline.org
Sr. Edith returns to St. Charles as Director of Pastoral Care

Since January 16, 2012, Sister Edith Menegus has been ministering as Director of Pastoral Care at St. Charles Hospital in Port Jefferson, New York. As Director of Pastoral Care, Sr. Edith is responsible, on an interfaith basis, for the spiritual well being of the patients, their families, and the staff at St. Charles. She is a member of the hospital leadership team and serves on many committees, such as Ethics, Mission & Ministry, Palliative Care, and Patient & Family Advisory Council. Sr. Edith oversees a staff of chaplains, priest chaplains, Pastoral Care Visitors, Spiritual Care Companions, Clinical Pastoral Education students, and Eucharistic Ministers. She visits patients, families, and staff as a board-certified chaplain. She also participates in the New Employee Orientation program and teaches in the Spiritual Care Companions training program.

Sr. Edith is grateful to be a part of the interdisciplinary health care team at St. Charles, bringing the spiritual perspective and her expertise to join with the other disciplines responsible for the care of the patients. She feels privileged to be ministering with such a compassionate and caring staff throughout the hospital.

Sr. Edith feels as if she has come home. She had served part time as a staff chaplain at St. Charles Hospital while she served in elected leadership as a Councilor in the US Province of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk. But Sr. Edith’s connection and commitment to St. Charles Hospital goes back many years, before she entered religious life. Sr. Edith’s mother, suffering from liver cancer, was a patient at St. Charles in October, 1980. Her father was in another hospital at the same time dealing with stomach cancer. Sr. Edith, an only child, was traveling back and forth between these two hospitals. At St. Charles, the pastoral care presence was lovingly offered by Sr. Martha Winum, a Daughter of Wisdom, and member of the founding congregation of the hospital. Sr. Martha sat with Hilda Menegus whenever Edith was visiting with her father. Sr. Martha was also a comfort to Edith and spent time with her after her mother’s death at St. Charles. This was Edith’s first experience of Pastoral Care and chaplaincy. She hoped that one day she would be able to give such care to someone else in a similar situation. The opportunity arose when she was discerning her ministry path as an Ursuline Sister of Tildonk. She accepted the challenge of becoming a chaplain and has loved the ministry ever since.

In order to serve as a board-certified chaplain in a health care setting, an individual must have attained a Master’s Degree in Theology, completed at least 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and appeared successfully before the certifying board of a national organization responsible for the certification of chaplains. Sr. Edith has been a board-certified chaplain since 2002. Her first CPE unit, or internship, was at Griffin Hospital, which embraces the Planetree model (body-mind-spirit connection) of health care, in Derby, Connecticut from 1999-2000. Next came Sr. Edith’s First Year Residency, three units of CPE, at Stamford Hospital, a Level II trauma center, in Stamford, Connecticut from 2000-2001. This was followed by a four-unit Specialty Residency at Calvary Hospital, an acute care facility for terminally ill adult cancer patients with symptoms, in the Bronx from 2001-2002. Sr. Edith received her Master’s Degree in Theology with a Specialty in Spirituality from the Graduate School of the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington in 2001. As part of this degree program Sr. Edith took several courses at Fordham University in the Bronx. Sr. Edith had a successful certifying board appearance with the National Association of Catholic Chaplains in 2002. She is also a member of the Three Village Clergy Association, an interfaith gathering of worship leaders from the Port Jefferson, Setauket, and Stony Brook communities.
Our Ministries

The following are ministries and organizations employing Ursuline Sisters or receiving subsidized or volunteer services from Ursuline Sisters.

Author, Children’s Books
Childcare, Vermont
Consultant, Corporate Responsibility
Eastern Farm Workers Association, Bellport, NY
Education Department, Diocese of Rockville Centre
New Ground, Hempstead, NY
Tomorrow’s Hope Foundation, Rockville Centre, NY
United Nations Educational Programs

Healthcare/Hospice/Holistic
Catholic Health Services, Melville, NY
Maria Regina, Brentwood, NY
St. Charles Hospital, Port Jefferson, NY
St. Ursula Convent, Blue Point, NY
UST Holistic Therapies

Parishes
Maria Regina, Seaford, NY
Mary Immaculate, Bellport, NY
Nativity BVM, Ozone Park, NY
Our Lady of Grace, Howard Beach, NY
Our Lady of Victory, West Haven, CT
St. Camillus, Rockaway Park, NY
St. Gregory the Great, Bellerose, NY
St. Gregory the Great, Danbury, CT
St. John Nepomucene, Bohemia, NY
St. Margaret, Middle Village, NY
St. Thomas the Apostle, Oxford, CT
St. William the Abbot, Seaford, NY
Weston Priory, Weston, VT

Schools
Divine Mercy Catholic Academy, Ozone Park, NY (formerly Nativity BVM School)
Fordham University, Bronx NY
Our Lady of Fatima, Jackson Heights, NY
Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Syosset, NY
Our Lady of Victory, West Haven, CT
Queen of All Saints, Brooklyn, NY
St. Gregory the Great, Danbury, CT

Spirituality
Tabor Retreat Center, Oceanside, NY
St. Ursula Center, Blue Point, NY

Has an Ursuline Sister made a difference in your life?

Would you consider giving a gift today to help support our retired and infirm sisters?

Have you thought of including the Ursuline Sisters in your will?

Call 631-363-2422, ext. 2003
You may have heard of a quote from Maya Angelou, “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” Sister Mary Lou, previously known as Sr. Jerome, was one of those unforget-table teachers that instilled in children a feeling of value and worth. As one of her former History students reflected, “I felt like my opinion mattered--that my understanding of history was as important as the facts, and that ultimately history was meant to become a part of me; that it could shape my thoughts and views of the world, and that these mattered.”

She was passionate about teaching and loved her students. Her teaching methods incorporated a bit of wit so as to make the sometimes difficult concepts enjoyable and easier to understand. Her favorite subject, Social Studies, was augmented with outside of the classroom projects and programs. This involved her students and gave them lasting memories.

Sr. Mary Lou is a product of Catholic School education having attended St. Thomas the Apostle in West Hartford, CT where she was taught by the Ursuline Sisters. Her experiences with the Ursuline Sisters there inspired her to become an Ursuline Sister and a teacher. She professed her vows in 1958. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education from St. John’s University and a Masters of Arts degree in History and Political Science from the College of St. Rose, Albany, NY.

She taught History and Religion at St. Thomas the Apostle in West Hartford, CT, St. William the Abbot in Seaford, NY and Our Lady of Hope in Middle Village, NY. She also served as principal at Our Lady of Grace in Howard Beach, NY and St. Gregory the Great in Bellerose, NY.

After retiring from her ministry of 37 years in Catholic Education, she worked several years for New York State to assist people in understanding how the government works for them and to ensure equal access for all. She often spoke on behalf of those in need.

Today, Sr. Mary Lou is still making a difference in other’s lives. She volunteers at the Grace Ministry of Care and Concern food pantry at Our Lady of Grace Parish. Sr. Mary Lou helps with organizing and distributing food to over 800 people in the Howard Beach area. The pantry is funded by government grants and generous contributions from members of Our Lady of Grace Parish and the local community.

She is also active in the Ursuline Community and in the ministry of fundraising, assisting the Mission Advancement Office in developing programs to support the retired sisters. As a hobby she has created and maintains a website depicting the Sisters in various ministries and at community events. The website can be viewed at http://tressy.tripod.com.
Events

Annual Luncheon

On Sunday, October 23, 2011 our annual Luncheon was held at the Strathmore Vanderbilt Country Club in Manhasset, NY. This year’s luncheon, themed “A Little French Flair,” honored Sr. Ursula Leibold for her years of service.

Sr. Ursula and Sr. Catherine Talia, Provincial.

Sr. Ursula says a few words of thanks.

Sr. Regina Delaney (below) speaks of Sr. Ursula’s life.

Sr. Ursula surrounded by her family.

Upcoming Events

May 20, 2012
Concert at the Convent, “Music Across the Nations”
St. Ursula Center, Blue Point

June 19, 2012
“Swinging with the Sisters” Golf Outing & Dinner
Harbor Links, Manhasset

September 23, 2012
Ursuline Annual Luncheon
Strathmore Vanderbilt Country Club, Manhasset

November 10, 2012
Annual Holiday Craft Fair
St. Ursula Center, Blue Point

For more information, please call or email Elizabeth Wilson at 631-363-2422, ext. 2060; lwilson@tildonkursuline.org
Events

Annual Holiday Craft Fair

On Saturday, November 12, 2011 the annual Holiday Craft Fair was held at the St. Ursula Center in Blue Point, NY. Many came to enjoy homemade crafts, delicious baked goods and raffle prizes. All proceeds of the event benefit the care of our retired Sisters.

Sr. Germaine Campbell lends a helping hand.

Homemade baked goods.

Sr. Margaret Golub with her Penguins with a Purpose books.

Sr. Ursula Leibold and volunteer Pat Duffy Yurdiga.

Sr. Margaret Mary Feahilly works the Irish table.

Sr. Margaret Gay displays her beautiful photography.
We Remember with Gratitude...

Sister Mary Josephine McCarthy, OSU who died December 20, 2011 at Maria Regina Residence, Brentwood, NY. She was 97 years old. She entered the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk on January 10, 1928. She was in the 83rd year of her religious profession.

Sister Mary Josephine Gorman, OSU who died January 2, 2012 at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital. She was 94 years old. She entered the Congregation of the Ursuline Sisters of Tildonk on August 15, 1933. She was in the 78th year of her religious profession.

Gifts in memory of our deceased Sisters may be sent to:
Ursuline Provincialate, 81-15 Utopia Parkway, Jamaica, NY, 11432-1308

Saint Angela’s Legacy Circle

We are deeply grateful to the following donors who have named our community as the recipient of a planned gift. These generous donors are faithful stewards who will leave a legacy that enables our Sisters to serve in various ministries and provides for the needs of our retired Sisters.

Joan & Arnold Bellmer
Linda Cusati
Dennis Doherty
Joseph & Marilyn Monteith

For more information on the Saint Angela’s Legacy Circle call Hope Motreuil at 631-363-2422, ext. 2003 or email hmotreuil@tildonkursuline.org
We are deeply grateful to the following donors who have joined the St. Angela's Friendship Circle by making a commitment to give on a monthly basis. Their commitment to our community helps us ensure the security of our retired and infirm Sisters, as well as provide our Sisters the ability to serve in various ministries.

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Timothy Connell
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For more information on the Saint Angela’s Friendship Circle call Hope Motreuil at 631-363-2422, ext. 2003 or email hmotreuil@tildonkursuline.org

Our prayer enrollment cards feature the stained glass image of St. Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursuline Sisters, and can now be used for the living and the deceased. Our new “In Honor of” cards may be sent in honor of birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and many other special occasions. Roses are placed in the chapel of the St. Ursula Center in Blue Point, where liturgy and prayer services are held for all enrolled intentions. The Sisters will remember your intentions in their daily prayers. All intentions are entered into a remembrance prayer book.

We would be delighted to send you a complimentary packet of cards at no cost. Please call 631-363-2422 ext. 2001 or email info@tildonkursuline.org. You may also order cards online to be sent on your behalf at www.tildonkursuline.org.
Thank You
Thank you for giving so generously to the needs and ministries of the Sisters throughout the year.
You are remembered in the daily prayers of our Sisters.

The following names represent those who provided financial support during the 2011 fiscal year Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2011. If any information is incorrect please call or email Hope Motreuil at 631-363-2422, ext. 2003; email: hmotreuil@tildonkursuline.org

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- Sr. Anna Ardiff
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- Lillian & Henry Betjemann
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- Sr. Michael McKenna
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The 35th Holy Family Reunion
   Committee (Class Of ’76)
Unified Window and Door
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Special thank you to our event sponsors:

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West Lake Inn
WLNY tv 10/55

Bequests

The following remembered the Ursuline Sisters in her will. She has shared God’s abundance with us, may she now share in God fully.

Grace Muller
A Woman’s Sacred Journey

After retiring from years of serving in hospital and hospice chaplaincy, Sr. Ann McHugh recognized there was a need for women to be able to gather together and share their stories. With this in mind, she created the Woman’s Sacred Journey group. Woman’s Sacred Journey is a spiritual sharing group where women gather together on a weekly basis in an open and sharing environment. The group meets for two hours on Monday morning for six consecutive weeks. The group prays together and shares their sacred journeys.

The women bond as they share their stories and become in touch with their spirituality, discovering God within them and with one another. One participant commented, “I feel we are truly blessed to have come together and have formed beautiful friendships, looking out for one another, understanding hurts and sharing what we can from the heart and above all being able to laugh at ourselves and with each other.”

The basis of the sharing comes from spiritual authors such as Jan Richardson, Joyce Rupp and Margaret Silf. The next six-week session is scheduled to start in September. For more information about the Woman’s Sacred Journey, please call 631-363-2422.

Ursuline Sisters honored by SOAR!

The Ursuline Sister of Tildonk were the recipients of the SOAR! (Support our Aging Religious) Rita A. Hofbauer Grant. The grant was presented at the SOAR! 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner at the New York Athletic Club on October 25, 2011. The $25,000 grant provided two stairway lifts at the St. Ursula Center. The lifts provide a safe way for our retired Sisters to stay mobile and active in their congregation. We are grateful to SOAR! for this grant.

Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Agnes take a ride on the newly installed chair lifts.
My name is Joanne Mary Vehstedt Bellmer. I was blessed to attend Nativity BVM School in Ozone Park, NY, where I received an excellent education and a strong foundation in the faith. The Sisters were loving, kind and great teachers. It was the happiest time in my childhood.

As a Hebrew Catholic, I am also grateful to the Ursuline Sisters for their attempt to send food and clothing to St. Edith Stein and her fellow Jewish prisoners in the death camps at Auschwitz. What heroic courage and compassion they displayed.

These consecrated Sisters are truly “great daughters of the church.”

Would you like to share your reason? Please call 631-363-2422, ext. 2003 or email hmotreuil@tildonkursuline.org
Please help us to be efficient.
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The Ursuline Sisters of
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