

Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province Fall 2004

Editor's Introduction:

URSULINES IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD

In this issue of Bylines, we are featuring the story of Sr. Eileen Finnerty and her work as Pastoral Associate at St. Ann's Church in Ossining, New York. At a difficult time for the church and in the world, we want to spread the "good news" of a parish that really works—a lively, multi-ethnic, faith-filled community.

We also report on sisters traveling this summer from the States to Europe and Asia for various reasons and coming home from service abroad for a visit or permanently. We in turn were graced by the brief visits of Ursulines from Australia, England, France, Slovenia, and Taiwan. And in October, members of the General Council and Ursuline provincials from all over the world (most of whom have never been to the USA) met for the first time in this country for an Enlarged General Council meeting, presided over by Mother Colette Lignon, our Mother General.

In most instances, this travel stems from the fact that we are Ursulines of the Roman Union, an international community with a generalate in Rome and provinces on five continents. If you imagine something like "an all-nun United Nations," you'll see that this lends an interesting and broadening dimension to our lives. Like the UN, however, it also presents its challenges. In the face of global conflict, we believe that our—and your—efforts at international understanding and collaboration are needed more than ever.

This issue of Bylines also tells another story—of beginnings, "middles," and endings. While we rejoiced at the beginning of perpetual vowed life in the final profession of Sr. Jeannie Humphries, we also honored the fidelity to those same vows of four Golden Jubilarians and two sisters celebrating sixty years of vowed life. At the same time, we were saddened by the deaths of four beloved Ursulines this past summer. We know by faith that these endings are themselves a beginning. "Life is changed, not taken away," as the liturgy tells us. Still, these sisters, each of them uniquely colorful, are missed.

But first, St. Ann's in Ossining.

Nancy M. Malone, OSU (Augusta)

1855-2005 Mount St. Ursula Celebrates 150th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving



The Most Reverend Patrick J. Sheridan, presiding, with concelebrants and students on October 16, 2004.

The choir sings a rousing rendition of MSU's Alma Mater.





ST. ANN'S PARISH

A MULTICULTURAL

MOSAIC *by Eileen Finnerty, OSU*

For the past eight years I have had the privilege of ministering at St. Ann's parish in Ossining, New York, a small town in the lower Hudson Valley. We recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of the parish, originally founded as a national parish to meet the needs of Italian immigrants. St. Ann's still serves many immigrants, but, as you'll see, it has evolved, developed and changed. Serving about one thousand active families, we now proudly describe ourselves as a "multicultural community rooted in Christian faith and committed to living the Gospel" (Parish Mission Statement).

At St. Ann's, Sunday Mass is celebrated in five different languages—English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Filipino. On a given weekday night you could stop into church and pray the rosary in English, Portuguese or Italian. Every Friday night offers the opportunity to

Above: Young parishioners listen attentively at the children's liturgy.

Below: Sr. Eileen Finnerty and helpers discuss plans at the parish festival.



participate in the Spanish Charismatic Prayer Group. In addition, the *Peregrinos de Maria* pray the rosary each night in a different home and the Filipino community celebrates the Lord of Pardon at weekly prayer

meetings in their homes. Each community also maintains the tradition of having street processions to celebrate patronal feast days or cultural devotions to the Blessed Mother and Our Lord.

Being multicultural, however, is not only our greatest asset but also our greatest challenge. We are constantly trying to balance a respect for the culture, traditions, language and customs of each community with a growing sense of unity as a parish family. Several times throughout the year and at major celebrations we come together to share the Eucharist at multicultural liturgies. Children wear traditional dress and carry the flags of the more than 40 countries represented in the parish. Readings are done in various languages, and hymns are sung in five languages accompanied by musicians from the different communities.

Since our parish family includes many recent immigrants, there are other needs to be met. The parish Food Pantry, the annual Coat Drive and Thanksgiving Day Baskets alleviate some of the physical needs. The H.E.L.P. Committee (Hispanic Employee Labor Project) assists day-workers who are defrauded of their wages by employers. The committee acts as an advocate for the workers and has successfully won several court cases on their behalf. We also offer English classes to help the workers acquire the vocabulary required in their working and living situations.

Our commitment to living the gospel extends beyond the borders of Ossining. During the Jubilee Year 2000, a group of women in the parish, touched by the poverty of children, asked me to suggest an Ursuline mission in need of support. St. Ann's Orphanage in Guyana, S.A.

came immediately to mind. And so, our “Rainbow of Hope Project” was born—St. Ann’s in Ossining reaching out to St. Ann’s in Guyana. In four years the parish has contributed over \$30,000. to the care of the girls at the orphanage. Going beyond fundraising, we have made efforts to send birthday cards to the girls and to connect the children as pen pals. One of our Religious Education First Communion classes created a banner and sent it to the first communicants at the orphanage. And each year our “Bread for the World Committee” sponsors a letter-writing campaign. This past year we sent 1200 letters to our representatives in Washington, urging them to back legislation to help parents in developing countries make sure their children have enough to eat.

Perhaps St. Ann’s Parish Festival, our annual fundraiser, best exemplifies the spirit of our community. For six nights in August some 200 volunteers work to provide rides, games and food for the greater Ossining area where we are especially famous for our Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Filipino specialties. The collaboration is palpable as we try to create an atmosphere of hospitality and welcome to all.

I came to St. Ann’s hoping to be involved in adult faith formation and I have not been disappointed. In the past several years I have journeyed with the adults in our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), been coordinator and spiritual guide for the annual Women’s Cornerstone Retreat, worked with our RENEW program, led a weekly scripture reflection group, and prepared parents for the baptism of their children. As a member of the Adult Education Committee, I work with several parishioners to provide opportunities that will enhance and deepen the theological and spiritual lives of our people. In brief exchanges outside the church on Sunday mornings I hear their hopes



and disappointments, joys and sorrows, challenges and desires. And the mystery of God’s presence and compassionate love becomes a more tangible reality for me.

At a time when our church is in such turmoil, it is a gift to be part of a dynamic, faith-filled parish. As I reflect on my ministry at St. Ann’s, the image of creating a beautiful mosaic comes to mind. Each piece, each color, each shape is important to the artistic effort.

Our mosaic is by no means complete and perhaps it never will be. As we adjust to the needs of the times and respond to our ever-changing community, the image and pieces will be modified or changed and the mosaic will be redesigned and created anew. The important thing is that we continue to strive for unity and harmony, beautiful even in an unfinished state.

St. Angela’s words, spoken to her original Company, offer encouragement to me and the parish family of St. Ann’s in Ossining: “Live in harmony with one mind and heart . . . and continue steadfastly in the work you have begun.”

*Above: St. Ann’s celebrates a multicultural liturgy.
Below: The Reverend Edward Byrne, Pastor, celebrates the 40th anniversary of his ordination .*



A Very Good Life

On August 28, 58 Ursulines gathered in Malone, New York, for the final profession of **Sr. Jean Marie Humphries**. Along with family, friends, the townspeople of Malone, and her colleagues from Flanders School, we celebrated a joyful liturgy at Notre Dame Church during which Jeannie, having lived as a vowed Ursuline for five years, renewed her religious commitment forever. The celebration continued at a reception outside the church, prepared by friends of the community and Ursuline Associates, and later at a festive dinner in a local restaurant.



In a piece in the North Country Catholic, Jeannie described the desire for a fuller life of prayer and community support for her ministry that led her in 1996 to religious life and the Ursulines. Two years ago, she went to Malone, “a big adjustment for a girl from the Bronx.... I felt it was a place where I could make a difference, where I could make an impact on people’s lives—and they on mine.” As a reading specialist, co-leader of a Girl Scout troop, and planner of the children’s Liturgy of the Word at Notre Dame Church, she no doubt has experienced both. “Work and career are no longer my top priority, but my relationship with God, my sisters and others is. It is a good life, a very good life,” says Jeannie.

Golden Jubilarians September Reflection: A Different Fidelity

There was a time—remembered by many of us—when “fidelity” was a very straight road, narrow perhaps, but well marked and direct. Once you had declared your desire to “follow God’s will” and become an Ursuline there were few decisions left to you. After two years of novitiate when you were introduced to the arcane customs of religious life and studied the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience neatly delineated in unambiguous prose, your way was clear before you. Since Ursuline ministry was devoted exclusively to classroom teaching, there was little doubt where you would spend your days—and your life.

If we need evidence that “fidelity” is a much more complicated issue in the twenty-first century, we have only to look at the life stories of our four jubilarians. All four began in the established pattern: a yearning for a life consecrated to God, a shared novitiate, years of study to prepare for a life of teaching. Then, gradually, after Vatican II, the narrow path broadened. Obedience was no longer a matter of acquiescing to commands but of taking part in decisions, of learning to trust the

Sixty Years – at Home and Abroad

On August 25, **Sr. Miriam (Theodore) Hahnenfeld** and **Sr. Christine Denesha** celebrated sixty years of vowed life in a quiet ceremony at the Marian Residence. The next day Miriam began her journey back to Thailand. In the more than 50 years spent there, she has served as provincial, was co-founder of a center for the education of young Thai religious, and is now a spiritual director. Christine spent her active life teaching in Ursuline schools in New Rochelle, the Bronx, Middletown, and Malone, and later as CCD teacher and Eucharistic minister there. A graduate of St. Joseph’s Academy in Malone, Christine followed her two older sisters Mary Thérèse (RIP) and Marie Paul into the Ursulines. Marie Paul, also at the Residence, was present at the jubilee; their younger brother Everett, a priest in the Ogdensburg diocese, was unable to attend.



*Sr. Miriam Hahnenfeld and
Sr. Christine Denesha*

This was a “small” occasion, different from that of our Golden Jubilarians with hundreds in attendance. But as you will see on reading the following Reflection, it was the same fidelity, only for longer, that was celebrated and renewed.

Celebrate at CNR

25, 2004

elity? by Irene Mahoney, OSU



Sisters Mary Walter Santer, Dorothy Ann Kelly, Doris Thérèse Walbridge and Bridget Puzon.

presence of the Holy Spirit. A change at once freeing and demanding. "Fidelity" had taken on another look.

Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly's "fidelity" was lived out mostly at the College of New Rochelle where she rose from faculty member to president and then chancellor of the college. In 2001, after almost thirty years of college administration, when surely she might have cried, "Enough," "fidelity" led her to accept new roles: that of superior of St. Teresa's community in New Rochelle and two years later of provincial of the Eastern Province.

Like Sister Dorothy Ann, **Sister Bridget Puzon** has devoted herself to the ministry of education, but in her case, "fidelity" has led her not only to CNR but to other institutions. Following doctoral studies at Harvard, she accepted a teaching position at Hollins College in Virginia where she would later assume the role of dean. Leaving Hollins in 1992 she took up residence in Washington, DC, joining the staff of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. For the last twelve years she has been editor of *Liberal Education* and Director of Editorial Services of the Association. This year she returns to St. Teresa's community in New Rochelle and will act as Director of Advancement for the Eastern Province.

For **Sister Mary Walter Santer**, "fidelity" drew her across the world. Having finished her studies she followed her dream and offered herself in 1959 for the Ursuline mission in Thailand. Here she taught, directed novices, and assisted in provincial administration. Even that was not enough and when she was asked to assume the daunting position of Executive Secretary of the Southeast Asia Major Superiors of Men and Women and this year of Executive Secretary for the Office of Consecrated Life of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference—"fidelity" led her to accept.

Sister Doris Thérèse Walbridge (Frances Thérèse), after almost twenty years of teaching history in

Ursuline high schools, changed direction in 1979 to become assistant provincial of the Eastern Province. Her abilities in this position led her in 1997 to a reappointment for a further six years. In the years between, her skills were employed in the administrative office of the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor, assisting them through a pivotal period of reorganization. Since 2003 "fidelity" has led her to serve as provincial secretary for the Eastern Province.

Different paths, at home and abroad. A different "fidelity"? No, fifty years of religious life faithfully lived out in love and service to God and neighbor. We gratefully celebrate our jubilarians.

News and Notes

When in Rome—or China...

Sisters Nancy Arroyo, Case Manager-Clinical Associate at Care Link in Wilmington, and **Jeannie Humphries** met at the generalate in July with thirty-seven other young Ursulines from twenty countries. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the bonds of Ursuline life among them as they follow St. Angela, an Artisan of Peace, in the commitment to peace and justice, and in fidelity to our vocation and to vocation ministry. Nancy, still enthusiastic about the meeting, says that "our time together was full of hope for Ursuline life in the future." **Sr. Julia Dennehy**, who spent many years in the generalate community and is now treasurer of the Bedford Park community, served as translator from French to English for the group.

News and Notes *continued*

Sr. Mary Alice Duggan, Staff Chaplain at St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Center in Staten Island, was also back in Rome from May 17 to June 10 as translator (French/English) for the General Chapter of the Religious of the Cenacle, a service she has performed for that community several times before.

In June, **Sr. Patricia Schifini**, teacher and Coordinator of Peer Ministry at The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, completed her seven-month renewal period at the generalate. Although this was an English-speaking "tertianship," as we call it, Pat was the only American among nuns from eight other countries.

And **Sr. Kathleen Kuczowski** returned from two-years service in the generalate secretariate for reasons of health. Kathleen's knowledge of French and the fifteen years she spent in Greece made her well-suited for the position. We're glad to have her home.

At the invitation of Fordham University, where she is Director of Academic Effectiveness, **Sr. Kristin Wenzel** spent July and early August at the University



Sr. Kristin at The Great Wall

of International Business and Economics in Beijing. Joining colleagues from several universities in the US, she participated in a series of seminars on a variety of topics about China and visited historic sites, with special emphasis on places of interest to the Jesuits.

At the triennial meeting of the History of Women Religious, held in June at the Benedictine Monastery in Atchison, Kansas, **Sr. Irene (Denis) Mahoney** was part of an Ursuline panel on the work of our missionaries in New Orleans, Montana, and El Salvador. From there she went to the Ursuline Centre in Great Falls, Montana, to direct The Third Annual Ursuline American Experience, July 7-14, assisted by **Srs. Irene (Basil) Kutsky and Kathleen (Nathanael) O'Connell**. In August Kay returned to New Rochelle after three years happily spent working at the Centre.

The Montana workshop explored the heritage of our missionaries in the state and was enriched this year by the presence of four Ursuline Associates from the East,



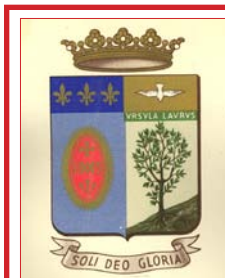
Ursulines and Associates under Montana's big sky

California, and Montana, RU Ursulines from France and Thailand, as well as Ursulines from various North American congregations, including Canada. Then in early September Irene was off to England to address members of the English province on the subject, "Cowboys, Indians -- and Ursulines." Her book on the history of the Montana missions, *Lady Blackrobes*, will be available in early fall, 2005.

The New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce named **Sr. Beth Dowd** as one of six recipients of its annual Women of Excellence Awards. An elementary school choir founded by Beth 25 years ago grew into what we now know as Songcatchers Inc.: Kindermusic for children under seven; the volunteer-run After-School Music Program; Concert Choir and Choir Camp. A lot of time and work, a lot of music-- and a lot of joy for all concerned!

The New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce also appointed **Sr. Marion Lynch**, Director of External Relations at the College of New Rochelle, to its Board of Directors.

Sr. Claire Smith was featured in an August issue of *MS Life*. Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1978, Claire described herself as an activist who still goes to peace rallies, as she did in the days of the Vietnam War protests, only now she goes in her wheelchair. She said that, "When you have a disability, you don't have to say 'Goodbye, world,' and pull the covers over your head." She didn't and doesn't. She is indeed a shining witness in "the cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12.1) she referred to in the article.



Please help to ensure the continuance of our service by remembering the Ursuline Sisters in your will. The legal title is:
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OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

Requiescant in Pace

Estelle (Bonaventure) Ghidoni, OSU (1911-2004)
Katherine Naughton, OSU (1943-2004)

It is difficult enough to try to capture one life in a few words. It is impossible to convey to you the lives of the four Ursulines who died this summer. And not just because three of them lived into old age. Or because of the variety of their ministries—as teachers on every level; Marguerite and Anne as superiors in Ursuline communities, the latter in her later years a social worker; Katie as NY regional catechetical director and pastoral associate in the Bronx. No, the impossibility of the task lies in the unique personalities of these women, all of them larger than life somehow, but each in her own way. The vignettes that follow don't begin to do them justice.

Think of Estelle, a marine biologist who taught at CNR for thirty-two years. Always full of energy and interest, she is perhaps best remembered as she was in the seventies, clad in her wet suit, bobbing around New Rochelle's Little Pea Island in her launch. Anne (we called her Goldie) was a tall, regal woman with a mellifluous voice, and she too was captivated by the sea in her middle years, not by a thirst for knowledge of it, but out of the sheer love of sailing and fishing, on the Elk River, the Atlantic, Pelham Bay. Marguerite, with just a hint of a southern (Wilmingtonian) accent, was gentle, concerned about others, but always with a smile playing around her lips, a twinkle—yes, a twinkle—in her eyes, as if about to tell or ready to hear a bit of mischief, something amusing. All of these sisters, having served so long and so faithfully, suffered diminishment in their last years, again, each in her own mysterious way.

Please visit our Web site at www.osueast.org.

There you will find:

- A message from the Provincial, Sr. Dorothy Ann Kelly
- Ursulines *In The News*
- Ursuline Associates
- A list of our Ministries and details on Ursuline works
- Ways to join our Community

You can even listen to music, browse our photo album and request additional information
We hope you find our Web site interesting and informative.

Marguerite Irwin, OSU (1917-2004)
Anne (St. Mark) Sullivan, OSU (1918-2004)

And finally, Katie, who was only sixty-one when she died after a valiant struggle with cancer. Granted, she was Irish-American to the core. But you would not have known it if you had seen her dancing, surrounded by her African American parishioners/friends, arms raised, fingers snapping, hips swaying, her feet moving in small, perfectly rhythmical steps. The poem below, best expresses our hope for Katie—and for Estelle, Marguerite, and Anne, great women all—now “Fresh washed in sunshine.”

For Katie, August 22, 2004

I slept last night in darkness
Yet conscious of half-light--
Your presence just beyond
The shadow of my dreams.

And when, half-waking,
I would turn my head to see the clock
I thought that it would say
--Always say, as though time could not pass--
5:00 pm, the hour of your going

You who painted days
As bright as sunrise
Who made silence sing
Made language fresh,
Unconscious of your art.

You, magnanimous in everything,
Expanded syllables
Until they lilted
Like water from a spring
And showered us with life.

Now waking into a new day,
You live where every day is new
Fresh washed in sunshine.
And so, our Katie,
You have reached
That land of light
That land which of all lands
Will best become you.

Irene Mahoney OSU

Bylines

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Largest Grant Ever for the Marian Residence Program

On July 28, the provincialate was informed that the Marian Residence had received a grant of over \$190,000 from the sale of the Colburn Home in New Rochelle. Thanks to Mary Jane Reddington, devoted Ursuline alumna and longtime chair of the Colburn Home board, we offer you a brief history of the Home.

The Colburn Home was founded in 1906 by several wealthy New Rochelleans who wanted their elderly workers to have a safe and secure place to live out the years remaining to them after retirement. The Home on Clinton Avenue was opened in 1910, and over almost ten decades of operation served thousands of residents from all walks of life and socio-economic groups, providing quality health care, activities, and entertainment for its elderly residents.

In June 2002, because of a great decline in the number of residents, the Board of Directors voted to close the Home. The property was sold in May 2003, and the proceeds went to nine not-for-profit organizations that support and minister to the elderly in New Rochelle.

MJR

We know that all of our readers share our deep gratitude for the gift. It has come at a time when we are vigorously engaged in planning how best to provide for the sisters currently living at the Marian Residence and for those who will be in need of assisted living in the near future. We will have more on this matter in the next issue of Bylines.

Ursuline *Bylines*

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The purpose of *Bylines* is to further the mission of the Ursuline Sisters by sharing the good news of our Sisters with our friends, alumnae and donors. Through this publication, we hope to share the charism of our community and invite others to become involved in our mission.

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