

Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province Spring 2005

SPECIAL ISSUE

A BIG MOVE The Ursuline Community at Andrus on Hudson

Although I have a folder marked "Bylines next issue," full of items of interest about Ursulines, their ministries, honors received, etc., the big event in our lives since the last Bylines has been the relocation of our elderly and infirm nuns from the Marian Residence in New Rochelle to the nearby Andrus on Hudson in Hastings. Sr. Dorothy Ann's letters have kept you well informed about the decision to move and about the move itself. We hope in this special issue devoted to the matter, and especially in the photographs we feature, to give you a sense of Andrus, to show you that our nuns are being well cared for.



It was a big move in every sense of both words; those of you who have done it yourselves or have arranged it for a relative know this from experience. The actual moving of personal belongings, furniture, and of the twenty-one Ursulines (the eldest of whom, Sr. Jean Marie Casey, celebrated her ninety-ninth birthday on January 1) began on January 3. By the evening of January 5, each nun was settled in on the floor corresponding to the level of care she needs, most of them on the second floor corridor reserved for Ursulines, opposite that of the Congregation of Notre Dame sisters who preceded us to Andrus.





The Ursuline corridor leading to the second floor lounge.



Peggy Sheridan (Director of Nursing at the Marian Residence) and Sr. Anne Walsh (Assistant Superior of the Marian Residence and one of the coordinators of the move) exchange remarks with Sr. Angela Chauvin on moving day.

Very soon after the dust had settled, so to speak, all of us directly involved – the staff at Marian, the sisters who were “companions” to the residents, and our ever-helpful Ursuline associates – received a thank you note from Sr. Dorothy Ann. In it she called the event “historical,” and referred to the logistical, physical, and psychological challenges presented in planning for and carrying out the move as “daunting,” especially given the number moving and their vulnerability. But as Dorothy also said, those engaged in it [not least the Marian residents themselves] were “dauntless.” The move completed, we could all breathe the “huge sigh of relief” that Dorothy expressed in her note. But let me go back for a moment to the first moving day.

A vignette. As Sr. Christine Denesha’s companion, I had arrived at Andrus as instructed at 12:30 pm on January 3 and found Christine in the dining room with Sr. Rita Beach. Rita (whom you may remember from the lively sketch in an earlier Bylines that presented her as an authority on pie baking) had just taken her first bite of the day’s dessert, blueberry pie. “The best pie I’ve had since I left Malone,” she said, emphatically, ecstatically even. “The crust is just right. I could have made it myself!” A good omen. Hooray for Andrus! I said to myself.

Later, as we waited for the movers in the central lounge of the second floor, an Andrus staff member arrived with a blue loose leaf

notebook for each nun. It was time for “orientation,” a dry run through the schedules, regulations, services and facilities at Andrus. The description was impressive, covering everything from access to computers and exercise equipment to a beauty parlor and creative arts studio, and outlining an array of cultural and social events. By then, it was 3:30, time to join the CND sisters in the auditorium for the daily celebration of the Eucharist, and Andrus residents, assigned as temporary “buddies” for each new nun, appeared to escort our sisters to the service.

The auditorium where the Eucharist is offered each day.



Amid so much that was new, this, the Mass, was familiar, the same. Just the day before, on January 2, as many of us as could be present celebrated the Eucharist with our departing sisters in the Marian Residence chapel. We prayed for them, blessed them as they embarked on this new venture. We remembered the devoted members of the staff at the residence, both religious and lay, past and present, remembered the Ursuline residents who had gone to God before us. The Rev. James Teague, chaplain and religion teacher at Kennedy Archdiocesan High School in Somers, and one of the priests who have served us faithfully at the residence for years, was our celebrant. He was clearly moved in bidding the sisters farewell. We ourselves experienced a complex mix of emotions – sadness, relief, hope, concern and admiration for the sisters beginning this new chapter in their lives and in the life of the province.



Mass at the Residence on January 2. We bless our departing

A vignette. When the sisters went down to Mass at Andrus on that first day, I instead visited our nuns on the skilled nursing floor who were unable to attend. I had asked Sr. Kathleen, the gracious CND sister on duty that day, if I might take the pyx from their tabernacle (ours had not yet arrived) and bring Communion to the Ursulines on the fifth floor. There they were, newly arrived in their new dwelling, and not at all sure where they were, as indeed they hadn't been even in our own residence. But when I approached them and asked if they would like to receive Communion, "Oh, yes," said one, "please." Another responded, "Oh, thank you!" A third smiled her brilliant smile, put out her hands, and welcomed the Lord, never a stranger to us. For the moment, at least, she and her companions were "at home."

Although the exterior of Andrus has a somewhat institutional look, that impression is dispelled on entering the high-ceilinged rotunda and walking down the corridor behind it. On either side of the

corridor, one finds a comfortable small parlor, a library, a TV room. Paintings, pieces of china, and sculpture are tastefully displayed along the way, personally selected, I learned, by Helen Andrus Benedict, the youngest daughter of John E. Andrus, and founder of the home. The spacious lounge at the end of the corridor, with a fireplace and chairs and couches arranged in conversational patterns, offers a view of "the lordly Hudson" through its two-story bank of windows, which frame a grand piano. On one of the days that I was at Andrus, a CND sister was practicing at the piano. She proudly announced to us



The entrance rotunda at Andrus on Hudson.

that she was taking lessons for the first time in her life. Perhaps Helen Benedict had professional concerts in mind when she furnished the room, but I think she would have been pleased.

We hope then that this issue of *Bylines* will show you, our faithful readers and benefactors – as those of us who have visited Andrus have seen – that our nuns are being well cared for, with services, such as those provided by the well-known Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, that we couldn't offer them on the premises

A current events discussion group led by Sara Flaumenhaft, C.T.R.S., a recreational therapist, gathers around the fireplace in the main lounge.



at Marian. Sisters Mary Alice Duggan and Pascal Conforti, both experienced in hospital ministry, will be present to support the sisters; to provide for the nourishing of their spiritual lives, their communal Ursuline lives; to serve as liaison with the Andrus administration and our provincial administration; to attend to their particular needs, such as arranging visits to their own doctors in New Rochelle and vicinity.

Fortunately, St. John's Riverside Hospital-Andrus Pavillion is located just a mile away on North Broadway in Yonkers. When I visited the selfsame pie-baking Sr. Rita Beach there in February, she comforted me from her hospital bed. She trusts her doctor at St. John's, she told me. "Care is what I need now, and I'm getting it," she said in her matter-of-fact way. Just as matter-of-factly, when I asked Sr. Patricia Powers, a missionary in South America for most of her life and now at Andrus, if there was anything I could do for her, she answered, "Come into my room and talk to me about God," reminding me that our souls as well as our bodies have their needs.

A closing vignette. When members of the editorial board met to discuss this issue of *Bylines*, the initial response of most of us considering the move to Andrus was concern for the relocated residents. Then Sr. Irene (Denis) Mahoney, herself not young, interjected with some feeling.

"Let's have confidence in the faith and courage of the sisters who've moved!" she said. "They're being entrusted with the foundation of a new Ursuline community. I think of them as followers of St Ursula, often pictured sailing off with her companions on a great venture."

It's an apt image. The decision to move to Andrus was not an easy one to make, nor was closing the residence, or the move itself, especially for the elderly and infirm. But as Irene said to me the next day, Agnes Repplier's book on Marie of the Incarnation, intrepid seventeenth-century Ursuline missionary to Canada, begins

John E. Andrus (1841-1934), son of an impoverished Methodist minister, was an industrialist, a public servant, and “one of New York’s most caring philanthropists”; his mission was “to give opportunity to youth and rest to the aged.” This mission was realized in the founding of the Surdna (Andrus spelled backwards) Foundation in 1917 and a Home for Children in 1928. In 1953, Helen Andrus Benedict, his youngest daughter, brought her father’s vision to completion by establishing the John E. Andrus Memorial, Inc., for the care of the elderly. Known as “Andrus on Hudson,” the home, located just north of the Children’s Home in Hastings-on-Hudson, is situated on 26 acres of woodland overlooking the Hudson River. As the result of recent renovations, the home, with the capacity to care for 247 residents who desire independent living, assisted living, or skilled nursing care, is both Medicare and Medicaid certified.



Sr. Priscilla Maloney receives the attention of Mary Ford, the beautician at Andrus.

Sr. Christine Denesha is assisted by Mary O’Brien, P.T., one of the Burke Rehabilitation Hospital physical therapists working at Andrus.

with the sentence: “The Ursulines are the most adventurous of nuns.” I know that the sisters at Andrus continue to pray for all of us, as they always have. I also expect that in a future *Bylines* we’ll offer you new vignettes of them. Rejuvenated by their contacts with other residents, we can imagine them finding new ministries for the new “Ursuline” community at Andrus on Hudson.

In her office on the Ursuline corridor is Sr. Mary Alice Duggan, one of the coordinators of Ursuline life at Andrus.





"Heads left"; the Stretching Exercise group under the direction of Sara Flaumenhaft, C.T.R.S.



The tabernacle, originally from an Ursuline chapel in Malone, NY, now graces our chapel at Andrus.

In like manner, the other members of the province, including some in their eighties, continue to serve others in all sorts of ways. Even as we are involved in a comprehensive planning process to meet the variety of housing needs we face (wheelchair accessible, etc.), we work and pray for the vocations that will carry the charism of Angela into the future. We are – foolishly, perhaps but, by the grace of God, I believe – both adventurous and dauntless.

*Nancy M. Malone, OSU
Editor*

Sisters Marcia Kimball and Mary Jane Robertshaw work on a puzzle with Sr. Barbara Glendon in one of the project rooms.



Sr. Ursula Baumann in "a room with a view."



Music therapist Jungrim Park plays for the residents while Sr. Marie Paul Denesha looks on.





Sr. Marie Paul Denesha celebrates her birthday with Ursuline residents and friends in the Long Vue Café. Left to right: Sisters Maureen McCarthy, Jeanne Giebelhouse, Cecilia Navin, St. Pierre Drury, Elizabeth Monaghan. Mary Alice Duggan presents the cake to Marie Paul, and with her back to us, her sister Christine.



Sr. Mary Gerald Carroll chats with Sr. Catherine Marie Jordan. In the background are Sisters Cecilia Navin, Pat Powers and Marjorie Stumpf.

Sr. Gregory Horgan visits with Sr. Maria Rosa Deiso.



Sisters Eugenia Marie Garvey and Jennie Seabrook are attended in the dining room by Nicole Lanier.



All photos by T. Eppridge

MEMBERS OF THE URSULINE COMMUNITY AT ANDRUS ON HUDSON

Ursula Baumann, Rita Beach,
Mary Gerald Carroll, Jean Marie
Casey, Angela Chauvin, Christine
Denesha, Marie Paul Denesha,
Marie Elizabeth Dugan, Mary
Martin Dyer (RIP), Mary Eugenia
Garvey, Barbara Glendon,
Margaret Hamilton, Gregory
Horgan, Gertrude Marie Krug,
Maura MacKessy, Priscilla
Maloney, Veronica Marie Maloney,
Elizabeth Monaghan,
Cecilia Navin, Patricia Powers,
Jennie Seabrook, Loretta Shanahan

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Bylines

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PROVINCE MISSION STATEMENT

We, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States, are women religious in an international community, united by the vision and spirit of our foundress, St. Angela Merici.

Impelled by deep personal love for Jesus Christ, Angela sought in a life of prayer and action to bring people from all segments of society to a deeper love of God and one another.

We follow Angela in the service of this twofold love. While we continue to proclaim the Gospel in our traditional work of education, we welcome the call of the Spirit to new ministries.

In response to the needs of our times, we commit ourselves, in both our life and our work, to solidarity with the poor; to the pursuit of justice for all, especially women; and to collaboration with the laity.

As a community that values both tradition and progress, we move into the future with courage and with trust in God.

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**URSULINES CELEBRATING
150 YEARS**

IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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