Summer 2015

Ursuline Sisters News

Contemplation • Justice • Compassion

15 Ursulines celebrating milestone jubilees
MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As I write, we are preparing for our Annual Assembly. We make this weekend a priority as a time to pray and engage with one another, and to celebrate the bond we share as sisters and women committed to service of the gospel. We take time to reflect on what we have accomplished in the past year and to shape our direction for the future. I look forward to this weekend each year as a wonderful homecoming. Being together and sharing what is most meaningful is a gift. And anyone who knows the Ursulines knows we manage to include a fair amount of fun and laughter in the mix!

We conclude the weekend with a luncheon celebration of our jubilarians. We honor their fidelity and their commitment to service, and celebrate the many ways they animate the mission and vision of our foundress Angela Merici. Jubilee is a grand congregational event because in marking the significant milestones of a few, all of us are renewed in our call and commitment.

In each issue of our newsletter we highlight a few sisters and their ministries and special friends who are part of our extended Ursuline family. We celebrate a new connection with the St. Angela Merici Parish community established through the pastoral service of Sister Miriam Fidelis, the first Ursuline sister to minister there. Sister Lucia serves as an inspiration for all transitioning out of full-time ministry. After a long career as a high school art teacher, she now uses her talents to encourage sisters to develop theirs in an individual art instruction program, Art: “One on One.”

Sister Nancy Beckenhauer returned to Cleveland from ministry in Missouri and now serves as Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at Saint Vincent Charity Medical Center. And finally, we pay tribute to Dan McGuire, a good and faithful supporter of the Ursulines. Dan’s love of life and adventure captures the spirit of Ursuline.

These summer days affording time for family and friends, celebration and relaxation are reminders of God’s love for us. May we find enjoyment and blessing in each moment. On behalf of the Ursuline Sisters, thank you for your interest and support. Our partnership enables us to bring to life the familiar words of Gandhi, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Together we are making a difference.

May God bless you and those you love.

In Saint Angela,

Sister Susan Durkin
Art: “One on One” brings out the artist within

They say a picture’s worth a thousand words. For four sisters in the motherhouse a picture is worth even more. Sister Lucia Vasko has been working with them for almost a year in Art: “One on One.” She spends an hour each week with each sister in a private art lesson, helping them uncover hidden talent, and giving them a joyful experience and a sense of accomplishment.

When Sister Lucia retired after 60 years of teaching art, she wanted to continue sharing her talents. She recalled teaching a large group in Ursuline ArtSpace. The memory of time spent with Sister Jeanne Campbell after class was the inspiration for the one-on-one program. “Sister Jeanne was so quiet,” Sister Lucia says. “She wouldn’t ask questions until it was just the two of us left in the room.” Sister Lucia was amazed by what came out of Sister Jeanne when she worked with her and believed others could benefit from that kind of instruction. She cherishes a drawing done by Sister Jeanne. It was found among her things after her death last year.

Sister Lucia starts with the basics of drawing and then encourages the sisters to “really look” at their subject and draw what they see.

“We can draw whatever interests us and that’s important,” says student Sister Mary Benedict. “I truly admire Sister Lucia’s talent and patience. She knows just how to bring out the artist in us.” Sister Mary Benedict has learned that everyone has some natural talent, and Sister Lucia has helped her discover hers.

After knee replacement surgery, Sister Paulette says drawing “found her” through her classes with Sister Lucia. “My heart was dancing as it had never danced before. Sister Lucia has made God visible in endless ways.”

When Sister Ann Kelly retired a year ago she was hoping to do some art and was pleased to hear about Sister Lucia’s program. “For me it’s a prayerful experience,” she says. “I was once absorbed in it for four hours, not conscious of time.” Sister Ann says the classes have made her more attentive to the ordinary things around her and she is awed by their beauty.

Sister Mary Sterle describes Sister Lucia as a very gentle, encouraging and talented teacher. “The hour just flies by,” she notes. “I look forward to going to class. It’s pure joy.”

Sister Lucia says to see the joy on the faces of the sisters is such a delight for her. “As they continually discover what they are capable of they just light up! I’m really enjoying it and I’m so proud of the work they’ve done.”
Ursuline at St. Vincent Charity trains ministers of spiritual care

At St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, indeed throughout the Sisters of Charity Health System, care of the spirit goes hand in hand with care of the body. It is not surprising, then, that the system boasts its own Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program to train competent and caring chaplains. Ursuline Sister Nancy Beckenhauer, a product of Charity’s CPE program, serves as its supervisor.

Sister Nancy, a 47-year member of the Ursulines, has enjoyed a diverse ministry career, beginning as a home economics teacher, first at Villa Angela Academy, then at Beaumont School. In the mid-1980s she was asked to teach religion at Beaumont. Wanting to update her theological study for her new post, Sister Nancy enrolled in and completed a master’s program at the University of Dayton.

While serving a subsequent assignment at Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School, she began to consider a ministry change. With the school’s proximity to the St. Joseph Christian Life Center, she found herself wondering about a potential opening there, perhaps as a spiritual director. To that end she pursued and received spiritual direction certification, but found no openings. Still, transition thoughts lingered, which led her to consider chaplaincy work and the requisite CPE studies.

After completing studies at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and an internship at Veterans Hospital, Sister Nancy learned that fellow Ursuline Sister Therese Demchok, engaged in pastoral work at Hillcrest Hospital for 15 years, was contemplating retirement. With the approval of the area Catholic pastors who funded the position, the two split the work until Sister Therese’s retirement, at which time Sister Nancy assumed sole responsibility.

While hired to minister to Catholic patients, Sister Nancy found that non-Catholics often asked for assistance as well. She recognized then the need for a fuller chaplaincy program at the hospital and possibly a CPE program. Soon after, when Cleveland Clinic acquired Hillcrest and a number of other area hospitals, Sister Nancy pitched her idea about the chaplaincy programs. There was some interest.

While working at Hillcrest she began her supervisor training at St. Vincent Charity Hospital. It took five years of part-time study, but she successfully completed the program.

When her hope for a CPE program at Hillcrest failed to gain needed support, she took a temporary position at Timken Mercy Hospital in Canton before accepting a full-time position at St. Joseph Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, as supervisor of CPE. In 2009, while in Missouri, she received her supervisory certification from the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE).

In 2013 she returned to Cleveland, hoping to establish a CPE satellite site on the Ursuline campus in Pepper Pike. In May of 2014, before plans were finalized, Sister Nancy was asked by Charity’s CPE director Bob McGreeneey to supervise an extended unit of CPE at the hospital. By November he had accepted a position with Cleveland Clinic. Sister Nancy stepped in as interim director at Charity. In March she assumed the position of Supervisor of CPE.

As supervisor she oversees and directs the residency program.

Currently five candidates are nearing the end of their year-long study. They spend three half-days in the classroom with Sister Nancy and the balance of their time handling chaplain duties at Charity and St. John West Shore Hospital.

Sister Nancy derives great satisfaction assisting them in developing spiritually, a component not emphasized as much in her own training. “The focus then was more academic, with more emphasis on clinical competencies,” she notes. Today, there is more inclusion of spirituality. “Clinical competency and spirituality are more integrated.”

Chaplaincy work is challenging, Sister Nancy asserts. Chaplains interact with patients, family members, and staff in often stressful situations. They are responsible for knowing a patient’s advanced directives or for inviting patients to initiate them. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing all hospital ministers is developing rapport with the patient, listening without teaching or judging, all in a very limited time frame. It is both an innate gift and a skill to be developed. And Sister Nancy is eager to assist.

She acknowledges her journey from home economics to chaplaincy has been a long and circuitous one. “But,” she says with a satisfied smile, “there is a connection. One feeds the body; the other feeds the soul.”
Sister Joann Kessler (formerly Sister Mary Herman) joined the community from St. Jerome Parish. Her 60 years in active ministry include 38 in education. She taught at Holy Cross (Euclid), Christ the King (East Cleveland), St. Clare (Lyndhurst), and St. Jerome (Cleveland) schools, and at St. Joseph School (Collinwood) where she also served as principal. Sister Joann also ministered as treasurer at Beaumont School and as Director of Financial Aid at Ursuline College. Beyond the educational arena, she served as co-founder and director of Martin de Porres Center, assistant treasurer in the community finance office, and as community archivist. In residence at Regina Health Center, Sister Joann continues to serve in the ministry of prayer.

15 Ursulines celebrating milestone jubilees

DIAMOND JUBILEE
Two sisters celebrated 70 years and 10 marked 60-year anniversaries at a Mass of Thanksgiving August 2 in the Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity at the Ursuline Educational Center. Rev. Mark Hobson was principal celebrant and homilist.
Sister Anne Cecile Muldoon

Sister Anne Cecile Muldoon, who entered the community from St. Patrick Parish (Bridge Ave.), has given her entire 68-year ministry career to the service of children. Her teaching assignments include St. Jerome and St. Catherine (Cleveland), St. Timothy and St. Therese (Garfield Heights), Parma’s St. Francis de Sales and St. Charles Borromeo, St. Mary Magdalene (Willowick) and St. Mary (Mentor). She served as principal at St. Paul (Euclid) and St. Therese (Garfield Heights). After leaving elementary education, Sister Anne Cecile began what she anticipated would be a short stint in day care at Up with Kids in South Euclid. She retired last year after 17 years working in the infant room. She currently resides in South Euclid and assists as needed in the congregation’s development office.

Sister Angela Nihill

Sister Angela Nihill (formerly Sister St. Angela) came to the community from St. William Parish, Euclid. She taught at the junior high level at St. Ann (Cleveland Heights) and St. Mary Magdalene (Willowick) schools. Before and after two terms in congregational leadership, she ministered as principal at St. Francis de Sales (Parma), St. Paul (Euclid) and St. Mary Magdalene (Willowick) schools. In 1993 Sister Angela transitioned into parish ministry and served at St. Mary Magdalene (Willowick), St. Jude (Elyria), and Guardian Angels (Copley). She currently resides at Regina Health Center where she engages in the ministry of prayer and presence.

Sister Mercia Madigan

Sister Mercia Madigan, currently serving as pastoral associate at Blessed Trinity Parish in Akron, came to the Ursulines from Our Lady of Peace Parish, Cleveland. Her years in the community include 20-year service in classroom education at St. Ann (Cleveland Heights) and St. Mary (Mentor) schools, the old Villa Angela Academy (Cleveland) and Lake Catholic High School (Mentor). She also ministered as the Formation Director for the congregation, overseeing the training of novices and postulants in the early 1970s. Prior to her current position in Akron, Sister Mercia was the Director of Religious Education at St. Mary Magdalene Parish (Willowick).

Sister Donna Capuano

Sister Donna Capuano (formerly Sister Mary Ignatius) joined the congregation from St. Timothy Parish in Garfield Heights. She spent 22 years in elementary education as a classroom teacher at St. Catherine and St. Patrick schools, both in Cleveland, St. Charles Borromeo (Parma), St. Therese (Garfield Heights), St. Robert Bellarmine (Euclid) and St. Clare (Lyndhurst) where she also served as principal. After a brief tenure with the diocese, Sister Donna served as Director of Continuing Education at Ursuline College. While ministering in that capacity, she also served in the Ohio Continuing Higher Education Association (OCHEA) and was the organization’s first woman president. After leaving the college she worked as an education consultant.
Sister Kathleen Burke (formerly Sister M. Ambrose) joined the Ursulines from St. Philomena Parish, East Cleveland. She currently serves in the Art Therapy Department of Ursuline College and as the director of Ursuline ArtSpace. Prior to beginning her 43-year service at Ursuline College, she taught at the elementary level at St. Catherine (Cleveland), Christ the King (East Cleveland) and Immaculate Conception (Cleveland) schools. She taught art at the high school level at Sacred Heart Academy and Borromeo Seminary High School, and also served a four-year term in congregational leadership. At the college she has taught art and chaired the department and served as director of the Graduate Art Therapy and Counseling Program. Sister Kathleen resides at the motherhouse.

Sister Marilyn Scott, currently a volunteer in the congregation’s development office, came to the community from St. Therese/St. Catherine parishes. She spent her entire career in education, teaching at the elementary level at St. Clare (Lyndhurst), Holy Cross (Euclid), St. Timothy (Garfield Heights), Immaculate Conception and St. Mary, both in Cleveland, St. Mary (Mentor), St. Therese (Garfield Heights) and St. John Bosco (Parma Heights), and serving as principal at St. Joseph School (Cleveland). From elementary school Sister Marilyn moved on to Ursuline College where she taught 25 years.

Sister Charlotte Trenkamp (formerly Sister Marie Rosaire) joined the Ursulines from Gesu Parish, University Heights. She taught 25 years at the secondary level at Villa Angela Academy, Beaumont School and Sacred Heart Academy before being assigned to Ursuline College where she served 32 years. Sister Charlotte currently volunteers at Ahuja Medical Center. In addition, she is engaged in a variety of volunteer efforts including Judson Park, St. Patrick Hunger Center, Sleeping Bag Ministry, Clutter Control, and the Laurel Tree Gift Shop at the Ursuline motherhouse.
Sister Joana Lincoln

Sister Joana Lincoln (formerly Sister M. Anselm) came to the Ursulines from St. Aloysius Parish, Cleveland. She engaged in the ministry of education 14 years, teaching science to the novices, and to students at Sacred Heart Academy and at Ursuline College. She left the classroom to train as a medical technician at University Hospitals and served in that capacity 27 years. Upon retirement from the hospital Sister Joana began a ministry of respite care for caregivers and a letter-writing outreach. She currently resides at the motherhouse where she engages in the ministry of prayer.

Sister Nina Vitale

Sister Nina Vitale (formerly Sister St. Pius), a native of Euclid, came to the Ursulines from St. William Parish. She taught at Cleveland’s Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph schools, Parma’s St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis de Sales schools, St. Therese (Garfield Heights), and St. Mary Magdalene School (Willowick), and served as principal at Cleveland’s St. Paul Croatian School. She engaged in youth ministry for the diocese and at St. Basil Parish (Brecksville). She assisted in the office at St. Rose of Lima Parish (Cleveland) and currently ministers at Holy Redeemer and Our Lady of Lourdes parishes (Cleveland).

Sister Barbara Ann Schoren

Sister Barbara Ann Schoren (formerly Sister Vincent Ferrer) joined the community from St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Parma. She spent her entire career in education as teacher, Director of Religious Education (DRE) and tutor. She taught primary grades 41 years, with assignments at St. Timothy (Garfield Heights), St. Paul (Euclid), Parma’s St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis de Sales, St. Joseph (Avon Lake), St. Mary Magdalene (Willowick), St. Mary (Cleveland), St. Catherine (Cleveland), and St. Ann (Cleveland Heights). She served as DRE at St. Luke Parish, Lakewood and, in retirement, tutored in the Ursuline Institute of Learning. Sister Barbara Ann, in residence at Regina Health Center in Richfield, currently engages in the ministry of prayer.
Sister Mary Ellen Brinovec

Sister Mary Ellen Brinovec (formerly Sister Alice Ann) joined the Ursulines from Cleveland’s St. Vitus Parish. Initially a classroom teacher, Sister Mary Ellen taught junior high science at Immaculate Conception School (Willoughby) and St. Jerome School (Cleveland) before moving on to teach high school science and theology at Villa Angela School where she served 11 years. Since leaving the classroom Sister Mary Ellen has served her Ursuline community in formation ministry and in congregational leadership. She has also served as pastoral associate at St. Basil the Great Parish (Brecksville) and Holy Spirit Parish (Avon Lake). Currently, she serves as pastoral associate at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Gates Mills, and as a spiritual director.

Sister Frances Helen Komar

Sister Frances Helen Komar entered the community from Holy Cross Parish, Euclid, where she served many years as the office administrator. Her ministry assignments have included tenures at St. Charles Borromeo Parish (Parma); Catholic Cemeteries Association, where she served as office manager, Family Service Representative, and facilitator of a support group; and St. Monica Parish (Garfield Heights) where she was the parish secretary. Sister Frances Helen currently serves as a pastoral care minister for Holy Family Hospice, providing spiritual support to individuals in private homes, nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
At last there’s an Ursuline at St. Angela Merici Parish

It is understandable that people might assume Ursuline Sisters have long served at the parish bearing the name of Ursuline foundress Angela Merici. But that is not the case. In fact, it took some 91 years for the first Ursuline to join the staff of the Fairview Park parish! Meet Ursuline Sister Miriam Fidelis Pinchot, part-time pastoral minister, who is completing her first years at St. Angela Merici.

A 56-year member of the Ursulines, Sister Miriam Fidelis coordinates the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process and the bereavement program, and ministers to the sick and homebound. In her short time at the parish she has already organized teams of volunteers to provide spiritual care to the residents of O’Neill Healthcare Fairview Park, a skilled nursing facility adjacent to the parish. O’Neill Healthcare and the parish have developed a wonderful partnership.

An educator by training and experience, Sister Miriam Fidelis is pleased that her position also offers her the opportunity to teach third and fourth grade religion in the school. “The children are so beautiful and eager to learn,” she says.

Father Michael Lanning, St. Angela pastor, is thrilled to have Sister Miriam Fidelis assisting in the school, teaching the children about their Catholic faith. He notes that “for some young people she is the first religious sister they have ever met. And the teachers adore her!”

In this Year of Consecrated Life, it is especially significant that Sister Miriam Fidelis is ministering in a parish community. “She is such a hard-working religious woman,” Father Lanning notes. “What a great example of consecrated life for our people, especially our young people.”

Sister Miriam Fidelis, a Euclid native, joined the Ursulines in 1959 following her graduation from Villa Angela Academy, much to the surprise and delight of her parents. Four years later her sister Diane followed. Sister Diane Therese Pinchot teaches art at Ursuline College.

Sister Miriam Fidelis began her education ministry in 1964 at Parma’s St. Charles Borromeo School, and followed with teaching assignments in several other parish schools. She also ministered in social service at the Martin de Porres Center and the West Side Catholic Center and as a pastoral minister at Immaculate Conception and St. Augustine parishes, both in Cleveland.

In 2005 Sister Miriam Fidelis responded to an invitation to minister at El Centro Ursulino, where she served the impoverished Hispanic community of Brownsville, Texas, near the Mexican border. She worked at Holy Family Parish there before moving on to serve orphaned children at Ciudad de los Ninos (City of Children) in Matamoros, Mexico. She cherishes her nine years in Texas; her Brownsville family will be engraved forever in her heart.

As in each ministry before, Sister Miriam has jumped into her work at St. Angela Merici Parish with both feet, eager to serve God and others. “I bring the whole Ursuline charism to my ministry here,” she says. “I am really enjoying this new challenge. The staff and parishioners have been so welcoming.”

And the St. Angela family is enjoying their newest sister, their first Ursuline sister. “We are so blessed to have her in the parish community,” Father Lanning proclaims. “She embodies with a most loving attitude the motto of Saint Angela, Soli Deo Gloria — for the glory of God alone. She is truly a fountain of God’s grace for our parish family. And, he adds with a smile, “She has a great sense of humor!”
DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Faithful friend most grateful for Ursuline upbringing, values

He graduated from St. Ann School in Cleveland Heights more than 75 years ago, but the memory of his Ursuline teachers is still very clear for Dan McGuire. “They were and are outstanding teachers,” he says. “Their philosophies and values came across in the classroom.”

Dan has been a long-time friend of the Ursuline Sisters, supporting them financially, attending events and welcoming sisters into his home. So what keeps the sisters part of this World War II veteran’s life? “They raised me through grade school,” he acknowledges, “so I continue to support them because of who they are now and who they were for me then.”

Born and raised in Cleveland, Dan retired in 1980 after a long career in transportation and sales. He boasts that he has now been retired longer than he worked! He’s been widowed twice, but that hasn’t stopped him from enjoying life and staying as active as possible. He enjoys socializing with friends, gardening and cooking. A conversation with Dan always includes a laugh or two.

Sister Susan Durkin, President of the Ursuline Sisters, suggests that Dan is “like a welcoming piazza. His graciousness, wit and charm invite you in like family. And his unwavering love of country, family and faith surely place him within the ranks of the ‘greatest generation.’ ”

On behalf of all the Ursuline Sisters, thank you, Dan, for your years of friendship and support. You are engraved in our hearts forever!

Sister Barbara Lusnak, teacher, nurse, spiritual companion

Throughout her 54 years as an Ursuline, Sister Barbara Lusnak (formerly Sister Ann Joachim) tended to the minds, bodies, and spirits of those in her care. The quiet and gentle teacher, nurse and spiritual companion died April 30 at Regina Health Center (RHC) where she had been convalescing for almost a year following a cancer diagnosis. She was just two weeks short of her 75th birthday. Her funeral Mass was celebrated May 4 at the Ursuline Educational Center.

Barbara Ann Lusnak, daughter of Michael and Mary (Dydek) Lusnak, was born May 15, 1940, in Cleveland. The 1958 Villa Angela Academy graduate joined the Ursuline congregation in 1959 from St. Paul Parish, Euclid. She professed final vows in 1967.

Sister Barbara earned a bachelor’s degree in education from St. John College, then went on to pursue studies in nursing, earning an R.N. certificate at St. Alexis Hospital School of Nursing, a bachelor’s in nursing from Ursuline College, and a master’s in mental health nursing from the University of Pittsburgh.

She began her ministry career as a classroom teacher with assignments at Our Lady of Peace and St. Malachi schools in Cleveland and at St. Ann School, Cleveland Heights.

While engaged in nursing studies Sister Barbara served in the Ursulines’ infirmary caring for the elderly and infirm sisters. She also served two years at St. Luke’s Hospital. Upon completion of her master’s study, Sister Barbara was assigned to serve in the nursing division at Ursuline College and in 1986 was appointed its Dean of Nursing.

At the conclusion of her college service Sister Barbara participated in a sabbatical program during which she discerned yet another call to ministry. Following training from the Institute for Spiritual Leadership in Chicago, Sister Barbara began a ministry in spiritual companionsing. She ministered in that capacity through the former Ursuline Sophia Center and in private practice. Even in the midst of her cancer battle, Sister Barbara continued her ministry, welcoming her directees at Regina Health Center and even taking on new clients.

Sister Barbara will be remembered for her kind and gentle demeanor, her self-effacing humor, and for her care and insight. She was a deeply spiritual woman, a committed religious, and a loving sister and friend.

She is survived by a brother Donald (wife Stella) of Palmdale, California.

Donations in her memory can be made to the Ursuline Sisters.

PLEASE NOTE:
The Development Office is planning to publish a donor list as a public thank-you to our supporters. If you do not want your name to appear in such a list, please contact Sister Laura Bregar in the Development Office (440.449.1200 Ext. 199).
CONSECRATED LIFE PILGRIMAGE CONCLUDES WITH STOP AT URSULINE MOTHERHOUSE

The Ursuline motherhouse will serve as the final stop on Diocesan Pilgrimage 2015, one of several events marking this Year of Consecrated Life proclaimed by Pope Francis. Since June more than 20 congregations of vowed women and men religious in the diocese have opened their homes and ministry centers to visitors interested in learning more about us and where and how we live and minister.

The open house, jointly sponsored by the Ursulines and the Sisters of the Living Word, will be 1:30-4:00 p.m. Sunday, September 13, and will feature tours of the motherhouse, visits with the sisters, prayer, and refreshments. There will also be opportunities to view Consecrated in Cleveland, a just-completed video highlighting the various religious congregations in the Diocese of Cleveland.

This special year, with the theme Wake up the World, aims to spotlight the gift of vowed religious. Locally, the effort has been spearheaded by women and men religious of the diocese in conjunction with the vocation office and the office of evangelization. Other events included a Mass at the cathedral, parish presentations by vowed religious, and the production of the video.

Sister Ann Letitia, a member of the Ursulines’ leadership team and the congregation’s vocation representative, directed the planning effort with fellow Ursuline Sisters Barbara Jean Sever and Charlotte Trenkamp and Sister Kathleen Heer, a Sister of the Living Word from Chicago who resides at our motherhouse.