

DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL

Weavings

Women making a difference

SUMMER 2023



Responding to

the Call

The Magazine of the
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

Dominican Convent of
Our Lady of the Rosary
Office of Communications
and Mission Advancement
175 Route 340
Sparkill, NY 10976
845.359.4179 | sparkill.org

SUMMER 2023

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PRIORRESS

Sister Marie Peter Buckley, OP
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Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP
Sister Nancy Richter, OP
COUNCILORS

Mission Advancement

David L. Coppola
**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND MISSION ADVANCEMENT**
dcoppola@sparkill.org

Bernadette Donohue
**MISSION ADVANCEMENT
ASSOCIATE**
bdonohue@sparkill.org

Patti McCallion
**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/
DATABASE COORDINATOR**
pmccallion@sparkill.org

Sister Jeanne Shary, OP
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
jshary@sparkill.org

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Elizabeth Martin Solsburg
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On Cover

(left to right)
Sister Irene Ellis, OP and
Sister Ursula Joyce, OP

Photo by: Maksim Akelin
Photography | Nyack, NY

From the Prioress ...

Dear Friends,

As I look at the beautiful grounds of Sparkill this summer, I am reminded that we have much for which to be grateful, especially your prayers and support so that our shared Mission continues to be a vital force for good.

I hope that this edition of *Weavings* will help to tell our story as a community of Sisters and Associates who continue to be of service through our ministry of preaching truth, seeking justice, and advocating respect for all of God's creation. In particular, we focus on Sister Ursula Joyce in this issue. Her tireless efforts over many decades exemplify the spirit of generosity and of commitment to the Dominican charism.

As you will read, our commitment remains strong to fostering justice and compassion for the poor and vulnerable in our time — whether learning lessons of empathy from a Holocaust survivor, the call to be welcoming to all people, fostering the Dominican charism of preaching in young people, or our Congregations' response to aid asylum seekers who have suffered greatly and need our support as they seek to begin new lives in this country.

In this issue, you will also see that we were blessed to be able to celebrate with in-person festivities our Jubilarians on Foundation Day. These women have preached the good word with their lives for many years, and we are all beneficiaries of their generous response to the Call of God.

Once again, thank you for your faithful financial assistance and encouragement, and know that you remain in our prayers as together we make a positive difference.

Sincerely,

Sister Irene Ellis, OP
Prioress



PHOTO BY CHRIS MARKSBJURY

SISTER IRENE ELLIS, OP
Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill



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Gratitude and thanks for your donations and prayers.

THREADS OF WISDOM AND GRACE ...

Women of *grace* walk among us!

While reflecting on the images of Mary that we have been using for our monthly online *Rosary for Peace*, I was reminded of one of my friends who had spent several weeks in the small village of Calle Real in El Salvador in the summer of 1992, just after the end of the long civil war there. She had traveled there with a university delegation, looking for ways that they might be able to help with the rebuilding efforts.

In a place of honor in her home, Eilene kept a framed photograph of a woman from that village, holding her child on her lap. In the midst of poverty, hardship, and many trials, this mother's face is full of love and hope and dreams. Eilene referred to the photograph as her "Madonna of El Salvador."

The Blessed Mother is the supreme expression of what Pope Benedict XVI once described as the prophetic charism of "virtuous women who are bearers of love, teachers of mercy, and artisans of peace." And, if we look, we find women like Mary all around us —



women who bring love, mercy, and peace to our families, to our communities, and to our wounded world. (I have only to think of our Sisters whose stories are featured in this issue of *Weavings*.)

During this month when we celebrate Mary's Assumption into heaven, let us ask her to protect all the holy women who grace our lives.



SISTER MARGARET PALLISER, OP

Sister Margaret earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and is the director of the congregation's Office of Dominican Life.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Rosary Academy Class of 1973, 50th Reunion

Classmates, faculty, friends and family are welcome!
(Donations welcomed)

Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023 | 1 p.m. Mass
Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary
175 Route 340
Sparkill, NY 10976-1047

Aquinas High School's 100th Birthday

Dominican Sisters of Sparkill invite you to reminisce, renew friendships, and share the spirit that is Aquinas.

Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023 | 1-4 p.m.
Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary
175 Route 340
Sparkill, NY 10976-1047

Responding to *the Call*

BY SISTER MARY DUNNING, OP

The word “vocation” stems from the Latin *vocatio*, a summons, and from the verb *vocare*, to call. The Constitutions of the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary are entitled *Call and Response*. By their public profession of vows, in accordance with these Constitutions, Sparkill Dominican Sisters pledge to respond to God’s call by devoting their lives to prayer and service in imitation of Jesus Christ as set forth in the Gospels. Each Sister brings her own unique personality, gifts, and aptitudes to her life-long responses to God’s call.

For seventy years, Sister Ursula Joyce has lived out her calling in diverse ministries. As a young, professed Sister, she taught in Catholic elementary and high schools for eleven years. In 1965, Ursula was assigned to St. Thomas Aquinas College (STAC) in Sparkill, where Sister Marie Enda Kennedy, the Dean, was a wise, encouraging mentor to the young Sisters on the faculty. Ursula founded and chaired the Psychology Department at STAC and provided direct service to students as the college psychologist and in the Life Experience Program. A decade later, Ursula served as a psychologist for adolescents in foster care.

These were the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council which exhorted religious communities to look to the example of Christ in the Gospels, study the original inspirations of their founders, and read “the signs of the times,” the conditions in the world and the



Sister Ursula Joyce

needs of the people of God. To create a vehicle that would enable collaboration among communities of women religious, the Sisters’ Communication Center was established in the Archdiocese of New York with Sister Ursula as the founding Director. Simultaneously, a new organization, the National

Assembly of Women Religious (NAWR), was formed to give voice to the concerns of “grassroots” Sisters, i.e., those who were not the elected leaders. Sister Ursula became the first delegate to NAWR representing the women religious of New York State.

In 1972, when Sister Marie Jean Dempsey was elected President of the Sparkill Dominicans, Sister Ursula was elected to serve with her on the Executive Team. To enhance the lives of older residents of the local town, Ursula established Thorpe Senior Center within Dominican Convent. Over the next five decades, the Center provided meals, socialization, and activities for hundreds of women and men who might otherwise have been isolated. Ursula

BACKGROUND BY STELLALEWIS/GETTY IMAGES



Early days as administrator of Thorpe Village.



With Sister Catherine Patrice Morgan, Sister Ursula welcomes musicians into the community room at Thorpe Village.

also became aware of the pressing need for affordable housing for seniors in Rockland County. She submitted a proposal to the Community Council and explained what would be entailed for the community to become a developer of HUD housing to assist seniors with limited income. In August 1981, Thorpe Village, named for our founder Mother Alice Mary Thorpe, welcomed the residents to the first senior housing built in Orangetown.

In 1992, Ursula proposed extending the Congregation's housing ministry to the frail elderly, who with an enriched service program would still be able to maintain their independence in their own apartments. The Sparkill Dominicans became the sponsor of Dowling Gardens which opened in 1996 bearing the name of our "second founder," Mother Dominic Dowling. For fifty years, from 1972 to 2022, as Founder and Executive Director of Thorpe Village and Dowling Gardens, Sister Ursula persevered in her work responding to the needs of older women and men not only in providing housing but also in creating opportunities for natural beauty to flourish in the carefully tended landscape/gardens, for artists to exhibit their skills in the mosaics, frescos, and sculptures on the property, and for providing a rich program of classes in art and literature — and parties celebrating every occasion. In recognition of her efforts, Ursula was awarded the County Executive's "Supporter of the Arts Award." In 1986, the County Executive appointed Ursula as the chairperson of the Rockland County Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

Through her extensive involvement in Rockland County life, Sister Ursula developed a network of contacts with town board members, staff at the Office of the Aging, reporters and editors at the local newspapers, politicians, and social service providers. She was appointed to the Rockland County Human Rights Commission where she served as an advocate for justice for five years. With a small group of volunteers, Ursula founded Hospice of Rockland, Inc., to offer palliative care to terminally ill patients. She



also served as a Board Member of Home Aides of Rockland Inc., and she chaired the Advisory Committee of the Rockland County Child Care Coalition. Additionally, Sister Ursula volunteered for Habitat for Humanity's Rockland Chapter, and from its earliest days, she helped to foster the growth of Venture Inn, an organization formed by parents of developmentally disabled children.

In recognition of the Sisters' extraordinary service, four Sparkill Dominicans, Sisters Ursula Joyce, Margo Saich, Adele Myers, and Mary Dunning, were honored as Founders of Rockland Family Shelter, which was established to assist battered women and their children and to educate the public, law enforcement, judges, and politicians about violence against women.

Sister Ursula's entrance into the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary in 1952 was her initial response to God's call. For all the years of her religious life, she has read the signs of the times and when she has heard the cry of the poor or of those in need, she has responded with creativity and compassion often drawing together others as partners into the work of building the Reign of God. Reflecting on her life, Sister Ursula modestly said, "One thing always seemed to lead to the next." This is also the way that the action of the Holy Spirit is described in Galatians 5:25: leading us from one step to another, even when we are unaware of being led by God.

Called by God, inspired by our heritage, and enlightened and strengthened through prayer, we daily commit ourselves to do the work of the Reign of God so that, through the merciful love of God, we and those we serve may have life to the full.



(Left to right) Sister Maureen Massett (RIP), Sister Ursula, Sister Mary Dunning, and Sister Anne Foley (RIP).

DOMINICAN *Preaching*

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

BY SISTER PEGGY SCARANO, OP

From May 23 to 28, Paolo Bruzzesi ('23), Kevin Delucci ('26), along with Sister Peggy Scarano, a Saint Thomas Aquinas College (STAC) member of the Board of Trustees and Class of 1970, attended the National College *Preaching in Action Conference*. Sponsored by the Dominican Youth Movement USA and hosted at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, participants came from nine universities and colleges founded by congregations of Dominican Sisters, spanning from the east coast to the mid-west, to the southeast.

The conference immersed the students in the charism, spirituality, and commitment to social justice of the worldwide, 800-year, Dominican Order of Sisters, Brothers, and Friars/Priests. The conference focused on Dominican preaching, which included a day of service that connected preaching as a living dynamic to the students' daily lives. STAC's Vision, Mission, and Values statements reflect its rootedness in a tradition of study, reflection, and service, and being faithful to its founders, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

Reflecting on their experience

PAOLO: The day that impacted me the most was our day of service.

Along with other students, I volunteered at the Community Food Club of Grand Rapids, a non-profit, member-based grocery store. Here we helped to stack shelves with non-perishable products and welcomed individuals and families who shopped for their everyday staples. We linked this to what we learned about the Dominican saints, the charism of the Order, and the communal prayer we shared — all inspired me to continue to deepen my relationship with God.

KEVIN: The conference taught me that preaching can be done in many different ways including prayer, music, dance, art, and conversation — all providing personal growth and strength for my faith in God. We brought back to campus the importance of proclaiming/sharing STAC's mission and values, promoting our commitment to sustainability; and committing to educating the STAC community about the history of the Dominican Order, especially the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, the founders of our college.

SISTER PEGGY: Sharing these days with the STAC students and the other attendees gave me a deeper appreciation of the enthusiasm



Sister Peggy (center) with STAC students

of our youth! Sharing our Dominican heritage was truly a blessing! Several times during the conference we were reminded of the words in the Dominican Youth Movement USA brochure: "We are a partnership of people committed to passing on and integrating the Dominican Charism into our lives." Yes — we are all family!



ALBERTUS MAGNUS HIGH SCHOOL

BY SISTER DIANE MCSHERRY, OP

The Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference was held in Adrian, Michigan from June 24 to 29. Three students from Albertus Magnus High School — Dahissa Auguste '24, Sarah-Lynn Jeantel '25, and Sandy Angeli '25 - and I joined students and mentors from Dominican high schools across the country in the six-day conference. The purpose of the conference was to empower high school students to discover and deepen the preacher within themselves through prayer, study, community, service, and interaction with members of the Dominican family.

PRAYER: Mass was offered each morning. Participants gathered for Morning and Evening Prayer. Students and mentors from each of the participating high schools planned and prepared, with the assistance of a liturgist, one of the prayer experiences. A student or mentor presented a preaching at each of the prayer services.

STUDY: Preaching workshops were offered each day. Students and mentors attended sessions about *Preaching in the Dominican Tradition*, *Preaching the Signs of the Times*, *Preaching in Action*, and *Preaching Through the Creative Arts*. Participants learned more about the lives of St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Rose of Lima from presenters who told the saints' stories in an engaging way.

COMMUNITY: Participants gathered for prayer twice a day as well as for an opening and a closing liturgy. Students and mentors met each evening in an assigned Home Group to share prayer, to reflect on their conference experiences, and to



Sister Diane (far right) with students from Albertus Magnus H.S.

discuss them with others. Participants gathered for meals three times a day.

SERVICE: Small groups of students and mentors volunteered during a day of service at various local organizations that serve people in need.

The conference offered an opportunity for the students and their mentors to become acquainted with the larger Dominican Family. Sixteen Dominican high schools were represented at the conference as well as Associates, Sisters, and Friars from across the United States. The Adrian Dominicans offered wonderful Dominican hospitality throughout our stay.

The three Albertus students — Dahissa, Sarah-Lynn, and Sandy — are grateful for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and other benefactors for giving them the opportunity to participate in the Dominican High Schools Preaching Conference. Each student found the conference to be enriching and enjoyable. They plan to share with the Albertus Magnus High School community their experiences with the Four Pillars of Dominican Spirituality and the various ways the Good News can be preached.



Mission Moments

Pictured are photos from our various mission activities this past winter and spring.

On Thursday, March 30, 2023, Sister Stephen Gerard Miick was inducted into the St. Thomas Aquinas College (STAC) Hall of Fame with four other alumni/ae. College President Ken Daly expressed his gratitude for the honorees who inspire current and future students to excel, make meaningful contributions in their professions, and learn the importance of paying it forward. The other honorees included: Mrs. Bernadette Hemmer '90; Mr. Francisco Garcia-Quezada, '90; Dr. Robert Murray (Spartan Award); Barbara Wallenstein '90 (Service Award); and Kersten Savage '24. Associate Jim Russell and many Sisters turned out to celebrate this award.

A graduate of the class of 1960, Sister Stephen has dedicated her life to enkindling the talents and gifts of teachers and students through her ministry of education. Serving as principal for 42 years at St. Paul's in Valley Cottage, New York, she said her hope for her students was for them "to be saints and scholars and nothing less." Sister Stephen accomplished many improvements at St. Paul's including two academic wings to accommodate pre-K and kindergarten classes, a computer lab, and a library.



Sister Stephen Gerard Miick receives STAC award from President Ken Daly.

"When we heard that Sister Stephen was being honored by STAC, we already knew why she was selected. All the acclaim assigned to her comes from her living the Gospel of Jesus. She talks to God so freely and we know her by her kindness," said Sister Bridget Kiniry.

Sister Marie Peter Buckley concurred, "Her dedicated concern for the whole child — spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically — as well as their families, has earned her the respect and admiration of countless students, parents, teachers, colleagues, and friends."



Sister Stephen employed creative approaches over the years to keep her school in top form. Some of these included: bringing a live donkey to the Nativity play, riding a Harley Davidson (attired in a leather jacket and helmet), singing at Karaoke Days, hayrides, and Easter egg hunts on the front lawn. Sister Stephen was "all in" when it came to helping the children in her care learn and thrive.

Sister Stephen's acceptance speech was characteristically short and humble. She has blessed us with her beautiful life — a life built daily on kindness, prayer, humility, sacrifice, and ministering to others.



Sister Anna Bashir at the Dominican Study Center in Bahawalpur.



Sister Philomena Victor teaching English.



Sister Irene Ellis and STAC President Ken Daly celebrate with Sister Joan Bearisto on her birthday who taught at STAC.



Sister Sadaf Aamir



Sister Martha Jaegers plants a tree in North St. Louis.



Mission Outreach Food Drive 2023.



Sister Robin Komal Nazir discusses proportion.



Sister Eileen Cunningham sorts items for a local food drive.



Dominican Sisters, Associates and STAC students collaborate for the Pajama Drive.

TEEING UP *FORE* THE SISTERS



Dominican Sisters
of Sparkill



On May 22, 2023, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill held their 26th Annual Golf Tournament at the New York Country Club in New Hempstead, New York. The proceeds from the golf tournament benefit the Mission and ministries of the Sisters.

It was a memorable event with great weather for the 110 attendees who enjoyed breathtaking views of New York City whether on the course or socializing on the patio.

That evening, the golfers, their guests, and generous sponsors feasted on a delicious dinner at the Club's ballroom, followed by the awarding of prizes, a 50/50 Raffle, and a presentation to the family of Ed Grzesiak, in memory and gratitude for his long-time, Golf Committee membership.

Many golfers enjoyed a new addition to the golf tourney by trying out an air catapult that propelled the golf ball more than 300 plus yards at a designated hole (replacing the tee shot) to get as close to the pin as possible. The results were humorous and humbling.

We congratulate all the winners and extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who helped to make this outing such a success!



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2023 GOLF TOURNAMENT

In Memory of Ed Grzesiak

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- Our 2023 Golf Committee for their time and efforts.
- The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for your prayers and support.
- Thank you to the many Dominican Sisters who donated gift cards.

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DR. J.T. VINCENT LOU LECTURE

The **Dr. J.T. Vincent Lou Lecture** is made possible because of a generous gift from Dr. York and Noelle Chynn that enables the Sisters to offer educational forums on social justice topics at Dominican Convent.

Rev. James Martin, SJ Presented

Gospel Reflections and Pastoral Ways to Build Bridges between Catholics and LGBTQ+ Persons Who are Often Excluded.

APRIL 11, 2023, Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill welcomed all gathered at Dominican Convent as well as those online around the U.S. She noted that since their founding in 1876, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have cared for destitute women and children in New York City and have continued to work for justice by serving the poor and outcasts and by safeguarding the natural environment.

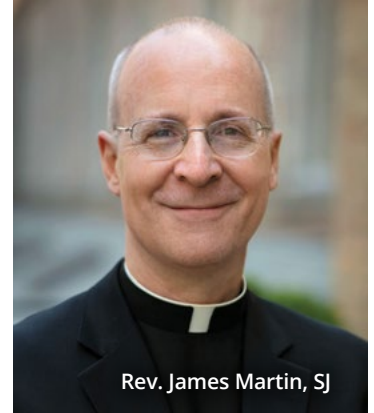
Rev. James Martin, SJ, editor-at-large of *America Magazine*, and bestselling author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything* (2016), and *Between Heaven and Mirth* (2012), joined the Dominican Convent community for an evening, live webinar, "Building Bridges: The Gospels and LGBTQ+ Outreach," which included a talk followed by a Q&A time.

The event, hosted by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, was open to Sisters, Associates, and community members who also had the opportunity to propose questions to Father Martin via video chat.

Dr. David L. Coppola, Director of Communications and Mission Advancement, noted in his introduction that Father Martin was no stranger to espousing the values advocated in *Pacem in Terris*, the encyclical letter publicized exactly 60 years earlier by Pope John XXIII. By emphasizing human dignity and equality, *Pacem in Terris* paved the way for the strong involvement of the Catholic

Church in the promotion of human rights, justice, and peacebuilding.

Father Martin began his remarks by sharing some of his life experiences that had led to his most recent ministry with the LGBTQ+ community, notably the June 12, 2016 murder of 49 people and 53 others wounded in a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida. He said that he understood the ministry of Jesus to embody compassion and mercy and that very few church leaders expressed support for the families and community where this mass shooting occurred. He confessed that he did not plan on serving in this ministry, but the Holy Spirit kept nudging him forward. He then presented three Gospel passages and their implications and invitations to build bridges of respect, compassion, and sensitivity with members of the LGBTQ+ community.



Rev. James Martin, SJ

"I don't challenge any Church teaching. Nor will I. I want to focus on areas of possible commonality between the institutional church and LGBTQ+ Catholics in a way that shows respect, compassion, and sensitivity..."

The first Gospel story was about Jesus' encounter with the Roman centurion in Capernaum who asked for Jesus to heal his servant. (Luke 7/ Matthew 8) Jesus praised the faith of this "outsider" and granted his request. Jesus did not ignore him because he was a Roman and pagan.

A second Gospel story recalled by Father Martin was about the woman of Samaria who came to draw water midday at Jacob's well near Sychar where Jesus was passing. (John 4) He does not ignore her because she is a Samaritan or an unaccompanied woman or one who had been married several times but instead, he

asks for a drink (vessels handled by Samaritans were regarded as ritually impure) and in exchange offers her "living water."

A final Gospel story on which Father Martin reflected was from Luke's Gospel (chapter 19) about a chief tax collector of Jericho named Zacchaeus who wanted to see Jesus as he passed but was prevented because of the crowd. The familiar story of this "short man" who climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus concludes with him declaring that he gives half his possessions to the poor and will pay back four times the amount he may have cheated others.

For the moderated Q&A time, questions focused on a range of subjects, from personal to public. When asked how he stays positive in the midst of so many discouraging and hateful events, Father Martin acknowledged that his outreach to the LGBTQ+ community has drawn both support and criticism

from within the Catholic Church. Despite uncharitable criticism and threats to his person, he continues forward with the support of his Jesuit superiors, several bishops, and Pope Francis. He said, "I don't challenge any Church teaching. Nor will I. I want to focus on areas of possible commonality between the institutional church and LGBTQ+ Catholics in a way that shows respect, compassion, and sensitivity, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [#2358] teaches."

When asked how to promote a compassionate and welcoming approach to the LGBTQ+ community, Father Martin pointed to the Dominican Sisters, remarking, "Sisters lead the way. I love the Sisters."

Father Martin is a spiritual resource for thousands through social and news media outlets. In 2017, Pope Francis appointed him to be a Consultor for the Vatican's Secretariat for Communication.

Memorial Bench

Located near Dominican Convent's entrance, providing a place for rest and reflection for the Sisters and visitors is a memorial bench donated by Rita Olsson in memory of her sibling, Sister Jeanine Nolan, OP, who died December 26, 2022, at the age of 92.



(left to right) Rita Olsson and Sister Jeanine Nolan, OP



DONOR PORTRAIT

Born in the Bronx in 1929, Mary Therese was the daughter of Michael and Anne Connolly Nolan. She entered the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary in Sparkill on September 8, 1946, and received the name Sister Mary Jeanine. She professed her first vows in 1948 and her final vows in 1953.

Sister Jeanine made a difference in the lives of countless young people in her ministry of education. She shared leadership skills as a Principal, Assistant Principal, and business manager, living the mission of the Dominican Sisters to proclaim the reign of God through ministry for justice and reverence for all creation for 75 years. May she be welcomed into the fullness of God's presence.

In Loving Memory of
Sr. Jeanine Nolan
"God Bless"

Boy on the Run

AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL

May 17, 2023

Paul Galan came to speak at Dominican Convent, Sparkill, New York, as part of the JCC Rockland 2023 Film Festival that featured his experiences as a young Jewish boy during the Holocaust. The one-hour film titled, “Boy on the Run: An Extraordinary Journey of Survival,” was followed by a discussion with Mr. Galan.



A native of Czechoslovakia, Paul was six years old in 1939 when the Nazi regime and their nefarious Nuremberg Laws forced out the democratic government. The film portrays his life being radically changed, beginning with the requirement that all Jews were to wear a gold star on their clothing. Not long after, several xenophobic actions were enacted and life took a sharp turn for the worse. As part of Hitler's plan to crush European Jews, the Nazis rounded up Jewish people to send them to brutal concentration camps for resettlement.

The Galan family avoided death several times and they were eventually sent to a labor camp in Slovakia from which they were later freed when an uprising liberated the prisoners. They then crossed the Sudetes mountains with little money and false documents stating they were Lutheran, pleading with people for shelter.

After the war, Paul immigrated to the United States as a teenager with his parents in 1951. After completing high school, he studied at the City College of New York where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in film and history.

Paul's adult life includes an illustrious career in New York's film industry as a Director of documentary television programs for ABC News and independent broadcast groups such as Westinghouse Broadcasting

and Capital Cities Broadcasting. He also produced and directed hundreds of films for Fortune 500 corporations. His television work earned him two EMMY nominations, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Award in Journalism, and numerous other professional industry recognitions.

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, founded in 1876, were happy to participate in the JCC Rockland Film Festival by welcoming Paul. The Sisters are committed to teaching truth through honest remembrance of the past, renewing justice in the present, and acting with compassion in the future by broadening the circles of diversity and inclusion. They also encourage the teachings of the 1965 Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, which repudiate historic Christian teachings of contempt toward Jews and positively asserted the ongoing validity and common spiritual heritage that Christians and Jews share.

Mr. Galan said that he shares his story in the hope that together we will stand up to hatred. By doing good deeds and sharing kindness with others we can help to repair the world.

BACKGROUND BY SERGIOS34/GETTY IMAGES

Our Call TO JUSTICE

May 12, 2023, Orangetown, New York - The following statement, issued by the Leadership of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and Blauvelt, is in response to the plan to provide housing to asylum seekers in Rockland and Orange County and the actions of elected officials.

We, the **Dominican Sisters of Sparkill** and the **Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt**, guided by the original vision of our Dominican founders are compelled by our commitment to the Gospel to act with justice and compassion. (Matthew 25)

We believe that all men and women are made in God's image and that seeking asylum is a fundamental human right. We stand with our sisters and brothers who are refugees and asylum seekers in our country while they pursue a fair, orderly, and humane process that we must honor and respect. As residents of Rockland County, we are disheartened at the actions of our County officials to block the entry of lawful asylum seekers from temporary shelter in Rockland County, all the while using rhetoric which promotes fear and division.

Our convictions echo Pope Francis who reminds the world that "our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility [for each other] upon which civil society is founded." (*Laudato Si*, 25)

The Gospel demands that we recognize and respect the dignity of all people, especially the poor and oppressed. Our Dominican heritage compels us to pursue truth in order to face and address the injustices of exclusion of migrants, violence, racism, exploitation, and all other threats to peace.

As members of a global sisterhood, we stand in solidarity with and look for ways to welcome asylum seekers, and provide for the vulnerable among us, especially immigrants and refugees. We call on our elected officials to welcome asylees to a county already enriched by the presence and contributions of the immigrant community among us.

*Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
Sisters of Saint Dominic of Blauvelt
Residents of Orangetown, New York, May 2023*

***You shall also love
the stranger, for you
were once strangers
in the land.***

- Deuteronomy 10:19

***For I was hungry,
and you gave me
something to eat. I
was thirsty, and you
gave me something
to drink. I was a
stranger and you
invited me in.***

- Matthew 25:35





In many ways, it was a normal, end-of-school-year celebration, honoring teachers who were retiring after many years of dedicated service. But the celebration on June 3, 2023, at Saint Anthony Parish, Nanuet, New York, had a special significance. With the retirement of Sisters Dorothy Kelty and LynnAnn Lewis, Saint Anthony School marked the end of 70 vibrant years of educational ministry by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

"Saturday, June 3rd was filled with joy, gratitude, and memories of the Sparkill Dominicans' 70-year teaching ministry at Saint Anthony School and Parish. We felt both humbled and blessed to be part of this community's life and faith and also to celebrate our retirement. Father Jerry Deponai orchestrated this wonderful event. It was very important to him that the Sisters be acknowledged and celebrated. The day was perfect!"

- Sisters Dorothy Kelty and LynnAnn Lewis

In September 1953, seven Sisters arrived to open the new parish elementary school. Over the past 7 decades, more than 75 Sparkill Dominicans have embraced the mission of forming faith-based learners for thousands of students who would go on to do great things and make a positive difference in the world. Through word and example, the Sisters' ministry extended well beyond the classroom, and they participated in leading youth groups, service trips to Appalachia, parish religious education programs, adult faith formation, and even coaching CYO athletic teams.

"Today we speak about Pope Francis' letter, Laudato Sí, which emphasizes our interconnectedness with all of creation and each other. This was always part of the

fabric of Saint Anthony's. If someone was in need, then the community responded — and the Sisters led the way. And thanks to the Sisters' broad vision, the scope of those in need wasn't just the person in my neighborhood. I would have to say the seeds of my vocation were nurtured by attending Saint Anthony's."

- Sister Jeanne Shary alumna ('77) and Dominican Sister of Sparkill

"It was an honor to work with the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. We are eternally grateful to them for founding Saint Anthony School 70 years ago. They carved a path of justice and kindness for the children. Most importantly, they taught and showed the children, by their example, the importance of God's love in their lives, each and every day. Thank you and God bless you!"

-Long-time colleague and pre-K teacher Nancy Duggan

At a special Mass of Thanksgiving, hearts were full as Father Jerry spoke of the selfless commitment of the many Sisters and lay faculty members, honoring not only the four who were retiring this year but also the past teachers and administrators who had died. He presented a plaque to the Leadership Team of the Dominican Sisters in gratitude for the Congregation's 70 years of educational leadership and service in the parish. In true Saint Anthony's fashion, all enjoyed a festive reception in the cafeteria after Mass.

Many alumni have chosen to send their children to Saint Anthony's "where children learn to love — and love to learn." Alumnus Brian McGuinness ('88) captures the Sisters' legacy well: "The Dominican Sisters brought a spirit of excellence and care that permeated the entire school and beyond. Their teaching and example gave us a strong foundation built on high morals and a strong work ethic that we proudly share with others."

STOP GUN VIOLENCE

As we continue to confront a culture of violence, our 2022 Direction Statement calls us to remain committed to the pursuit of truth in order to face threats to peace. One of the greatest threats to peace is the consequences of gun violence. As women and men of faith, we are horrified by the gun violence in this country which goes well beyond anything found in any other country like our own. Although many will blame mental illness, the fact that guns are so available makes no sense to us. Half the people who are killed by guns in this country are victims of suicide. Research shows that sometimes people do not commit suicide if there is no available means and maybe that extra minute could have saved that person and their family and loved ones.

As people who have been teachers all our lives, we cannot imagine what it is like for children to be forced to participate in gun drills and for teachers to have to worry about who might come to the door, and for children to go to school and worry that somebody might come to shoot them. So, we are saddened that our elected officials seem to be paralyzed. No one is saying that people cannot have guns. Many

people go hunting, but no one hunts with an assault weapon.

On Friday, June 2, **National Gun Violence Awareness Day**, we joined with other grassroots advocacy groups in Wear Orange Day, attended the Tappan Zee Bridge Light Up to promote Gun Violence Awareness, and conducted an in-house prayer service.

On Saturday, June 24, at our Assembly, the Sisters and Associates unanimously supported our membership in the Nuns Against Gun Violence organization of Sisters and their allies who pray, study, and act to end gun violence. We joined in prayer remembering some of the many victims of gun violence contemplating Father James Martin's "Sad, Tired, and Angry: A Prayer in the Face of Gun Violence." Each Sister or



Associate received a prayer card with the name, location, DOB, and date of shooting for a victim. This spiritual practice helps reinforce the message that each life matters.

We stand in solidarity with the victims of violence, with a majority of the American people, with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as we heed the Gospel call to nonviolence and seek to persuade our local, state, and federal officials to enact laws that will support a total ban on assault weapons and limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines. We also support measures that control the sale and use of firearms, such as universal background checks for all gun purchases. We ask that Congress pass a federal law to criminalize gun trafficking. This is of particular importance since the United States not only suffers from domestic gun violence but is a major international exporter of weapons. Finally, the USCCB also supports recent proposals to set a more appropriate minimum age for gun ownership, and to ban 'bump stocks.'

The Lord cannot lead us from death to life on his own, we must do our part to end the violence.





LUMINOX/GETTY IMAGES

Ministry Grants in 2023

Our Partners in Mission

The Leadership Team approved the following grants for 2023-2024; each one responds to the needs of our world and reflects the Congregational Goal — Ministry for Justice, enablement of the poor and reverence for all Creation.

■ Leadership Training — Good Shepherd Religious Education Program

The Leadership Training for religious education will provide funding for a formation leader to train others in the Montessori method of religious education for the continuation of the program. The National Association is a twelve session program by a certified instructor. The request to provide religious education to immigrants reflects the goal of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill to respond to the spiritual needs of the poor.

■ Inner City Enrichment

The grant request by St. John Chrysostom, an inner-city elementary school in one of the poorest congregational districts, will serve a vulnerable population. The funds will enable the purchase of board games, manipulatives and playground/gym equipment for students from pre-K through grade 8. The board games and gym/yard equipment will provide socialization and physical activity, skills of critical thinking, concentration, and winning and losing peacefully. The grant reflects the Dominican Sisters commitment to addressing systemic racism, empowerment of women, an end to poverty, and a commitment to education.

■ Women's Circle — East St. Louis

The Women's Circle has been a stable and ongoing component of the Eastside Heart and Home Family Center. The circle brings together two generations — grandmothers and middle-aged mothers. East St. Louis, Illinois is known as

one of the most violent and poorest small cities in the country. The Center provides a home to women of faith and empowers them to believe in themselves. The Dominican Sisters are proud of the leadership of the Executive Director, Sister Carol Lehmkuhl, a Dominican Sister who reflects our commitment to justice, peace and empowerment.

■ A Garden in Response to *Laudato Si'*

The project to involve Sisters in planting and caring for vegetables and flowering plants in St. Joseph Garden, Dominican Convent, connects to the commitment of the congregation to the *Laudato Si'* goals. The Garden will connect the “gardeners” with the earth, its generosity, abundance, and will foster a greater appreciation of the land. It will connect with the broader picture of food supply through those who plant, harvest and distribute food.

■ Proyecto Faro

Proyecto Faro (Project Lighthouse) is an organization founded in response to the escalation of anti-immigrant sentiment, ICE enforcement actions and material need in Rockland County. Their request reflects the Dominican Sisters' goal to face forward in a world in desperate need of healing and renewing peace and compassion. The grant request will assist in addressing the educational disparity of immigrant students in the East Ramapo school district, New York. Funds will enable community organization, intensive mentoring and training of students, outreach and support for educational justice.

■ Marydell Faith and Life Center

The request by Marydell Faith and Life Center reflects the Dominican Sisters' commitment to the *Laudato Si'* goals. Support for the funding of the Children's Garden at Marydell is designed for low-income families with limited access to nature. The garden program promotes physical and emotional health and enriches the lives of children.

■ Days for Girls

Dominican Sisters' collaboration with the Mission of Days for Girls International, an endorsed NGO by the United Nations, reflects commitment to the *Direction Statement 2022* to broaden our circle of relationships and enter into diverse partnerships as members of a global sisterhood. The project provides access to materials and education vital to removing the stigma and limitations of menstruation for girls throughout the world. Volunteers include Dominican Sisters and Associates, STAC students and Rockland County residents.

Eagle Scout Project

AT DOMINICAN CONVENT, SPARKILL, NEW YORK

For his Eagle Scout project, Thomas Moetzinger of Boy Scout Troop 2033, Nanuet, rehabilitated the memorial for the St. Agnes alumni who served our country in the armed forces. This memorial is located on the front lawn of Dominican Convent.

Thomas and his volunteer crew cleaned the plaques and base, fixed the flagpole, added scalloped bricks, and enhanced the landscaping. Beyond this rehabilitation, Thomas added a memorial bench to commemorate the updating of the facility and honor the fact that it was completed by an Eagle Scout. An unveiling of this memorial will be scheduled for early fall to include Sisters, Associates, local community members, scouts, civic associations, such as the Pearl River Elks who sponsor Troop 2033, and local veterans.

Thomas researched the original memorial and noted that “The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill ran an orphanage for boys and many of the orphans went to war during World War II and the Korean War. When asked to write down their next of kin, many listed the Sisters. The Sisters were so moved by this that they decided to put the memorial in place.”

Thomas shared that his grandmother, Marilyn Burda, who taught with the Dominican Sisters at St. Anthony’s School in Nanuet (Sisters Pat Niblock, Daniel

Catherine, Maryann Summa, Margaret Flaherty, and others), encouraged him to connect with Dominican Sisters for his Eagle Scout project.

Thomas then reached out to Tom McMenamin, Dominican Convent Facilities Manager, who served as the liaison. Louis Urruttia-Orme from Dominican Convent also worked alongside the scouts for hands-on technical assistance on weekends for such tasks as mixing and pouring concrete, providing tools, and operational guidance. Thomas was joined by his father, fellow troop members, and his younger brothers for this project. The family was most grateful for the support of Tom and his staff for this project.

Thomas was inspired to become an Eagle Scout because he wants to make a positive difference. He said, “I want to be able to do something with my life and see people happy. If it means helping my community out by building a memorial or just making someone’s day a bit brighter, then that’s what makes me happy. That’s why I want to become an Eagle Scout.”

Mr. Steven Moetzinger, Thomas’ father also has strong connections with the Sisters. He was positively influenced by Sister Angele Saunders while attending Albertus Magnus High School, Bardonia. “She was a significant influence on me, fostering attention to academics and developing a relationship with my Creator. She encouraged me to become a Eucharistic Minister at Albertus and



wanted to help me be the best version of myself.”

This project has prepared Thomas to be a project manager of almost anything through a kind of trial by fire. He researched, raised funds, organized people, delegated, led by example, communicated, and learned what is possible to change and what to leave be. He said he also learned to be calm under pressure and grateful to his father who helped buy supplies when he forgot things at Lowe’s.

The new memorial invites everyone to remember a part of the living history of the Dominican Sisters. As new Associates and visitors come to the convent, this is part of the living history and charism to be passed on into the future. Mr. Moetzinger who is a disabled U.S. Veteran from the Vietnam War is passing on the lessons he learned from Sister Angele to Thomas, and now Thomas is passing that on to other people.

Thomas would be interested in meeting any St. Agnes Alumni who served to hear their story. With two grandparents who were American history teachers at Clarkstown South High School, Thomas seems to have a natural curiosity and understanding of civics. His father is delighted he has co-mingled this sense of history with his faith and desire to improve the world around us.



SPARKILL DOMINICANS *Celebrate* AN UNPRECEDENTED JUBILEE IN 2023

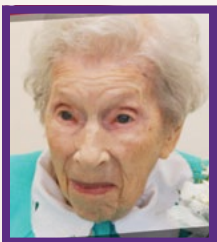
Jubilarians Shatter Previous Records

May 7, 2023 was a magnificent day for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill who celebrated the 147th anniversary of the Congregation's founding (Foundation Day), and **Diamond Jubilees for more than 95 Sisters**. The Congregation commemorates Diamond Jubilee celebrations for Sisters celebrating 60, 65, 70, and 75 years and higher, starting with the year of a Sister's entrance into the Congregation with her group, which the Sisters call a "band."

Among the Jubilarians was Sister Lois Liekweg who celebrated 90 years as a Sparkill Dominican and Sister Marie Daugherty who celebrated 85 years! Sister Lois has set a record in the Congregation, and Sister Marie became only the second Sister to reach the 85-year. But the similarity does not end with longevity. Both Sisters are also graduates of Saint Mark's High School in St. Louis.

These St. Louis natives have witnessed incredible developments and growth in the world: from enhancements in the classroom, where they spent years of active ministry, to advances in American life and society, to an array of global events and concerns ranging from devastating wars to mind-boggling scientific discoveries. Throughout these changes, what has not wavered is their commitment to the Dominican integrated charism of mission, prayer, community, and study. Sister Lois has excelled in the areas of education, administration, and catechetical ministry; in addition to education and administration, Sister Marie has shared her extraordinary gifts of music and healing prayer. Both Sisters have a great sense of humor and much wisdom to share.

In their own words...



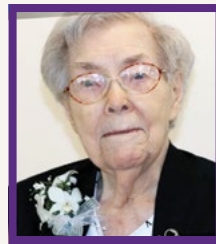
Sister Lois Liekweg

(Called to God 8/3/23)

"In my lifetime, I have witnessed the development of technology which has provided some of the greatest 'toys' ever brought forth. The contribution of tech gadgets

to society is on par with what the automobile has

done over the years. Also, today it seems there is no peace in the world. Having lived through two World Wars I can say the atmosphere in our world right now feels different. I think of groups like Boko Haram and ISIS, and I ask God to change their minds and keep them from becoming a powerful body. I also don't remember as much physical hunger in the world as there is today.... I think about it a lot — what it must be like to be hungry, or to have children cry because they're hungry."



Sister Marie Daugherty

Q: What do you think God wants to say to us?

"Love one another as I have loved you!"

Q: What would you say to people who don't know how to pray?

"I'm still learning how to pray ... There are many things you can look at and get information to help you if you really want it."

Q: What have you learned about dealing with changes in religious life?

"I think we have to keep trying and go along with whatever comes. Sometimes I wish changes would bring us closer to heaven, closer to God. Other times I'm just very grateful to be where I am in this big chair."

Although the other Diamond Jubilarians may not have shattered any records, they are each a cause for great celebration, affirmation, and thanksgiving. This year's celebration was the first time the Community had been able to gather in four years to celebrate Foundation Day and Jubilees, and the enthusiasm was palpable. The Mass was full of joy from beginning to end, with a full choir and involvement of jubilarians in all aspects of the Mass. Sister Irene Ellis, the Prioress, delivered an inspirational reflection.

Following Mass, the festivities continued with a delicious meal, socializing, and lots of photo opportunities.

DOMINICAN CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, FOUNDATION DAY

May 7, 2023

BY SISTER IRENE ELLIS, OP
PRIORRESS

I offer my heartfelt, sincere congratulations to our Diamond Jubilarians! How amazing and wonderful to be celebrating the anniversaries of those who have lived the vowed religious life as Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for 60, 65, 70, 75, 85, and even 90 years! Congratulations, Sisters, as we honor you on this Foundation Day!

Thinking about and planning for our celebration of the 147th anniversary of our foundation led me to *The Vision is Tremendous*, by Sister Mary Lucille Collins published in 1975. I found myself re-captured by our story — the story of open, listening hearts and generous, steadfast love — an extraordinary story still so full of mystery. I find that I am attracted by and drawn more and more into Mystery — the mystery of the Universe, the mystery of the Divine in all of creation, the mystery of a seed coming into full flower.

Alice Thorpe, her sister Lucy, and our very early ancestors were the seeds that took root and gave rise to who we, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have been for 147 years and who we, Sisters and Associates are today. This is truly amazing — a manifestation of the Divine in human history!

Who was this woman, Alice Mary Thorpe, born in England in 1844? Why did she, an Anglican from a devout family, convert seemingly out of the blue, to Catholicism? Why did she leave everything behind, her comfortable family life and her country of origin, to voyage across the Atlantic to New York City? Where did she find her courage and her strength?

The Vision is Tremendous sheds some light on these wonderings. According to this account, Alice Mary loved God and lived from a young age with an awareness of a deep sense of God's call to a consecrated life to be lived in service to the poor. She told her parents that she wanted to become a nun. She was infused by the mystery of the Divine calling her to something new and unknown.

Is not the mystery that opened and prepared her heart to know and follow the inner voice of God, the same inner knowing that each of us has experienced?

Congratulations ON YOUR ANNIVERSARIES

90th

Sister Lois Liekweg

85th

Sister Marie Daugherty

75th

Sister Ann Marie Stoltz
Sister Mary Rose Mullervy
Sister Mary Magdalen Fleming
Sister Frances Dryden

70th

Sister Nora McCarthy
Sister Patricia McLoughlin
Sister Elizabeth McAleavey
Sister Margaret Ryan
Sister Kathleen Kane
Sister Dolores Shortal
Sister Maureen Stocking
Sister Helen Regina Durso
Sister Margaret Glynn

65th

Sister Paulette Patrilli
Sister Louise Mileski
Sister Sheila Gorham
Sister Eileen Guinan
Sister Mary Ann Borrello
Sister Margaret Flaherty
Sister Patricia Broderick
Sister Anne Queenan
Sister Donna DeGhetto
Sister Carole Valentino
Sister Joan Marie O'Leary
Sister Madeleine Murphy
Sister Sheila Mullins

60th

Sister Gloria Lowe
Sister Barbara Wright
Sister Kathleen Gorman
Sister Sheila Brennan
Sister Diane Aiken

We know that once in New York, Alice Mary and her sister Lucy met the Dominican Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Father John Rochford whom Alice Mary discovered shared her soul's dream of providing refuge to destitute women and children. And the story continues and continues, or shall I say, the mystery of God's Providence and the manifestation of God's purpose became revealed.

The birth of the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary was not a well-thought-out, rational plan. Alice Mary and Lucy and those early Sisters who joined them had nothing of material consequence. They endured disappointments, setbacks, and hardships, including the early and untimely death of Alice Thorpe in 1879. There was no map, no security. What these women, our ancestors, did have was an abiding sense of trust in God's presence, and open, loving hearts willing to reach out in service to do whatever they could to help those most in need. This is the foundation

upon which we stand. This is the foundation of our Dominican Congregation.

Today's Gospel of John (14:6) has Jesus, the Christ, proclaiming "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." In the reading from the Letter of Peter, we are being called to come to Christ, a living stone, the cornerstone, rejected by some but chosen and precious to God (1 Peter 2:7). Come to Christ, Peter preaches, and be "living stones" such that your lives will emerge into a "spiritual house," chosen and holy, a people of God's own — called to live in the light.

Alice Mary (Mother Mary Catherine Antoninus) and Lucy (Sister Mary Agnes) of the Order of Preachers, through the living presence of Christ and the magnificent work of God in them, serve as our cornerstone. Along with more than 1000 women who followed in their footsteps, we are summoned to be the "living stones." Dominican women, alive in the lineage of St. Dominic, under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we are called to seek Truth, to Praise, to Bless, and to Preach the Gospel with our lives. As Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, we are committed to our Mission to proclaim the Reign of

God through a ministry for justice and reverence for all creation. We face forward encountering the signs of our times, responding with the same abiding trust in God's Presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as did our founders.

At this point in our well-lived life as a Congregation, we are emerging into a new phase of our journey — we are the elders, the wisdom keepers. Living in faithful service to the Gospel, our Mission has been shaping our lives, shaping our very beings such that our hearts, souls, and minds are being transformed. We have indeed become living stones. We have become the heart and hands and face of Christ for the world.

We have much about which to rejoice! We are in the hands and heart of God — the Divine Creator of All — the Great Mystery. We face forward as joyful women of prayer and compassion preaching the Gospel with our very lives.

Let us celebrate together today!

Let us celebrate God's magnificent Presence and work in us!

Heritage Room

In early Spring of 2023, our Heritage Room in Dominican Convent had visitors from the Marist Brothers. They came at the request of their Provincial who had heard about our displays. He wanted their archivist to see what we had created. Joining the Marists were Sisters Ann Eigenbauer, Mary Dunning, and Maureen Foy.

This room was created by Sisters Ann Eigenbauer and Adele Myers (artists) and Sisters Margaret Harrison and Catherine Tahaney (archivists). This group of women studied the Sparkill Dominican history using various publications, letters, and reports that led them to choose the main categories for the displays. They used photos and

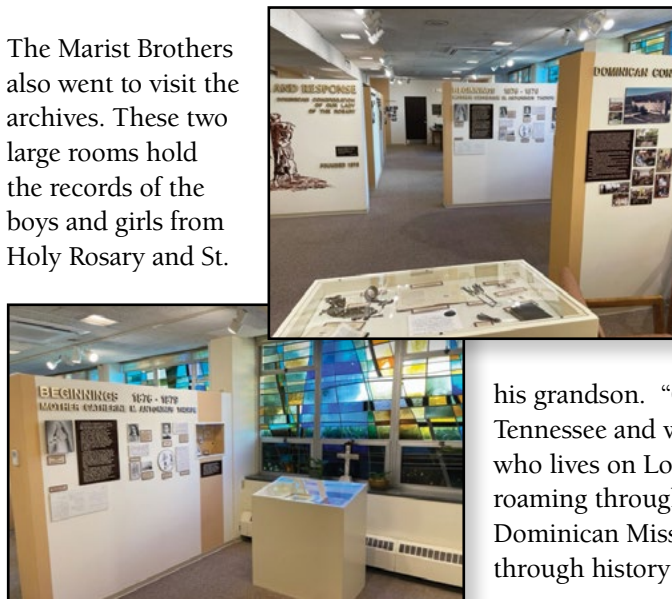
written materials to bring this room to completion up to around 2010. We are in the process of adding Sr. Mary Murray's twelve years as President, the covenant agreement with the Sisters of Christian Doctrine, and Venerable Brother Norbert (a boy in our care at St. Agnes).

The Marist Brothers also went to visit the archives. These two large rooms hold the records of the boys and girls from Holy Rosary and St.

Agnes as well as the school records of Thorpe Secretarial School and Rosary Academy. There are also numerous artifacts, especially from Pakistan and Montana together with blueprints of all of the Congregation's buildings.

The Heritage Room is always open and as Providence would have it, as the Marists were leaving, another group arrived — a gentleman who was a boy at St. Agnes in the late 1940s and early 1950s, his son, and

his grandson. "Our boy" now lives in Tennessee and was here to visit his son, who lives on Long Island. They enjoyed roaming through the displays as the Dominican Mission came to life again through history and warm memory.



For more information on the Heritage Room, contact:

Sister Kathleen Gorman, Archivist | kgorman@sparkill.org | 845-359-4207

A meaningful and rewarding life

Sister Zubeda Tarcis, OP

Sister Zubeda Tarcis is a member of the vibrant community of Sparkill Dominican Sisters faithfully serving in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The youngest of six children, she was born and raised in the city of Khanwal, Pakistan. In her teens, her family moved to the close-knit Catholic village of Francisabad. Her father was a dedicated catechist and brought Sisters as frequent guests into her home for meals. Besides Sister Naseem George, Zubeda did not know the Sparkill community as a child, although many Sisters, including Monica Lewis, Nusrat Lewis, Violet Sampour (RIP), and Catherine Bashir were from Francisabad.



During her teens, Zubeda attended secondary school with the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena in Faisalabad. She was impressed with the Sisters and at age 17 she had a strong feeling that she wanted to be a Sister. She ended up entering the Sparkill community due to her aunt, Sister Naseem George. In fact, after graduation, she was ready to go and join the Faisalabad Dominicans when her cousin Naseem said, "Why are you going there?" Although her plans were to go to Faisalabad, her father knew many of the Sparkill Sisters and encouraged her to go with Sister Naseem. She went to Bahawalpur, entered the Dominican community on October 7, 2002, and has happily stayed. Sister Zubeda is most grateful for the Sisters who gave her a strong start in guiding her formation, notably Sister Mary Dempsey, her spiritual guide, and Sister Monica Lewis, her Novice Mistress.

After college, Sister Zubeda was assigned to teach the 2nd grade. With little experience, her first mission was very challenging. She credits Sisters Anna Bakhshi and Anne Schwartz with helping her to meet these challenges starting with the basics of learning how to make a planner. After four years, she began to teach 4th and 5th grades. At the same time, she went back to school and earned a master's degree in

linguistics. She then taught the 6th and 7th grades, as well as English to all levels.

In 2017, she was asked to help Sister Anna Bakhshi run the school and has served as Assistant Principal ever since. Although she no longer teaches students directly, she teaches as she supervises, and guides teachers' plans to deliver successful lessons to students. She supervises 89 teachers and about 36 support staff and humbly says, "I don't do a lot. I just contribute whatever I can. Sister Anna helps me a lot in learning how to be an effective Administrator."

There are many stairs in the school's four large buildings, but she is happy to walk to the classrooms to help support face-to-face learning. She and Sister Anna make a great team. She also enjoys working on the school's website, making tests, setting up and coordinating the online learning management systems (Google Classroom and Cambridge). In short, she is the school's "techie"! She even organizes school-wide special event programs and says that she enjoys the Christmas shows the most.

Sister Zubeda takes the Dominican charism of study seriously, which is not surprising since her father was also an educator and catechist. While

school is out and she is on holiday, she is busy studying for her Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Education.

Recently, Sister Zubeda was asked to support the Sisters in religious formation, helping them deepen their spirituality and discern their own call of how to best use their talents to serve God. She remains inspired by her community of Sisters in Bahawalpur who affirmed and supported her on her own journey. She enjoys the rich prayer life and encourages others to come and join them because she has been blessed with a meaningful and rewarding life.

Sister Zubeda Tarcis enjoys her ministry as assistant principal of Dominican Convent School with more than 1,300 students, serving grades K-12, including college-level coursework, and online Cambridge Classes. She finds the work challenging to keep this #1-rated school competitive and to live up to the expectations of the families. And when each day's challenge is done, she says that the inspiration for the next day begins. To relax, she enjoys gardening: "I love gardening. Whenever I have a chance, I go out and plant something. Now it's the rainy days and everything is coming up!"



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