# the FLAME



Inspired by God. Serving you.

A publication for friends of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary



# A Blessing to Serve

by Joyce Bieber, CHM Development Director

This is the first in a four-part series focusing on the priorities identified by CHM at the General Assembly in the fall of 2021 (see page 4). This article focuses on immigration.

Reflecting on the volunteer work she has been doing the past five years, Sr. Mary Bea Snyder said, "I found myself wondering 'what is God calling me to do next?' It seemed like God was calling me to be welcoming to immigrants."

Sr. Mary Bea trained as a teacher but she has a long history going back to the 1970s of helping people assimilate in society. Her career path took her through stints working with homeless individuals, mentally ill persons, men who had recently been released from prison and Vietnam veterans. She was known as a person that could really help those that were serious about getting their life together. She was

grateful to have a reputation of being effective and compassionate.

Fast forward to 2018: Sr. Mary Bea was active in delivering food to refugees through Tapestry Farms, a Davenport, Iowa, non-profit which helps refugees navigate the many obstacles they experience when settling in a new country. She and Sr. Mary Ann Vogel, CHM, began serving on the Unitarian Sanctuary Coalition. "I got to know some of the individuals and families who were being helped," she said. Hearing the stories of fear, hardship and determination to provide a better life greatly impacted her. In May of that year, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers raided a manufacturing facility in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, about 85 miles away from Davenport. Thirty-two adult males were arrested and detained. Sr. Mary Bea and others headed to Mount Pleasant to offer whatever assistance they could. She met with

the local First Presbyterian Church Pastor Trey Hager and other church and community representatives. She learned the stories of the wives and children who were now missing their family member as well as a steady income source and facing the uncertainty that comes with. "I just thought, you know, this is something that I can help with." She recalled that there was a food pantry operating at First Presbyterian. She and Sr. Maggie Bennett, CHM, began taking supplies including food and other staples.

Pastor Hager confirms that Sr. Mary Bea has been actively involved with IowaWINs (Iowa Welcomes Its Immigrant Neighbors), a commission that is a ministry of his church. "Since the raid, she comes down

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Photos: Sr. Mary Bea is sixth from right in this photo at the Mexican border. Sr. Bea and Maggie unloading gifts for the children in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

# Spring 2022 Volume 20 Issue 1

The Flame is published three times a year for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary and friends.

Our Mission: We, the members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary, call one another to live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

Like our founders, we strive to be attentive to the call of the Spirit in the signs of our times, especially the needs of the poor and the powerless.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to work for justice within the human family and to care for Earth itself.

Help us now to open our arms in welcome, and reach out our hands in support.

That the desperate may find new hope, and lives torn apart be restored.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ who fled persecution at his birth and at his last triumphed over death.

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Editorial Staff: Lisa Martin Joyce Bieber

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L-R: The new CHM Leadership Team for 2022-2026. Sisters Lynn Mousel, Mary Bea Snyder, Marcia Eckerman, Mary Ann Vogel and Johanna Rickl. Read all about the team at www.chmiowa.org in the news and announcements section.

## Dear Friends,

This Lent, the death and resurrection of Jesus have new meaning as we are exposed to the vivid images of those suffering and dying in war-torn countries. Earth, too, is suffering from war but also from our daily indignities of exploitation, pollution and degradation of soil, air and water.

We sisters and associates of the Humility of Mary renew our solidarity with immigrants and refugees and reaffirm our care for Earth. Read about all the commitments of our Direction Statement in this issue of *The Flame*.

You are "companions on the journey" through your support. We are grateful for such a long list of friends and partners in ministry. May you be ready to celebrate resurrection this Easter!

Blessings,

Sister Johanna Rickl CHM President



-Immigration ontinued from page 1



CHM Sisters Mary Bea Snyder and Maggie Bennett hard at work individually addressing Christmas cards for older children and families that include Hyvee gift cards. You can see in the background that Sr. Bea's apartment is the storage area for the many toys she collects for the smaller children.

regularly with her vehicle packed with food pantry and hygiene items. She has been wonderful and I've really enjoyed getting to know her and seeing how she cares for others," he said.

By fall she realized the difficulties families of those who were detained or deported in the ICE raid would face at Christmas time. She wondered about the children who were not yet U.S. citizens. She heard that children born in the US could receive a gift through the national program Toys for Tots, but even within the same family, non-US citizen youth would be disqualified. She was determined that, with everything these children and families had gone through in the past year, they should have some joy at Christmas time.

After a few conversations, through a combination of her own money and money she raised, she had enough to buy gifts for the children. Along with Sr. Maggie, she went shopping and set up a distribution site with

volunteers to distribute the gifts. "I know that the families were really grateful and it made a difference to see that there were people who cared. I felt so blessed to be able to do it. It just brought a deeper meaning to Christmas for me."

Pastor Hager is impressed by the way Sr. Mary Bea organizes the gift distribution so that the immigrant parents are the ones who give the gifts to the children, not her. "She doesn't want the credit. She wants the families to have the dignity and joy that comes from giving at Christmas. That's very important to her," he notes.

Over the past few years the donations to the immigration ministry have continued to increase. "I have had several people who have said that they wanted to do something to help immigrants but didn't know how. Once they learned about what I have been doing with Christmas gifts and regular contributions to the food pantry, they have made donations to CHM for this ministry. They know

the money is directly assisting those who need it," she said. The increased donations have allowed Sr. Mary Bea to think about ways to expand the ministry. "The need for this is greater than ever as we see refugees from places like Afghanistan seeking a safer home," she acknowledges.

She has also faced a fair amount of criticism for her involvement in helping refugees find resources in this country. Some, she supposes, have difficulty understanding why she would be so welcoming to refugees because of the negative rhetoric surrounding immigration.

"My response is, 'Do we just have to care about ourselves and that's all? What is our faith based on? Do we believe that we are all children of God? And, if we are all children of God, doesn't that make us family? Doesn't that make us brothers and sisters?" she said. "I don't know anyone who would want their family to be treated the way refugees are treated," she asserted.

In February 2022, Sr. Mary Bea traveled to the border crossing in San Juan, Texas, with her cousin, Jody O'Brien. They were part of a team of 12 with Global Volunteers, a Minnesota-based non-profit that mobilizes volunteers to assist worldwide with projects to nurture and sustain the well-being of children. Volunteers assisted at a low income clinic, a food bank, or, like Sr. Mary Bea, at the Respite Center of the Rio Grande Valley, a place where families who have a determined destination to go in the United States stay temporarily while paperwork is processed. At the respite center, they receive clothes, food and medical care.

"Volunteering there was a very eyeopening experience. The children

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#### -Immigration continued from page 3

were interacting and playing like children do. But the mothers and fathers were so somber, almost expressionless. I could tell that they had been through a lot to get to this point," she recollected. She would like to go back if she had the opportunity. "I felt a real purpose being there to show love to them and help them."

Reflecting on the path her life has taken and the many experiences that she has had to help others, Sr. Mary Bea observed "I think that it's just part of my DNA. It resonated so much and felt like 'yes, this is a good thing for me to do.' God has certainly been with me on this journey. What a blessing!"

To learn more about Sr. Mary Bea's immigration ministry, check out the CHM website to view photos and watch interviews with Sr. Mary Bea as she travels to Mount Pleasant to distribute Christmas gifts last December. Donations to Sr. Mary Bea's immigration ministry can be made to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary.

# Laudato Si' Action Plan

The Laudato Si' Action Platform empowers the universal Church and all people of good will to respond to Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical on caring for our common home.

As the CHM community prepares to commit to a Laudato Si' Action Plan, please join them in reflecting on each of the seven Laudato Si' Goals and how you might respond.

- 1. Response to Cry of the Earth
- 2. Response to Cry of the Poor
- 3. Ecological Economics
- 4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles
- 5. Ecological Education
- 6. Ecological Spirituality
- 7. Community Resilience and Empowerment

# **CHM Direction Statement**

At the Congregational Assembly October 26, 2021, CHM confirmed the following Direction Statement:

As members of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary our Mission and Vision statements call us:

To live the Gospel with simplicity and joy following the example of Mary.

To work for justice within the human family and to care for Earth itself.

To be strong, dedicated women, and to face our changing world by stepping deliberately into the future with courage and grace.

#### THEREFORE,

We CHMs, recognizing the challenges to our democratic system, will direct our lives, in collaboration with others, for the period 2022–2026:

- 1. To be peacemakers and to promote non-violent actions at all levels of society.
- 2. To advocate for just and comprehensive immigration reform and resettlement of refugees.
- 3. To live in harmony with creation and to reduce our carbon footprint.
- 4. To work for greater inclusion in society, especially for racial and gender equity, with liberty and justice for all.



The gardens at The Prairie Retreat provide nutritional food for our visitors and utilize OLPR compost and rain-barrel water.

### Believe, Do, Serve!

by Deb Friederichs, OLPR Cook and Operations Assistant

At Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat (OLPR) we believe in local, fresh, organic and seasonal. Why is that important? It provides us with a fresher product, is more economical, and contributes less of a carbon footprint at OLPR.

Part of The Prairie's ministry is to provide nourishing local grown foods while taking care of Earth. Planning for the upcoming garden plot begins days after the last plant is harvested. Composting consists of all vegetable and banana peels, coffee grounds, filters, tea bags, egg shells, onion and garlic casings being put in a garbage can. Next, it's taken to the composting area, turned and mixed regularly and eventually it is composted into new soil where it is used to produce new vibrant seedlings for the next growing season. Whether it's adding fertilizer and compost back to the soil, planting, weeding, harvesting, preparing meals or eating, the staff is passionate about taking care of Mother Earth. We will reap what we sow!

If you have ever attended a retreat at The Prairie you will find the staff has excitement in their voice to introduce the menu before you. Our goal is to provide a meal where a majority of the food is a product of The Prairie garden or locally grown. The OLPR garden accommodates all diet restrictions—it is gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian and vegan!



We pick produce in the summer at its peak and what is not used fresh, we freeze. Whether it is the peak of the season or the dead of winter, we are able to provide a delicious product. At OLPR we do local, fresh, organic and seasonal. We use vegetables like zucchini, potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, kale, cucumbers, green beans, onions, basil, rosemary, thyme, parsley, spinach and lettuce. In November we utilized our greenhouse and had fresh leaf lettuce so tender and delicious our guests were asking for salad for breakfast. We are blessed to have neighbors who share their sweet corn, apples, rhubarb and strawberries which are all so fresh no additional seasoning needed. When picked at their peak and stored they are as good as the day you picked them. Eight bee hives provide delicious honey.



The eggs and chickens are purchased from local farmers. Have you ever eaten an egg bake, scrambled egg or deviled egg when the color of the egg is bright yellow? That's one sign it's farm fresh. When it is

-13° outside, how does a nice hot bowl of tomato basil soup with bright red tomatoes, sweet onions, and herbs sound? Add a slice of fresh homemade bread and a crisp lettuce salad, picked from our greenhouse and topped with homemade poppy seed dressing. For dessert, let's add a slice of rhubarb cake where the rhubarb used may have been picked just hours before eating.

Come treat yourself to a visit, where we serve local, fresh, organic and seasonal. We look forward to feeding you!



Sr. Margaret tending the garden at The Prairie.

Dear Readers,

Twill be leaving Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat May 1st and taking over responsibilities of the gardens, the urban forest and wetlands of the OSF Motherhouse grounds in Madison, Wisconsin. God is calling me to this new ministry and it is with a sad heart I say goodbye. It has been a privilege these past four years to minister to all the people who have come through The Prairie doors, to welcome them and provide an environment of prayer and peace. I did not imagine, in 2018, I would ever be living in Iowa again. These years living in a rural area have been a blessing. God will continue to be with you and assist you and the staff of OLPR to expand the vision of Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat.

> God's Blessings, Sr. Margaret, OSF



Blessings come to Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat! Two of our guests, Jennifer Walter and Sarah Dexter, have generously donated all new mattresses in the Victorian House and Prairie Heights. Here you see the double bed in the hermitage which offers ensuite bath, kitchenette and, like all our rooms, a pretty view.

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Quad City Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees representative Susan Leuthauser (2nd from left) stopped by to pick up sewing and hygiene items donated by CHMs at Humility of Mary Center in Davenport. The donation drive was organized by two Quad City organizations, World Relief and Progressive Action for the Common Good. The collected items will be distributed to Afghan families who have recently settled in the area. Pictured with Susan are (L-R) Sr. Catherine Linnenkamp, Sr. Kathleen Henneberry and Sr. Justine Denning.

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Sr. Harriett Ping feeling the love on Valentine's Day at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center.

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Sr. Nguyet Cão, a sister from the religious order Lovers of the Holy Cross who is living at the Humility of Mary Center while studying nursing at Eastern Iowa Community College, is happy to share her craftiness making bears and dogs from hand towels and washcloths with Sr. Dolores Schuh.

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Sr. Cathleen Real just loves St. Patrick's Day cake served up at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center.

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This spring issue of *The Flame* contains a listing of friends who have made contributions to the Congregation of the Humility of Mary from January 1 through December 31, 2021. Every effort has been made to provide a complete and accurate listing. If there are errors, omissions, or questions, please contact the development office at 563-336-8401.

Thank you for your generosity and support.

# Humility Homes and Services, Inc. Expanding to Achieve the Sisters of Humility's Dream of Ending Homelessness

Humility Homes and Services, Inc. (HHSI) will receive over \$4.1 million in funding to expand their mission from Scott County ARPA, RDA, SCRA, Ryan Foundation and Amerigroup.

It started with a dream... HHSI's history goes back 32 years. It grew out of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary's mission to work for justice within the human family and care for Earth itself. They were resolute to help affect change individually and systemically.

What once started as a long-term plan to end homelessness is now an effective plan to address the gap in affordable housing and creating a home for every person, as HHSI was granted \$4,190,800 for the purchase of 60 units to address the housing crisis in the greater Quad Cities area.

Sr. Johanna Rickl related, "Jesus reminds us that we are called to care for each other. Humility Homes and Services is one way the CHM sisters responded to that call in relation to the most vulnerable among us. Lack of affordable housing is a great injustice in our Quad City community. We are grateful that so many people have come forward to be partners in our dream of securing a home for every person. Their support allowed a leap from the first year's four families housed to last year's more than 1,100 persons served by HHSI. With continuing partnership from generous donors and these grants, the dream goes forward."



Ashley Velez, HHSI Executive Director and Sr. Johanna Rickl, CHM President, stand at the base of the beautiful stairway in a newly purchased home scheduled to be a supportive living residence for a large family.

# Development Income Designation Calendar Year 2021 Greatest Need Humility Homes and Services Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat Restricted - CHM Retired Sisters Other Ministries



Retired Sisters Joan LeBeau (L) and Jeanette Kopel keep things moving with chair exercises at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston, Iowa.

CHMs contributed to a bus and billboard awareness project focused on Human Trafficking.

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary is grateful for the donations received in honor and memory of loved ones between October and December 2021.

#### In Honor of

Sr. Miriam Anstey, CHM

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CHMs devote the month of November to remember those who have gone on to their eternal rest and take time to reflect and pray for those in the Book of Eternal Life and all the deceased.L-R: Srs. Rosie Restelli and Kathleen Henneberry.

2020 CHM Donors Contemporary

# **CHM Magnificat Society**

Membership in the Magnificat Society is granted to each friend who makes a will provision/planned gift for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary as part of his or her estate planning. To learn more about the benefits of becoming a member contact:

Joyce Bieber CHM Development Director 563-336-8401 or jbieber@chmiowa.org

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# Resting in Heavenly Peace



Sr. Marilyn Schierbrock April 27, 1939 -February 28, 2022



CHM Associate Lyle Hellyer September 11, 1930 -March 15, 2022

Loving tributes to our departed sisters can be found in "Sister Stories" at www.chmiowa.org



Enjoying a gift of flowers from Davenport HyVee are L-R: Sisters Justine Denning, Kathleen Henneberry, Catherine Linnenkamp, Roberta Brich, Pat Heidenry, Regina Mary Cratty, Rosie Restelli, Claudellen Pentecost and Joann Kuebrich. The delivery lady is in mask in back.



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# **Retreats Always Include Peace and Beauty**

Sun. May 1 | 1:00-4:00pm Labyrinth Sound Healing

Thurs. May 5 | 1:00-2:15 Yoga

Thurs. May 12 | 9:00am-noon The Way Is Within

Sat. May 14 | 9:00am-4:00pm Marriage Enrichment

Wed. May 18 | 9:30am-3:30pm Come to the Quiet

Thurs. May 19 | 9:00am-3:00pm An Old Crone Speaks, An Old Crone Listens

Thurs. May 19 | 6:00-8:00pm Meet the Author Online: Meister Eckhart: A Mystic Warrior for Our Times

Fri. May 20 | 11:00am-1:00pm Facebook Live: UN World Bee Day

May 20-22 | Fri. 5:00pm to Sun 2:00pm Meet the Author In person: The Joy of Forgiveness

Wed. May 25 | 6:00-8:00pm Meet the Author In person: These Interesting Times: Surviving 2020 in the Quad Cities

June 3-5 | Fri. 5:00pm to Sun. 2:00pm Grounded in the Heartbeat of God

Thurs. June 9 | 9:00am-noon **Dream Studies-A Gateway to Knowledge** 

June 10-12 | Fri. 5:00pm to Sun. 11:00am Sacred Grace of Aging

Tues. June 14 | 9:30am-3:30pm Come to the Quiet

Wed. June 15 | 10:00am-3:00pm Cosmic Walk

Thurs. June 16 |6:00-8:00pm Meet the Author Online: A Way to God: Thomas Merton's Creation Spirituality Journey

Sat. June 18 | 10:00am-1:00pm Father-Son Experience: Become the Inspiration

Wed. June 22 | 6:00-8:00pm Meet the Author In person: These Interesting Times: Surviving 2020 in the Quad Cities

We also offer Mass on the first Wednesday of each month.

Visit theprairieretreat.org for details E-mail: olpretreat@chmiowa.org Call: 563-374-1092



