



small fire. I was treated very special at that baptism. A sister actually kissed me and said she was kissing a saint for that moment, which left me longing to be just like her. I studied and learned what the sisters did. I even got to make sandwiches and hand them out for the people coming to the back door who were hungry.

*New life from death!
Likewise, with death
came new life for me.*

A Spark and the Holy Spirit

by Sister Lillian Stevens, CHM

When I was in the fourth grade I attended the Lowell Public School in Missoula, Montana, which was about a two mile walk from home. I enrolled in a Bible class offered by two missionaries whose classroom was in a garage across the street. The class I remember most was the Easter story. After hearing and seeing what they did to Jesus I cried all the way home. That was the first spark of the spirit working in my young soul.

The summer after I finished the 5th grade we moved to Clinton, a small town south of Missoula. The missionaries were there also and kept the spark ignited. I graduated from the 8th grade in the Clinton School in 1951 with a class of 10. It was a rural school with two grades per room so I knew well the class ahead of me and behind. Some of my classmates were getting pregnant before finishing the freshman year. I spent the summer

after graduation very worried that I would end up the same way.

My mother had a friend who was Catholic who suggested I attend Sacred Heart Academy where her daughter was enrolled. The academy was taught by the Sisters of Charity of Providence. In my sophomore year I was baptized a Catholic. The spark ignited into a



Sr. Lillian Stevens, CHM

The summer after my junior year I moved to Seattle to live with my father and stepmother. My parents had divorced when I was 8 years old and I wanted to know my father, whom I'd only seen a handful of times, before I stepped out into the world on my own. Not far from his house was the Holy Angels High School, taught by Dominican sisters, which I attended and graduated from in 1955. I learned that the Providence sisters had a convent in west Seattle. I promptly went to the convent to interview with the Mother General. We talked for some time but it came down to "No, not now, come back in a year." I didn't like that answer at all.

So I interviewed at Seattle University which did not go any better. I had to make up classes to bring my grade average up. I had to work and could only take one or two subjects a semester, one or two nights a week. That would take forever! From there I went to a recruitment office. The interview was lengthy and I was ready to sign up. The recruiter told me to walk

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Summer 2016

Volume 14 Issue 2

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 the earth itself.



The Prairie Retreat was awarded \$500 by Aureon Network Services, which helps to provide advanced telecommunications and data services across the state. F&B Communication, local service provider for The Prairie, matched the \$500 grant. Read more on page 6.

l-r: Ken Laursen, F&B Communications; Sr. Johanna Rickl, CHM President; Sr. Greta Fitzgerald, CHM Vice-President; Joe Craig, Aureon Network Service; Sr. Kathleen Storms, SSND, Director, Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat.

Dear Friends,

Summertime offers opportunities to leave the fast track for times of relaxation and renewal. It has been wonderful for me to spend time with my family in Montana. I hope you have had a chance to partake of the life-giving presence of family and friends not always near at hand.

The culture we live in can keep us very focused on our work or compelling projects that demand a sense of constant immersion. I have been reflecting about how this affects my own life and that of many of us. The importance of stepping back, of taking time to disengage from our electronic devices is being communicated with greater insistence.

In the last months, I have enjoyed the healing aspects of being outdoors, attentive to my surroundings with its sights, sounds and feel. I've been surprised to learn how exercise outside provides so much more benefit than the same exercise done indoors. I am becoming more aware of the value of letting my mind ruminate on and my heart explore the facets of each day's experiences. Reconnecting with my own inner spirit helps me connect with others.

Sister Lillian's lead article provides one example of the transformational power of ongoing reflection on our lives, especially within the context of nature. Relationships with others are evidenced in other articles and the list of donors honoring connections past and present. Sister Kathleen's update about changes at The Prairie Retreat draw us more deeply into our intimate connection with Earth and its people.

As we continue to celebrate this Jubilee Year of Mercy, I hope you will also note in this issue the ways CHMs, in partnership with their friends and benefactors, exercise the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We are so grateful to walk this Jubilee path with you. Thank you for choosing to walk with us!

Sr. Johanna Rickl, CHM President

*Prayer does not use up artificial energy,
doesn't burn up any fossil fuel, doesn't pollute.
Neither does song, neither does love,
neither does the dance."*

-Margaret Mead

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*1998 celebration! The day Sr. Lillian took her final vows.
CHM Sisters Ursula Keough, Lillian Stevens and Adrienne Marie Savage*

around the block first. So I did, and I didn't look back.

I started dating a boy. And then, I became pregnant. I was married by a justice of the peace, had a lovely girl and then a handsome son a year later. In three years I was divorced. I knew I would never go to the convent now. I had two children to raise and would be about 40 when they left the nest. I would be too old, no one would accept me. Dream gone...

So I thought—until I found a certain brochure in a church's gathering space. My, what a spark and the Holy Spirit can do. But I get ahead of myself...

One of my favorite pastimes is walking through the woods, or climbing a mountain path. Once I crossed a creek on a fallen tree trunk. Several seedlings of other trees had taken root and were well on their way of growth so I barely could find a foot hold on that trunk. New life from death! Likewise, with death came new life for me.

While taking care of my grandmother in Hamilton, I was chosen to make the holiday meals for the whole family. Thanksgiving and Christmas of 1984 my mom came, though she didn't feel very well. Her excuse was that she couldn't get rid of a cough. I was finally able to take her to a doctor on May 13, 1985. She had a tumor on her lungs and would need home care. I said I would

do it and moved to Missoula. I found an attic apartment not far from St. Anthony's Church.

One day I went to Mass early and spent time looking at the various brochures in the gathering space. I picked up an Associate's brochure for the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. I stuck it in my pocket, then went to Mass and prayed for my mother. Before the hospital released her into my care mom went into a coma. She didn't want to be a burden to anyone and went to heaven on July 15.

Later, I found the CHM Associate brochure which offered women a chance to be a part of the CHM community without taking lifelong vows. I filled it out and sent it in. I received a phone call and arranged an appointment with Sr. Ursula Keough, who at the time was working with Sr. Veronica Kirscher as a pastoral assistant. I planned to return to Hamilton to take care of my grandmother but hadn't left the apartment yet.

I became a CHM Associate and Sr. Ursula was my contact sister for a few years starting in 1986. Sr. Ursula introduced me to the CHMs in Great Falls and other parts of Montana. We had a great time traveling together to the meetings of the sisters. I met Sr. Adrienne Marie Savage and took many of the human relations sessions she

offered in her ministry. Learning how to understand myself and others was an invaluable part of my journey.

Back in Hamilton, I was attending a parish council meeting when Father Ray Gilmore was called out for an emergency phone call. One of his parishioners had been in an auto accident and died in the river when their car was swept away. This woman left an adult daughter named Ann. Father Ray asked me if I would be Ann's companion for she was mentally limited. I agreed to watch over her so no one would take advantage.

My grandma died the last of April of 1988. And then a friend of the Thane family volunteered to look after Ann. So it happened. Life after death.

On June 3, 1992, I sent a letter to Sr. Pauline Tursi, CHM president, asking to become a vowed member of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. I left Montana and was present at the Humility of Mary Center in Davenport, Iowa, on December 4, 1992, to begin my new life.

Praise God, thank you Jesus, for all the blessings along the way. I am soon to celebrate my Silver Jubilee as a very happy sister of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary.



Sr. Lillian spent several years ministering to retired CHMs at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston, IA. She now resides at Humility of Mary Center where she is active as a volunteer and in a ministry of prayer.



Jason Hutchison, Deb Sullivan, and Kraig Sleaford.
Not pictured is Tom Doty.

Casual for a Cause

by Joyce Bieber, CHM Development Director

Employees of DB&T Mortgage Loan Center in Davenport not only had the opportunity to enjoy wearing jeans at work on Fridays but also got the satisfaction of knowing that they were helping families gain housing independence through their donation to Humility of Mary Housing, Inc. (HMHI) earlier this year. DB&T employees made a donation each Friday to be allowed to dress casual; at the end of the campaign, money raised was donated to HMHI in Davenport. Producing Sales Manager, Deb Sullivan said, "The campaign was a really good way for DB&T to give back to the community." Employees chose to give the money to HMHI because they know the needs of the charity are significant. "Our business is helping families with housing needs so this seemed to be a good fit," she added. HMHI serves single-parent families in the Quad Cities who are experiencing homelessness by assisting families in regaining their footing, offering opportunities for growth and development and leading families into self-sufficient living.

Joani McKay and Carol Roth were inadvertently left off the 2015 donor list that appeared in the Spring "Flame". We apologize for the omission.

Honor and Remember

The Congregation of the Humility of Mary is grateful for the donations received in memory or honor of loved ones. CHMs remember these individuals in our daily prayers and Masses. To further our ministry of prayer we have decided to publish the names of those who have been recognized through donations by our friends and partners in each issue of "The Flame." Donations associated with three or more memorial or honorarium names are listed as "multiple friends, family and sisters." The donations listed below were received between January 1—May 31, 2016. Please join the Congregation of the Humility of Mary in remembering these individuals in your prayers.

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Sustaining our Environment

by Kathleen Storms, SSND, Director, Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat

“We want to sustain our environment to make the world a better place for generations to come.”

-Congregation of the Humility of Mary

Humility of Mary sisters have identified “Caring for Earth” as one of their strongly held beliefs. Being stewards of the environment making the world a better place for generations to come is who they are.

Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, a sponsored ministry of the sisters, practices environmental stewardship in a concerted way. Here are the most recent ways in which we have been stewards of this sacred place:

•**A new entrance sign.** Our Lady of the Prairie is a ministry of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary. The sign reflects this and its clear crisp lines mirror the signage at the Humility of Mary Center in Davenport.



•**Two Rain Barrels** installed at the corner of the Victorian House and on the garage near the vegetable gardens. These 65 gallon barrels fill with just a half inch of rain. This simple practice brings home the preciousness of water that we take so for granted. Each time I unwind the hose and water the gardens I am reminded that water is a God-given gift.



•**A sure foundation under the Gazebo.** After years of being home to squirrels and other destructive animals, the floor of the gazebo needed replacement. Doug Schwarz (Schwarz Grain and Fence, Inc., New Liberty IA) and his gang of 8 strapping young men moved the gazebo, ripped out the wooden floor, leveled the base, poured concrete and re-attached the gazebo all in about 24 hours. It again is a safe and welcoming place.



•**Fiber Optic Upgrade.** The Prairie was long overdue for an upgrade to its Wi-Fi, internet, phone and TV systems because of the growing use of The Prairie by committees, boards and crafters. With the installation of fiber optic connectivity in Clinton County, it was the right time to do an upgrade. The Prairie was awarded a \$500 by Aureon Network Services, which helps to provide advanced telecommunications and data services across the state. F&B Communication, local service provider for The Prairie matched the \$500 grant. We now have four access points which allows guests and staff to tap into Wi-Fi without buffering. The new system has been functioning flawlessly.

•**Welcoming honey bees.** Two years ago we planted pollinator strips along the lane to encourage the return of bees and butterflies. This year the strips are alive with a rainbow of colors. It seemed the right time to bring in honey bees. Our small hive is a gift to The Prairie from a near neighbor, Eric Storjohahn.

•**Installation of an 8kw Solar Array.**

This is by far the most stunning addition to the “sustainable” commitment at OLPR. After a two year search for a company that would service our needs, Atwood Electric, Sigourney, IA, was selected. Because Our Lady of the Prairie and our sponsors, the Congregation of the Humility of Mary, do not pay property taxes, we could not take advantage of the tax incentive offered to private home owners. So our payment for this installation will take many years. Sr. Johanna Rickl, CHM President, states, “We are doing this project not only for savings in the future but especially to do our part to lower the carbon footprint of The Prairie and help to save Earth for future generations. We hope it will inspire others to think about using renewable energy resources that don’t increase the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere.” Here is a link that discusses this: <https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>



As our mission statement reads, “Our Lady of the Prairie provides hospitality and service in a sacred space of peace and beauty that promotes respect for all creation.” The practices we share here are part of our commitment to sustain this welcoming beauty for many generations to come. Please come and visit us to see these new features and experience the gift they are to Earth and each one of us.



The Congregation of the Humility of Mary celebrated Jubilee 2016 on June 26 with a Celebration Mass at Christ the King Chapel on the St. Ambrose University campus in Davenport. Those celebrating their anniversaries that day were l-r: Sisters Irene Muñoz, Jeanie Hagedorn, Miriam Anstey, Marie Vittetoe, María Luisa Muñoz and CHM Associate Diane Schlachter.

On Saturday, September 24, a second Jubilee Mass of Celebration will be held in Our Lady of Peace Chapel at Bishop Drumm Retirement Center in Johnston, Iowa. Sr. Ann Therese Collins (far left) and Sr. Ramona Kaalberg will be joined in the celebration by several of those pictured above.



With the influx of so many Spanish speakers, many United States professionals, whose work rests upon a confidential relationship with clients (for example, doctors, lawyers, social workers, police officers and clergy) are finding that they can't work effectively without knowing Spanish.

Since 1984, CIRIMEX has offered intensive, integrated, total immersion programs to develop both language fluency and a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary Mexican society. Founders and CHM Sisters, Caridad Inda and Kevin Bissell, are the executive directors of CIRIMEX and ready to help you on your quest.

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Resting in Heavenly Peace



Sr. Barb Costello
November 11, 1929 -
May 6, 2016



Sr. Martha Mary Conrad
January 17, 1940 -
May 8, 2016

Loving tributes to our departed sisters can be found at
www.chmiowa.org in the news section



*Back: l-r: Sisters Claudellen Pentecost, Joan Marie Schuster, Pat Heidenry.
 front: Sisters Mary Rehmann and Catherine Linnenkamp.*

Sisters living at Humility of Mary Center practice a daily ministry of prayer for many and varied intentions including the continual search for new ways to serve.

One fun and creative new way is by playing BINGO. Those pictured above were recent BINGO winners. Their prize: a bag filled with necessities that a person experiencing homelessness would be thankful for. The bags will be delivered to Humility of Mary Shelter, Inc. in Davenport.

**Your prayer requests can be submitted at
www.chmiowa.org**

Melissa Clark, who has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, was welcomed as a foster daughter in 1982 at the age of six by Sr. Johnelle Howanach, CHM. Lissie and Sr. Johnelle, of Great Falls, Montana, have franchised a gourmet pet biscuit business called "Lissie's Luv Yums." Sr. Marianne Nehus, CHM, has joined them in the effort by making signature book marks, business cards and address labels.



CHM Associate Melissa Clark and Sr. Johnelle Howanach with a tray full of Lissie's Luv Yums.



Sr. Nehus

Luv Yums was crafted around Lissie's interests, abilities, talents, and her need to function as a businessperson. She works from home and is able to work on her own schedule.

Their business is unique in that the money earned supports their efforts to educate people about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Lissie is a nationally recognized speaker on FASD and self-employment for people with disabilities. She and Sr. Johnelle have spoken all over the country— most recently the Disability Employability Conference in Great Falls.

**For more information about Lissie's Luv Yums visit
lissiesluyums.homestead.com or call 406/453-2531.**