



Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Spring 2005

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Upcoming Events

**Discernment
Retreat ~
September 30-
October 2, 2005**
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**Good Shepherd
Spirit & Mission
Retreat ~
November
18-20, 2005**

Sr. Debbie Drago
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Dear Good Shepherd Friends,

In this edition of our Good Shepherd newsletter, we continue to look at the Good Shepherd fourth vow of zeal. This vow keeps us steadfast in our mission, that "One person is of more value than a world."



We fulfill our vow of zeal by wholeheartedly putting all our energy, prayer, and work into helping each person know God's saving love. "The Good Shepherd does not want even one of God's children to be lost in the chaos of the times."

Like our foundress St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier instructed, "We are to be consumed with the Compassion and zeal of Jesus, the Good Shepherd."

In the heart of our Shepherd-God,
Sr. Debbie Drago

Zeal in the Halls of Collier High School

Saint Mary Euphrasia often said that she was consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls. Today, we don't hear people speaking in that fashion yet they share the same commitment and drive to help others as she did. The Divine Discontent that Saint Augustine spoke of is similar in this regard. Augustine believed that it was God who placed this condition – of never being satisfied - within the human spirit so that humankind would reach fullness of life and purpose.

For Collier High School staff members, zeal and the Divine Discontent are always operating. Without these attributes of spirit, one could not be affective, nor last, working with teenagers who are hurt, fearful, disillusioned,

angry, or depressed.

What draws people to become part of the Collier enterprise where the work will be extremely demanding? What kind of people come?

In the gospel, we learn that faith is a gift and we may think of zeal and the Divine Discontent in this way, as special graces given to us by God. Some souls shine with these gifts and it is these who come to Collier. It might be safe to say that the majority of students who elect Collier as their school, are teenagers not unlike Augustine. They are not satisfied and seek a better life, a fuller experience where their best selves will be drawn forth. The staff who come, are those wishing to create that very experience for students, and they will work tirelessly to make it happen.

Thus, the social worker will not *bruise the broken reed* but will strengthen it in counseling sessions and group therapy. And the teacher will be careful to keep her eye on a level with her students, never above looking down. Lessons will be carefully crafted to support, nourish, and challenge. All others –administrators, secretaries, maintenance, accounting– will faithfully carry out their roles knowing that in doing so they sustain this great work: creating a place where the unique promise inherent in each child will reach fulfillment.

*Aideen Bugler, Lay Collaborator
Director Collier High School
Wickatunk, New Jersey*

ZEAL AND THE FACE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A HAUNTING CRY IN OUR TIME

The specific mission of our Congregation comes right out of the New Testament story of the Good Shepherd who leaves the 99 well-tended sheep to go in search of the "lost one."

Over our 170 year-history and in each of the 67 countries where we are located, we have tried to discern ever anew in each era and culture, who the "lost ones" are; the poor, the marginalized, the ostracized, those wounded by life and excluded from full participation.

This mission is fueled by one simple, bedrock idea, that every human person is sacred. This core Good Shepherd value is captured in our identifying motto, "One person is of more value than a world." Our mission calls us to stand with those who are in some way "lost"; the powerless, those who do not count in society, those who are the 'non-persons' of our day. Our 4th vow of zeal defines us as existing for these others, the ones that Jesus, the Good Shepherd said He knew, that He called by name, that He loved, and for whom He laid down His life. There is a searing clarity about our Good Shepherd mission and its driving force, our 4th vow of zeal. This mission places the individual who is at risk or in any way excluded at the heart of our ministries.

Not surprisingly, the issue of human trafficking emerged as a priority issue in our 2003 General Chapter Direction Statement that guides the entire Congregation for the next six years. Another way of describing a Direction Statement is to speak of it as a means of "dreaming our best dream together on behalf of a suffering humanity." In particular, it spoke of "the poor becoming poorer and the rich richer, that women and children are exploited and trafficked; and that migrants, refugees, indigenous people, Dalets, and many others are being excluded and marginalized." In response, the Delegates, on behalf of all of us, pledged themselves "to be present at the margins; to make a preferential option for the poor by giving priority to women and children who are exploited

and trafficked."

My own involvement in the human trafficking issue has led me to design and carry out a research project on behalf of the Congregation that took me to Sri Lanka, Thailand, Korea, the Philippines, Belgium, Paris, Milan and Palermo to interview trafficked woman. I chose these specific countries in Southeast Asia and Europe because Good Shepherd Sisters are already involved and have relationships with women who have been trafficked in each of these locations either in our own Good Shepherd programs or other programs serving trafficked women. This process facilitated my access to trafficked women and reduced the possibility that the interviews would re-traumatize the women. (The U.S. research sample is progressing at this moment.) The variables studied were the women's "social and emotional adjustment", "life before trafficking", "the experience of being trafficked", and "life after trafficking." Although I have not yet analyzed the data, I can share the responses of some of the women on two questions about their experience:

What was the hardest part of being trafficked?

Being a prostitute, having no choice - I was 11 years old when they took me. This was my life, what right did they have to take it?
It is impossible to forget what I have been through.
I complied because I did not want to die. The violence of the customers.
I am very bitter, no girl goes into this on her own, a hatred grew within me. I must drink before I do this, if not drunk, I cannot do.
Being badly beaten.
They looked at us as if we were bad women.

What was your greatest fear during the time you were trafficked?

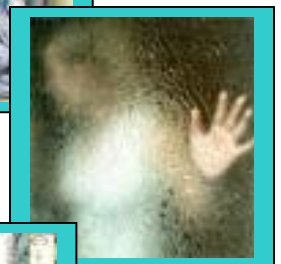
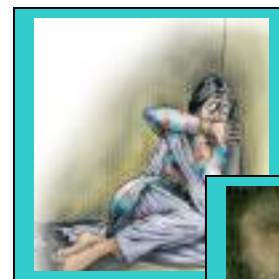
That I would be killed by a customer.
That the customers would get violent.
That all my dreams would vanish.
Getting AIDS and STD's.

One of the girls jumped from a building and died, and I envied her.
That I would lose my mind.
That what they did to others, they would do to me.
I was afraid most of sadistic clients.
That they would kill me or tell my parents what I was doing.

The last question asked the women what their experience of the interview was. Many said that it was difficult to go back there in memory but if it could help one girl not to experience what they had been through, it was worth it. Another woman, when answering the question said of her experience of being trafficked: "It was painful. I accept that it happened. I survived, and I struggle every day."

What is at stake in the issue of human trafficking in a very stark way is our core, bedrock belief that every human person is of infinite worth and dignity, not a commodity to be bought and sold for profit in the underground marketplace. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminds us that "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." Human trafficking is a haunting cry in our time that must be answered.

*Sr. Helene Hayes, Apostolic Sister
Marlboro, Massachusetts*



ZEAL- AN ACTION OF LOVE

Zeal is a burning passion to love as Jesus loves. It is this powerful force that motivates me to do things I find difficult to do, to change attitudes I may not want to change, and to love others who are not always easy to love.

I have always been inspired by the teaching of St Mary Euphrasia: "Our zeal should embrace the whole world." Zeal definitely does this for me. Being a Contemplative, my life is lived in simple ways, nothing great or outstanding. And with its ups and downs, joys and sorrows, I do my best to live it with all my heart and soul. My best is not always the greatest, but whatever I have to give, such as it is, I place it all in the loving Heart of Jesus, where I know that all my poor efforts are transformed into His Love for all people and for the praise and glory of God.

Zeal is an incredible action of Love!

*Sr. Elizabeth Correia,
Contemplative Sister
Harwichport, Massachusetts*



A Contemplative Expression of Zeal

It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost." (Matthew 18:14)

" I feel a great ardor for the Salvation of Souls, an interior flame, which penetrates and consumes me. It is not a passing moment of exaltation, which dissipates and leaves nothing. No, it is a love filled with tenderness, dedication, and sacrifice.... My soul is filled with delight and consolation at the thought of the good that is being done through our weak efforts sustained by the grace of God.

But at the same time, my heart is torn by sorrow at the sight of so many souls who may perish." (St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier quoted by Sr. M Holy Name of Jesus Duchesme)

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16) Love is the only motive that will call us to pray for all those in need of the mercy of God. Love calls us to the Cross and empowers us to stay there. If God loves us so, we must have the same flaming love for the entire world.

Since I joined the contemplative sisters of the Good Shepherd, I have grown into the awareness of the Contemplative Spirituality's Motto: "Live Jesus and His Cross." Our way of life is not just to adore. It is not just to devotion. It is a life commitment which unites us fully with the Crucified Christ.

One of the things Jesus says to us in contemplative prayer is "**Bring here all those for whom you want to pray.**" Bring me your senses, your mind, your heart. In contemplative prayer, we bring everything to the Lord, all that we are, all that we have. We give them all to God to let him do with them what he wills. It is God who heals each of us and makes us whole, and worthy instruments of the Holy Spirit. God acts in and through us by means of the gifts He has given to each.

The Vow of Zeal that we profess sustains us and gives us the grace to follow the Crucified Christ. The gift that bursts forth from this Vow of Zeal at a very deep level is the gift of hope. Hope becomes activated when we suffer. Love is

another virtue that grows and develops at a deep level, often through pain and suffering. Love is at its best when we are one with the Suffering Servant on the Cross.

A soul may rise to the highest degree of contemplation even when busily occupied. Work, strictly speaking, is not prayer, but it can take the place of prayer when done solely with the intention of promoting the Glory of God.

St. Mary Euphrasia said that we must combine the activities of Martha and Mary. Like Martha, we should know how to apply ourselves to exterior work such as making vestments, providing Altar Breads, attending to the Liturgy and Divine Office, caring for the sick, house cleaning, cooking and so forth; and like Mary, we strive to remain aware of our divine Master's presence.

"Do everything as far as possible through love, and you will see what great things you will be able to effect" (St. Mary Euphrasia) There is no pain like Love. If we are not in love with God and His people, we will not know the pain; but knowing the pain increases the depth of our love of the Cross-for Jesus. It gives us an assurance that we are wearing the footgear of zeal, Zeal for the Salvation of Souls.



*Sr. Frances Marie Ellul
Contemplative Sister, Baltimore MD*

Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Apostolic ~ Contemplative

Sister Story continued from page 6

this would be to reach out to people who are hurting. I wasn't sure how I could integrate massage into my ministry, but I knew that I wanted to serve those most in need. I thought about women who had been abused and those recovering from addictions. And so it was that I formally decided to pursue my certification in massage therapy.

Massage Therapy: A Ministry of Healing Touch

What is the connection between massage and the charism of the Good Shepherd, which is to bring good news to the poor and to heal the brokenhearted?

Sr. Elish explains that her ministry as a massage therapist provides her with wonderful opportunities to exercise the charism of the Good Shepherd. "It allows me the privilege of ministering to people whose minds, bodies, and spirits bear the scars of trauma and injury. Anointing is part of many of our sacraments in the Church and massage is a way of anointing the body, thus facilitating the healing process.

"In my ministry of massage therapy and other modalities of body work I am able to exercise our charism of compassion. I firmly believe that God can and does use this touch to bring healing and comfort to those persons whose bodies and spirits are calling out, even sometimes crying out, for relief from emotional and physical pain. Frequently, as I wipe away tears and attempt to be present to each person, I find myself praying with a special intensity. I feel connected to the desire of God's heart, that each person experience concretely the love of God in a personal and profound way, and that somehow my work can play a part in bringing a person to a greater awareness of God's love for them.

The Power of Prayer

In her ministry of "healing touch" Sr. Elish notes that she encounters the

charism of the Good Shepherd, in the people with whom she works, as she witnesses a movement towards greater compassion towards themselves.

One of the greatest supports for Sr. Elish in her ministry is the awareness of the power of the prayers of the Contemplative and infirmed Sisters of the Good Shepherd. "It means so much to the people when I assure them that they are held in prayer each day by all of the sisters. This prayerful connection puts flesh on the bone's of Christ's Body of which we are all members."

"As I wipe away tears and attempt to be present to each person, I find myself praying with a special intensity. I feel connected to the desire of God's heart, that each person experience concretely the love of God..."

In Sr. Elish's current ministry as a massage therapist, God has lead her to a new "Samoa Island", an island where those who visit can experience the power of healing touch.



Zeal, the Energy that Directs Us!



As we learn about the vast age of the universe --- billions of years --- the centrality of human life in God's creation is mystery beyond what we can fathom: that God who is totally Other than human form in the Incarnation has given us the ultimate way of knowing our purpose and our destiny. The uniqueness of the vow of zeal is that God's own free work of reconciling the world to Himself through Christ is passed on to us. As St. Paul says, the message of reconciliation has been entrusted to us, with God making us His ambassadors, "God as it were appealing through us."

At the Center for Family Life, a community based neighborhood agency, we can be ambassadors of the divine message in a poor, very ethnically and racially diverse community, transcending personal and social differences for an appreciation of God's purposes among us, especially in family life where conflicts are sometimes severe. We look to every opportunity to build community that sustains individuals and families, that speaks to values of compassion, understanding and the importance of building a just society here and beyond us. Zeal is the energy that directs us to strive to live the purposes of Christ's presence among us.

Sr. Mary Paul Janchill
Apostolic Sister, Brooklyn, NY

“Don’t You Ever Get Frustrated Because They Go Back?” Reflections on Zeal in Ministry

Saipan is a small island way out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, a tropical paradise for tourists; a predominately Catholic society where nearly everyone is baptized and hardly anyone receives more than the most rudimentary religious instruction; a multicultural environment reflecting enormous contrasts between the “haves” and the “have-nots”; a magnet for thousands of contract workers, mostly Chinese and Filipino, living in harsh conditions in order to send money back to their families at home; and home to two Good Shepherd Sisters. Sr. Stella Mangona has been living here, 120 miles north of Guam, since 1999. I joined her in August of 2003. Although the agencies we work in are not owned by the Sisters, we feel that our ministries are “traditional” Good Shepherd work, primarily with women and girls experiencing difficulty and danger and needing the healing touch of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to be reconciled with themselves, others and God. Sr. Stella is an individual and family therapist with the local government’s Guma’ Ina’ Ayuda (Community Guidance Center). I work for Karidat, the local government’s equivalent to Catholic Charities, at Guma’ Espernansa (House of Hope). We run the shelter for victims of domestic violence in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Domestic violence encompasses not only physical abuse but threats, intimidation, emotional and verbal abuse, stalking and other forms of control. I have been working in this field for more than six years and often see

“classic” situations where a woman is manipulated and “kept in her place,” but every year I also encounter new variations or manifestations of the dynamics of abuse. The reality in this type of ministry is that the overwhelming majority of women return to their abusive partners quite a few times before any lasting change or improvement is attained. Thus the question so often directed to me by benefactors and inquirers, “How can you stand it? Don’t you just get too frustrated when you can’t help the women because they go back?”

“Zeal is about love, not about outcomes... My vow of zeal frees me from having to succeed by whatever measurement I may have imposed or whatever judgments society is using at the moment. Salvation comes from God, and God will succeed.”

The answer is, that’s the wrong question. We can and do *help* the victims we serve. We listen. We provide physical and emotional comfort in crisis. We accept and respect them. We affirm their strengths. But we often can’t measure the help we render in success statistics. This, I think, is where our vow is so orienting. A dictionary definition of zeal is “eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something.” What is that “something”? It’s salvation - salvation of the persons we meet, those we serve. Salvation is God’s gift; our role is not to provide salvation,

but to reflect the mystery that this gift is available and that God desires to give it. Remembering that salvation can’t be measured or qualified reminds me that trying to define “success” is hollow. Zeal is about love, not about outcomes. Of course, love is not just a feeling. Love expresses itself through observable behaviors and attitudes as well as hidden prayer or sacrifice. Did the family experience some taste of God’s love and care through our ministry? That is the bottom line, whether or not the victim is able to completely break away from a damaging relationship at this time.

How freeing! I am not a high-energy person; I generally need a lot of sleep, and I used to worry that I couldn’t “work hard enough” to fulfill the Good Shepherd vocation. My vow of zeal frees me from having to succeed by whatever measurement I may have imposed or whatever judgments society is using at the moment. Salvation comes from God, and God will succeed. Zeal reminds me to believe this, to trust it, and to savor it as I see it evidenced in small steps in the persons I serve. For me, this vow has gradually taught me that my quiet intensity is very acceptable to God and that Jesus, Good Shepherd, will use me just as I am to communicate His love and mercy to the people with whom I minister.

*Sr. Mary Carol McClenon,
Apostolic Sister, Saipan*

Sisters of the Good Shepherd

Sister Stories

Sister Elish McPartland grew up in Ireland and loved to read stories about the work of Irish Missionaries in various parts of the world. She recalls, "As a youngster I experienced a deep desire to become a missionary sister and work in the Samoa Islands."

At seventeen she moved to New York City and worked for an advertising Agency on Madison Avenue right next door to St. Patrick's Cathedral and



"occasionally the desire to enter religious life would again rise up in my heart." One particular day Elish purchased a magazine in the gift shop in St. Patrick's. On her way home that evening, she read a story in the magazine, which was written by a Good Shepherd Sister from St. Louis.

Sr. Elish remembers how she felt. "I can still feel the excitement I experienced as I read about the spirituality of the Good Shepherd Community, and how this spirituality influenced this particular sister to reach out to a teenage girl in need of guidance and support. At that moment I knew that I wanted to join this community. Although it is now over forty years since I read that story, I can still see clearly in my mind the inside of the subway car and the picture on the cover of the magazine. I felt that the spirituality described in the story was very akin to what I felt in my own heart. I decided immediately to contact the author of the story." Eventually this led to Elish's discovery of the Good Shepherd Sisters in New York City. She entered the Good Shepherd Community at the age of twenty-three, and so it was, that, after working in New York City for over six years, Sr. Elish reflects, "I found my 'Samoa Island' and the beautiful ministry of the Good Shepherd."

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS:

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Good Shepherd Sisters share in the mission of Jesus Christ who identifies himself as ... "sent to bring Good News to the poor and to heal the brokenhearted." It was this mission of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, that first captivated Sr. Elish's imagination and heart.

It was in 1993, after the completion of a year's sabbatical program at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkley, California, that God's gentle and persistent way of leading the heart to service took on a new and surprising twist for her. While in Berkley, Sr. Elish was introduced to a course in massage therapy. She was initially attracted to the idea of massage as a way to help her sister who has multiple sclerosis.

After completing the course, she began to provide massage therapy to women living at a nearby HIV treatment center.

Sr. Elish comments, "All the time I was doing it, I thought what a wonderful ministry

Mission

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd approach each person with the same care of Jesus the Good Shepherd. We are guided by the principle that "One person is of more value than a world."

Through Contemplation and Action our mission of reconciliation impels us to promote justice and peace. Our vow of zeal, the heart of the Good Shepherd vocation, leads us to search out the wounded, those left behind by the world. We minister in all areas of human service, with a particular focus on the needs of women and children.

There are two ways that a Sister of the Good Shepherd can express her zeal for God's people – apostolic and contemplative. Is God calling you to love with the heart of a shepherd?

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