

Sisters of the Good Shepherd



Summer 2008

One Congregation ~ Two Lifestyles

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Dear Good Shepherd Friends,

After you read this issue you will have a good taste of Good Shepherd. Like a wonderful dinner, we have in this issue some of the key ingredients of what nourishes a Good Shepherd spirit, such as: Internationality, Justice, Healing and Compassion, Contemplative Experience, Community and New Life.



St. Mary Euphrasia said, "Do not be afraid to bring your tents to other shores..." She continues to inspire people around the world to bring the Good News of mercy and reconciliation to those who have been wounded by life's circumstances and live on the edge of society.

I hope you enjoy the reading, get to know more about Good Shepherd and your spirit feels encouraged and energized by the life of all those who carry the Good Shepherd spirit in their daily lives.

Sr. Claudia Palacio

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A Good Shepherd at the Catholic Worker

The following is a reprint of an article from the May, 2008 edition of the Catholic Worker written by Annie Marie Kaune.

CATHOLIC  WORKER

I had the opportunity to spend a weekend with Sister Teresa Murray at Good Shepherd Center, a rest home for Good Shepherd Sisters in Marlboro, MA. Sister Theresa's 60th anniversary as a Good Shepherd Sister coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Catholic Worker, and she has beautifully integrated the spirituality of both communities.

In her room there is a portrait of Dorothy Day and a reproduction of the Annunciation, a gift from Dorothy, alongside another of St. Teresa of Avila, her patron. When asked about her love

for St. Teresa she replies, "She was so down to earth." It is obvious that this is a virtue highly prized by Sr. Teresa. With a little encouragement, she agreed to speak about her life with the Good Shepherds and with the Catholic Worker. Sister Teresa has been associated with the Catholic Worker (CW) in New York from the 1970s, and was at Maryhouse in its beginnings.

AMK: Teresa, tell me how you first heard of the CW.

Sr. Teresa: Well, we had this priest, his name was Fr. Harold Hynes. He was very

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fond of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, so he invited her to come speak at our high school, at Catholic Central High School in Troy, New York. I was about sixteen when she came to speak. At that time there was a Catholic Worker house in Troy and, of course, I wanted to go down there right away, but my mother said no. Right after that a man was killed at the house, and the bishop closed it.

AMK: So what did you do when your parents said you couldn't go to the Catholic Worker?

Sr. Teresa: Well, I continued my education. I really wanted to go to the University of Chicago. But my mother said I had to go to a Catholic school, so they decided I would go to St. Rose in Albany. I figured I was doing them the greatest favor in the world to go to that college. I really wanted to be a religious when I couldn't go to the Catholic Worker. At that time I probably would have been a Sister of Mercy. Their constitution is similar to ours.

AMK: When you finished at St. Rose, did you plan to enter the Sisters of Mercy?

Sr. Teresa: No, I worked at St. Mary's Hospital, but then I wanted to get away. So the easiest thing was to continue my education.

AMK: A good way out of Troy?

Sr. Teresa: Yes, exactly. So I went to the University of Pennsylvania. My brother, Bob, was in the service, and I went to visit him, and stayed with my aunt and uncle down there, and I got registered, and got a master's degree

in medical bacteriology.

I liked that kind of thing. And another thing is, my father asked me why I wanted to go to the University of Pennsylvania. I told him, "I only know Irish Catholics, and I would like to know other Americans." I had



Sr. Teresa Murray

a lot of friends there from a variety of backgrounds. They were great.

When I finished that degree I got a job at a laboratory in Albany. I took three buses to get there. So Gretchen Sickles, a woman from our parish, said I could ride with her and she never would take a cent from me. I always tried to buy her something and she wouldn't accept it.

But she would talk, and one time she said, "These Catholic college graduates think they're doing a great job if they buy a ticket to a card party. But they're looking for someone to

volunteer at the Good Shepherd, to be a girl scout leader." I thought, "I might do that." I had to go one day a week to learn how to be a girl scout leader, or whatever I was, and another day I went with the girls. And I just fell in love with the Good Shepherd. That was just it.

Well, by the time I was twenty-seven years old, I told my mother "I'm really going to be a Good Shepherd sister," and she just kept washing the dishes. She didn't say a word. So, I went to visit my Aunt Elizabeth, her sister, and she showed me the picture that's now hanging in my room of Jesus knocking on the door. And she said, "Is He knocking on your heart?" She understood. My parents and my brother went with me. I never saw Mt. Florence until the day I entered.

When I first started, they asked me to teach Chemistry. But then the provincial sent for me and said, "We want you to go to Catholic University and get your degree in social work." I had never thought of being a social worker, because I was brought up to think that if a person has a problem, you just keep it to yourself, and pray, and it would go away. So the provincial said I would just get my degree, then come back and do as I had always done.

So I went and got my degree in social work at Catholic University. But when I came back there was a new provincial. She said, "Tomorrow you go over to the social work department." Oh no, I'm not going to be a social worker! (laughing) She answered, "Well, you just got your

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degree didn't you?" So I did. I had a picture of the Sacred Heart on my desk. And I told Him, "Now this is up to You because I don't like this idea at all." And when people came and I just talked to Him and talked to the person too. And I got the idea that people did need to talk about their problems.

AMK: And they needed someone like you to listen to them.

Sr. Teresa: Yes, that's right. I thought I got to be a pretty good social worker.

AMK: And this work was always with young girls, young women who were having family problems?

Sr. Teresa: Yes, that's right. And all those years we always got The Catholic Worker at the convent. I always read it, and kept up with what was happening.

(In the ensuing years Teresa was instrumental in Good Shepherd homes and programs in Troy, NY, Marlboro, MA, The Bronx, and finally East 17th Street in New York City where she got great satisfaction in setting up group homes from the ground up, finding and furnishing the houses and then working in them.)

AMK: How did you come in direct contact with the Catholic Worker again?

Sr. Teresa: In those days, we didn't have permission to go to any meetings. So, in the 70s, I was at the 17th St. community and they told us we could go out, and the first meeting I went to was at the Catholic Worker.

I met Eileen Egan, and I kept going to the Friday Night Meetings. Then Dorothy bought Maryhouse and they

said they needed somebody to go over and clean. So I got a group of sisters together and we cleaned, and we begged some tiles from different places to fix the floors.

AMK: When did you first meet Dorothy?

Sr. Teresa: Well, I spoke with her a little, but I remember when I went there to live she said, "We don't really need social workers."

AMK: So what did you say when she said that about social workers?

Sr. Teresa: I thought it was great! Well, Dorothy was living there. And Sister Anne, and of course Kathy Clarkson, and Mary O'Connor, and Pat De Angelis. It was a good group. And later Kassie came. I loved Kassie. I knew she really loved the Lord, and she really lived poverty! I always had a roommate, one of the women. I didn't have a private room. I still related to 17th St. and went there every once in a while. We'd borrow a car from there and go up to Hunt's Point Market and beg for vegetables and fruit. We got a lot of good food.

AMK: What were some of the things that you remember from Maryhouse that stick out as your fondest memories?

Sr. Teresa: That's a hard question, because everything was fond memories. And even though Dorothy said we're not looking for social workers, a lot of times the women came to me with their problems and questions, and I felt I was using my background as a social worker to help them. They wouldn't come to a social worker ordinarily.



Dorothy Day 1897-1980

AMK: Can we talk a little about your friendship with Dorothy?

Sr. Teresa: Well, a lot of times in her last years at Maryhouse, Dorothy didn't come down for breakfast, and I often brought her breakfast to her room. And she was always saying her prayers. And she'd say, "Now listen to this." And she would quote me a Psalm, and it gave me a love for the Psalms. And sometimes I would bring her Communion and she was so prayerful. She really loved the Lord, and she loved the Church. And, she thought I was a good driver. I gave her a lot of rides, out to Staten Island, or up to Tivoli. She liked to ride with me. We had some good talks.

(At the request of her community Sr. Teresa went to Guam to help found a new house. On her return to New York, she got permission to live again at Maryhouse until, with other Good Shepherd sisters, she started a house

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A Sister's Inter-Province Experience

My name is Margarita Rodríguez Olguin. I'm from Irapuato, Guanajuato Mexico.

I am Contemplative Sister of the Good Shepherd and have been for 11 years.

I like the contemplative lifestyle because praying for people is my life.

I met the contemplative sisters for the first time when I was 19 years old. Every month for one year I went to a day of retreat at their convent. I would see them in the hall going to the chapel, and would wonder what was happening inside of me because I felt I wanted to be in the chapel with them.

After a year of retreats every month I entered their convent. It was a difficult decision because I had a lot of resistance from my father who strongly disagreed with my decision. For a year I did not have any contact with my family. During this time my sisters in community and I prayed intensely about this situation. One



Sr. Margarita

day my father came to visit me at the convent and our relationship was restored. That experience taught me that when God calls he is faithful and he keeps his word to the end. Last year I made my perpetual vows.

My experience in St. Louis

I arrived in St. Louis on January 15,

2008. I came to the community for two reasons: 1. I am living the inter-provincial experience and, 2. I am studying the English language. The sisters drive me twice a week to English class. Now I am able to read at Mass and this makes me very happy. The Mid-North America Province has been very supportive of my English studies. The community I live in at St. Louis is very good to me. They pray for me, speak with me and make me feel at home even when I don't completely understand everything. I am thankful to the Sisters because their presence is a blessing in my life. I am very grateful to Sr. Barbara Beasley for opening the doors of her Province to me.

This experience is strengthening my vocation because it is a different country and culture but the charism is the same, one that I love.

*~ Sr. Margarita Rodriguez Olguin
Contemplative: Mexico
currently residing in St. Louis, MO*



The Good Shepherd Formation Community in St. Louis, M.O.,

welcomed **Sisters Thanh-Thuong Chu (left) and Maria Thu Tran (right)** into the next phase of their vocation journey on June 8th, 2008, at a simple ceremony. During the ceremony, the new novices received medals as a sign of their commitment to the Formation Process. They also received copies of the Good Shepherd Constitutions and the Conferences of St. Mary Euphrasia, which they will study in greater depth. Both sisters are deeply grateful for the gift of their vocation and wish to be supportive of other women interested in the Good Shepherd.



Good Shepherd Ministry in Los Angeles

Hi. My name is Sr. Donna Marie. I am a sister of the Good Shepherd in my 4th year of temporary vows. I was missioned to a confidential, domestic violence shelter in Los Angeles, California.

We have a wonderful program offered to women and children who want to break the cycle of violence, bond with their children, heal from the trauma of domestic violence and begin a new life.

At our ministry we have a nursery, a preschool, an elementary school and an adult learning center for the families who come to us. We also offer trauma-focused therapy, which helps the families find ways to express the hurt inside and to heal from the trauma they have experienced from domestic violence.

In addition to therapy, we also offer coping skills which give the families ways to manage their stress, identify triggers, address the causes of flash backs. They have fun while doing it.

Some of the coping skills we offer are yoga, breath work, salsa dancing, art, and even puppetry for the little ones. Soon we will begin drumming, if all goes as planned.

The families choose which coping skills work for them and then they practice them at home together, so they can support one another in their healing process. It has been very successful so far and the families use what they have learned even after they move out.

The biggest gift in working with these families is the healing that takes place while they are with us. I think we learn as much from them as they learn from us.

If only you could see the miracle of healing that happens while they are with us, the generosity of the donors who provide all the outings, gifts, birthday presents, and holiday events. If you saw our ministry, you would want to join us too.

So many of the families when they arrive at the shelter, are quiet, fearful, reserved and afraid to be assertive that many comment they wonder how they will make it out in the world.

Well, by the time they leave the shelter a transformation has taken place and

*"Love, console and encourage those who are suffering."
~ St. Mary Euphrasia*



Sr. Donna Marie

they realize they are happy, have great coping skills, and are able to be assertive. They have everything they need to make it. This is one of my biggest joys.

And what is my part in this? All of us who work in this ministry try to be present to the families, encouraging them, walking with them through the hard stuff, and trusting God will take care of the rest.

Then we watch God do his magical work. It doesn't get any better than this. I am so happy God called me to become a Good Shepherd sister because I have had the opportunity to participate in his great work.

*Sr. Donna Marie Miles
Apostolic: Los Angeles*

Volunteer with the Good Shepherds at Kateri

In the summer of 2007 a new volunteer program was initiated through the sisters in Wickatunk, N.J., that allowed young women the opportunity to combine their faith with service.

Single women between the ages of 18-39 were invited to volunteer in the Kateri Day Camp program, while living on the convent premises. The day camp provides underprivileged children with a safe and wholesome summer camp environment. The program's philosophy is one of respect for self, others and the world around you.

The sisters opened their home to six candidates for a week allowing them to work in the camp by day and learn the mission and philosophy of the sisters at night.

As a volunteer the women had the opportunity to:

- Work one-on-one with a child with

special or diverse needs.

- Supervise (with other staff) educational, cultural and recreational activities.
- Witness to and impart the values of the camp's philosophy.
- Make a difference in the life of a young person.

The week also included...

- Orientation to the mission and spirituality of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.
- Morning and evening prayer and theological reflection.
- An opportunity for those interested in deepening their Catholic faith to learn more about Catholic social teaching, the environment and vocation discernment.
- Living in a small Catholic community with others who share their faith and interests.



Our 2007 participants

- Free time to participate in recreational activities and share with the sisters.

Although this program was not specifically geared to women thinking about a religious vocation, the time here gave them a good introduction to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and a direct experience of their Mission in Action.

Last year's program was a huge success and this year's program is set to go from August 2 - 9 with 7 volunteers accepted.

What Participants Had to Say...

I found the daily prayer and reflection before camp allowed all to share and find a special meaning to the day and events.

The program was a great opportunity to learn and see how God is present in everyone and everything. The daily events and activities were greatly developed; everything produced a positive feeling, emotion and inner peace.

The readings were inspirational, helping me to focus on the very reasons we came: to serve and love those who need it most.

Working with the Kateri kids really gave me a chance to reach out and connect to those who may not have otherwise experienced such a bond. I am glad to have brought a smile to those faces.

The special get togethers with the Good Shepherd Sisters was very helpful. It gave me a chance to understand the mission which I found inspiring.

I have never had the combination of reflection and working with a camp before; therefore it was great and exceeded anything I could envision.

Good Shepherd Intercontinental Assemblies

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd are preparing for the first time ever to gather together for reflection and sharing of concerns, dreams and deeper ways of networking at inter-continental assemblies in preparation for their General Chapter which will take place in June and July, 2009. The (Contemplative Intercontinental Assembly) CICA for the contemplative sisters and the (Intercontinental Assembly) ICA for the apostolic sisters will have representatives from the Americas, Europe/RIMOA and Asia-Pacific. These gatherings are aimed at generating more participation from the sisters from the seventy-two countries where Good Shepherd Sisters live and minister.

Among the signs of hope in the congregation is the increasing

vocations in Asia like Myanmar and Vietnam, as well as in countries in Africa. Young professed sisters will be participating at these intercontinental assemblies to represent the dreams,

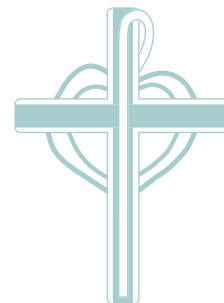


ideas, hopes, vision and concerns for the world from our newer members within the congregation.

The 2009 Congregational Chapter theme, "Weavers of Compassion and Reconciliation in Global Solidarity," (which is represented by the logo to the lower left) continues to give inspiration to the CICA and ICA chairpersons as they plan for these assemblies.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd declared at their General Chapter in 2003, "We dare to create a globalized network of action and contemplation woven together with all the tenderness and compassion of our Shepherd, God."

May the assemblies rally all Good Shepherd Sisters to a deeper commitment to serve the poor and work for justice, especially for the women and children entrusted to them.



Sr. Brigid Lawlor (back row) with novices and junior sisters from Asia - the Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, China and Malaysia. Sr. Brigid met the apostolic and contemplative sisters during her recent visit to the Philippines where the sisters are studying.

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for women on East 14th St.)

AMK: How did 14th St. get started? What did you do there?

Sr. Teresa: I wanted to do something like Maryhouse with the Good Shepherds. So Dorothy told me to get some place near her, stay close together and we could share. It was called Cor Marie. It was great, and I tried to do things the Catholic Worker way. There were twenty-five women and four sisters: Christine, Cecilia, Lucia and me. We were there for fifteen years.

Women would come to the door, and they came in and could stay as long as they wanted. They didn't need any referrals, but we had a relationship with St. Vincent's Hospital. They sent

us a social worker and a nurse. The women said they didn't want anything like that but on the day they came the women would stick around; and if these workers could relate to the women they could do a lot of good. If anyone wanted help we could get it for them. And if they didn't they could just hang around—just be at home. Once we had a leak and I asked around for help with the repair. I was told it would cost \$10,000 so I fixed it myself!

AMK: Was Good Shepherd supportive of your work?

Sr. Teresa: Oh yes, I had perfect freedom. But even some of the sisters didn't understand why I wouldn't have money in the bank. I had it in a checking account, I didn't want any inter-

est...really influenced by the Catholic Worker about that. They thought I was crazy! *(laughs)*

AMK: Now that you are retired and living in snowy Massachusetts, what is your relationship with the New York Catholic Worker?

Sr. Teresa: Well, I'm very interested in everybody; in how Frank is doing. I read the paper. I talk with Jane often, and if I get down there, I visit. And I pray for them all the time.

OUR MISSION

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd approach each person with the same care as 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 or contemplative.

Is God calling YOU to love with the heart of a shepherd?



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