



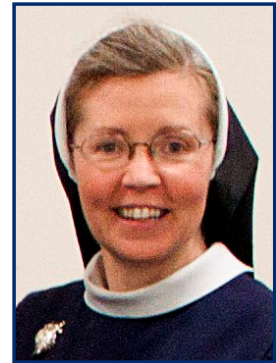
Rejoice!

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Newsletter

Winter 2015

Dear Friends and Families,

Just like clockwork... or was it by God's Design that made "all things work together for the good of those who believe". The Sisters often marvel at the providence of God who gives us what we need when we need it, arranging our daily lives with such loving solicitude. Things could not have worked out better. Five days before Thanksgiving the Sisters with the help of family and friends moved in to their new home in time to prepare for our first holiday at the Novitiate House. Our move coincided with the visit of Maggie Schaeffer who plans to enter in February. She and her father joined in the fun of moving the Sisters and getting a first look at Maggie's new home. What a blessing for us and Maggie to have this shared memory. *Build and they will come* proved true one week after Thanksgiving when the Sisters hosted their first group of young women for a *Come and See* weekend. Six young women traveling from La Crosse spent time with the Sisters, praying, working and playing, experiencing the peaceful and beautiful atmosphere of the Novitiate House. May this be only the beginning of discernment retreats for young women in search of God's will and a good community!



Blessings abound as our prayer for strong, dedicated and persevering young women for our community is answered. Anne Marie Laville from Leawood, Kansas and Samantha Ridder from Hutchinson became postulants in the Fall of this year, sharing with us the beginning of a new chapter in the history of our community. Their joy, enthusiasm, hard work, and desire to do all for Jesus is an ever present reminder and confirmation of the need and importance of building a Novitiate House to foster vocations to the Religious Life that we may continue to serve the Church through our prayers and apostolate of education. Thank you for working and praying beside us these past several years. Our hope in the Lord has never wavered knowing that He is always by our side. Our prayers are offered for you unceasingly, and as long as there are Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, they always will be.

Devotedly in Mary's Heart,

Mother Mary Magdalene, IHM

Mother Mary Magdalene O'Halloran, IHM
General Superior

P.S. Unable to accommodate all our friends and families, the Blessing of our Chapel and the Novitiate was private. We do plan to have several Open Houses after the first of the year for all of you. Please stay tuned.



Merry Christmas!

*Thank you so very much!
Only 2,998,474 more to go
... please keep praying!*

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Heritage Series

Sister M. Giovanni Oliveri, IHM

The youngest of our three Wichita foundresses, Sister M. Giovanni, was born in San Pedro, California, in 1913 to Italian immigrants Leonardo of Riva Trigosa and Anna of Genoa and named Eva Loretta. Her father died in an accident in the fishing shipyards of San Pedro when she was nine months old; subsequently she became the favored of the family. Her two brothers, Steve and Jimmy, and her two sisters, Cecilia and Louise, along with their mother, doted on her. Soon her favorite food was candy. Often she would say, "I don't have a sweet tooth, I have a whole mouth full!" She was baptized, received her First Holy Communion and was Confirmed in Mary Star Parish in San Pedro.

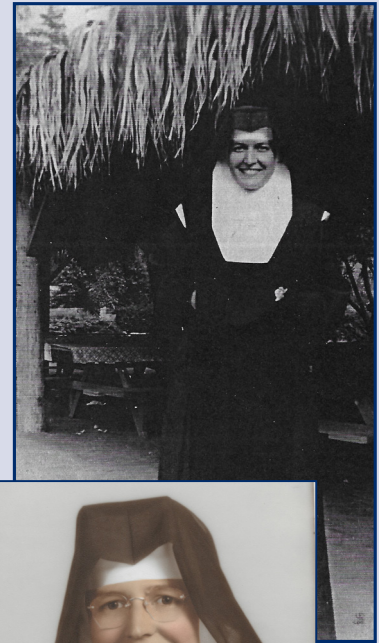
Never one for "girly" activities, she was quite the athlete! She often recounted the story of begging her mother for a pair of roller skates. Her mother just as adamantly refused convinced that Eva on wheels would meet up with an injury. Eva somehow acquired a pair without the knowledge of her mother, and on her maiden voyage rolled down a hill uncontrollably. The only way she could stop was by running into a curb ... she broke both of her ankles! Regardless of her unsuccessful attempt at roller skating, she was accomplished in sports, especially basketball and tennis. Swimming in the ocean was something Sister M. Giovanni loved to talk about even in her later years. Later, in addition to teaching full time and running the bookstore, Sister coached girls' basketball, tennis and volleyball. At one point, she was even the "faculty coach" for the football team!

From the fourth grade on Eva knew she wanted to be a Sister. Her family directly and strongly opposed her entrance into religious life, but she remained strong in her resolve to do so. Anxiously awaiting her 21st birthday, she secretly made her preparations. One of the Sisters actually helped her assemble her trousseau, making several of the items Eva would need in the convent. The evening of her birthday she heard her mother whisper to her siblings, "She

must have decided not to go!" The next day, August 25, 1934, with conviction, determination and tears, the darling of the family left for the convent, with no one supporting her. In fact, shortly thereafter her brothers arrived at the novitiate, demanding their younger sister, prepared to remove her forcibly. The Sisters remained calmed, encouraged the hot-blooded young men to reconsider and Sister Giovanni was allowed to remain. In protest, however, her family did not communicate with her for several years after her entrance into religious life.

Eva was received into the novitiate of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary on July 3, 1935, and was given the name of Giovanni – Italian for John. When she came to the front of the Chapel to receive the veil of a novice she heard her name for the first time and didn't know who "Giovanni" was! As was their practice (and it is still ours) she had submitted three possible names, all titles of Mary, with Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) at the top of the list. All the names had been rejected and she was assigned an Italian name, possibly in attempt to appease her family.

During the novitiate, Sister Giovanni would often trade chores with the other young Sisters. Not being familiar with household chores – having been the spoiled one of the family – Sister would do all the typing and secretarial work and trade off cooking! She would often recount her dismay at having done so, saying all she could cook was a good cup of coffee! Her typing skills, however, were excellent, and those were the days of the manual typewriters. Since Sister had completed her high school education before entering, Sister Giovanni taught in a training school for part of her novitiate. Two years and one day after being



TOP AND ABOVE: Newly professed!



20-year-old Eva

Heritage Series

received into the Community she professed her first vows on July 4, 1935. Being the only one to profess on that day, the Bishop in attendance to witness the profession dubbed her "God's firecracker!" and she certainly proved him true! After her profession Sister Giovanni continued her education eventually earning a Bachelors' degree in history and a Masters' degree in School Administration. Simultaneously she was also assigned to the apostolate and given a teaching position first at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Los Angeles. This was the beginning of one of the greatest loves of her life: teaching.

Teaching full time until she was 84, for over 60 years Sister Giovanni was in the classroom, the hallways and the office inspiring, leading, forming and educating faculty (especially first year teachers), administrators and students. Often she would say, "There is nothing greater than teaching." Several priests and religious attribute the beginning of their discernment to a comment of Sister Giovanni's. She was not only interested in teaching about Jesus, she wanted to bring her students to Jesus. Sister Giovanni is remembered for having a special nickname for everyone, for her zeal in teaching, for being an unabashed promoter of Catholic education, and for exhibiting real love and concern for each individual person. Her religious life and teaching were constants in Sister Giovanni's life, even amidst the turmoil of the 1960s. When faced with the demise of her own religious community she wrote to her friends in the Community who had decided to live as lay people with private vows: "Thirty-five years ago, after much difficulty with my family, I decided to enter the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart. My mother and brothers opposed this move,

and it took a great deal of courage to stand by that decision ... Since that time I have never changed my mind ... I have given it long hours of thought and prayer. I do not feel that having given myself wholly to God I can take back in any way any part of the life I gave."

This conviction led her to join Sister M. Joanne and Sister M. Eileen in coming to Wichita. In Wichita as in Los Angeles, Sister M. Giovanni was an unabashed promoter of Catholic education and the teaching apostolate.

Always smiling, always enthusiastic, always approachable to her thousands of students and to the faculty and staff with whom she worked, she was always displaying the good news of religious life and of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in particular. Her great love for her students and for teaching was only exceeded by her love for Jesus, his Blessed Mother, her vocation and her community. All of this overflowed in generosity and a joyful spirit of prayer and sacrifice.

Taking the opportunity to reflect upon Sister M. Giovanni's life and recalling with great appreciation her love for religious life, for the IHM Community and the apostolate of teaching, it seems fitting to recall that her fidelity to the charism and life of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary has strengthened and deepened that same charism and religious life these past 39 years in Wichita.

Father Joaquin Masmitja brought together seven of his penitents to form a religious community for one purpose: to transform through prayer and Catholic education a society divorced from religion. Sister Giovanni's

life was a picture of this very mission. Remaining true to the religious life she vowed in 1935 she gave up everything, walking away from the fishing boats of San Pedro and giving her widow's mite, everything she had to live on, to ensure its continuity. First she left the family she loved to follow the Lord's call, then she left the ocean, the California she loved, to follow again God's call, to assist in preserving the charism of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary: praying and working for the transformation of society through education. From 1848 till now we are doing what we were founded to do ... helping to form good strong Catholics who will raise their families to be the same, transforming society one family at a time.



TOP: How she loved teaching!

ABOVE: Always smiling!

The Blessing of the Novitiate House of Formation

“Where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, He is there in their midst. We have gathered here to bless a house where the love of Christ will bring together those who in charity and virginity, in poverty and obedience desire to follow Him more faithfully and closely. Relying on the goodness of God, from whom all blessings flow, we pray that those who live here will conform their way of life to what they have promised. We ask that with Jesus they will seek the Father’s glory in all things; that, praying together without ceasing, they will be a sign that the Church is a praying community.”



1: On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop Carl A. Kemme with Father Ivan Eck and Father Kenneth Schuckman, entered the Chapel of the Novitiate House to begin the blessing.

2: After the opening prayer, Bishop Kemme blessed the walls of the Chapel, the statues and the Stations of the Cross.

3: After the homily, Bishop Kemme blessed the Altar of Sacrifice, sprinkled it with holy water and incensed it.

4: The blessing of the altar completed, Mother Mary Magdalene dressed the altar for Mass.

*“O God, Grant to your servants who will live in this house these blessings:
to listen to You in faith, to speak to You in prayer, to seek only You in their work,
to find You in all they do, to become witnesses to the Gospel.
Through them spread the good aroma of Christ everywhere,
Until the day they rejoice in the revelation of his glory, who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. Amen.”*

The Blessing of the Novitiate House of Formation

“O God,
 inspirer and author of every
 holy resolve,
 hear our prayer that
 You will bestow the kindness of
 your grace on the Religious
 who live in this house.
 Make it a place of continuous
 meditation on your word,
 of mutual love, and of tireless
 service to others.
 Grant that those who here
 loyally follow Christ
 may together become an eloquent
 witness of their
 consecration to You.
 We ask this through Christ our
 Lord.
 Amen.”



5: The Bishop, concelebrants, and servers led the Sisters out of the Chapel to bless the entire convent. The Sisters sang Marian hymns as they processed.

6: The blessing continued throughout; here the Bishop is pictured in one of the bedroom halls, ...

7: in the cloister walk, ...

8: ... and he ended in the dining room.

BELOW: Bishop Kemme, Father Eck, Father Schuckman and Father Peltzer joined the Sisters in the Chapel for a group photo. Not pictured are Sister Mary Margaret and Sister Marie Therese.



Remember the Church

FRIENDSHIPS LAST A LIFETIME AND BEYOND

BY BRONWEN LEWIS

Initial Remarks

As many of you know, I have been deeply touched and moved by the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita. There is a joy and goodness to them that cannot be described ... only felt. My role with the Sisters has been to be their advocate – advocating for their worthy needs, and seeking your support for these needs. That's why I am writing this article – to inform you of their needs and to suggest ways you might include the Sisters in your charitable giving plans.

Throughout their long history, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary have benefitted from the generosity of their friends ... friends who have believed in them and their apostolate, friends who have believed that teaching Sisters in our Catholic schools make a difference ... on the children they teach and their families, on the community they teach in, and, importantly, on society in general. Your support has played a critical role in the many successes the Sisters have had over the years, the most recent being the establishment of the first Motherhouse property in Kansas in over 100 years, and the building of their new Novitiate House.

As you read this article, the main message I wish to impart to you is that the job of supporting the Sisters is not finished – that they need our continued, ongoing support. The remainder of this article suggests ways for you to provide that support.

Annual Giving

The Sisters are no different than you or I when it comes to the expenses of running a household. They pay for their food, utilities, medical costs, health insurance, automobile expenses, homeowners, liability and auto insurance, repairs and maintenance, and the multitude of other expenses that crop up from time to time. Unlike most of us, they also have substantial

educational expenses for the training and certification of teaching Sisters, much like the diocese has expenses in the formation of priests in seminaries.

To meet their annual expenses, the Sisters rely on two forms of revenue – stipends and gifts. Stipends are what each teaching Sister is paid by their school. These stipends are designed to support the needs of the teaching Sister; however, for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who are a young growing community, these stipends must also support the novitiate, thus they are not enough to pay for their annual expenses and the Sisters rely on gifts to balance their budget each year. These gifts have generally been in the form of periodic checks received from friends, memorial gifts, or bequests from estates.

If I were to ask each one of you to do one thing for the Sisters, it would be to ask you to set up a monthly gift to the Sisters in the form of an automatic withdrawal from your bank or brokerage firm. Monthly gifts of this type are easy to do, and they help the Sisters so very, very much with their budget management, in particular with the significant educational costs they face.

As you deliberate this request, please know that literally every dollar you give the Sisters will be used directly for their benefit. The Sisters have no employees, and they have virtually no fundraising expenses – the cost of this newsletter is essentially it. Your gift truly makes a difference.

Other Forms of Gifts

Just a few days ago, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop Kemme said Mass for the Sisters in the chapel of their new Novitiate House where the Sisters now permanently reside. The Novitiate House was made possible, of course, by the many wonderful gifts and gifts-in-kind that

all of you gave to the Sisters over the last two to three years – extraordinary gifts, as opposed to annual giving.

Extraordinary gifts generally take the form of a response to a specific appeal, but the Sisters have been most fortunate to have been receiving gifts of this type for many years, long before they started their fundraising efforts for the Novitiate House. In fact, in large part this is how they were able to save enough money to purchase their 80 acres of land in Colwich, and to have a nest egg in place for the Novitiate House project. The Sisters are excellent stewards of their gifts, and most disciplined at saving for the future.

Extraordinary gifts can be made in a number of ways. Although simply writing a check is by far the most common type of donation, many tax advisors and financial planners encourage clients to take advantage of the many other ways to give that our tax code allows. Gifts of appreciated securities may be the most popular of these, followed closely by gifts of real estate or personal property, estate bequest gifts, and IRA-rollover gifts. All of these ways of giving carry with them potentially substantial tax savings for charitable donors, and, in fact, they were put into the tax code by our government to encourage philanthropic endeavors.

Many of you will be fortunate enough in the years ahead to be looking at ways to maximize the charitable dollars you give each year through these extraordinary gifts, and it is my great hope that you will consider the Sisters when that time comes. At some point in the future, with growth in vocations (God willing) the Sisters will have need to build once again, this will be a beautiful thing...a new spring of vocations...that will ensure in the future we will have teaching Sisters in our Catholic schools. Mother Mary Magdalene has a dream of a teaching Sister in every Catholic

Remember the Church

school in Kansas...and your gift of this type will allow them to create savings for the education of future Sisters and a proper Motherhouse.

Final Remarks

Catholics universally approach charitable giving with a grateful heart, a love of God and a purity of intention. The Sisters approach life this way every single day of every month of every year. Whatever your reasons ... to

do something beautiful for Our Lady, to give something back to the Sisters because they have made a difference in your life or the lives of your children, or simply to support their apostolate of teaching and praying for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of priests ... please bless them with your gifts.

Rarely will you ever meet a Sister of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita

who does not radiate joy. It makes sense. Giving your life totally to Jesus ... teaching others to know Jesus ... has to be lovely. A vocation to the religious life is divine, just as vocations to the priesthood are divine...God sets apart those whom he wishes to serve Him in these vocations.

Please do actively consider the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in your charitable giving plans.

May the angels lead them into paradise.



Memorials have been established for

*Madeliene Alfaro
Eugene Patry*

Gifts have been given in memory of

*Mal Goenner
Mary Thome
Loretta Meil
Roger Robben
Mark Rupp
Virginia Schreffler
Alan Shepherd
Marcus and Mary Simon Family*

Vocations Visitors

The weekend of December 5 brought our first vocation visitors to the Novitiate House all the way from La Crosse, Wisconsin. Six young women discerning religious life were accompanied by Sister Mary Luka, FSGM. The young women spent the weekend praying, eating, working, recreating and talking with the Sisters.



SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY OF WICHITA

**3550 N 167TH STREET W
COLWICH, KS 67030**

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See our website:
www.sistersihmofwichita.org

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*Postulants Samantha Ridder
and Anne Marie Laville*



Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel

*Praise God
from Whom all
blessings flow!*

November 21, 2015, the Saturday before
Thanksgiving, the Sisters of the
Immaculate Heart of Mary,
with help from a multitude of
family members and friends, moved into
the Novitiate House of Formation!

Our new address is:
Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
3550 N 167th Street W.
Colwich, Kansas 67030