

Lurana's Star

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ATONEMENT
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Prior to our departure following our Twentieth General Chapter which was held from June 5th to June 18th, and surrounded by the flags of the countries in which we minister, we, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement delegates, gathered at the front of the Washington Retreat House with our newly elected Leadership Team. Front row left to right: Sisters Lucinda May Patterson, René Drolet, Mary Patricia Galvin, Minister General, Denise Robillard and Theresa Ann Clarizio.

**Franciscans...
Missionaries...
Lovers of Creation...
Lovers of the Lord!**



Sister Eilish Sweeney

Dear Friend,

Greetings, prayers and best wishes to you and to your family. I hope that the past few months of summer were pleasant and restful for you. Know that you were remembered in our daily prayers and liturgies.

Summer months here at Graymoor were busy enough. As you read in our last issue, we had our community Jubilee Celebration on Saturday, May 21st. We also celebrated Memorial, Independence and Labor Days. On these national holidays all of us at the Motherhouse gather after our daily Liturgy for a picnic lunch with our senior Sisters from the Residence.

Summer visitors often came by just to say "Hello!" while other friends and relatives spent time with some of our senior Sisters. Still others, like myself, took time to visit family and friends in various places.

Our Twentieth General Chapter took place June 5 - 18 at our well-known retreat house in Washington, D.C. with thirty-eight of our Sisters participating and representing our missions in six countries. Chapters are meetings held every five years that provide us the opportunity to discuss and formulate

necessary changes in policies and to elect a new leadership team. Our newly-elected team members are as follows. Sister Mary Patricia Galvin, a member of our congregation for the past thirty years, is a native of Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA. Sister René Drolet, a student of our Sisters in Pittsfield, NH many years ago, has been with us for fifty-seven years. Sister Denise Robillard comes from Pascoag, RI and has served our congregation for thirty-three years. Sister Lucinda May Patterson, a native of Lowell, MI has been with us for twenty-seven years and Sister Theresa Ann Clarizio, a member of our congregation for forty-nine years, comes from Binghamton, NY. I ask you to join us in prayer as we wish each of them God's blessings as we work together in meeting the needs of all those whose lives we touch.

Our Washington Retreat House has a very interesting history in the Society of the Atonement. In this edition of Lurana's Star I would like to share with you how we happened to establish this retreat ministry in our Nation's Capitol.

Recently we came together to celebrate Sister Mary Bride Spratt's 100th Birthday. (See page 8).

Once again I extend sincere gratitude to you for all your goodness to us, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, throughout the year. May God bless you and your family. Know you are in our daily prayers.

Gratefully,

Sister M. Eilish Sweeney

Our Society's History

Although a great deal has been written over the years about our Sisters' ministry at our Retreat House in Washington, D.C. it seems fitting to share with our good friends and benefactors some of the fascinating history connected with that area of Washington. While attending our Twentieth General Chapter, back in June, we had the opportunity to walk around the area and to appreciate the beauty of the land and also the magnificent buildings erected within the Northeast area of Washington, DC. Among the important establishments is The Catholic University of America established in 1887.



One of the many stately buildings enhancing The Catholic University of America campus today

In the years to follow many of the well known congregations of male religious such as Dominicans, Augustinians, and various Franciscan Orders went about establishing Houses of Study for their future Priests and Brothers close to The Catholic University. Today, many of these long established seminaries still stand in their mighty splendor as they add class and dignity to the Northeast area of Washington, D.C.

Today, not too far up the road from some of these familiar establishments is a beautiful - four pillar - Southern style home. This is the Washington Retreat House at 4000 Harewood Road, N.E. which was built in 1930 by our Foundress, Mother Lurana White. You may recall in the Summer/Fall 2012 edition of Lurana's Star, I shared with you some of the present ministries our Sisters are involved in today.



Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement Washington Retreat House at 4000 Harewood Road, N.E. in Washington, D.C.

Our Society's History

In the Second Edition of the Concise History of the Society of the Atonement printed in 1977 it is written: “On February 8, 1923 four Sisters and two Tertiary Sisters left for Washington, D.C. to take charge of the Mt. Carmel House of Retreats for Women at 200 “T” Street, N.E., at the invitation of the Carmelites. Lafayette and other men of the Revolutionary War had been entertained at the house. In the early part of the twentieth century, the home was a Protestant run college for young women. The Carmelites purchased it in 1922. The house was first known as the Eckington Mansion. On March 22, 1923 the Sisters, in conjunction with the Carmelites, established the first national novena to the Little Flower held in America. It began on the Little Flower’s death.” Our Sisters withdrew on March 11, 1926 and later returned to found the Washington Retreat House, which was blessed on September 27, 1930. It has continued to serve the people of the D.C. area ever since.



Father Paul (front row 4th from left) and Mother Lurana (second row 5th from left) surrounded by our Sisters, Priests and Retreatants for the dedication of the Washington Retreat House.

This important retreat ministry in Washington, D.C. became possible because of Father Paul. History tells us that, “Having seen the grounds and buildings of the Robinson Compound known as The Vineyard, Father Paul was convinced it would make an ideal location to establish a residence for Friar students who could attend The Catholic University of America only a short distance away. The major barrier to realizing his plan, however, was the \$190,000 price, which in those days was an enormous sum for a fledgling religious community to raise.

“Undaunted, Father Paul began a spirited campaign in April 1923 to obtain the necessary funds. Through his monthly magazine, The Lamp, he appealed to readers for financial help and established one of his famous “St. Anthony Clocks” to inform his subscribers how near they were to the “hour of triumph” when sufficient money would be available for the down payment. From 1923 to 1928 he used various other fund-raising techniques like the sale of over one million Christmas cards, thousands of Little Flower souvenir pictures and Papal Jubilee medals.”

Our Society's History

Father Paul's efforts paid off and history tells us "On March 1, 1923 Fr. Paul purchased "The Vineyard" in Washington from Agnes Robinson which consisted of 33 1/3 acres of property, the Robinson mansion and a cottage. He bought it for \$190,000. In the April 1923 Lamp he started clock No. 8 to raise the funds. In the September Lamp (1923) he promised to send contributors of one dollar, a silver oxidized medal of Our Lady and of St. Anthony. On November 28, 1923, the Friars made an initial payment of \$25,000 and agreed to pay \$33,000 with accumulated interest on May 28, 1924, and to continue annual payments until the debt was eliminated. From 1924-1927, the Friars paid \$33,000 yearly with accrued interest at 6%. The Lamp (February 1926) Fr. Paul announced that the clock had been completed. He raised \$120,000 in three years. And by 1928 he was able to announce that the final payment had been made to the Robinson's heirs."



The original Robinson mansion and original Holy Ghost Seminary of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

In those early days, our Sisters ministered to the Friars at The Vineyard/Holy Ghost Seminary. And once again history tells us "In September 1924, the Sisters of the Atonement began renovating the Robinson mansion at an expense of \$9,000. Fr. Paul estimated that if it had been done by outsiders, it would have cost \$15,000. The Sisters occupied a two-room house formerly used by the slaves of Mr. Conway Robinson. It was separate from the brown brick mansion but later was attached and enlarged. The Sisters continued serving the Friars at The Vineyard until August 29, 1967." They were great cooks!!



The new Atonement Seminary building was opened in 1957 and served our Friars of the Atonement until 1999. Today the seminary building has become the Saint John Paul II Seminary for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. Note the statue of Our Lady of the Atonement still stands on the front step!

Our Society's History

When reflecting on our early history and what Father Paul and Mother Lurana accomplished as they worked side-by-side for the good of our Society, particularly in the northeast area of Washington D.C., they are to be commended.

As noted earlier, Father Paul fearlessly bought property close to The Catholic University of America for the good of his future friars. He had the foresight to share his property with Mother Lurana, who later built our present Washington Retreat House that continues today to serve hundreds of retreatants monthly.

Our history tells us on the 27th anniversary of Mother Lurana's coming to Graymoor, December 15, 1925, the Father Founder deeded over to the Sisters five acres of land. His gift note read, "In reality this is a gift in joyful commemoration of your coming to Graymoor 27 years ago--a very small 'quid pro quo' for all that the Sisters have done, are doing, and will do for the Friars at Graymoor, Washington and everywhere they are, or will be." This property was truly appreciated, for it was a gift from the poor to the poor, for Graymoor had its "full measure of poverty." What a beautiful tribute to Mother Lurana!

Not only did the Atonement Seminary prepare hundreds of friars for the Community's ecumenical history, but it also became known as a source for ecumenical, social and educational initiatives, as well as a place of Franciscan hospitality, an ideal stressed by Father Paul. Stemming also from the Friars' presence at "The Vineyard" came the campus ministry in which the Friars engaged at Howard University for over twenty years.

Today, one of our Friars, Father James Gardiner, Director of Special Projects, is very much a part of the ministry of the OFM Franciscans at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America. This, too, is within a short distance from The Catholic University of America and serves thousands of pilgrims to Washington D.C. Two other Friars are also in residence in the northwest side of D.C. and often assist our Sisters in the retreat ministry, as does Father James Gardiner.

Father Paul, after meeting the needs of his friars and those of our Sisters, made the excess land of the original parcel he had purchased available to other religious congregations - both Roman Catholic and other denominations - for their future planning.

Today one can appreciate the beauty of the Archbishop Carroll High School, St. Josaphat's Seminary, and the Ukrainian Catholic National Shrine of the Holy Family, and the beautiful Little Sisters of the Poor Jeanne Jugan Residence later built on the former site of St. Joseph's Carmelite Seminary.

And to add to the richness of the neighborhood, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is within a short walking distance from our retreat house. And the Saint John Paul II National Shrine is our immediate neighbor to the left.

Now--enjoy your next visit to Washington D.C., knowing we are very much a part of it!



Father Paul Wattson, S.A.

Our Society's History



Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement
4000 Harewood Road, N. E.



Mother Lurana White, S.A.

Our good friends and neighbors today....



Little Sisters of the Poor
Jeanne Jugan Residence
Former site of St. Joseph's Carmelite Seminary



Ukrainian Catholic National
Shrine of the Holy Family



St. Josephat's Ukrainian Seminary



St. John Paul II Seminary - Archdiocese of Washington
Former site of the Friars of the Atonement
Seminary of the Holy Ghost



Archbishop Carroll
High School



Basilica of the National Shrine of the
Immaculate Conception



Saint John Paul II National Shrine

Happy 100th



November 22, 1916

November 22, 2016

What a wonderful day for Sister Mary Bride Spratt, her family, her good friends and our community. May God continue to bless Sister and each of us who have been touched by her life of dedication to God, to the Church and to our Congregation.

Sisters' Gift Shop Graymoor

Shop 5 days a week 9am-4pm
(closed on Monday & Tuesday)
Call 845-424-3809
giftshop@graymoor.org



Mass Schedule

You have an open invitation to join us in prayer



*M-F 11:15
Sat. 4:30
Sun. 9:00*

Welcome to
the Sisters' Chapel
St. Francis Convent
Graymoor