

Lurana's Star

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ATONEMENT
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SUMMER

No. 3

Feast of Our Lady of the Atonement - July 9th



On Sunday, October 9, 1921, Father Paul blessed the outdoor Shrine of Our Lady of the Atonement in the presence of about four hundred people. Two hundred and fifty of them were on a pilgrimage to Graymoor that day. The blessing was followed by a Solemn High Mass at the Shrine also celebrated by Father Paul. Mother Lurana wrote: "Let us love our dear Lady devotedly, but let us not be content with offering her our own hearts, let us be missionaries and reach out for other hearts and more love with which to increase the Joy of Mary." To this day, our outdoor Shrine of Our Lady of the Atonement provides a place for prayer, petitions and devotion to Our Blessed Mother for many visitors and friends of Graymoor.

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



Sister Eilish Sweeney

Dear Friend,

Now that the heat of summer is upon us we, no doubt, have forgotten all about the cold, cold, snowy winter that was ours just a few months ago. In spite of all we had to go through back

then we still give thanks to God for the gift of Seasons.

Each year during the month of July, we, the Franciscan Sisters and Friars of the Atonement, celebrate the beautiful Feast honoring our Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of the Atonement. In Sister Mary Celine Fleming's biography, of Mother Lurana of Graymoor she writes: "But as early as July 20, 1901, the Feast of Our Lady of the Atonement was kept at Graymoor, and in 1946 the Holy See graciously gave its full approval to devotion to Our Lady of the Atonement. This approval includes a special Mass and Office for the Feast of Our Lady of the Atonement, July 9; the Church's blessings and indulgences on the Rosary League, the Novena and the Litany in honor of our Atonement Queen."

Know that you and all our friends and benefactors are remembered in our Monthly Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Atonement held here at Graymoor and in all our convent chapels wherever our Sisters are

ministering among God's people.

As you will see on page 3, Sister Mary Bride Spratt had a delightful day on March 28th with her family and good friends on the occasion of her 85th Anniversary.

As you well know, we had our 12th Annual Benefit Concert on Sunday, April 19th. It was truly a wonderful concert and was enjoyed by many. Joanie Madden and her Irish All Star Entertainers outdid themselves. We are so grateful to them.

Early on Sunday morning, April 26th, 2015 Sister Barbara Ohl, S.A. died peacefully here at our Lurana Health Care Residence. She was a native of Endicott, New York and a member of our congregation for sixty-one years. May she Rest in Peace.

We, as a community, gathered with the families of seven of our Sisters on Saturday, June 20, 2015 as they celebrated their 75th, 50th and 25th Anniversary as Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement. Due to the large number of guests attending their Jubilee, Liturgy was celebrated at Our Lady of the Atonement Chapel at the Friary and a Festive Dinner followed in our Friars' dining room.

Best wishes to you and your family for a blessed and safe Summer Season. God bless you all and sincere gratitude to you for your goodness to us, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement.

Gratefully,

Sister M. Eilish Sweeney

Together: A total of 235 years of Religious Life



Sister Mary Bride Spratt & Family

In 1930, Hanna Spratt traveled to Graymoor at the age of fourteen with her sister Mary to join the Oblate Program of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement. That was eighty-five years ago. What memories of those “olden” days Sister Mary Bride must carry with her today!

On Saturday, March 28, 2015, Sister’s family and a few close friends gathered with her and her community to give honor, praise and glory to Sister Mary Bride in recognition of her 85th Anniversary of

dedicated service to God, to her church and to her community. Although not in the best of health, Sister Mary Bride did have a very enjoyable day. A special Liturgy was celebrated at 11 a. m. in her honor and a festive dinner followed. Congratulations Sister Mary Bride. Eighty-five years as a woman Religious is no small achievement in today’s world. God bless you.



Sister Colette Duffy

In our January, 2015 edition of Lurana’s Star you read about Sister Colette Duffy who had celebrated her 100th birthday on November 8, 2014. Last month on Saturday, June 20, 2015 Sister joined six of our Sister Jubilarians for another great day of celebration in honor of their 75th, 50th and 25th Jubilees with families, friends and community members.

Sister Colette was born in South Boston, Massachusetts in 1914 and as a young lady at the age of twenty-six she joined the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement here at Graymoor. During her many years of missionary work Sister Colette lived and ministered among the people in New Jersey, New York, Utah, California and Connecticut. May God continue to bless and protect Sister Colette as she enjoys her *Retirement years*.



Sister Louis Marie Diebner

Our second Diamond Jubilarian, Sister Louis Marie Diebner, was born in Brooklyn, NY, on August 13, 1918. Twenty-two years later, a charming young lady, Blanche Diebner traveled to Graymoor and joined our congregation on October 4, 1940. After her Profession, Sister was assigned to her first mission in Schuylerville, NY. In the years to follow, Sister was called upon to minister to the people in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Maine, New York, Rome, Italy and Washington D.C.

In September of 1977 Sister Louise Marie returned to our Motherhouse here at Graymoor and for the next thirty-two years graciously served as assistant to no less than six Treasurer Generals. Sister now resides in our Residence and is enjoying good health and the friendship and support of a loving family who traveled from far and near to celebrate her 75th Jubilee.



Golden Jubilarian: Sister Diane Bernier, S.A



Sister Diane Bernier

On the occasion of her 50th Jubilee, Sister Diane Bernier shares with us: “When I reflect on fifty years as a Sister of the Atonement, vivid images come to mind of significant moments in my life and ministry. Each represents depths of meaning for me beyond the events themselves. They come so easily to mind, and are as fresh in my memory as if they had occurred only recently.

- I had been reviewing with six-graders what they had learned about God’s covenant with His people throughout salvation history. A boy who had been very quiet, suddenly exclaimed with deep conviction: “God must love us a whole lot!”
- I had introduced guided meditations and centering prayer to students and teachers in a Catholic school where I was the Director of Religious Education. The next day a kindergarten child ran up to me, hugged me around the knees, and with a beaming smile looked up and whispered. “I talked with Jesus like you said. I love Him!”
- A dad, who hadn’t been to Mass for over 20 years, insisted on being his son’s Confirmation sponsor, claiming: “Who do you think kicks him out of bed on Sundays and makes him go to Church?” I was given the courage to ask him to consider becoming an example of a different kind of dad and sponsor. What a joy to see him at Mass each Sunday with his family from that day on.
- On a visit to Brazil, a catechist rose to express her gratitude for the presence of one of our Sisters in their poor parish. Though I do not know Portuguese, at a certain moment we each realized that we were understanding each other beyond the words!
- Standing in the Sanctuary, I was brought to tears of joy as I looked out at the church brimming with friends and relatives gathered to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, and watched as portraits of our Founders were carried forward in solemn procession up the aisle of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.

Fifty years of such moments make me grateful that I met the Sisters of the Atonement in Boston who presented me with two books - the biographies of our Foundress and of St. Francis of Assisi. I couldn’t have put my dreams and deepest longings into words until I found expression for them in “A Woman of Unity” and “The Little Flowers of St. Francis.” I thank God for my life as a Sister of the Atonement, and am deeply grateful to Mother Lurana and Father Paul for the covenant they made with God and with each other to establish our Society. I have witnessed over and over again throughout the world the joy and hope our members have shared with the persons we encounter in our lives.”



Golden Jubilarian: Sister Marjorie Moon



Sister Marjorie Moon

Sister Marjorie, an only child, was born in the Borough of Brooklyn, New York where she lived for nine years. Because of her parents' decision in 1946 to move away from the city due to her father's work, Sister Marjorie had the good fortune to grow-up in a delightful New England town: Conway, New Hampshire.

In September, 1965 Sister Marjorie entered our Congregation at Graymoor with nineteen other young women. Her memories of those days back fifty years ago are still very vivid in her memory. Sister Marjorie shares: "During our Postulancy time I learned about the foundation of the Society of the Atonement along with coming to know about religious life and living in community with the other postulants who entered with me. The Congregation was getting to know me and I the Congregation. During the Novitiate we deepened our prayer life,

learned more about the history of the Congregation, how to chant the Liturgy of the Hours and living with all different kinds of people. We had special times for Holy Hours during the day and took turns praying during the night. My Holy Hour time during the early morning hours was from 1:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. We had lots of time for spiritual reading and prayer. I missed that time.

After I made my first vows, I went to SUNY Cobleskill and graduated from SUNY Oneonta with a degree in Early Childhood Education. My first Mission was St. Cecilia's Day Nursery in New York City. The younger children 3, 4 and 5 year olds were a delight to teach. They were always enthused when they saw me bring out my guitar for they knew we would learn new songs and sing songs they loved.

However, in 1979 being an only child, the Congregation gave me the necessary permission to be with my parents who were elderly and sick. I was with them for 14 years. During those years I took a job at the North Conway Day Care Center for twelve years. It was a wonderful experience. I lost my mother in 1993-the last of my family. I miss her a lot. I am still grateful for the time I spent with my family. I am grateful to the Congregation.

In 1993 I was asked by the Congregation to go to our mission in Rome, Italy. What a beautiful place to be! There were wonderful people from all over the world staying at our Guest House. During my time off I would take my watercolors and paper and paint various scenes including magnificent Italian sunsets. I sold many of my paintings to our visitors and guests at our Guest House.

I returned to Graymoor in 2008 due to illness, and an operation was necessary. During my days of recuperation I would talk with Sister Nancy Conboy, our Minister General and I assured her that I would be more than pleased to share my art and music with our Sisters.

In time I had eight Sisters for art classes, and later on people from around the area began to come also for art instructions. When we had music sessions, fifteen Sisters would come and play on various instruments as we sang hymns and Irish songs.

Here at Graymoor today I am welcomed to come aside and pray each day for the needs and intentions of all who ask for prayers, as well as for the sick and the dying. I pray a Holy Hour each day for the Lord. My Fifty Years is just a time to return to be as I started out to be...in the Presence of the Lord. Thank you Jesus."



Sister Marjorie and some of her beautiful paintings.

Golden Jubilarian: Sister Vivian Giulianelli



Sister Vivian Giulianelli

In 2014, Sister Vivian, a native of Mechanicville, NY granted an interview to Angela Cave, Staff Writer for *The Evangelist*, the official Publication of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, entitled “Art Teacher’s Portrait of Religious Life.” The following is a summary of Sister Vivian’s sharing. “I see my religious life not as a vocation but rather as a life to be lived. I have been in religious life almost 50 years, and for twenty years I have been a teacher at St. Ambrose School in Latham, where I plan to stay as long as I keep my boots on.

As an art teacher the biggest thing for me is to teach the child how to see things. I tell them things like, look how beautiful God made the clouds in the sky. We know a lot, but sometimes we miss a lot. I was the only woman religious at the school for many years. Today, I am the only Franciscan Sister of the Atonement from Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y. in the Albany Diocese.

In my home town of Mechanicville, as a young child I remember the Franciscan Sisters heading up the religious education program at my parish. They were wonderful. They were a great inspiration and were among the people all the time. In High School, I kept thinking about the Sisters’ joy and warmth. I liked to draw pictures I copied from illustrated versions of the Catechism, and one image of Jesus as a boy stood out. He was looking at me and almost saying, ‘Come,’. I wanted to do something to help other people. I was kind of shy, so I knew I had to work on that. I did a lot of praying and talking with my priest, religious Sisters and my own twin sister. It was a confusing time. My father was not happy about the idea of a daughter in religious life. But he relented, and I began formation at the age of 17, later earning a Bachelor’s Degree in education from SUNY Oneonta.

At first, I did social work and taught children and adults in a poor neighborhood of Boston. I chauffeured children in a station wagon to basketball games, where I helped to keep score. I felt different from the people I served because of my gender, race and clothing. After being attacked on the street, I left Boston and worked with a kindergarten education program in a poor part of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Later I was a special needs teacher at a Catholic school in Oregon. Another 13 years were spent at the marriage tribunal at the Diocese of Sacramento, California, where I prepared annulment briefs for canon lawyers and did history intakes. I also worked with children coping with the loss of their parents through divorce or death and did workshops on annulment at parishes to alleviate confusion about the topic. I enjoyed this time, because it aligned with my order’s charism promoting unity or “at-one-ment.” While in Sacramento I earned a Master’s Degree in family counseling. I counseled women at a rape crisis center as part of my coursework. Some of the pain from these women was just terrible. I elicited feelings and emotions from them to help them see the way.

I returned east in 1995 to care for my mother. I now live in my childhood home and in addition to teaching at St. Ambrose, I help to prepare confirmation candidates at All Saints on the Hudson Parish in Mechanicville/Stillwater. Outside my ministry at St. Ambrose, I continued my own artwork-portraits, landscapes, oils, watercolors and icon writing. I also carve out time for prayer, retreats and spiritual reading. Religious life requires continual recommitment. It’s like any vocation. Its got its hills and valleys. My advice for discerners is to pray and seek spiritual advisers. Religious Life, can free people from the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood but it gives them a different type of obligation. I enjoy being a part of a congregation of like-minded people in our goal to serve the Lord.”



Sister Vivian with students

Silver Jubilarian – Sister Helen Hadcock



Sister Helen Hadcock

Since January 1, 2015, I have been celebrating and savoring each day of my 25th Jubilee Year! The people, places, and events that I have encountered since August 11, 1990 have been remembered and celebrated in my heart, mind, and soul. I cannot say that it has been one singular incident that has been the most rewarding and life-giving because each person, place, and event has influenced the person I am today. The focus of this reflection is upon my gratitude for the countless opportunities and possibilities that Our Creator has bestowed upon me to know, love, serve and adore Him through the people, places and events of my lifetime.

I am grateful to the children who attended St. Cecilia's Day Nursery (New York City), St. Francis Xavier School (Winooski, VT), St. Joseph's School (Burlington, VT), and St. Mark's Religious Education Program (Burlington, VT) who imaged the innocence, kindness, and vitality of the Christ Child. I am grateful to the parents as they witnessed to me and others, the Blessed Mother's and Joseph's fiat to God's will for them in the joys and challenges of daily life. I am grateful to the friends and acquaintances with whom I ministered with at the various programs and my classmates and professors at St. Michael's College (Colchester, VT) who inspired me to grow in my own faith and holiness. I am grateful to the laity in Edmonton, Canada and Washington, DC who attested to the reality that God is continually calling each person into relationship with him. I witnessed how new learning of Church doctrine, the saints, or prayer drew individuals into a deeper relationship with God although the why, who, how or when is a mystery although God's blessings are not.

Presently, I am missioned in the Philippines participating in God's continuing dream of unity among all people. I am grateful for the opportunity to encounter God in the Philippine culture and environment. The young children and youth have accepted me and my questions as God is experienced in all and for all.

My life has been authenticated by the presence of wonderful women who have reminded me that I am a member of a dynamic congregation and church. No age, no physical disability, can prevent God's grace from becoming realized in a person's life. We are called to be in communion not only with God but with each other. I believe they discovered as I did the lingering invitation to come, to be, and know the Lord who loves and forgives.

As I end this reflection, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my family from whom I first experienced God's faithfulness and care. Their prayers and love have supported my journey toward the Lord and pray that my prayers have supported them, too. To quote Eli Wiesel, "For me, every hour is grace. And I feel gratitude in my heart each time I can meet someone and look at his or her smile".



Sister Helen (third from right) in ministry today in the Philippines.

Silver Jubilarian: Sister Kristine Koba



Sister Kristine Koba

In reflecting on her religious life Sister Kristine who comes from Akron, Ohio shares: “Back in 1987, I entered religious life with a background in business management. In the Postulancy in Vermont we, Sr. Helen Hadcock and I attended St. Michael’s College and loved learning about the church, philosophy and religion. In the afternoons I volunteered at the local battered women’s shelter. This was my first experience with shelter work. As a volunteer, my work involved taking care of the shelter more than the women. My ministry that year took place at the Washington Retreat House. As a postulant again my work was taking care of the facility not the retreatants.

Because of my work at the shelter in Burlington, Vermont, I was sent to my first ministry assignment in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada at the Lurana Shelter which at the time was an over-flow holding unit for the three area battered women’s shelters. This was my first ministerial assignment ever. It was very overwhelming. Many of the women there had come from horrific circumstances. To say the least I was not prepared to really help them so I often asked the other staff what to do. How can we truly help these women? The answer was to provide a safe place for them to be, to consider their options and formulate a future without violence in it. The Franciscan Sisters did this by providing this shelter. We clothed them, housed them, fed them, nurtured them and kept them and their children safe. I had no doubts that every day there I was doing the Lord’s work. I was missioned there for three years afterwards I was missioned to Emmanuel House in Roxbury, Mass.

I remember seeing Emmanuel House for the first time and realized we didn’t just serve the poor, we lived with them in their neighborhood. With bullet holes through the sky-light and lessons to the children as to what to do when area gangs started shooting, this was also a new experience for me. Originally I greeted our children and their families as they came in, helped with the rummage sales and food pantry and senior program - - all ministry all the time. The experience of “living over the store” stretched my sensibilities of the going to work and going home from work mentality, that in the words of our foundress “This is a life to be lived not a work to be done.” Eventually, I became the Administrative Director and helped with the fund-raising and grant proposal writing. During my stay there I attend Emmanuel College and obtained a Master’s in Pastoral Ministry.

After nine years, my aged parents were a concern and I am blessed to be in a congregation that let me return to my home town in Ohio to be accessible to them. While there I worked for the local Catholic Charities office in an administrative capacity. Since my parents were doing well, I left them and went to Graymoor to work in the Treasury Department. Eventually my parents’ health declined severely and I was allowed to return home to live with them as their caregiver. In January 2015, I lost my father and still have my 90-year-old mother who is burdened with Parkinson’s and blind from macular degeneration. This experience has grown my patience and understanding of the elderly. At this writing, I continue to commute to Graymoor for one week a month to assist in our Treasury Department.”



Sister Kristine at work in her office.