

Lurana's Star

FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF ATONEMENT
41 Old Highland Turnpike
Garrison, NY 10524
www.graymoor.org

EDITORS
Sister M. Eilish Sweeney SA
Betsaida Cohen
developmentoffice@graymoor.org

2014

SPRING

No. 2



This unique building, the Shrine of Our Lady of the Atonement and the first foundation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement in Canada, back in 1926, is in Smoky Lake, Alberta. Many other missions were soon to follow. This Edition of Lurana's Star shares their stories.

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



Sister Eilish

Dear Friend,

Those of us who are familiar with Graymoor's early days are known to have often stated: "We have a wonderful history." When one reflects on the challenges put before Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White, both members of the Episcopalian Church, and drawn together to form two religious communities yet one Society within their own denomination one has to admire their determination and their trust in God. Ten years later they took another leap in Faith as they responded to God's call to become one with Rome and established themselves in the Catholic Church.

In preparing for this Edition of Lurana's Star, I found it fascinating to be reminded once more, that when our Foundress, Mother Lurana, responded to the requests made to her back in 1926 to assist in meeting the missionary needs of the church in Canada, it was not for the Canadian natives themselves but rather for the new immigrant people coming to their land. The first request came from Archbishop O'Leary of Edmonton who had as many as 20,000 Ukrainian and Slavish people in his diocese.

The second request came from a Franciscan tertiary, a native of England and a recent convert from Anglicanism to the Roman Catholic Church, Miss Kathleen O'Melia. This dedicated and energetic English woman had already been working among the Japanese people in Vancouver since 1903 and had become very much a part of what was well known throughout the Vancouver area as the Vancouver Japanese Mission School, established back in 1912. As she worked side by side with the Diocese of Vancouver Miss O'Melia must have been overwhelmed with joy when Mother Lurana accepted Bishop Timothy Casey's invitation to

come to his diocese. Our Sisters finally arrived there on October 16, 1926.

By that time Kathleen O'Melia had already left for Graymoor and joined our congregation as a Postulant on July 26, 1926. After her First Profession on May 8, 1928 Kathleen, now known as Sister Mary Stella returned to Vancouver where she remained until her death on September 5, 1939. She is buried among the Japanese people whom she loved so much.

Our first mission in Smoky Lake, Edmonton Diocese, flourished in its own way as our Sisters undertook the ministry entrusted to them in meeting the needs of the thousands of Ukrainian and Slavish people. There is a very touching story that occurred during the first Christmas our Sisters were in Smoky Lake. One of our Sisters who spoke both Polish and Ukrainian, entering the tiny convent chapel one morning, found an elderly Ukrainian woman, with the native bright shawl over her head, prostrate on the floor in front of the altar. Seeing that she was weeping, the Sister bent over her to inquire why, and the reply was, "Sister, this is the first time I have been in God's presence since leaving Russia, forty years ago."

Over the eighty-eight years since our Sisters first went to Canada in 1926 we have had as many as seventeen missions throughout Canada mostly throughout British Columbia, Edmonton, Alberta and on the East Coast at East Saint John, as well as ministering among the people in sixty-seven other area towns and villages. So many of our great missionaries, several of whom are now being cared for at our Lurana Health Care Residence here at Graymoor or in Canada, gave their all in service to the Church and to the people of God in this great country.

With this edition of Lurana's Star I am pleased to introduce to you ten of our Sisters both young and old who are still touching the lives of so many good people in one way or another.

Wishing you and your family a blessed Lenten Season and a glorious and Happy Easter. God bless you all.

Gratefully,

Sister M. Eilish Sweeney

Atonement Mission and Ministry

Our series continues



Sister Agnes Marie will celebrate her 95th birthday on November 20, 2014. She is proud of her long life and has much to share. “I was born November 20, 1919 in Violette, Alberta, Canada. My given name is Elizabeth Marie Moric. I received my education in the country schools.

The first time that I met the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement, was back in 1931 when Mother Lurana White, Sister Clare Marie Nenzel, Sister Anastasia & Sister Bonaventura were at my grandmother, Anna Moric’s home, out on the farm in the Vilna district. I was 12 years old. Father Rooney was the pastor at Smoky Lake, Alberta at Our Lady of the Atonement Shrine. He brought the Sisters for an outing. They had dinner at my grandmother’s home. My grandmother, Uncle Stanley, Aunt Annie and Aunt Mary all felt it was an honor and a privilege to have a Foundress of a religious order and other Sisters come and eat at their home. I remember Mother Foundress made the Sign of the Cross over my head and she said to me, ‘Someday you’ll be blessed by God.’

Over the years I stayed in touch with the Sisters at Smoky Lake and became very close to Sister Clare Marie Nenzel. Sister often invited me to visit the Sisters and in God’s good time, March 25, 1943, I entered the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement at Graymoor in New York.

After my Profession in 1944 I returned to Canada with Sister Regina Koelzer and Sister Paul Eugene to open our new mission in Michel/Natal, British Columbia where I spent many wonderful years.

In the years that followed I ministered in Steveston and Natal teaching religion, taking the parish census, visiting the families, organizing clubs

for the children, and doing manual work when needed.

In 1968 I was transferred to the Atonement Home in Edmonton, Alberta. I was the cook for the Sisters and for the children that lived at our home. After 20 years, in 1988, I transferred next door to St. Joseph’s Convent, our Retirement Home for the senior Sisters. This beautiful home has always been considered a power house of prayer! I was the assistant cook to Sister Lucille Hassey. I also loved to plant flowers in our window boxes each Spring! I was always a ‘farm girl’ at heart!

In 2007, due to a broken ankle I ended up in a hospital and later at Youville Home run by the Grey Nuns in St. Albert, Alberta where one of my cousins in also being cared for. I visit him on a regular basis, and we talk about where we grew up on the farm in Vilna, Alberta. I’m happy living at Youville Home.”



Sister Lucille Hassey, a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement for 67 years was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. As a child, Sister’s family moved to what she refers to as “the farm”.

As a young woman Sister Lucille, inspired by her friend and neighbor Sister Agnes Marie Moric, left her native land and joined our congregation. She came to Graymoor in 1946 and was professed in 1948.

Sister Lucille writes: “My first mission was a newly opened mission in Canajoharie, New York. I had a religion class and visited the sick in a nursing home. We also taught summer school religion classes. Being a Canadian, after one year on the mission, I returned to Canada and was transferred to Edmonton, Alberta. There I cooked for the Sisters and children at the Atonement Home.

Once a week I visited the Catholic patients in the local hospital. In later years I also spent 10 years working with the little boys ages 2-5 years at the Home as well.

In 1963 I was transferred to Rome and Assisi, Italy. There I did household duties. I returned to Edmonton and cooked again, then it was off to Golden, British Columbia. Later I was transferred to the USA at Mother Lurana Home at Graymoor. I finally retired and I am now living at St. Joseph's Convent in Edmonton, Alberta. It is lovely to be living so near to St. Maria Goretti Church as I am able to attend Mass and all parish functions. It is a ministry just to keep in contact with the people."



Sister Cecilia Marie Hensel

Sister Cecilia Marie Hensel, a native of New Sarepta, Canada has been an active member of our congregation for over 65 years. Except for the five years she spent on missions in the United States, Sister Cecilia Marie has been serving her church and her native people in Canada. Since 1987 some twenty-seven, years Sister has been a missionary in Revelstoke, British Columbia. It is one of the most beautiful towns in Canada. Sister, in reflecting on her missionary journey shares the following.

"I serve the people in the parish of St. Francis of Assisi in Revelstoke. My ministry today is Religious Education Coordinator. I am also responsible for all liturgical events, Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, RCIA and working with and helping people get involved with the ministry as well. It is my hope that the people become confident enough within themselves to participate in the ministry on their own. Down through the years we've had some wonderful people assist us in our mission. I also visit families and the elderly, both in the parish and in the housing development where I live.

The future of the parish is uncertain. Enrollment is low and the community has aged, however, I continue to serve faithfully, and look after the many needs of the parish. Currently we have a priest from the Philippines and I try my best to be of assistance to him."



Sister Margaret Fujisawa

Sister Margaret Fujisawa, a first generation Japanese born and raised in Vancouver, Canada, and a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement for sixty-three years is alive and well at the great age of ninety-two. Her twin sister, Sister Catherine Marie, also a Sister of the Atonement died on September 17, 2005.

Since her First Profession at Graymoor on May 16, 1953, Sister Margaret's missionary assignments took her back to Vancouver then on to Japan for seven years, to New York State, California and eventually back to Vancouver where she has been for the past forty years.

Sister Margaret has always been active in local parish ministries, while living and working with our own Sisters at St. Paul's Parish, Vancouver where she worked side by side with many volunteers in providing a daily feeding program for hundreds of local people. Over the years she also ministered to the Japanese and Korean families living in Vancouver and surrounding areas of the city.

Our congregational ministry in St. Paul's Parish area has come to an end after 85 dedicated years because of age and fewer Sisters. However, the ministry to the people in that area of the city of Vancouver continues because the Archdiocese has welcomed the Sisters of Charity (Mother Teresa's congregation) to assist them in meeting the needs of the less fortunate in our society today.

Sister Margaret, who walks sixteen blocks each day for exercise continues her ministry to the Japanese and Korean families in the city. Sister Margaret also visits many families in their homes and brings Holy Communion to those who are no longer able to attend Mass on their own.

We wish Sister Margaret many more years of life, energy and dedication as she continues to minister to others in her home town, the beautiful city of Vancouver.



Sister Betty J. Wilms

Sister Betty J. Wilms, another great missionary from Vancouver, Canada has been a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement for over sixty-five years.

Since her Profession at Graymoor back in 1950 Sister Betty ministered in various cities and towns throughout California such as: Woodland, Buhack, Placerville, Oildale, Lindsay and San Diego. Like most of us back in those days Sister was very active in various forms of parish ministries: religious education, altar servers, parish census and youth clubs.

In 1958 Sister returned to the East Coast and joined our Sisters in Deal, NJ where together they met the needs of the children and families in the surrounding areas. Over the years Sister also spent some time at our missions both in Utah and Oregon.

In 1986 Sister returned to Canada to assist her ailing aunt who was living alone in Parksville, Vancouver Island. Once again, Sister found herself very active and involved in various parish ministries as well as visiting nursing homes and hospitals.

On behalf of our community Sister Betty worked very closely with several of our Sisters as they studied the prospect of forming an Associate Program within our congregation. She was active in forming Guidelines and a Guidebook for applicants. Sister Betty was one of our first Sisters to establish an Associate Program within her parish and the first to have a commissioning ceremony.

Thanks to the efforts of Sister Betty and her co-workers, we, the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement have approximately 120 associates today. All of our associates, thirty of whom are active in Canada, are a tremendous source of support in so many ways.

Today, Sister Betty is being well cared for in an Assisted Living/Nursing Care Facility on the Island she loves, Vancouver Island. Our wish today is that Sister Betty can continue for many years to come to enjoy the many blessings God has sent her way.



Sister Christina Marie Fuoco, a native of Revelstoke, British Columbia has been a member of our congregation for fifty-six years. Those who know Sister very well also know that she is a gifted musician. You will find no one better on the accordion. She never needs a note of music. What a gift. She has brought so much joy to our Sisters and all those whom she has ministered to over the years.

Sister Christina's early mission experiences were in Amsterdam and Cadyville in New York State where she taught Religious Education classes to children of all ages. Her sense of humor and musical ability enhanced her teaching methods and her bonding with teenagers especially. Youth choirs were sure to sprout up wherever Sister was assigned.

Since 1965 most of Sister Christina's assignments were in her native land, Canada. They included Saint John's East, New Brunswick, Sparwood and Castlegar, British Columbia, Edmonton and Camrose, Alberta.

Due to her declining health Sister Christina Marie is now living at Providence Centre Infirmiry where she is being well cared for, attends daily Mass, has ample time for personal prayer and reflection as well as socializing with other residents. Reflecting on the blessings in her life Sister Christina Marie recently shared the following with family, friends and community.

“An 87 year young Sister who plays the violin and myself on keyboard team up together to provide music for the sing-a-longs and birthday parties. We are known as The Infirmiry Duo. We enjoy playing the golden oldies—Lawrence Welk style.

The mystery of my journey of life continues to unfold with many surprises. I strive to be attentive to each moment -- Emptied of the familiar, I await the unknown — God is not yet finished with me!

Each new day provides another opportunity to give thanks for the many blessings received through the members of my religious community, family & friends.”



Sister Marianne Rohrer, a native of Atwater, CA, has been ministering in Vancouver, British Columbia since September 2000. Sister Marianne joined our Sisters at our Cordova Street Mission in responding to the daily needs of the men and women in

need of various types of support such as; food, clothing and just a listening ear.

As earlier mentioned, this great ministry came to an end in 2011 and is now under the direction of the Vancouver Archdiocese and the Sisters of Charity.

In recent years Sister Marianne has been ministering in Sacred Heart Parish and shares the following: "I am responsible for the PREP program -- Parish Religion Ed Program. I meet with the parents once a month and find great joy in encouraging parents to minister to each other, and sharing their wisdom in raising their children. In addition I visit parishioners, celebrate communion services and I'm also the bookkeeper for the parishes. There are three small churches in this area, St. Paul's, St. Kateri Centre and Sacred Heart.

I am also coordinating Mary's Place, situated next door to our old convent on Cordova Street. Twice a week, volunteers and I welcome women from the neighborhood to come in for a hot drink, sandwiches, pastries and lots of vitamins (candy). It is a safe place to be, free of all the noise and distractions of the street. The site is attached to St. Paul's Church so for some of the women, they feel the presence of God. (I'm here with God and feel safe.) Even though the room is small, about 40 women will come through in the 2 hours, twice a week that Mary's Place is open. Each woman is greeted by name and served by our faithful volunteers. We try to listen to the stories that are told, not giving advice but just offering the peace filled stance of presence.

Recently, I was able to help Ellen who told me that she kept falling into the street. She needed glasses and couldn't find the clinic. I took her by bus, 12 blocks away because she was too afraid to go outside of her comfort zone, alone. She is so

grateful now with her glasses.

Mary, suffering from stomach cancer, speaks of who God is for her. When she leaves, each time, she can be seen touching the door leading into St. Paul's Church and saying quietly, 'Goodbye, God'.

Today, Anne shared that she has a son, but wasn't able to raise him.

Clare was so excited because she will be able to spend Christmas with her sisters after 17 years away.

And Ellie comes and sits away from the others just to enjoy the peace and quiet she can't find anywhere else.

At Mary's Place, I am again reminded of the importance of 'just being'. The temptation to judge, to try to take away pain and suffering, is tempting and maybe easier than 'just being present'. My year and a half, being part of Mary's Place, has definitely given me a deeper sense of humility and gratefulness. What I receive from the women during the two days that I am with them has grounded me to be more accepting of those I meet in the other areas of my ministry. And I believe that this is exactly what God has in mind for me. Praise God!"



Sister Hope Marie Fulkco

Another native of Canada, Sister Hope Marie Fulkco comes from the beautiful island of Nakusp, British Columbia. Sister first met the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement through summer school religion classes. Our sisters would come from Revelstoke, British Columbia,

to teach the children in Nakusp for two weeks in July.

Sister shares: "It was Sister Mary Oliver Bredin who asked me if I had ever thought of becoming a Sister. I was in the 8th grade at the time, and from that moment the seed was planted in me in becoming a Sister. I entered the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement at Graymoor, Garrison, New York on September 27, 1962."

In the years that followed Sister's Profession, she ministered in Hogansburg, New York where she taught religion classes to the native Mohawk Indians and the Caucasian children as well as home and hospital visiting. Over the years Sister also ministered in upstate New York, California, and New Hampshire. In returning to Canada, Sister Hope Marie worked at our Atonement Home for children. Sister was responsible for 50 boys ages 2-16 years old.

Sister continues: "The community asked me to go into nursing. I started out as an LPN then 5 years later studied to be an RN. I nursed at our motherhouse infirmary & back to Edmonton and worked as a child care worker and then returned to the USA and nursed at Mount Alverno Centre in Warwick, New York. (Warwick was the place our Mother Foundress, Mother Lurana Mary White, grew up before she founded the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement.)

While nursing in Warwick, I did a lot of research at the church that Mother Lurana attended, and also went to museums and the cemetery in search of Mother Lurana's family history.

From there I nursed at Holy Name Friary in Ringwood, New Jersey. Their infirmary was filled with Franciscan Friars, OFM. They were always grateful for the care they received. Then it was back to California and I nursed at Placerville Pines Convalescent Hospital.

Today I am at St. Joseph's Convent in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada caring for our elderly Sisters.

Since I've returned to Edmonton, I've been involved with the Youth Group from St. Maria Goretti Parish. I accompanied a group of them to World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain, that was quite an experience! I also pick up elderly people and take them to Sunday Mass, and sometimes take them to do their grocery shopping. I visit our Sisters in the nursing home and keep busy with the needs at our convent.

I'm very happy being called to the religious life of the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement."



Sister Joanne Macaulay who comes to us from the town of Steveston, Vancouver tells us: "St. Joseph the Worker Parish was responsible for nurturing my early years of faith.

In the 11th grade we began to think about our future careers. I had cared for my brothers, sisters, cousins and neighbors and felt that I would like to work with young children. Teaching in school did not appeal to me. One afternoon a Sister of the Cenacle and a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement came to talk to us about Religious Life. As the Franciscan Sister of the Atonement talked about the Residential Care Facility in Edmonton, I felt a stirring in my heart. The seed of my vocation had been planted.

Eventually, my journey took me to Graymoor, New York for formation. My dream of working with young children was fulfilled when I ministered in the Day Care Center in Vancouver, B.C. Like most Religious I had Mission experiences in several places -- Lincoln, New Hampshire, Revelstoke B.C., and now in Edmonton, Alberta.

Soon after I arrived in Edmonton I became ill with a serious auto-immune disease. My journey to health led me to search for ways to live a fuller life. At a retreat I heard about energy healing. I met teachers and took courses where I learned that in healing myself I would be able to share healing with others. I have continued to live a healthy life which keeps the auto-immune disease in remission.

Now I am the treasurer serving on our corporation and society boards. I am also a Faith Minister in our Franciscan Centre. I present sessions on Franciscan Spirituality to individuals who come to our centre. My dream is to build the programs that are presented in the Franciscan Centre and that more persons will come to share faith, learn about the Franciscan Saints and deepen their spiritual life."



Sr. Lucinda May Patterson

Sister Lucinda May Patterson, in reflecting on her call to religious life, shares the following: "Jonah's adventure is one I can relate to when I was discerning what God had in store for me as a vocation.

For many years I thought my vocation was to be married and raise a large family, twelve children, six adopted and six natural, but my knight in shining armor never made an appearance.

When I learned about the vocation for consecrated life, I immersed myself in finishing my education, knowing the invitation or call I was experiencing to religious life was a mistake by God. After graduating from the University with a teaching degree, and after seven years of teaching, volunteering as a Girl Scout Leader and five years as a catechist, I realized God was still waiting. 'What will you do for my people?' was a question I could not shake loose from.

I met the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement in Douglas, Georgia. When I got involved as a catechist, my curiosity started rising. I asked one of the Sisters if she had a book about Saint Francis. Though I was very content as an educator, there was still a missing piece in my life. I attended a vocation weekend held at Graymoor. After receiving an invitation to return to Graymoor for a month during school break. I witnessed love, joy and was filled with a peace and wholeness when I walked and hiked on the holy grounds of Graymoor. A dream assisted me in

knowing my vocation was to consecrated life when all the children I had a chance to work with were in it. I knew then there would be children in my life, just none of my own. All I can say is MY GOODNESS! Have there ever been children in my life.

The ministries in Edmonton over the years have been to some of the most vulnerable children and adults. For sixteen years, I was Executive Director for Lurana Shelter which provides programming with emergency sheltering as a component for women with or without children fleeing domestic violence. I have had the privilege of meeting over 12,000 women and children. I was present for the birth of one of our client's baby. I will never forget hearing his cry before he was totally delivered. As of February 2014 I have been appointed to work with our other ministry in Edmonton, Alberta known as the Franciscan Centre. I am looking forward to being creative by growing what we do. I pray next year at this time, you will be reading about aspirants coming into our community from Edmonton, Alberta. The ministry of the Franciscan Centre involves exploring and praying with Saint Francis and Saint Clare, along with exploring and praying with the charism of the Atonement Sisters and Friars and getting to know about our Founders, Mother Lurana and Father Paul. An education center for children living in domestic violence homes is in process and will be launched in our new fiscal year 2014-2015, along with launching a House of Welcome for women interested in the vocation of consecrated life. Last but not least, I know by the peace within, in spite of chaos around me, that this is the vocation God has called me to live."



Sisters' Gift Shop Graymoor

Shop 6 days a week 9am-4pm
(closed on 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