

That all may know the Savior



SISTERS OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR

Salvatorian News

FALL 2015

focus



Dear Friends,

Two months into my term as Provincial Leader for our North American Province, I'm settling in. I think back to last February, when our sisters chose new leadership after months of prayerful discernment. We gathered around tables adorned with words of our co-founder Fr. Francis Jordan: Go forward faithfully and courageously on the path Providence shows.

And so we go forward: faithfully – with your prayers of support, and courageously – with God's hand guiding us every step of the way. Many models of faith and courage in our elder Salvatorian Sisters inspire us. For many years, they ventured into unknown places to serve God's people. Their faith and courage endure today, as they celebrate 65 and 70 years of profession, and adapt their longtime ministries to the limitations of aging.

We call on that same faith and courage as our congregation departs from the village of St. Nazianz, where we've had a continuous presence for 119 years. We're grateful for the love and prayers of that tight-knit Wisconsin community as we close a long chapter in the legacy of the Sisters of the Divine Savior.

That same faith and courage feeds the soul of Mary Kay Balchunas, who we'll honor as our 2015 Woman of Faith on September 17. We hope many of you in the Milwaukee area will join us that evening. I welcome the opportunity to meet those of you who can.

In the Savior,

Sister Beverly Heitke, S.D.S.

Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS
Provincial Leader

Call to religious life is for *life*

"Retired sisters" is an oxymoron if there ever was one.

Sr. Mary Frost blogged about it in her April 28th post entitled, "Am I retired?" Likewise, Sr. Virginia Honish says since retiring from her 30-year ministry in education, coordinating care at our Salvatorian Sisters Residence (SSR) in Milwaukee keeps her on her toes.

SSR is home for 20 members of our congregation. One of those members is Sr. Maria Elena Arias, who celebrates 65 years of vowed religious life this year. She taught 32 years at Escuela Vieau School, the first bilingual elementary school in Milwaukee. She officially retired in 2000, but Sr. Maria Elena couldn't turn off her compassion for the needs of Vieau School families from the Hispanic community. Today, she continues to connect with families through Vieau to help them make Milwaukee their home. She translates for them, and helps them find work, housing, and needed services through Goodwill and St. Vincent de Paul Society.

These families trust Sr. Maria Elena because she is a sister and, being born and raised in Colombia, she's fluent in Spanish and English. Sr. Maria Elena loves her ministry and says, "These families do more for me than I can do for them. They need help, and I feel needed." Like many elder sisters, Sr. Maria Elena has adapted her beloved ministry over time.

Sr. Maria Elena looks back on her mother as a big influence on her vocation. She shares a story about her mother's generosity toward orphaned children in her home town of Bogotá. Sr. Maria Elena vividly remembers coming home from school at

age 6 or 7, and seeing a little girl on the street wearing a brightly colored dress that fit her perfectly. She thought to herself, "What are you doing with my dress?" and then ran home to ask her mom, "Why does she have my dress?" Her mother's reply was simple but held a lifelong lesson about compassion. "You have everything you need and this little girl needs a dress." Sr.

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Sr. Maria Elena Arias formed a special bond with Milwaukee's Hispanic community when she taught at the city's first bilingual elementary school, Escuela Vieau.

New leaders go forward on the path Providence shows



Pictured from left to right: Sr. Nelda Hernandez, new Provincial Councilor, and Sr. Beverly Heitke, new Provincial Leader, join Sr. Ellen Sinclair in her second term as Vicareess for the North American Province.



Fr. Hauser's friendship was the tie that binds

When Fr. Gerald Hauser passed away in February this year, memories poured forth from his ever-widening friendship circle in 69 years as a priest with the Milwaukee Archdiocese. Perhaps his greatest gift was bringing people together to forge new friendships.



In 2013, Fr. Hauser generously offered to sponsor a bus pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help near Green Bay. His gesture brought together the Sisters of the Divine Savior and people served by the Milwaukee Archdiocese Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry. Fr. Hauser saw it as a way to honor his recently deceased friend Alvin Deinlein, who was deaf and a faithful supporter of the Salvatorian Sisters. In turn, our sisters welcomed the opportunity to host the bus trip in gratitude for Fr. Hauser's longtime friendship and support of our mission and ministries.

Sr. Susan Staff, SDS remembers Fr. Hauser as a great story teller who laughed at his own jokes. She also shares how the Sisters of the Divine Savior came to fill a special

place in his heart. When he first served as director of the Albert Cardinal Meyer Institute (ACMI) in the 1970s, Fr. Hauser typed all his own letters to invite priests and sisters to attend ACMI presentations. Sr. Helene Patefield, SDS, North American Provincial at the time, was among those who

attended. Her friendship with Fr. Hauser eventually paved the way for Sr. Susan to serve as his associate at the institute for many years. During that time she and Fr. Hauser hosted worldwide pilgrimages to raise funds for the institute and became loyal friends.

Sr. Susan says the single thing in Fr. Hauser's life he was most proud of was his priesthood. A final tribute to Fr. Hauser by colleague Fr. Steve Avella rings true to Sr. Susan's claim. "So many of you have rich memories of this good man and excellent priest, who was not perfect, but who tried with every ounce of his being to excel at everything that pertained to the Kingdom of God." ☩

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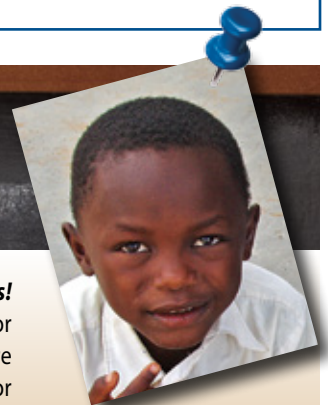
— 2 Cor 10:16-17

The Sisters of the Divine Savior are deeply grateful to an anonymous grantor for generously funding projects to help children and families in three Salvatorian missions:

- **Sri Lanka** to build 20 small homes with electricity for "roofless" families who need shelter
- **Tanzania** to buy cooking stoves for a large hostel and for our formation house and convent
- **Philippines** to support the rights and well-being of 200 children and women in 10 parishes

Generosity x YOU = Hope

Picture bright-eyed children on the first day of school. Now, imagine the smiles you helped put on their faces! Your combined gifts ranging from \$1 to \$10,000 will provide a year's tuition for 74 students at Complex Salvator School in the Democratic Republic of Congo. There's great strength in numbers when you join together to share your prayerful gifts for a cause. For children growing up in the Congo's Diocese of Kolwezi, education offers hope for economic, social and spiritual wholeness. It's a promise for a fuller life. Our Congolese Salvatorian Sisters are working to keep that promise to their local people, and we are deeply grateful to each one of you who helps make it possible.



Thank you!

Ever Faithful September Jubilarians



Sisters of the Divine Savior who will be honored at a jubilee liturgy in September gathered for a picture in the courtyard at Salvatorian Sisters Residence in Milwaukee. Jubilarians from left to right are: Sr. Margaret Bosch, 70th jubilee; and Srs. Maria Elena Arias, Teresa Rebholz (Jacinta), Jean Marie Hauck, and Patricia Wieloch (Salesia), all celebrating their 65th jubilee.

Farewell liturgy celebrates our heritage in St. Nazianz

A special Mass and reception at St. Gregory's Church on August 22 was both a farewell to the beloved community of St. Nazianz, Wis. and a celebration of thanksgiving for our Salvatorian Sisters' 119-year presence in the tight-knit village in the Diocese of Green Bay.

The first Sisters of the Divine Savior arrived in St. Nazianz in 1896. Their early ministries included home nursing care, teaching, and sewing church linens and vestments. Within three years, our sisters were also providing kitchen and laundry services for the Salvatorian Seminary at St. Nazianz.



By 1912, Sisters of the Divine Savior were cultivating farm land and tending to cows, pigs and chickens. When Salvatorian priests started giving retreats in 1924, our sisters provided room and board for their guests. Later, they extended room and board to young women who worked in the Salvatorian priests' printing office. The sisters also began baking altar breads, and by 1947 were supplying them to 100 parishes in Wisconsin, Alabama, Michigan and Pennsylvania. Our sisters continued their altar bread apostolate until 1992. At its peak in the 1960s, they were packing seven million altar breads annually, while also tending a large garden, apple orchard and vineyard.

There are many more memories from our century-long presence among the St. Nazianz community, but now the most visible reminder will be markers at St. Gregory Cemetery where 63 of our sisters are buried. Sisters Jane Barman, SDS and Rita Faust, SDS, the last two Sisters of the Divine Savior remaining in the village since 2000, have now departed St. Nazianz to join our community members serving in Portage, Wis. ☩

Our sisters' recipe for altar bread read simply: seven measures of fine white flour, two quarts of cold water. Then stir until it has no more lumps.

No more whispers

The crime of human trafficking has slowly emerged from the shadows. It's a crime the Sisters of the Divine Savior have been fighting for almost 15 years.

In 2001, our international congregation led by Sister Jean Schafer, SDS, chose human anti-trafficking as one of our top mission priorities. Since then, we have established several anti-trafficking missions around the world.

Now we are expanding our anti-trafficking efforts with a more unified network of Salvatorian Sisters, and strengthening our collaboration with other women's religious congregations and international groups.

In early August, Salvatorian Sisters speaking a dozen languages and representing 22 areas from around the world gathered at our Villa Maria Motherhouse in Rome to begin building this global anti-trafficking network. Sr. Ellen Sinclair represented our province at the conference.

In a Eucharistic celebration on the opening day, Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo from the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences noted our sisters' leadership in anti-trafficking efforts, years before the Vatican began addressing this modern-day form of slavery. He encouraged us to continue our important work, as we seek ways to share resources and exchange strategies to raise awareness, support survivors, and advocate for stronger anti-trafficking laws.

More than 35 million people are in slavery today – more than any other time in our history. This figure from the Global Slavery Index – and the heartbreaking experiences of trafficking survivors – have given our sisters new resolve. Greater awareness about the crime of human trafficking has also moved the hearts of generous people here and around the world to support our anti-trafficking initiatives. Thank you for your prayers and support of this vital ministry. You are helping us build a strong global network to combat this crime against humanity. ☩

2015 Woman of Faith heals souls wounded by violence

Mary Kay Balchunas has grieved the loss of a loved one to the kind of violence that besieges Milwaukee and our nation. Her son, Jay Balchunas was gunned down in Milwaukee while serving as a Department of Justice special agent in 2004. Since then, Mary Kay has channeled her grief by reaching out to survivors of violence, trauma response teams, and law enforcement personnel.

Mary Kay speaks from her heart about the need to address violence from a faith perspective. Her message couldn't be more poignant, as communities desperately seek answers to what many call an epidemic. Mary Kay will share her healing message of hope and forgiveness when the Sisters of the Divine Savior honor her with our 2015 Woman of Faith Award in September.

The Woman of Faith Award program began in 2001 to shine a light on local women whose lives exemplify Gospel-inspired service to people in need. Eric Szatkowski

"Chaplaincy is a calling from God. What Jay's death has done has given me a deeper knowledge of what some of the families I work with go through. It has deepened my sense of compassion and empathy."

— Mary Kay Balchunas



nominated Mary Kay for this year's award. He worked with her son at the Department of Justice, and his nomination captures the strength and courage he witnessed in Mary Kay at Jay's funeral Mass. "Even in the face of such unfathomable grief, she honored her son's memory with a deeply moving eulogy based on Christian values of service, love and even forgiveness."

As Eric points out in his nomination, Mary Kay had already been living an exemplary Christian life as a certified Catholic chaplain. She retired from her full-time ministry at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in December 2014, but continues speaking across the country about death in the line of duty, violent crime and forgiveness, and

spirituality as a means to cope with loss.

Two years ago, Mary Kay addressed the Midwest Conference of Mayors Against Illegal Guns. A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reporter who covered the conference wrote, "With a soft but steady voice, Balchunas made it clear she wasn't there to advocate for specific laws and measures... She was there to talk about her son, Jay. To put a human face on gun violence." Afterwards in an interview, Mary Kay told the reporter that she and her husband Don are at peace with their son's death, saying, "We try to be better than we were before in Jay's honor."

Their tragic personal loss also prompted Mary Kay and Don to establish two scholarships in Jay's name. Scholarship funds at Marquette University and Waukesha County Technical College benefit students aspiring to public service in law enforcement and firefighting, respectively.

Until she learned she was chosen for our 2015 Woman of Faith Award, Mary Kay never knew how her eulogy 11 years ago changed Eric Szatkowski's life path. His nomination of Mary Kay concludes, "Her actions that day helped inspire me to pursue a career as a chaplain upon my retirement from law enforcement." ☩



WOMAN OF Faith AWARD

Please join us to honor

Mary Kay Balchunas

Healing souls wounded by violence
with her ministry of hope and forgiveness

Thursday, September 17, 2015 • 7:00 p.m.

SDS Community House • 4311 N. 100th Street, Milwaukee

Please register for this free event by September 11.

Go online: www.sistersofthedivinesavior.org/2015wof Or call: 414-466-7414



Call to religious life *continued from page 1*

Maria Elena remembers to this day how she felt and her mom's generous heart.

Sr. Maria Elena says she always felt loved as a child and dreamed of becoming a teacher. She realized her dream after getting to know

Sr. Maria Elena continues to serve the needs of young Hispanic families through her longtime association with Milwaukee's Vieau School.

Salvatorian priests with the Society of the Divine Savior at her school in Colombia. In 1948, she came to the U.S. to enter the Sisters of the Divine Savior. She loves being a sister and shares her favorite Scripture passage from the Gospel of John, saying simply, "God is love." Sharing that love with Vieau School families long after retiring from her teaching ministry still brings great joy to Sr. Maria Elena's heart. ☩