



DMJlink

Daughters of Mary and Joseph ▪ California Region ▪ Spring/Summer 2025

Hope is the belief that your future
will be better than today,
and you have the power
to make it so.

-Chan Hellman



Spring/Summer 2025

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DMJlink is a publication of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. It has a twofold purpose:

- to inform its members of the involvement of our Sisters in mission and ministry;
- to acknowledge the generosity of our donors.

All material submitted for the *DMJlink* is subject to revision and/or editing.

Editorial Policy:

The mailing list for the *DMJlink* is **not** made available to any outside business firm or organization.



Dear friends and benefactors,

Greetings from all of us! Since we are still celebrating the resurrection of our Lord, it is not too late to wish you a happy Easter Season!

Easter season is a time filled with hope. Late last year, Pope Francis declared 2025 as the Jubilee Year of Hope. In his message he wrote, "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision." In the light of this, we would like to thank you, our friends for sharing with us the flame of hope that the Holy Father denoted. Thank you for helping us to remain hope for our world.

Every day, we remember you, our donors and benefactors in our prayers and each year, in March when the sisters in the region gather, we dedicate an hour of prayer for you. We read out your names and hold you in a prayer of thanksgiving. You are part of our life and you give us hope to keep our eyes gazed to the Lord as we scan the horizon to reach out to the world and its peoples. You have been bearers of hope and new life for us throughout the years. We continue to rejoice and give thanks for you, for your prayer, generosity and many acts of kindness which have supported us in so many ways.

In this issue of the DMJ Link, you will note that two of our Sisters: Sr. Julia Costello and Sr. Ellen Mary were born to eternal life. May they Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory. We thank God for their years of living and sharing the charism of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph with the many people whom they touched. You will also share with us the joy of celebrating Sr. Anna O'Reilly's 70 years of vowed life and generous service to the Lord. Enjoy reading these stories.

Our world today, more than ever needs the charism of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph: Instruments of Mercy in God's Hand. We continue to hold the world and all it entails in our prayer and reach out to those we meet in our apostolates. Because you are with us, we look to the future with hope. May God bless all of us as we live our Founder's advice: "You are the instruments of the mercy of God. Let no difficulty stand in the way of this ministry."

We would like to end with Pope Francis words, "For all of us, let us journey together in hope and may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope." And indeed, may it be!

-Sister Pascazia Kinkuhaire, DMJ

Our Mission:

We are an international community of vowed religious women. We are committed to deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship manifests itself as an individual and corporate response to the needs of today's world. Our mission is to be a compassionate, joyful presence enabling those to whom we minister to recognize their value and dignity. We are dedicated to sharing the merciful love of God with all who experience brokenness or poverty in any form.

Our Vision:

"Be there for the whole Church, be there as a pardoned sinner who has found peace and rejoices in the merciful love of God."

~ Msgr. William Van Crombrughe, Founder

Keeping Hope Alive

There's no better time to reflect on Hope than during Spring. What has been silently growing for several months in the darkness under the soil, now gradually emerges, bringing a vast panorama of color to our gardens and parks, and genuine delight to the hearts of all. One can even see this phenomenon in the cracks in pavements! Life pushing through the hard concrete – surely an amazing sign of God's Spirit present in the whole web of creation!



It is well known that Nature's ongoing marvels support and nourish our faith life too. How often Scripture draws us into Creation where we recognize our Creator and the processes of nature, and nudges us to reflect on those patterns of growth in our spiritual lives. During this Season of Eastertide, our entire Christian journey is laid out for us in the Readings of the liturgies – all full of hope as we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. St. Paul reminds us that "Hope does not disappoint", Romans 5:5. and "If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit dwelling in you", Romans 8:11.

This year is a special one to walk as "Pilgrims of Hope", a term used by Pope Francis in his designation of 2025 as a Holy Year. What does that mean for us? Thinking of being a pilgrim conjures up images of the numerous faith journeys to various holy places and shrines around the world. A pilgrimage is usually undertaken with a specific intention in mind, for example in thanksgiving, or praying for guidance as one searches for life's meaning. Pilgrims are people on the move interiorly and exteriorly.

What is hope? A TED talk presented by Chan Hellman, Director of Hope Research Center in Oklahoma, opens up the meaning of hope in a succinct presentation. He offers a definition of hope that goes as follows: "Hope is the belief that your future will be better than today, and you have the power to make it so." Thinking of hope as a participative act and not just as 'wishful thinking' brings energy to the whole notion of hope. We have the power to make good things happen! It requires of us a way of thinking and a commitment to seek and follow ways to live as people who have a plan that creates a sense of what KFWB used to call "EGBOK" – "everything is going to be ok". Being "Pilgrims of Hope" calls us to carry in our whole bearing the assurance that while there's much to drag us into darkness, we are always accompanied in our walk by the Risen Christ who strengthens us to keep hope alive.

-Sister Nuala Briody

Celebrating 70 years as a DMJ: Sr. Anna O'Reilly

I was born January 19, 1933 in County Longford, Ireland, in the Parish of Colmcille, to John Reilly and Annie McVeigh. My father's name was O'Reilly but he never wrote the "O." We were 4 girls and having no brothers to help us, all of us worked the farm when not in school.

I went to a National School where Religion was also taught. While in school, I met Sister Mary Kevin. She was a great recruiter and kept in touch with those of us who showed an interest in the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. After completing National School, I began my journey as a DMJ in the Novitiate for three years: two years in Castlecor, Ireland and one year in Brussels, Belgium.



After the Novitiate, I was missioned to serve in California. Leaving Ireland wasn't easy, for I felt so lonely, missing my family and friends; also, I was seasick for five days on the boat to the United States. However, when I arrived in New York, I was greeted by many cousins and my aunt. This meeting with family members gave me courage to continue my long journey, flying alone to California. As I began settling into my new mission in Religious Life, I found California to be quite different in the culture, educational system and parish life!

I have always been a teacher of CCD/Religious Education and Elementary School wherever I was asked to serve. I taught at St. Paul the Apostle in Westwood for 5 years, St. James the Less in La Crescenta for 8 years, and served for 46 years as a teacher and principal at Our Lady of the Rosary in Paramount from 1965 to 2011. Although I retired in 2011, I continue to live at Our Lady of the Rosary Convent, along with Sisters Peggy Bradley, Teresa Groth and Mary Mortz.

I find great joy when friends, past students and parents come to visit. Not only are they interested in learning about our lives, they share with us all that is happening in their lives. I love reading everything they bring to me, especially Carolyn Humphrey's writings. We also have wonderful people, friends and care providers, who assist us here in the community when we have needs.

Having lived most of my adult life here at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, I have many fond memories of people and events. My dearest memories, though, are of Monsignor Bernard O'Reilly, Sister Bridget McGuire and Sister Ellen Conefrey, who have left us here on earth after many years.

I am so very grateful for my religious vocation and my 70 years as a Sister in the Daughters of Mary and Joseph.



Sister Julia Costello
May 2, 1930 ~ May 7, 2024

RIP

Sister Julia Costello, one of six children was born May 2, 1930, to James and Ellen Mahedy Costello. She grew up in a farming family in Longford, Ireland, located along the banks of the River Shannon. Living in this idyllic countryside in Ireland and receiving her education in the local National School, Julia developed a deep love and appreciation both for education and nature.



Julia entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1948 and came to California in 1951. A woman of many talents, Julia was called to various ministries: teaching and principalship in San Francisco at St. Michael's and Morning Star Schools; in Los Angeles at Precious Blood Elementary School and St. Bernard High School. At the same time, she also pursued her own education at various colleges.

In the 70's, because of Julia's gift for spiritual direction and leadership, she was chosen to be Novice Director in Ireland and later in the 80's in California. These assignments were followed by a call to be House of Prayer Director in Camarillo and then Director of the Mary and Joseph Retreat Center in Rancho Palos Verdes. That was the beginning of 35 years of retreat ministry. During these years, Julia became involved with the local Interfaith Community, promoting dialog and understanding among the various churches. This ecumenical community, Dawn Unity, continues to meet to this day!. In addition to all her roles, Julia was also formation director for the DMJ Associates.

In her retirement years, Julia lived at Marian Residence in Rancho Palos Verdes. Even with failing eyesight and slower step, Julia was still active, especially in her prayer ministry, inviting others to join with her in her compassionate concern for the myriad needs and suffering of the world, both locally and globally.

Julia continues her prayer ministry, but now in a new way; she went to God on May 7, 2024, and now shares in the fullness of God's love and life. Julia will always be remembered fondly for her gracious and peaceful presence. Rest in peace, Julia.



RIP



Sister Ellen Mary Conefrey October 9, 1927 ~ September 3, 2024



Our Sr. Ellen Mary Conefrey died on September 3, 2024, at Our Lady of the Rosary Convent, Paramount, one month short of her ninety-seventh birthday. Within a short time after her death, we had the beautiful photo of our dear Ellen Mary, a smiling DMJ with her short blue veil and radiant smile. That veil meant a lot to Ellen, a rich symbol throughout her religious life. The photo also speaks to us of Ellen's good humor and warmth, the great characteristics of her long life.

Ellen came to the DMJ's through the influence of her cousin, Anna Mary, who herself had entered with us. So, Ellen entered with us, DMJ's, and after the novitiate in Ballymahon, Co. Longford, she came to California in 1952. There was no doubt in Ellen's mind that this was the life for her. She was a woman committed to a deep religious life and wanted to come close to God.

Ellen's first teaching assignment of religious life was to Morning Star School in San Francisco in 1952. In quick succession she was assigned to schools in the L.A Archdiocese, teaching many grade levels: St. Augustine, Culver City; St. Anthony, El Segundo; St. Louis de Montfort, Santa Maria; Our Lady of the Rosary, Paramount.

With education as the DMJ's primary ministry, our Founder, Constant van Crombrughe, often wrote to our Sisters, encouraging them in his spirit of education. He wrote: *"You will love God through the hearts of those you have taught to love Him."* These words greatly influenced Ellen's manner of teaching. She was imbued with a strong sense of prayer and had the ability to perform tasks with perfection. These characteristics Ellen passed on to the students in her care, both as teacher and as principal, in the classroom and in all the various extra-curricular activities in which she was involved. Ellen finally "retired" from her 60 years in the classroom, but her concern for others remained very active.

During her last years in Paramount, Ellen visited the sick, fed the hungry, and ministered to the needy as she took her daily walk. Ellen remained very active with her extensive family, being with them as often as she was able, even to the last days of her earthly life.

It can be said that Ellen "wrapped" in prayer every aspect of her life. Again, using the words of our Founder, which aptly apply to Ellen:
*"You are the instruments of the mercy of God.
Let no difficulty stand in the way of this ministry."*

Ellen, we rejoice with you as you now experience the fullness of God's love and life! May you rest in peace.



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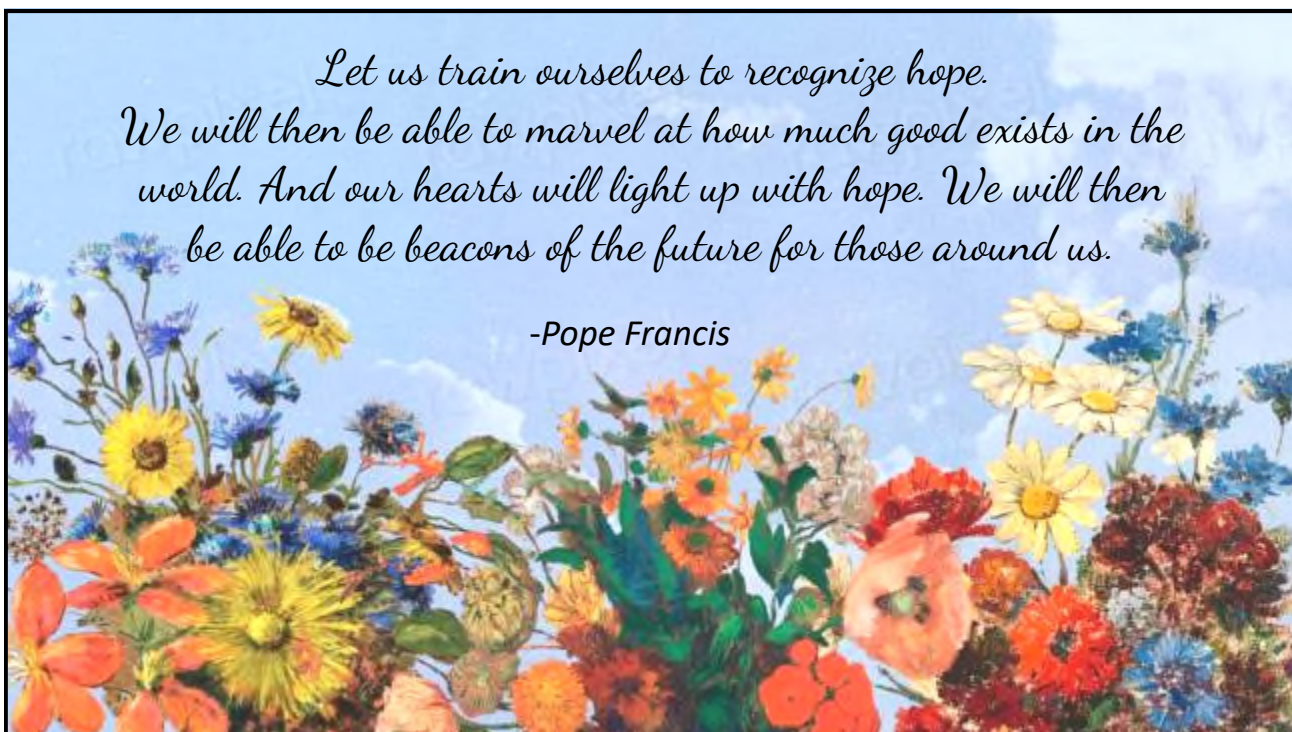
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*Let us train ourselves to recognize hope.
We will then be able to marvel at how much good exists in the
world. And our hearts will light up with hope. We will then
be able to be beacons of the future for those around us.*

-Pope Francis



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