

DMJInk

Daughters of Mary and Joseph - California Region - Spring/Summer 2018



Patricia Campbell Carlson



Spring/Summer 2018

Editorial Staff
Sally Nowinski
Sr. Linda Peters
Sr. Linda Webb

<u>DMJlink Logo</u> Jonathan Nowinski

<u>DMJlink</u> 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 <u>not</u> made available to any outside business firm or organization.



Dear Friends,

We greet you once again as we celebrate the splendor of springtime and the hope of new life in this Easter season.

We know, however, that before a plant can blossom into beauty, its seed must first die. We also know that to enter into the joy of God's promise of new life, we must allow ourselves to be transformed by the sufferings which come to us in our lives. It is in this sense that we understand how both "grief and gratitude are kindred souls".

During this past year, all of our lives have been touched, personally and globally, by events of grief and gratitude. We have grieved with the victims of so many natural disasters, conflicts, social unrest and deaths, but we have also been amazed and filled with gratitude by the overwhelming and spontaneous generosity of so many friends and "strangers" reaching out, tirelessly giving of themselves, their time, their resources, to try and lessen the pain of such unspeakable losses. Such events of grief and loss provide opportunities for us to move beyond ourselves while at the same time to embrace the joys and sorrows that are a part of our lives, day after day.

In this edition of our DMJ LINK, we share with you some of what has touched our lives in significant ways, both in grief and in gratitude, during these past months.

Three of our DMJ Sisters, Régine Donner, Stella Maria Enright, and Alice Nugent, completed their life's journey and are now truly experiencing the fullness of new life. We remember how each of these women lived her call as a DMJ, uniquely serving as an instrument of God's mercy. Although we grieve their passing and the absence of their presence, our hearts overflow with gratitude for the gifts of Regine, Stella Maria, and Alice and for all the people whom they served during their long lives. We are most grateful to you who expressed your love and appreciation for these Sisters through your many messages and generous support.

We also celebrate special anniversaries at this time:

- **the 60 years of religious profession of Sisters Theresa Berry and Peggy Bradley. Both Theresa and Peggy have dedicated their lives to the education of elementary students, which they continue to do today.
- **the closing of our jubilee year of our 200th anniversary celebrating of the Founding of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, and the beginning of our third centenary!!! We were happy to host members of our Congregation from around world to help mark our 200 years. For all that has been, we give thanks!

We thank each of you, our friends and benefactors, who journey with us in times of sadness and joy, for all the ways you generously support the life and ministries of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. Please be assured that we always give thanks to our God in our daily prayer for you and your families, our "kindred souls".

The Daughters of Mary and Joseph



Sister Stella Maria Enright 1933–2017

The Book of Proverbs asks "Where can we find a valiant woman?" (Proverbs 31). Sister Stella Maria, a woman of strong faith, courage, and extraordinary accomplishments, was such a woman.

Sister Stella, affectionately known as "Maudie", was born into a farming community in Athea, Co. Limerick. At an early age, she felt the call to Religious Life, and in her teenage years, Stella entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in Ireland in 1950. As part of her three years of spiritual formation in Ireland and Belgium, Stella studied the life and writings of our Founder, Canon Van Crombrugghe, and the charism and Constitutions of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. Our Founder's principles of education, including education of the whole person, so influenced her that they be-

came foundational to her future ministry as an educator.

Shortly after professing her first vows in Belgium in 1953, Stella was missioned to California to serve in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Her ministry in education began as a teacher for 13 years, first, at Our Lady of Peace School, North Hills (Sepulveda), and continuing at St. Paul the Apostle School, West Los Angeles, and St. Augustine School in Culver City. Stella then returned to St. Paul the Apostle School as Principal, where she remained in this position for 48 years.

Her love for the children and her creative and innovative educational skills touched the lives of the students, teachers and families at St. Paul the Apostle School. Stella's influence was not confined to St. Paul's but she was deeply influential as an educator and innovative leader in the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Educational System. She became a leader and teacher of "Instro-Teach", a program designed to enable principals to be effective spiritual leaders in their schools and communities. Stella was recognized as National Distinguished Principal by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

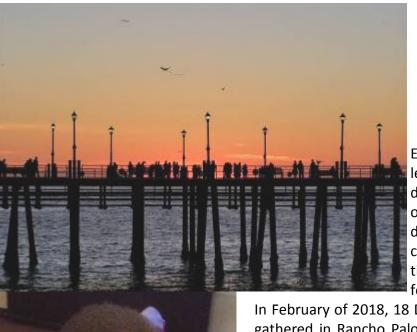
Within her Community of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, Stella was elected to Leadership teams several times and had served as a member of the Board of Directors of Mary & Joseph Retreat Center in Rancho Palos Verdes. In her later years Stella became a strong advocate for the abolition of human trafficking.

Sister Stella Maria—a valiant woman—a woman of prayer—a contemplative in action—a woman of love, compassion, hospitality and joy. She knew where her strength came from and when faced with challenges she would say "The Holy Spirit is in charge!"



Our Founder experienced God as all-merciful, all-compassionate, and he calls us to reflect in our lives the merciful love of God, centered on the heart of Christ.

We return love for Love, allowing God to use us as instruments of mercy in his hand.

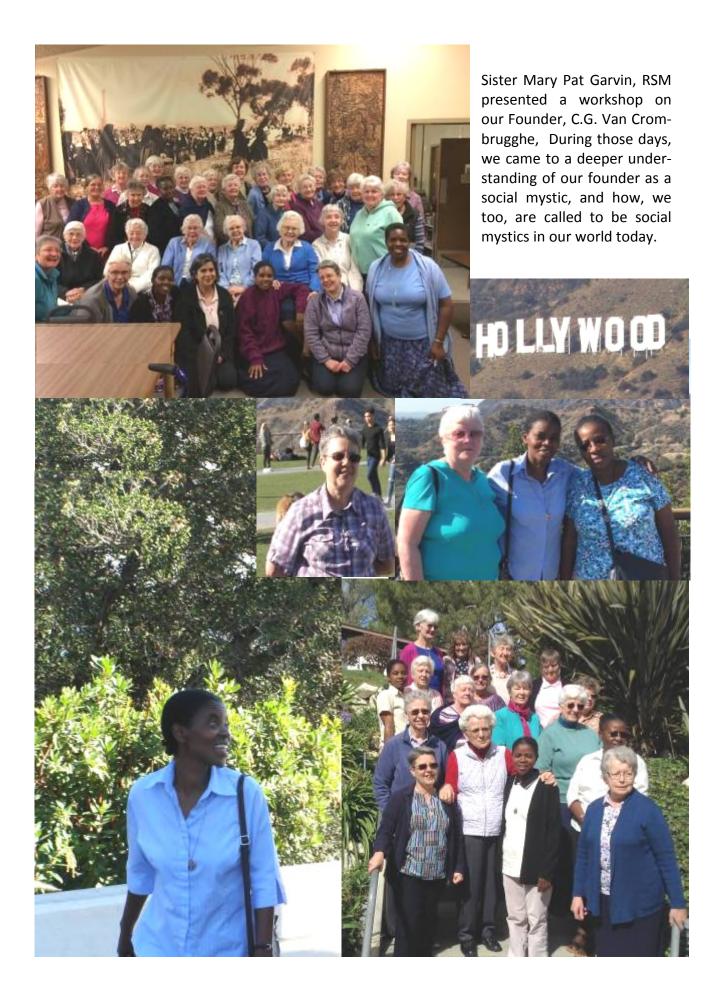


International Meeting Takes Place in Rancho Palos Verdes

Every two years, the Sisters in leadership and finance from the different regions of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph meet to discuss their sustainability and collaboration within the Congregation, and to set goals and a vision for the next few years.

In February of 2018, 18 DMJs and employees of the DMJs gathered in Rancho Palos Verdes for three weeks to discuss and plan our future, but also to see the sights of Los Angeles and to have some fun.

During our gatherings we were aware that we were approaching the end of our 200th Jubilee Year and at the threshold of the third century of the Congregation. We shared much on our Charism, our Founder and many memories, "taking time to name and acknowledge the blessings of the past and draw from these the strength and inspiration that would support us into the future." (CLT letter to the Congregation)



Memories

As I take this trip down memory lane, it takes me back to my grammar school days in Ireland. I recall how sensitive and compassionate I was towards those students who "suffered' at the hands of others. I did not appreciate the "bullies" who thought they were better than the weaker students. I remember praying to the Lord promising Him that if children were ever in my care, I would do everything in my power to protect them. I hadn't realized it at the time, but it was a turning point in my life. To my surprise, shortly after that I joined the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, and within two years I found myself teaching sixty-five first graders at St. Augustine's School in Culver City. I felt right at home and with confidence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit's promptings helped me to recognize the students needs so that they could reach their highest potentials.

I still have fond memories of my first year's teaching. It was a very exciting year, and what an education! Those little ones taught me everything I needed to know about teaching. Am I glad I was open to their honesty, and quickly learned that being very positive and very loving was the best policy. They also taught me that they were watching everything I said and did, and hoping one day to be just like grown-ups. Yes, they did keep me on my toes. For the next fifty-three years that was the philosophy with which I taught. It was a very successful one. Am I ever grateful to those precious first graders!

Thank you, God, for your special grace and privilege in choosing me to teach, educate and protect your precious little ones for the past fifty-three years. I am aware that without the daily assistance, guidance and promptings of the Holy Spirit it would have been impossible. This quotation from Scripture is one of my favorites:



Sister Peggy Bradley, D.M.J.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13)

What a Wonderful Life!!

Celebrating 60 years of my life as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph is simply wonderful. I can honestly say that these years have been filled with blessings and love.

As a 7 year old, I had wanted to be a nun, but when I would broach the subject at home, the response from my older sister was always: WHEN and WHERE???? or my mom would interject a firm, "you are too young" response. That was that !!

Throughout the following few years with my family and by myself, I prayed every day for the correct answer. As the years went by, I was enjoying a simple life filled with music and with my friends. One Sunday, as my family was having dinner, my younger sister made an announcement that another friend had been looking for me to visit a convent in County Longford to which she was going for an interview over the next weekend and she was inviting me to go with her.

This entailed a long journey by train and bus. We high-tailed it off for a weekend to the Convent which was named "Castlecor", a name and a place that would always be dear to my heart. The nuns with whom we conversed that weekend were members of the Congregation known as The Daughters of Mary and Joseph. The weekend experience answered all of my desires for which I had prayed so long and hard. Within 2 months, I was on my way to entering this Convent. My heart was really filled with a deep joy. I spent a good 2 years learning the rudiments of Religious Life, an awesome experience on many levels.



Sister Theresa Berry, D.M.J.

After this eventful time of Novitiate during which I had received the religious habit, I was commissioned to our Novitiate in Brussels for a year being steeped in Spirituality, and a time of deep silence and learning different methods of prayer.

The prayerful desires of my childhood were being answered and I grew in gratitude to God for how He led me to this life of holiness and community living.

The past sixty years have been blessed with joyful and full filling celebrations of milestone events. Each Community in which I lived was a great blessing for me. My journey as a Daughter of Mary and Joseph has been one of Faith and Love. I thank all of my Sisters, living and deceased, for their great love and support. I thank my family for their confidence in

me and their encouragement to help me reach my life's goal of becoming a religious. I have loved being a Daughter of Mary and Joseph!



Sister Alice Nugent 1935-2017

Sister Alice Nugent, one of seven siblings, was born in Co. Tipperary, Ireland, on April 27, 1935. Alice entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1953. After completing her novitiate in Ireland and Belgium, where she was introduced to our Founder and the charism and mission of our Congregation, she was assigned to California. For a number of years she taught elementary students in the dioceses of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Alice's other ministries included missionary work at the Archdiocesan Training Center in Recife, Brazil, financial administration in the Congregation's Generalate in Rome and the California Provincial Center in Los Angeles, and parish ministry in St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Ontario and in St. Mel's in Norco.

Perhaps Alice's greatest gift to us was her extraordinary work as Congregational and Provincial Archivist. While she was a novice in Belgium, Alice had been fascinated by

the world-view of the Congregation, and taking on the ministry of archivist was a natural emergence of this fascination. Alice loved the history of the Congregation and never tired of researching various facets of our Founder's spirituality and teachings. The walls of our Regional Center bear witness, in photographs, to the extent of her love of our story. Copies of the history of the Congregation and California and the writings of our Founder and early members of our Congregation are made easily available to us.

Our Founder calls us, Daughters of Mary and Joseph, to the service of Christ and His Church. He urges us to live our mission to the full, with an unlimited devotion to Jesus Christ, his Church and all our brothers and sisters."

This quotation from the DMJ Constitutions expresses the life to which Alice was called and which she fully embraced.



Sister Regine Donner 1927 — 2017

Regine Donner was born into a Jewish family in a little shtetl called Sokal in Poland, now totally off the map. Because of this, her birth certificate could not be obtained, so the exact date of her birth is unknown. Many difficult yet exceptional events in the story of Regine's life were to follow.

Regine's family immigrated to Antwerp, Belgium, where they lived as foreigners until the war in 1940, when the Nazis invaded Belgium. Her family, having to flee, was separated from one another, with her sister and one of her brothers being arrested and sent to Aushwitz, where they were eventually gassed. Regine fled to a small village in Grez-Doiceau, Belgium, while the remainder of her family sought refuge in France.



The Hanquet family, who were Belgian Catholics, risked their own security and courageously took Regine into hiding. The example of the family's Christian life and their Gospel witness so inspired Regine, that she converted to Catholicism in 1943. Regine's decision to become a Christian led to her being ostracized by her family of birth. It was only in the 1980's that Regine was reconciled with her remaining family members. Regine struggled with her identity of being Jewish and Catholic. After some years she was able to proclaim: "Now I can say I embrace being a Jewish Catholic Nun"!

Regine remained with the Hanquet family, her second family, until she entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1955. After her first vows in 1958, she went to the DMJ mission in Burundi, Africa, and ministered there until 1962. After taking some time for further studies, Regine was missioned to Nigeria from 1973 until 1983. Because of health reasons Regine was re-assigned in 1985 to Santa Maria, California, where she taught at St. Joseph's High School and started a program, Volunteen, at Marian Hospital for high school student volunteers. She continued in these ministries until a few weeks before her death.

In sharing some reflections on her life, Regine wrote: "I thank the Lord for instilling in me love, compassion, tolerance, flexibility—Strength to look forward, not back. Remember me for Tolerance and Peace." May this prayer be ours as well.

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(those honored are in **BOLD**)

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Remember Your Loved Ones In a Special Way

Enroll your loved ones, living or deceased, in the Daughters of Mary and Joseph Prayer League.

Beautifully decorated Enrollment Cards are mailed according to your request. All prayer requests are placed in the chapel at Marian Residence where the Sisters pray for your intentions each day.

To request enrollment forms please contact:

Sr. Linda Webb (310) 377-9968

Requests may also be made in writing to:

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