

Ursulines of Cincinnati Visions

Christ-Centered Women in a Changing World



Autumn/Winter 2017

TRIP TO INDIA INSPIRING, ENLIGHTENING FOR SR. EILEEN

The woman stood in front of a crowd of her fellow country women and men, along with several visitors from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Her voice was firm and her demeanor confident as she described how the programs of the Madras Social Service Society in Chennai, India, empowered her to transform her life. Thanks to a micro-loan and the opportunity for skill development, she



Sister Eileen visits with Indian sisters from various religious communities during the group's stay in Chennai.

overcame extreme poverty in a small rural village and went on to establish a successful sari making business, eventually earning money to send daughter to college.

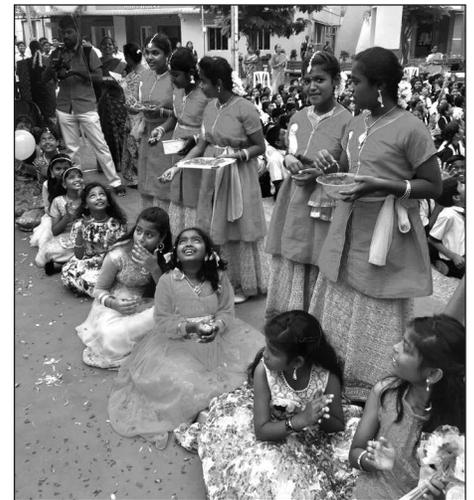
Hearing her story was one of countless powerful experiences Sr. Eileen Connel-

ly, news editor for *The Catholic Telegraph*, had during a two-week trip to southern India in late July. Along with Mike Gable, director of the archdiocesan Mission Office, and Tony Stieritz, director of the Catholic Social Action Office, Sr. Eileen traveled to India to learn more about the ministries of the church there and how our brothers and sisters a world away live their faith.

Their journey began in Chennai, a city of more than seven million on the Bay of Bengal. While there, they visited an orphanage, grade school, home for the aged, a seminary and the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle, in addition to engaging in dialogue with lay and religious church leaders. They then traveled to the state of Kerala, where they stayed with a local family and were exposed to the faith and ministries of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. They attended Holy Mass with their host family, met church officials and visited numerous shrines. Their trip concluded in Goa with several days spent in the company of the Jesuits at the Xavier Centre for Historical Research. A highlight of their time in Goa was a private Mass celebrated at the tomb of St. Francis Xavier.

"The church's dedication to empower the poor and vulnerable in India is

incredibly inspiring," said Sr. Eileen. "We witnessed sisters, priests and lay ministers in action caring for the elderly, educating orphans, empowering women,



The visitors from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati received a warm welcome from students at St. John Bosco School.

and advocating for those from the traditional lower castes, regardless of whether they were Christian, Hindu or Muslim. They are compelled by compassion and Christ's love...such wonderful examples to anyone in ministry!"



Following in the Footsteps of our ForeMothers

Sr. Margie, Sr. Barbara and SUA religion teacher Jennie Mertens recently returned from a pilgrimage in Greece: "Following in the Footsteps of our ForeMothers." Look for related stories in the next issue of *Visions*.



Dear Friends,

Each human being's life is a unique journey, with many twists and turns, interim destinations and activities along the way. Individuals touch lives and are touched and shaped by others. The stories in this issue of *Visions* illustrate this truth in the lives of some of our Ursuline Sisters.

You'll read about Sr. Eileen's summertime travel to India with two companions from the archdiocesan offices. Their purpose — to experience a bit of India's culture and learn about the lives and faith of the people they visited there.

I personally marked a milestone in my life journey, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of my religious profession. The Aug. 27 event was the public expression and celebration of a year of jubilee prayer and reflection in which I continue to recognize God's abundant goodness, as manifested in all the people who've been part of my life and ministries throughout these 50 years. I am grateful to God and to the Ursulines. I am grateful to each and all of you who are part of our Ursuline family!

As you will also read, and may already be aware, we bid farewell this summer to two of our dear Ursuline Sisters as they completed their earthly journeys and, we believe, are enjoying the prize to which God calls us all. We celebrate Sr. Ruth Ann Hartmann and Sr. Mary Germaine Thorburn, who touched us and so many others through their lives and their ministries of teaching, study, spiritual guidance and service to our community.

Recognizing clear signs of God's goodness around us does not negate the hardships experienced by God's people or deny the evidence of evil in our world. So we pray and act for healing of our brokenness, as seen in natural disasters, wars, social divides and more. As our faithful band of Cincinnati Ursulines grows smaller, we find Sr. Ruth Ann's maxim — "Trust in God to care for us each day" — to be wise advice. So, in response to a modern interpretation of St. Angela's counsel, we will "Do something; get moving; be confident; risk new things; stick with it; get on our knees; then be ready for big surprises!"

Sr. Margie Efke
General Minister

Our Mission Statement

We, the Ursulines of Cincinnati, are a community of Christ-centered women transforming lives with compassion and creativity. We pledge to respond to the needs of our times through our diverse ministries and in collaboration with the laity. We will respect the dignity of each individual, nurture their unique gifts, and be present to them as we all seek a deeper and more personal relationship with God.

Ursulines of Cincinnati

Sr. Margie Efke, OSU,
General Minister

Editor

Sr. Eileen Connelly, OSU

Special Acknowledgment to
Stephanie Lang Beckmeyer (SUA '89)
for design



SR. MARGIE EFKEMAN CELEBRATES GOLDEN JUBILEE

Strains of "Wake the World with Dawning Joy" rang out as family members and friends of Sr. Margie Efke gathered with the Cincinnati Ursulines on August 27 to celebrate Sr. Margie's 50 years of vowed life. Fr. Dan Anderson, OFM, good friend of the community, presided and preached at the 11:00 a.m. liturgy. Members of the music group Sr. Margie sings with at St. Bernard Parish in Spring Grove Village led the gathered guests in song.

Sr. Margie greeted her guests with the call and response, "God is good — all the time! All the time — God is good!" celebrating God's faithful love for her,

which has animated her response to God's ever-evolving call. The Scripture



All four of Sr. Margie's godsons gathered together for the first time.

readings, intercessions, and song choices highlighted Sr. Margie's prayer themes for this Jubilee year — God's overwhelming goodness and her own justice journey.

"I was touched beyond words by the way Dan personalized the homily and the prayers throughout the liturgy," Sr. Margie commented. "It's clear that this was a prayerful experience for him as well as for me." Following the homily, all the sisters present were invited to renew their own vows along with Sr. Margie. Several guests later remarked that that was quite meaningful for them.

(continued on page 4)

SR. RUTH ANN (MARY AGNES) HARTMANN



Mary Agnes was born Dec 16, 1929, Cincinnati, Ohio, to Lawrence and Ruth Dulle Hartmann, and was baptized at Old St. Mary's Church. She received her first Communion and was confirmed at St. Monica Church. Mary Agnes grew up with her siblings Bernard, Robert, Edith, Ruth, Lorraine, Lawrence, Richard and Thomas. She once wrote "if my life were a movie, the title would be "A Family of Eleven." She has enjoyed her wide extended family of many nieces and nephews, and their families.

Early in life, while attending St. Monica School, she became interested in the Ursulines at St. Ursula Convent and Academy. Her sister Lorraine (Sr. Mary Lawrence) entered the convent first, and with her parent's encouragement, Mary Agnes entered the community Feb. 11, 1949. At her reception on Aug. 19, 1949 she took the name of Sr. Ruth Ann, in honor of her mother and her devotion to St. Ann. Temporary vows were made on Aug. 17, 1951 and her final vows Aug. 17, 1954.

Sr. Ruth Ann graduated from Our Lady of Cincinnati College in 1959 with a bachelor of education degree, and from Xavier University in 1964 with a master's degree in education. Throughout her life, she enjoyed watching sports,



including SUA basketball and soccer games, and was a devoted Cincinnati Reds and Bengals fan.

She was a dedicated junior high school teacher at St. Francis de Sales; principal and eighth grade teacher at St. Henry (Dayton, OH); fifth grade teacher at St. Ursula Villa; and junior high teacher at St. Monica and Our Lady of Visitation schools. Her other ministries were house coordinator, directress of the temporary professed, superior of the Sisters of St. Ursula, and CCD teacher at St. John Parish in West Chester. Later ministries included assisting with the St. Ursula Villa pre-school class and after school care program and volunteering at Mercy St. Theresa.

A quiet place near the ocean is what she envisioned as her ideal and her motto was: "Have no fear for what tomorrow will bring. The same loving God who cares for me today will take care of me tomorrow and every day."

Sr. Ruth Ann and her sister (Sr. Mary Lawrence) were inseparable in life. She died at St. Margaret Hall, Cincinnati, Ohio on July 5, 2017, at the age of 87, after 68 years of religious profession.

SR. MARY GERMAINE (MARY FRANCES) THORBURN

Mary Frances was born on March 21, 1940, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to John and Alice Wessels Thorburn. She was baptized at St. Elizabeth Church in Norwood, where she attended grade school, made her first Communion and was confirmed. While still in grade school, she attended summer sewing classes at St. Ursula. It was at this time that she developed a love for the Ursulines.

Mary came to St. Ursula Academy for high school. Her love and devotion to the sisters continued to grow while she was a student at the Academy. Mary was an only child. The friendliness, warmth and small size of the community of the Sisters of St. Ursula appealed to her. She entered St. Ursula Convent on Aug. 28, 1957, just prior to her senior year of high school. On Aug. 17, 1958, she was received into the community and chose the name Mary Germaine due to her devotion to St. Germaine.

Following high school and her year of postulancy, on Aug. 17, 1958, she was received as a novice. She made her temporary profession on Aug. 17, 1960, and her final profession on August 17, 1963. She graduated from Our Lady of

Cincinnati College and received her degree in mathematics and Latin. In 1964, she was awarded an NSF grant to attend Catholic University of America, where she received an MTS degree in



mathematics. She also attended Fordham University, where she earned a master's degree in theology.

Sr. Mary Germaine was known in the U.S. and Canada as a pioneer in the study of St. Angela Merici's spirituality, especially on the staff of the inter-Ursuline Angela Institute for many years.

Through the years Sr. Mary Germaine taught mathematics and religion at St. Ursula Academy and mathematics at McNicholas High School and Ursuline Academy in Springfield, Ill. She was also a GED teacher for welfare recipients at the Terrace Guild in Winton Terrace. This led to eight years at the Hamilton County Justice Center, where she was a deputy sheriff and prepared inmates for their GED. She was a teacher in the Permanent Deacon Program of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, giving retreats to deacon-candidates and their wives in preparation for their ordination. In addition, she was a spiritual director for the Cursillo Movement. She taught a course in spirituality at the Athenaeum of Ohio and served as a spiritual director to seminarians.

In her free time, she enjoyed calligraphy, making posters and signs, sketching pictures and floral designs. Her last years were spent at Mercy Franciscan West Park, where she served as Resident Council President for several terms.

Sr. Mary Germaine died at the age of 77 on Aug. 17, after 59 years of religious life, on the anniversary of her profession of vows.

Sr. Margie Efkeman Celebrates Golden Jubilee

(continued from page 2)

Sr. Margie joined the musicians in singing the Communion meditation, "O God, You Search Me," Bernadette Farrell's interpretation of Psalm 139. This psalm has been foundational to Sr. Margie's prayer throughout her religious life. The liturgy closed with a joyful "How Great Thou Art", after which the celebration continued with a repast in St. Ursula's Keller Center.

At the luncheon, Sr. Margie introduced her guests by groups of relatedness and encouraged them to meet and talk with someone they didn't know or had not seen for a long time. The sound level and activity in the room suggested that they took that invitation to heart. Guests

raved about the food provided by Power Inspires Progress (PIP), a training and

jobs development program for individuals with barriers to employment. Word has it that some guests have already engaged PIP for their upcoming events!

Sr. Margie reflects, "This Jubilee has been – still is – a joyful celebration of all that has brought me to this point in my religious life, including many challenges as well as obvious gifts. As Paul describes in the day's reading from Philippians 3, I've not yet reached the goal or finished the course. But having been 'grasped by Christ', I'm still racing – perhaps a bit more slowly, with age – toward the prize to which God calls me. I am deeply grateful for all my companions on this journey."



Brown County Ursuline Agatha Fitzgerald created the artistic design for Sr. Margie's invitation and program.

The Ursulines
of Cincinnati



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