Angel of Hope Remembered

Gone but not forgotten
Sr. Mary Ignatia Gavin was honored and remembered on the 40th anniversary of her death. Since her death in 1966, Sr. Ignatia's work with AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), alcoholics and addicts has continued at Rosary Hall in St. Vincent Charity Hospital and Summa St. Thomas Hospital. Both these hospitals, with CSA and community support, are celebrating and remembering Sr. Ignatia.

Sr. Ignatia Way
On April 1, 2006, before the liturgy held at St. Patrick Church, Cleveland, a section of East 22nd Street was renamed to honor Sr. Ignatia. An appreciative crowd cheered as the City of Cleveland and St. Vincent Charity unveiled the newly designated street. A small museum at St. Vincent Charity will be devoted to Sr. Ignatia.

Alcoholics Anonymous at St. Thomas
The 71st Annual Founder’s Weekend is June 9-11, 2006. Centered at the University of Akron, activities include tours of important AA locations, including the chapel at St. Thomas which will contain an exhibit of AA memorabilia and archives. This chapel, which has changed over the years, is regarded as a sacred space where recovering alcoholics visited and prayed.

Renovations to the chapel are being planned and executed by Mr. Scott Carpenter of Scott Carpenter Designs. Mr. Carpenter is familiar with the mission of AA and restored Gate Lodge at Stan Hywet Hall where Dr. Bob Smith and Bill Wilson met. Items for the exhibit will come from the CSA archives as well as St. Thomas Hospital. Funding sources include Summa St. Thomas Hospital, the Women’s Board, the St. Thomas School of Nursing Alumni Association and the CSA community.

Film in production
A documentary film is being produced about the important people in the development of AA. Sr. Ignatia and Fr. Ed Dowling, SJ are featured. Funded by the Catholic Communication Campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Katherine Digiulio, PhD of Larkspur Productions is directing this effort. Dr. Digiulio has made an initial trip to the CSA archives and the Akron area.

Recognizing others in this ministry
Guest House in Lake Orion, Michigan cares for the needs of clergy and religious who suffer from alcoholism and other addictions. To celebrate their 50th anniversary, they inaugurated three new awards. To recognize outstanding contributions and dedication in the ministry of addiction and recovery, Guest House will annually honor a priest, vowed religious woman, and layperson. The ‘Sr. Ignatia Gavin Award’ will be presented to a sister in appreciation for efforts and service to addicts and alcoholics. The first recipient of the award was Sr. Mary Therese Golden, OP. Representing the CSA community, Sr. Mary Denis Maher was present at the Guest House/NCAA Leadership Conference in Savannah Georgia when the awards were presented.

For more information on Sr. Ignatia and related activities, visit our website at www.srsofcharity.org
Early this year, Sr. Eileen Keating joined the thirty-three member staff at Rosary Hall as Spiritual Care Director. A certified pastoral minister with CPE education, Sister describes taking on this position as a "leap of faith." Though she did not know the details of her responsibilities, she acted on a strong desire to continue CSA's presence in this ministry to recovering alcoholics.

Sister draws her inspiration from having known Sr. M. Ignatia Gavin. She has childhood memories of Sr. Ignatia visiting her home on Cleveland's West side and adult memories of reading letters that came from all over the world to Sr. Ignatia when she was a patient in the Infirmary at Mt. Augustine.

Sr. Eileen radiates joy when she recalls Ignatia's humor, conviction and humility. "Sr. Ignatia saw herself as an instrument of God for others. For her, love of God and love of neighbor were one. I'm honored to follow in her footsteps as well as those of St. Victorine, Sr. Rita Louise, Sr. George and Sr. Stephanie."

Sr. Eileen has established herself well after a short time in ministry. "She really is present when you talk to her," reports Donald Davies, Executive Director of Rosary Hall. "Eileen ministers to clients and staff by listening to their stories, sharing prayer and simply being a part of the Rosary Hall family. She is a tremendous asset on our team."

One aspect of Sr. Eileen's ministry is guiding individuals through the 5th of AA's 12 Steps. "Helping someone take inventory of his life and becoming reconciled with God and others is indeed a privilege," she acknowledged.

Always using the pastoral approach, whether in the classroom, at the parish, as a hospital chaplain or on CSA Council, Sr. Eileen gives witness to the gentle presence of a compassionate Jesus. Her contemplative awareness sees deep into the heart of anyone she meets, always recognizing and appreciating their goodness.

"I remind myself and others I meet every day of Psalm 139: 'O God, you know all about me.' The good news is that it's true! God does know all about us, and loves us unconditionally, so don't be afraid."

"The Charity Hospital community is blessed to have Sr. Eileen here, continuing the ministry of the sisters who have gone before her," observed a hospital employee of 27 years.
A child went to Europe, where she saw beautiful stained glass windows in the great cathedrals. Her parents said, "Those are the Saints." When she came back to the United States, she was asked, "Who are the Saints?" She said: "They are the ones who let in the light!"

This is true for many of us; the Saints are the ones who let in the light. Sister Ignatia, founder of Rosary Hall, has not been canonized a Saint, but the members of AA say that if the pope doesn't canonize her, they will.

Sister Ignatia emigrated from County Mayo, Ireland, at age 7. She entered the Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine in 1916. In 1927, she had a "breakdown" as a result of a number of probable causes - her fragile health, her exhaustion from a variety of musical obligations, and the precipitating cause was a break-in in the convent building where she was staying.

When she regained her health, she wanted to return to teaching music, but was cautioned by her doctor that it may be too strenuous. In fact, he asked whether she wanted to be a dead music teacher or a live nun. Sister was transferred to the new St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, where she worked in admitting upon the hospital's opening in 1928. In 1939, four years after AA started, she was approached by Dr. Bob Smith, cofounder of AA, to allow an alcoholic patient in the hospital for care. While beds were at a premium, she did arrange for a semi-private room. The next day, Dr. Bob requested a private room.

She moved the patient to the only available room she had, the flower room, where they stored flowers for the patients. Dr. Bob took care of the patient's physical needs, while Sister Ignatia and members of AA took care of the individual's spiritual and emotional needs. In 1952, Sister Ignatia transferred to St. Vincent Charity Hospital to "work with AAs."

On October 7, Sister Ignatia received permission to open the unit that she named Rosary Hall Solarium (RHS). She named it this because she received permission to open the unit on the Feast of the Holy Rosary, and she wanted to name it after Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith, who had died in 1950. Respecting Ms anonymity, she used Ms initials, RHS.

Sister went home to her Lord on April 1, 1966. At that time, hers was the largest funeral ever held in Cleveland.

Why do AA members believe that Sister Ignatia should be made a Saint? She took her greatest liability, a nervous breakdown, and made it her greatest asset, working with others who suffered. As a result, she had a significant impact on the lives of more than 20,000 alcoholics and was instrumental in forming the greatest program known to God and humanity, Alcoholics Anonymous.

Today, her mission is our co-mission. In Jesus' name, we pray!
Solemn Blessing of the Chapel 
and Dedication of the Altar 
September 24, 2005

Some of the many enhancements to the chapel include:
- New Tabernacle stand
- New Altar
- New Ambo
- Better accessibility and safety: terrazzo flooring, access ramps to Adoration area
- New sound system
- Improved lighting, heating and cooling system
- New sound system
- Flexible seating
- New stained glass windows
- Glass entrance doors
- Sprinkler system installed

Reflection

"This was always a beautiful space but today we see and feel the lift of our hearts in pursuit of God through new and marvelous 'light' as these windows usher in the light of life." "This renovated space also reconfigures the shape of the assembly as it wraps the assembly around the twin tables of Word and Sacrament and places us into new and enlivening "relationships." "Access to the mysteries of God and the relationship of each worshiper to the rites and to one another is to fulfill St. Augustine’s pleas - that we might seek and find rest in God’s presence."

These powerful words, taken from the homily given by Bishop Anthony M. Pilla at the dedication of the new chapel, express for all of us, the gift of this new worship space. Its gift is not only the beauty of the chapel but also the wonderful accommodations to hearing, seeing and sitting close to the sanctuary.

It is because of you - our families, friends of CSA and residents of Regina Health Center that we were able to undertake this monumental project. As we gather for daily Liturgy we recall the words of Deuteronomy, "Do not forget the things your eyes have seen nor let them slip from your heart all the days of your life." We will not forget your great generosity to our Chapel project. We thank you over and over again and ask our God to always bless you with an abundance of love and peace.

Please come and join us for Liturgy at 11:00 AM any day of the week. We would love to have you experience the peace and beauty of the chapel. And by the way, it is good to hear again the whirl of the wheelchairs and the thump of the walkers making their way with great ease to new places in the chapel.

Sr. Miriam Erb
Last fall, Jubilee liturgies were held celebrating the lives and ministries of ten of our sisters.

The Most Rev. A. Edward Pevec celebrated the liturgy on October 9 commemorating 50 years in religious life of four sisters.

Sr. Mary Bryan entered the order from St. John Parish, Summitville, Ohio. For many years Sister was a familiar face for those entering Mercy Medical Center emergency room, where she served as the Emergency Department Family Liaison. Her earlier years in the order were spent teaching at several elementary schools. For a time she was principal of the PSR Program at St. Joseph School, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. She has also served the community as a member of the leadership team. Now retired, she spends her days volunteering at Mt. Augustine.

An Akron native, Sr. Marian Durkin came to community from St. Mary Parish. Sister spent many years at CSA elementary schools. She served as principal of St. Philip Neri School. Many former students recall her as a Cleveland Indians’ fan. Sr. Marian often sees friends at Tribe games where, for her own amusement, she keeps score. In 1993, Sister became the first director of “The Open House,” a ministry of support, services and a safe haven to HIV+ men and women. Sister currently is serving the community as a part of the leadership team.

Sr. Evelyn Flowers’ primary focus these days is the environment, with work she does for CSA and the Congregation of St. Joseph, as an Environmental Facilitator. Entering the convent from Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Broadview Heights, Ohio, Sister taught music at several schools and was a music therapist at the Cleveland Music School. She has taught Spanish and spent time in El Salvador. Sr. Evelyn served two terms of CSA leadership. In addition to her ecology work, she is the organist for many liturgies at Mt. Augustine.

Sr. M. Sharon Anne Yanak entered the order from St. Francis de Sales Parish in Parma, Ohio. Her early years were spent teaching at CSA elementary schools in Lakewood, Brook Park and Cuyahoga Falls. Sister worked for a short time at Regina Health Center in the activities department and has also served in community leadership. Currently, her ministry is focused on social concerns issues. She always participates in the march protesting the School of the Americas. Last year, she spent time at a Heifer International Farm learning about programs for feeding the world. An active participant in life at Mt. Augustine, Sr. Sharon Anne continues to educate those around her about social issues.

On October 23, 2005, Rev. John Mucha had the Liturgy commemorating those Jubilarians celebrating 60 and 75 years.

Celebrating 60 years:
Sr. Helen Mary Frank entered the community from St. Joseph, Maximo, Ohio. She spent nine years as a Parmadale cottage supervisor before moving to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron where she was Director of Public Service. Her assignment to Mercy Medical Center in Canton began a fourteen-year span of volunteering for which she was recognized by the hospital in 1992. At that time she had 5,500 volunteer hours. She retired to Mt. Augustine in 2004 and continues to keep busy with her family and in prayer ministry.

Born in Ballymore, Ireland, Sr. Maura Hannam emigrated in 1937 settling in Cleveland, St. Ann Parish. In 1952 she was appointed Mistress of Novices, a position she held for twelve years. Known as “Mother Maura,” she was responsible for nearly 300 who entered the order. Twenty-five of those sisters are still in active ministry and describe her as a woman of prayer, deeply committed to her religious vocation and community. Sister was assigned to St. Vincent Charity Hospital first as Director of the Admitting Office and later at the information desk, a position she held until her retirement. Sr. Maura was especially known from her gracious hospitality. Although she died March 2, 2005, her family celebrated her jubilee.

Sr. M. Coletta McNamee is from St. Ignatius Parish, Cleveland, Ohio. Her early years in community were spent teaching at several CSA elementary schools, including Immaculate Heart of Mary, Cleveland and Holy Family School, in Stow. She was principal at Immaculate Conception, Akron, St. Joseph, Cuyahoga Falls, and Divine Redeemer School in North Carolina. After serving in leadership for eight years, Sister worked for St. Augustine Manor, Lakewood, where she held several positions including Assistant Administrator. The boards of trustees she served, CSA Health System and Providence Hospital, have also utilized her input and service. Retired at Mt. Augustine, she continues to keep busy on various committees. She is an avid reader and a great story teller.

Sr. Rita Louise Neader entered the order from St. Mary Church in Marietta, Ohio. Nursing was the focus of sister’s ministry in CSA hospitals in Northeast Ohio and in South Carolina. She was nursing supervisor at Providence Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina, as well as St. Vincent Charity Hospital where she was Head Nurse in Rosary Hall. At DePaul Maternity and Infant Home, Sister was Assistant Executive and Director of Nursing. She volunteered for many years at St. John Hospital and Mercy Medical Center. She is now retired at Mt. Augustine.

Sr. M. Pauline Panik has spent most of her community years with the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine in service. Entering from St. Wendelin, Cleveland Ohio, she worked at several CSA ministries but is best known for her twelve years as a receptionist at St. Vincent Charity Hospital. She was a cottage supervisor at Parmadale. Retired and living at Mt. Augustine, she spends her days in prayer ministry and volunteering for Regina Health Center.

Jubilarians continued on next page.
The International Institute of Akron, Coming Together Akron and the University of Akron sponsored the International Women’s Conference in March. Sr. Catherine Walsh spoke to this gathering on spirituality.

Joseph’s Home has a new executive director, Mike Wooley. Sr. Joan Gallagher retired last December. She is grateful for the support that she received over the past five years from sisters, associates, donors and friends and urges everyone to continue this support through prayer, volunteering and donations. Citing the warm reception that Joseph’s Home has received in the community, Sr. Joan says, “I believe the time was right for me to leave. The staff is good, the ground work for this ministry is established and my health is good.” We thank Sr. Joan for her efforts at making Joseph’s Home a reality.

Holy Family Learning Center is the destination of Sr. Carol Kandiko and Sr. Elizabeth Schur on some afternoons. Sr. Carol reports that she holds the babies and does anything else that needs doing. Holy Family Learning Center is on the grounds of Lakewood Catholic Academy and Centering Space.

Sr. Marian Durkin has been named to the Board of Trustees of Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE). In April, Sr. Marian will be giving the Invocation to the Cleveland Bar and Bench convocation. Approximately 400 judges and attorneys will hear her remarks.

Sisters Cheryl Keehner and Catherine Walsh are members of the Conference of Religious Leadership Committee (CORL) that hosted the conference “Sustaining the Future of Shared Ministry” held on March 24-25, 2006. Almost 100 women and men gathered at this collaborative forum, including 27 CSA Sisters and invited lay participants.

Sr. Cheryl also served on the planning committee for a similar conference in South Carolina. She has just returned from Myrtle Beach where sisters from all over the state gathered to consider ways to collaborate in their ministries. CSA Sisters Nancy Hendershot, Denise Stiles and Loretta Spotila attended.

Since 1991, Sr. Mary Patricia Barrett has been on the board of the Hospice of the Western Reserve. Recently she was presented with the President’s Award to recognize “her outstanding contributions to further the mission of the Hospice of the Western Reserve.” Congratulations Sr. Mary Pat!

Sr. Mary Grace Betzler started as the Coordinator of Programs and Transportation at Regina Health Center in January.

Sr. Mary Jean Eucker spent two intensive weeks of study at the Center for Spiritual Development in Orange, California. The time she spent in sunny California was enhanced by cultural and recreational activities. Sr. Mary Jean completed course work for professional ministry credentials in the art of Spiritual Direction, which will be beneficial to her and all those she encounters in her ministry at Centering Space.

Requiescat In Pacem
Sr. M. Carleen Ackhart
Sr. Maura Hannam
Sr. M. Venard Kline
Sr. M. Verona Porter
Sr. M. Bernard Rostas
Sr. Mary Virginia Wampfler
Sr. M. Louise Willman

Jubilarians continued

Most of Sr. M. Francesca Reardon’s years with CSA have been spent in education, not only as a teacher in CSA schools but in the Diocese Education Office where she was a consultant for 12 years. Sister entered the order from St. Clement Parish, Cleveland, Ohio. She taught at several schools before becoming principal of St. Luke School. Upon leaving the Diocesan Education Office she started a new career as a pastoral minister at St. John West Shore Hospital where she remained for nine years. Sister has served on several boards, including Board of Trustees for St. Vincent Charity Hospital, St. Augustine Manor and the Hospice of Western Reserve. Retired, she lives at Mt. Augustine where her days are spent in prayer ministry.

Celebrating 75 years:
Sr. M. Annella Treber’s first CSA assignment was to St. Joseph School, Cuyahoga Falls where she worked for twenty-three years as a teacher and choir director. She continued this work at Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Cuyahoga Falls. A Cleveland native, from Holy Name Parish, Sister retired in 1985. She then focused her energy as a reading tutor at Cleveland State University, as a reading teacher at St. Augustine Academy and at Project Learn (an adult literacy program) where she was recognized for having the most volunteer hours. She now resides at Mt. Augustine.
Hope

Remember yourself in your darkest moment... no hope, no light, no reason to get up in the morning. Have you never been there? Then imagine what it would be like... imagine total despair, deep, hopeless and endless.

Now imagine Jesus the Risen One reaching out to you in love and peace, holding out hope and offering life. In this fantasy, do you imagine a glorious Christ with victory banner and rays of light standing there? That is the artist's version! Let go of the metaphor and see instead Christ in your neighbor... the one who brings soup, presence, a note of encouragement, a prayer.

The Paschal Mystery is relived daily, from death to new life, when we recognize our own divine power to be sons and daughters of the One who is Life. When we share with each other the good news of hope, forgiveness and peace. Who are you looking for? Who might you be?

Sr. Carol Kandiko