

*f*OCUS

a publication of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

SPRING 2021



Sisters of
Bon Secours, USA

“HAVING FAITH DOES
NOT MEAN HAVING
NO DIFFICULTIES,
BUT HAVING THE
STRENGTH TO FACE
THEM, KNOWING WE
ARE NOT ALONE.”

— *Pope Francis*

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Photo: The grounds at the Bon Secours campus in Marriottsville.

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For additional information about the Sisters of Bon Secours, visit bonsecours.us.

DEAR *friends*



Our Faith and Connection to God

This issue of *Focus* reflects the COVID-19 times we have been living in over the past year and the challenges many of you have faced. It has become more apparent than ever that with social distancing and working remotely, and for some experiencing loneliness and loss, our faith becomes even more important.

In this issue, we look at how our Bon Secours family has stayed connected to God and each other and turned to faith to stay positive in these challenging times. We share how we came together to participate in a campaign against hunger. We talk about bereavement and grief as we pray for and mourn the many lives that have been lost across the United States and the world in the past year. We are all looking forward to the light at the end of the tunnel as more and more people get vaccinated. We hope you find our stories uplifting and helpful.

Additionally, the Sisters of Bon Secours have always been fully committed to advocating against racial inequality

and injustices in our society and support the Black Lives Matter movement. In this issue, we share one of the initiatives our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation team engaged in with our Congregation and the Bon Secours family.

The work of our Congregation has continued with online Zoom forums for faith-sharing experiences and to unite our staff working on-site and remotely. We even had our international meetings on Zoom with simultaneous translation so our sisters from around the world could participate.

On the international front, we are especially excited about starting a community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and keep in our prayers Sr. Jacqueline Rebours and Sr. Nelida who are now officially living in the Congo. Sr. Pat Dowling joined them for several weeks in February to help them settle in.

Please enjoy the story about our Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski as she reflects back on her 10 years as leader of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, and her transition to Congregation leader.

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Sr. Frances McCabe. We appreciate her many contributions to our Congregation over the years, and she will truly be missed. We also note the passing of Louis Vanlandingham, a valued member of our Housekeeping department.

And finally, a special thank you to all of the people who contributed to the recent fundraiser coordinated by the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. More than \$30,000 was raised in just four weeks, and we appreciate all the hard work of the fundraising committee.

Wishing everyone a wonderful spring and summer as we come closer to once again connecting in person with friends and loved ones.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Elaine Davia".

SR. ELAINE DAVIA
*Area Leader,
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA*

The Bon Secours Family Brings Good Help to *Those in Need*

THE BON SECOURS FAMILY JOINED THE SISTERS OF BON SECOURS AND ITS MINISTRIES TO CELEBRATE CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK BY PARTICIPATING IN A CAMPAIGN AGAINST HUNGER. THE BON SECOURS FAMILY PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN EXTENDING THE MISSION, VISION AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE SISTERS OF BON SECOURS AND SHARING THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES AND WORLD.

Their collective efforts as one Bon Secours family were part of a larger campaign against hunger sponsored by Region IV of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. The number of people going hungry in the United States has surged since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged last year, affecting the most vulnerable among us, especially the young and elderly. Members from all of the Bon Secours ministries formed a committee to create a combination of activities in which the

Bon Secours family could participate to help impoverished people in their communities.

Catholic Sisters Week took place March 8-14, 2021, and concluded on the birthday of Mother Josephine Potel, founder of the Sisters of Bon Secours. In her honor, Director of Associates Amy Kulesa had the idea for “Jars for Josephine,” and Young Adults Program Manager Nicholas Stein designed the label for the jars. Participants were invited to fill the jars with loose change during Catholic Sisters Week and then donate it to a local food bank.



◀ Sr. Fran Gorsuch with staff from the Bon Secours Baltimore Community Works Urban Farm.

Sr. Fran Gorsuch ▶
inspects the spring produce with Timothy Douglas of Bon Secours Baltimore Community Works Urban Farm.



“BEING ABLE TO SERVE WITH BON SECOURS BALTIMORE COMMUNITY WORKS URBAN FARM HAS REALLY OPENED MY EYES TO THE INJUSTICE OF FOOD INSECURITY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOODS. I CAN REALLY SEE HOW MUCH BON SECOURS CARES ABOUT THE COMMUNITY THEY SERVE THROUGH THE LOVE THAT IS POURED INTO THIS FARM.”

— KELLY FLYNN, Ministry Volunteer



Timothy Douglas, on behalf of Bon Secours Baltimore Community Works Urban Farm, accepts the donation raised by the Bon Secours Campaign Against Hunger from Sr. Fran.

Participants were also encouraged to donate food to a local food bank. A collection site was set up in the lobby of the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center, and the donations, which included diapers and gift cards, were given to Asylee Women’s Enterprise. This Baltimore nonprofit supports asylum seekers through a combination of wraparound services including English as a Second Language, job readiness, computer classes, parenting skills classes and wellness activities.

The Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry researched advocacy for hunger relief and provided educational materials to help inform participants of the issues and the actions they could take to help end hunger. The educational materials included sample letter templates with the names and addresses of local politicians who could make a difference.

A GoFundMe campaign was created to raise money for the Bon Secours Baltimore Community Works Urban Farm and Food Access Program. The urban farm distributes its produce to food insecure families in West Baltimore, one of the city’s most vulnerable neighborhoods.



SR. FRAN IS INTERVIEWED ABOUT HER GREEN HAIR BY WBAL-TV IN BALTIMORE.



Vocation Director Sr. Fran Gorsuch (c), Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center Marketing Manager/Sales Associate Tessa Newton (l) and Bon Secours Young Adults Program Manager Nicholas Stein (r) participate in the Campaign Against Hunger.

The original fundraising goal of \$500 was met within a few days. Inspired by her Irish roots and the fact that the campaign was happening in March, Vocation Director Sr. Fran Gorsuch offered to dye her hair glow-in-the-dark green if a goal of \$2,000 was met. The response was overwhelming; almost \$3,000 was raised. Sr. Fran made good on her promise, and her green hair caught the attention of local television station WBAL-TV. She and Bon Secours Baltimore Community Works Urban Farm were featured on the evening news on St. Patrick’s Day.



Jars for Josephine

The Sisters of Bon Secours are grateful for our Bon Secours family and their generous, kindhearted participation in this campaign.

Use This Time TO CONNECT WITH God, Nature & Each Other

THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO IMPACT OUR LIVES. SOCIAL DISTANCING HAS LEFT MANY OF US AT HOME FEELING ISOLATED FROM OUR FAITH COMMUNITY AND OUR NORMAL SOCIAL CONTACT. AREA LEADER SR. ELAINE DAVIA AND SRS. JI KYUNG CHOI, NANCY GLYNN AND ANNE LUTZ REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PRESENT AND DEEPENING OUR CONNECTIONS WITH GOD, NATURE AND EACH OTHER.

“The phrase “Being with is as important as doing for” is especially relevant during the pandemic.

The history of our sisters is built on the belief that when someone is in a lot of pain that cannot be alleviated and suffering or dying, just being present with them provides comfort. Front-line hospital workers have borne witness to this as they sat with their patients as they died from COVID-19. It is their inability to be present that contributes to the great sadness of families who have lost loved ones during this time. From another perspective, we have found ourselves at home with our family or with our sisters in community because we cannot be doing the things we normally have to do. The pandemic has forced us to stop all but the most necessary activities. We have the opportunity to be present for each other, to be still and to listen more. Being at home with your family or sisters is as important as travelling around the world and doing 100 different things. The pandemic is a reminder to stop and take time to connect with God, nature and each other.



When you choose a life of faith, you have to give time to it. God’s presence is with us all the time and so is faith, but you have to give some intentional time to prayer, otherwise you will not notice God’s presence during the day, and that is how I approach time during the pandemic.

I used to travel all the time. I am still working and have a lot to do, but now that I am home so much more, I find myself with extra time. How I use it has become an important part of this year, whether I spend it creatively making music or caring for all of my houseplants or simply take the time to sit still and breathe or do all of the spiritual practices that are common to life as a Religious.”

— SR. ELAINE DAVIA

Area Leader, Sisters of Bon Secours, USA



“The pandemic has helped me realize how important it is to be connected to one another.

It has been an endeavor learning the new technology to connect virtually, and the experience is not the same as meeting in person. Reflecting on what we are facing, God led me to recognize I never fully appreciated the normal life I had before the pandemic. This realization has led me to have more optimistic thinking and to appreciate every present moment of my canonical year. Searching for God’s message during this challenging time, what delights Him may be getting everyone to connect spiritually. One good outcome is everyone’s concern for each other’s health and safety. We may avoid being in contact in person, but we can still be together in each other’s spirit through prayer. I wonder if through this pandemic, God is giving us an opportunity to experience the power of spiritual connection.”

— SR. JI KYUNG CHOI

“During the pandemic we have come to realize we have limited power.

For many of us, social distancing and the break from our daily routines has provided time for reflection — to take a hard look at what we can and cannot control. As a society, we have faced deaths among our families, friends and neighbors. Each of us knows someone who has had COVID-19 or died from it. The pandemic has led us to look at our lives and our mortality differently. Personally, it has helped me see my life through a different lens. I have tried to focus on the positive and how God has provided this year as a gift. The pandemic has caused me to pause, slow down and build deeper relationships with family and colleagues. It has given me time to reflect on questions such as: What does work/life balance look like? What is really important? And what is God asking of me now?”

— SR. ANNE LUTZ

“It has been more than a year since we experienced the first COVID-19 lockdown.

During these months, an unexpected joy has been the various Zoom calls with our sisters, Associates and young adults. I am part of a small prayer group with two young adults, one from the U.S. and one from Ireland. We meet by Zoom once a week, taking turns to prepare prayer. This has been a truly nourishing experience. Participating in shared prayer and book discussions with our Associates from the United States, Ireland and Scotland has brought us closer together and closer to God. Weekly prayer gatherings with the sisters on Marian Hall and Sr. Rosie’s Zoom calls across the Congregation have helped us to stay connected in a deeper way. I feel blessed that the COVID-19 crisis has allowed us to find creative ways to deepen our relationships.”

— SR. NANCY GLYNN



Living Communal Life in a Pandemic

“WE PLEDGE TO MOTIVATE, SUPPORT AND INVITE EACH OTHER TO ACCOUNTABILITY AS WE INDIVIDUALLY AND COMMUNALLY COMMIT TO LIVE OUT THE CALLS TO ACTION FLOWING FROM OUR MISSION FOCUS STATEMENT.”

— 2019 MISSION FOCUS STATEMENT

The theme of connection reverberates through the Sisters of Bon Secours' response to the pandemic.

The sisters do not work alone.

They listen for the voice of God in their own hearts as well as in communion with others. They work with the Bon Secours family and friends. They partner with other organizations to be Good Help and carry out their mission. As their Congregation Mission Focus Statement says,

“We...cry out with others...”

They are attentive to their world. An excerpt from the Congregation of Bon Secours General Directory explains: “As an apostolic community, we discuss the profound implications of our mission, present commitments and future plans, since a charism is a dynamic force responding to the needs of time and circumstance.”

Area Leader Sr. Elaine Davia says, “When we realized that the pandemic was going to last more than a few weeks, we began sheltering in place and searching for new ways to maintain our relationships during this time of separation and distancing. We believe that celebrations and rituals, recognizing transitions and rites of passage, deaths and losses are important aspects of everyone's life and tried to find ways to continue these in a keep-our-distance world.”



Pictured (l to r):
Srs. Fran Gorsuch,
Mary Shimo, Anne Lutz
and Pat Eck, Area
Leader Sr. Elaine Davia,
Congregation Leader
Rose Marie Jasinski
and Sr. Ji Kyung Choi
participate in a Stop
Asian Hate rally.

“We share ideas and insights which through dialogue grow, change, become clearer and more fruitful. Thus, we are led to a deeper appreciation of each other, our religious consecration, mission and ministry and to a better witness of the evangelical life.”

The virtual world has opened new pathways for connection. Bon Secours Young Adults from France and Ireland are showing up at virtual retreats hosted by Bon Secours Young Adults in the U.S. Associates who had never been able to travel and attend an Assembly in person participated virtually.

Sr. Elaine says, “When we come through the pandemic, there are some practices using technology that we may want to continue. Many of us are connecting with each other more and on a deeper spiritual level than we had before.”

The sisters are using technology to stay connected, holding virtual Spring and Fall Assemblies in 2020 and participating in Zoom calls with sisters, Associates, young adults and staff. Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski hosts Congregation-wide Zoom calls with translators, so sisters and Bon Secours family from around the world can connect and faith share.

The sisters remain true to this excerpt from the Congregation of Bon Secours General Directory:

LIVING OUR FAITH

DURING COVID-19

DURING DIFFICULT TIMES, OUR FAITH GIVES US THE STRENGTH AND THE HOPE TO NAVIGATE LIFE'S CHALLENGES. WE FIND COMFORT IN COMMUNAL PRAYER AND THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF OUR CHURCH. WE ATTEND MASS TO CONNECT WITH GOD AND OUR FAITH COMMUNITY. OUR FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF THAT WE ARE DIVINELY CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD CALLS US TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER AND SHARE OUR FAITH WITH THE WORLD. HOW DO WE LIVE OUR FAITH WHEN THE PANDEMIC HAS INTERRUPTED THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES WE HOLD SACRED?

We asked members of our Bon Secours family to share some of the ways they are nurturing their spiritual life and practicing their faith during these unprecedented times:



FROM OUR RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER MINISTRY

"Our God is Emmanuel. God is with us always wherever we are. Even if we do not feel his presence with the anxiety of uncertainty about this pandemic, he is right beside us and strengthens us by walking the journey along with us. Spending some quiet time on our beautiful grounds, the pond and the peace garden, helps me feel God's presence, get refreshed and relieve the stress of being homebound."

— SR. JI KYUNG CHOI
Bon Secours Retreat Services Ministry

FROM OUR ASSOCIATES MINISTRY

"Bon Secours roots me in the whole idea of being present, and that has been a good practice during the pandemic. The Sisters of Bon Secours have a long history of living with uncertainties and taking risks to do what they can to be Good Help to people in need. It is all about being the face of God for other people. Focusing on meaning and purpose is especially important, because with that comes happiness and peace. We are on a threshold right now of waiting and not quite knowing what is next, and that is such a biblical theme. Christianity teaches us patience, and sometimes it helps to have like-minded people make meaning together, and that is what being part of the Bon Secours family does for me."

— MICHELE "MICKEY" REED
Bon Secours Associate in Formation



FROM OUR JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION MINISTRY

"I have always seen my connection to God as connection to His people. Having to be separated from friends and loved ones has been difficult but has served to remind me of my own blessings. I have a home and good neighbors and family I can call on if I need help. I have access to internet; I can attend Mass online and communicate with my children and grandchildren on Zoom. My life is less complicated and less hectic; it has left me with more time for prayer, reflection and gratitude. These are truly blessings. The pandemic has also brought more into focus the tremendous injustices of the world. So many do not have resources, have lost jobs and have a scarcity of food. There are disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on the poor and people of color. I pray that bringing some of world's injustices to light and witnessing the suffering of others may serve to change hearts."

— EILEEN FERNANDINI
Bon Secours Associate and JPIC USA Team

FROM OUR VOLUNTEER MINISTRY

“Each year we introduce the Ministry Volunteers to Thich Nhat Hanh’s walking meditation. I’ve practiced this walking meditation regularly throughout the pandemic. Likewise, life during COVID-19 has presented me with the opportunity to increase my daily prayer time. Even better, it has made it possible to practice more stillness in prayer. My family enjoys our house liturgy each Sunday with children dressing in their Sunday best to sit on the couch together for Mass. The opportunity to share our own intentions for prayer during the prayers of the faithful has been a gift, as children are rarely asked to share in this way during Sunday liturgy. While it is not the same as the Eucharist, online Mass has opened more opportunities to practice communion at home, which is another way I have been able to connect family life with a practice that we share with the Ministry Volunteers as they learn the sacramental nature of service and practicing communion in everyday life.

This has been a time to practice courage, endurance and gratitude in new ways. I like to think that these practices are strengthening my faith. Without a doubt, these practices are deepening my understanding of hope. These challenging times have called attention to new ways to love.”

— SHANNON CURRAN
Director, Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry



“I lived alone for many years, and during that time, I studied meditation and developed a contemplative prayer practice and personal relationship with God. This is the foundation of my life. But now, during COVID-19, I find myself surrounded by family. With this change of living situation has come a change of expression of faith and prayer. I am so grateful to be daily surrounded by love. What brings me the most joy and what connects me to God is simply being with those that I love. After years on my own, I have a deep appreciation for the time spent in cuddles, laughs and the intimate moments of everyday life.”

— OLIVIA STEBACK
Program Manager
Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry



“During COVID-19, as a working mom of an 11- and a 15-year-old, it quickly became imperative for us to find small spaces and places to foster our faith. A quick respite from our daily routine (school and work under one roof) was essential, and the outdoors and nature proved to be the answer. As a family, our end of work/school routine quickly became a short hike in the woods that bordered our home. This outdoor time allowed us to reconnect, renew and refresh ourselves, while pulling us closer to God. As an added blessing, our church offered outdoor worship through the summer and fall months. The combination of nature and worship was simply beautiful.”

— LIESEL RUPPRECHT
Program Coordinator, Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry

“My favorite new spiritual practice that I have developed during COVID-19 has been my weekend hikes in nature. I have been able to explore new parks and paths that I had not known before. There is a deep peace that comes over me when I am out in nature. I often listen to podcasts while I am walking, but at some point during my walk, I like to stop, take my headphones out and just breathe in the peace present all around me.

The pandemic has made me appreciate even more the beauty of a deep breath. Those moments often sustain me throughout the week, moments of mindfulness that bring me closer to God.

In non-COVID-19 times, I hope to continue this practice of taking time for stillness and just being with God.”

— PAULA HASTINGS
Volunteer Recruiter
Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry



“COVID-19 has presented challenges of isolation, deferred celebrations and anxiety around normal routines and practices. I have found comfort in some of the new rhythms that have emerged from this upside-down time. One example has been my weekly family Zoom calls, closing the gap of three time zones and five zip codes. The regular connections with family have helped assuage feelings of isolation and disconnection.

My church family has also had multiple avenues for virtual connection including weekly large gatherings and House Church meetings over Zoom as well as biweekly virtual gatherings of a group of women who meet to share prayer requests and praises and support each other through work, family and health concerns.

While nothing compares to the joy of physical proximity, these virtual connections have helped encourage and support me in the long months of the pandemic. God promises to never leave us, and God’s people have embodied this promise to me, even remotely, as I have worked to embody it for others.”

— EMILY THRUSH
Site Leader, Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry



We Are Part of a Bigger Story

GRIEF & LOSS

THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED OUR LIVES IN MANY UNEXPECTED WAYS.

From the loss of jobs and homes to interrupted work and school routines, this past year has been a time of uncertainty and multiple losses for many people. “It has been particularly traumatic for those who have lost a loved one, either to COVID-19 or another illness, especially when they could not be present when they died,” says Director of Bon Secours Associates Amy Kulesa.

One of the most painful parts of grief is feeling alone and isolated. Social distancing during the pandemic has intensified these feelings. Amy has led a number of grief retreats and bereavement support groups. She says, “People struggling with grief and loss often find comfort in participating in a bereavement group or meeting with a pastoral counselor. When they talk to others who understand their pain, they discover they are not alone, and this can provide a tremendous amount of consolation.”

Annie Hisle, a psychotherapist and bereavement and grief counselor, says “When someone is grieving, it helps to

find someone or have something to hold on to that fans the fire of God’s love from within.” She recommends life-giving activities such as journaling, gardening, nature walks, music and reading. She also suggests prayer and reading devotions and Psalms. Annie explains,

“**Our faith teaches us that we are part of a bigger story, and an important factor in working through grief is finding a way to connect with that story and choose life.**”

Annie has led several grief retreats at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center and tries to help people feel and acknowledge their pain and avoid getting stuck in it. She says, “Experiencing loss makes us stop and ask questions, and this curiosity often leads to healing.” Annie is a firm believer in the idea that when one door closes, another one usually opens. She wrote the book, “My House Burned Down and Now I Can See the Stars,” to help people integrate their grief. She says, “We know in our faith, death leads to resurrection. After night comes day. Life comes with joys and difficulties, and sometimes we have very little control. Joy and sadness are fundamental to life and complement each other.”

Ask GOD to Show You the Journey

by SR. FRAN GORSUCH
Vocation Director
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

Jesus gives each of us as Christians

a clarion vocational call when he says, “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

(John 13:34) In the poem “The Summer Day,” poet Mary Oliver poses a critical question about how we will live out the command of Jesus: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Taking the risk to enter the fray, to choose to live in the messiness of life, to give one’s life, one’s heart, one’s energies and one’s dreams to a cause greater than one’s self is to obey Jesus’ command and to commit to engage with God’s dream to change the world. I invite you to enter into your own heart and your own soul and get more deeply in touch with your own passion, your own deepest desire for life, for yourself and for others, and ask God to show you the journey that He *promises* will bring you to fullness of life. Then, please reach out to me or to someone else who can help you explore that call, that energy of living fully in the freedom of the children of God. My prayer is that each of us will have the courage to be all we are meant to be. And don’t rule out the possibility of living that call as a Catholic Sister, as a Sister of Bon Secours. I promise you won’t regret considering it.

IF YOU ARE A SINGLE WOMAN aged 20-40, Catholic and curious about what it means to be a sister today, contact Sr. Fran Gorsuch at CBSVocations@bshsi.org or 410-442-3171.

COME & BE, JUST AS YOU ARE

During this time, with continuing health scares and feelings of isolation (or just way too much togetherness), take the opportunity to Come and Be with yourself, with God and with others Saturday and Sunday, **June 19 and 20**. This virtual retreat will have limited Zoom time, prayer, reflection offerings, conversation and above all time just to BE.



@FranTheNun
@ SrsBonSecours



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youtube.com/
cbsvocations

Sr. Ji

Enters the Apostolic Year of Her Novitiate

THIS SPRING MARKS SR. JI KYUNG CHOI'S TRANSITION FROM A CANONICAL NOVITIATE TO AN APOSTOLIC NOVITIATE. ENTERING THE NOVITIATE IS AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN A WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO BECOMING A RELIGIOUS SISTER AND A SISTER OF BON SECOURS.

“In this stage, she is deepening her understanding and experience of our life, charism, prayer, community living, apostolic spirituality and mission focus.”

—SR. BERNADETTE CLAPS
FORMATION DIRECTOR



The Retreat and Conference Center held Stations of the Cross Retreats every Friday in March.



Sr. Ji Kyung Choi leads Stations of the Cross Retreats as part of her Retreat Services Ministry.

ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF BON SECOURS:

“The period of novitiate is that privileged time when the community offers the sister ample opportunities to study, ponder and assimilate the spirit of the Gospel, especially the evangelical counsels (vows), and the spirit and mission of Bon Secours. It is a time of deepening relationship with Christ, during which the novice reflects on the grace and responsibility of her personal consecration to Him. It is also a time to gain an understanding of the intercultural dimensions of Bon Secours as an international Congregation.”

A woman is a novice for the next two years and is now called “sister.” The first year of the novitiate is the canonical year, which has certain requirements of the Church’s Canon Law. This year is devoted to personal and spiritual growth, study and fuller immersion in religious life with the Sisters of Bon Secours. Continued discernment of the sister’s call to religious life is important during this time

and in every stage of initial formation, for both the novitiate and the Congregation.

The second year of the novitiate is the apostolic year, the stage of novitiate that Sr. Ji began this winter. In this new phase of her journey, Sr. Ji participates in community prayer and life, and she continues a course of study related to a deeper understanding of religious life and what it will mean when she makes temporary vows after completion of this second year of novitiate.

As part of the apostolic year, Sr. Ji engages in ministry four days a week. Sr. Ji is working within our Retreat and Conference Center’s Retreat Services Ministry. She is currently preparing for a series of retreats that she will lead from June to October. She is also assisting with other retreats, the Center’s blog and becoming oriented with how all of the Center’s staff work together.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide Sr. Ji as she enters this new phase in her journey to becoming a Sister of Bon Secours.

Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski: *Reflecting on Ten Years as Leader of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA*

SR. ROSE MARIE JASINSKI BEGAN HER TERM AS LEADER OF THE SISTERS OF BON SECOURS, USA, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE 2009 CHAPTER AND SERVED IN THAT ROLE FOR 10 YEARS. THIS WAS AN EXCITING TIME FOR THE SISTERS, AS THE CONGREGATION HAD JUST VOTED ON THE RESOLUTION TO CHANGE ITS GOVERNANCE MODEL TO CREATE A CONGREGATION WITHOUT PROVINCE BOUNDARIES.

This came after a five-year process of study, research, surveys and much committee work to form this new model of governance. While the vote was met with great enthusiasm, there was still much work to do locally to implement the many changes it entailed.

One of the most significant changes was that individual sisters were elected to the Congregation Team and then appointed to serve as the leader in one of the countries. The Congregation Team serves as the primary canonical governing body of the Congregation.

“My term as the United States leader was a brand-new experience for all of us. A big change for me was travelling



more frequently to the other countries and meeting so many of our sisters across the Congregation. In pre-COVID-19 times, we had the opportunity to meet in person as a Congregation Team four times a year,” says Sr. Rose Marie.

“Over my many years in ministry, I’ve discovered that I really love creating new things; that I love having variety in my life. This opportunity to serve as a Country Leader certainly gave me both. I enjoyed working with the directors of the various ministries to support their efforts and, hopefully, encourage their growth and development as leaders. I also very much enjoyed working with the sisters, as together we gave life to the new governance model and the Mission Focus Statement.”



Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski being blessed when newly elected as Congregation Leader in 2019.



Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski visits with a student at Sisters Academy.

Early on, the sisters in the United States were very attentive to implementing the Mission Focus Statement, as stated at the Chapter. Our sisters, for example, spent significant time at assemblies and on committees learning how to better implement our call to “care for all creation ...”

The sisters expanded attendance at our assemblies by inviting other women and men religious in the area to join us for presentations and discussions on this topic.

Among Sr. Rose Marie’s many accomplishments, a few of the things she was most proud of during her 10 years as leader were:

- The Sisters of Bon Secours’ membership in the Asylee Women Enterprise, an organization that journeys with asylum seekers as they rebuild their lives, enabling the Sisters of Bon Secours to assist several women with housing and support at Marriottsville.
- Significantly reducing the use of plastics and disposables at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center as we work toward saving our planet.
- Major renovations and upgrades on Marian Hall to improve the home of our elderly and infirmed sisters.

- Acquiring a much-needed new piano for the Chapel and installing handrails on the altar steps, improving accessibility.
- Leading a group of about 18 staff on a pilgrimage to the Bon Secours Motherhouse in Paris to share the very rich heritage of the Sisters of Bon Secours with them.

As Sr. Rose Marie completed her term as Leader of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, she was elected Congregation Leader at the 2019 Chapter. She says, “The transition to Congregation Leader was certainly helped by the fact that I was on the Congregation Team for 10 years. In some ways, I knew what to expect.”

She goes on to explain how shortly after becoming Congregation Leader, COVID-19 changed everything. Travel bans restricted all in-person gathering meetings, and most of the the work is now done via Zoom.

“**TO ENHANCE A BETTER SENSE OF CONNECTEDNESS, WE HAVE HELD SEVERAL ZOOM GATHERINGS ACROSS THE CONGREGATION WHERE EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN A CALL, JUST TO CATCH UP, SHARE CURRENT EXPERIENCES AND ‘SEE’ ONE ANOTHER.**”

— SR. ROSE MARIE JASINSKI

“It has been very invigorating for all of us to see the smiles on the faces of friends we haven’t seen for a while. Of course, our excellent translators facilitate the sharing.”

Sr. Rose Marie is looking forward to being able to resume her travels and to meet in person with our sisters around the globe.

We're Up to the Challenge! *Learning, Praying & Acting for Racial Justice*

by SR. MARY BETH HAMM, SSJ
Coordinator: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours

Taking to heart these words from the Bon Secours USA Statement on Racism, the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation USA Team recently participated in the 21-Day Ignatian Racial Equity Challenge and invited the Bon Secours family to join us on this journey. Each day for three weeks, we entered into the complex work of understanding the realities of racial injustice and anti-blackness in the United States. Daily emails, that included short articles, podcasts, videos and other resources, invited us to learn, pray and act on various aspects of racial justice.

Some resources explored the critical difference between being non-racist and anti-racist and what that means in the context of faith and justice. One author, Heather Malveaux, urged us to listen to, advocate for, sympathize with and raise our voices to match the outcries and suffering of our Black brothers and sisters. A very moving video by Fr. Bryan Massingale challenged us to become aware of our own white privilege and sit with the discomfort of it. During the final week of the challenge, we explored racial equity in relation to five systemic justice issues that are prevalent in our society—housing, environment, healthcare, mass incarceration and policing.

Throughout the 21-day challenge, we were invited to go beyond intellectual engagement with the content and notice and reflect on our inner feelings. Paying attention to one's feelings is central to Ignatian spirituality, and all of us who took this challenge wholeheartedly agree that the content evoked many emotions — some of them very uncomfortable. Nonetheless, in the spirit of St. Ignatius, we concluded each week of the challenge by sharing those feelings with God in a prayerful, honest, heart-to-heart conversation.

Engaging in racial justice work truly flows from our relationship with God. It is our loving God who inspires us, calls us and breaks open our hearts to hear and respond to the cries and suffering of our brothers and sisters of color and to live in profound ways our belief that Black Lives Matter.

This 21-day challenge is but one small effort at addressing racial injustice and bringing about racial healing. We hold fast to the belief that our loving God will give us the grace to continue on this journey and do our part to dismantle racism forever.

Across the pond, sisters from Cork, Ireland, advocate for Black Lives Matter.

Pictured: (front row) Srs. Martha Leamy, Katherine Tierney and Ita Keane; (middle row) Sr. Maureen Condon; (back row) Srs. Oliver McSweeney, Frances de Chantal Ryan, Eileen O'Connor and John Chrysostom Duggan.

“AS WOMEN OF HEALING, WE RECOMMIT OURSELVES TO BRING HEALING TO THE DISEASE OF RACISM IN OUR OWN HEARTS, IN OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR COUNTRY AND OUR WORLD.”



SISTERS ARRIVE

in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

On the Sisters of Bon Secours Foundation Day, January 24, two Sisters of Bon Secours, Sr. Jacqueline Rebours from France and Sr. Santos Nélida Romero Vásquez from Peru, arrived in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), to start an exciting new community in accordance with the Congregation's Chapter Statement to:

“ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY IN THE CONGO.”

The sisters stayed with the Jesuits in Kinshasa until renovations on their home were completed, and Congregation Vocation Coordinator Sr. Pat Dowling joined the sisters for three weeks in February to help them get settled.

Two Congolese sisters from the Congregation of Christ the Redeemer began the transfer process to the Congregation of Bon Secours with Srs. Jacqueline and Nélida. Upon visa approval, they will spend three to six months in France to experience and

learn more about life as Bon Secours sisters. We also are excited to welcome six young Congolese women, who have been in the discernment process for their three-month, live-in experience with Srs. Jacqueline and Nélida, with hopes of entering the Congregation of Bon Secours. Four more young women will be ready for a live-in experience before the end of 2021.

We ask everyone to keep Srs. Jacqueline and Nélida in their prayers as they begin forming

Women in discernment from the Democratic Republic of the Congo meet with the Sisters of Bon Secours.

Standing in front of their house in the Commune Lemba in Kinshasa. Pictured (l to r): Sr. Patience, a new Congolese transfer sister to the Congregation of Bon Secours, Sr. Santos Nélida Romero Vásquez from Peru, Sr. Jacqueline Rebours from France and Congregation Vocation Coordinator Sr. Pat Dowling.



a new community. There is much work to be done, and they are energized with hope as they move into the future:

“Impelled by the Holy Spirit and renewed by the fire of our original call, we women of audacious hope nurture each other in our vocation; risk living on the periphery; and as resurrection women, respond to what is to come.”

(CBS Direction Statement, 2019 Chapter)

INTERNATIONAL Bon Secours *Family Residence in Great Britain*

The Sisters of Bon Secours recently launched the invitation process to the Bon Secours family to consider becoming part of a new international residence of the Bon Secours family of sisters, Associates, young adults and volunteer ministry alumni. The residence will be located in London, England, in the Diocese of Westminster, where our sisters first arrived and lived. After long, careful research as well as partnering with others in co-sponsored events, participating in various London events and staying in contact with women interested in religious life, we expect our new residence will bring much hope, both in young adult ministry and to those in need in Great Britain.

Sisters in Peru *Go Virtual*

There are vocation promoters in every community in Peru. Together, they made the recent decision to go virtual. The Sisters of Bon Secours in Peru are now on Facebook and Instagram, focusing on promoting vocations. There are several young people who have expressed interest in learning more about the Congregation, and post-COVID-19, the sisters look forward to meeting them in person. The sisters have also been involved with high school and college students in the last several months and have been in contact with 700 young people, and more than 50 are currently participating in a WhatsApp reflection group.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Sr. Jacinta McGrath, one of our sisters in Ireland. She was known to many of our sisters in the United States and will be missed.

Chaplain Builds Bridges of Healing

When we think about the people on the frontlines in hospitals during the pandemic, doctors and nurses always come to mind, but we should also remember the important role chaplains have served during this unprecedented time. Raymond Barnes, a chaplain at Bon Secours DePaul Medical Center in Norfolk, Virginia, has been building bridges of healing during the pandemic. He has been the comforting link for patients and their loved ones via virtual visits while visitor restrictions have been in place.

In an interview with local news channel 10Wavy.com, Raymond's message to families and loved ones is:

“**Stay home and let us do the work, so we can protect you and your loved one.**”

Another significant part of Raymond's job has been to support the nurses, physicians and medical staff as they deal with the emotional toll of caring for people who are sick and dying from COVID-19. He is thankful for the training he has had as a chaplain to help prepare him for this experience.



Chaplain Raymond Barnes prays with a patient who is COVID-19 positive.

Being in the ministry and serving as the DePaul chaplain for the last 17 years, Raymond has always associated his work with getting close to people. He has had to change how he counsels people and the way he works. He wears a face mask at all times and personal protective equipment when necessary, and he maintains a physical distance from those who are COVID-19 positive. In his interview with 10Wavy.com, he shares,

“**I am learning that my prayers are powerful enough to go through a glass door.**”

Bon Secours Associates:

Staying Connected During COVID-19

The months of COVID-19 quarantine, which have stretched over a year, have challenged all of us in myriad ways. A year ago, we could not have conceived what 2020-21 would look like, the many changes it would bring to our lives and relationships and how it would expand our faith and resilience.

Many of us have reflected on the blessing technology has been for us during this time, certainly not available to those who lived through previous pandemics, such as the Spanish flu outbreak of 1918. In fact, during that international health crisis, a number of Bon Secours sisters, serving as nurses, died.

Today, the internet has allowed widespread communities such as the Bon Secours Associates to stay connected in ways we could not have imagined even 10 years ago.

Zoom and other video platforms have become the mainstay of the Bon Secours family during this past year, allowing us to meet, pray, discuss important social issues and celebrate across wide geographical distances.

We have met and prayed over the months about such issues as our response to living in quarantine, the national distress over continued acts of racial violence, the divisiveness and lack of civility in our political sphere, and themes of justice and prison reform as seen in the film “Just Mercy” and enjoyed both an advent day retreat as well as a three-day annual retreat in the fall — all on Zoom!

This platform allowed us to invite Associates and sisters in other countries to join us.

*by AMY KULESA
Director, Bon Secours Associates, USA*

We have gotten better acquainted as a whole Congregation across national boundaries during this time.

As with all things in life, challenge and opportunity are two sides of the same coin, and we have certainly experienced plenty of both. But we are grateful for the opportunities this crisis has given us to pray together, support one another and grow in more abiding friendship, celebrating the faith and mission which connect us as Bon Secours family.

Connecting Remotely Through Service

A KEY COMPONENT OF A BON SECOURS VOLUNTEER MINISTRY'S FORMATION IS TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE WITH OTHERS. THE NEED FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING BROUGHT ON BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED HOW OUR MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS SERVE AND HOW THEY CONNECT WITH THOSE THEY SERVE.

Since September, they have served virtually, socially distanced or in outdoor settings. During these unprecedented times, they have found new ways to build relationships with those they serve and have learned how to walk with others even when they could not be physically present. Here we share some of our ministry volunteers' experiences:

MIKAYLA HAEFELE

"I first experienced the challenges of remote learning while in college," says Mikayla Haeefe, who volunteers with Cristo Rey High School in Richmond, Virginia. She relates to the students' struggles with virtual learning through her recent experience of college education and her online service with Cristo Rey High School. The highlight of her service has been building relationships with the teachers and finding ways to support them by monitoring classroom chats, acting as a sounding board and providing feedback. Upon the teachers' request, she and other Ministry Volunteers created a Zoom etiquette video to help facilitate a smoother distance-learning experience for students.



In addition to seeing students in class, Mikayla holds virtual office hours and meets and works with students one-on-one. She also offers help during off hours.

"BECAUSE I SEE THEM IN DIFFERENT VIRTUAL SETTINGS, I AM ABLE TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM AND BE A BETTER MENTOR."

— MIKAYLA HAEFELE

Mikayla is pleasantly surprised by their ability to build trust virtually and by how many connections she has made with students in the classroom chats. She has discovered: "Students who do not speak up in class suddenly come alive in the chat; they are more comfortable there."

BRION HARRIS

Brion Harris was accustomed to in-person service, such as helping to build a house or working in a soup kitchen. He says, "When COVID-19 happened, I realized we would have to make connections virtually. That mindset shift was difficult." Brion will never take in-person connections for granted again, and through his year of service, he has learned to be more open and has stopped taking himself or his mistakes too seriously.

Brion volunteers with Sisters Academy of Baltimore, a middle school for girls in Baltimore, Maryland. He leads the school's Community Action Club, a role he especially enjoys because the relaxed setting has allowed him to get to know the students on a more personal level.



He says, "They understand and are aware of current events much more than I was at their age." He is happy to be a part of providing students with a forum for discussing these issues.

Brion has accompanied the fifth grade students, who were all new to Sisters Academy of Baltimore, as they created a virtual family community. He is impressed by how much care

and concern they show one another, even though, prior to February, they had never met in person.

"I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE DEVELOPED VIRTUALLY WILL TRANSLATE TO AN IN-PERSON SETTING."

— BRION HARRIS

KELLY FLYNN

Kelly Flynn felt hopeful but nervous at the beginning of her year of service when she contemplated creating new relationships remotely. She volunteers in Baltimore, with Sisters Academy of Baltimore and also with Bon Secours Community Works, where she attends virtual Crime and Grime Community meetings. Initially, Kelly noticed that the lack of opportunity for natural conversation in these virtual settings made it difficult to develop relationships.

As she grew more comfortable with virtual service, Kelly became more open to being creative and discovered there were ways to



connect. "I would come early to class and stay late, so I could talk with the teachers," she says. "I advocated my ability to use breakout rooms and then really began making connections."

It took creativity to engage with students online. She learned that participating in the classroom chats helped her build relationships. When she took the initiative, students

responded and reached out to her, and it quickly became normal to work with students virtually. She says, "The students make me laugh, and I am surprised by how much fun we have online. They have taught me that being playful in a virtual world is not only possible but very much needed."

.....
Since the Ministry Volunteers shared their experiences, they have been able to serve in person at both Sisters Academy of Baltimore and Cristo Rey High School. They were blessed to be able to continue to build relationships with both staff and students and to live more fully into Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry's mission to live compassionately, receive and offer healing and share in liberation.

Bon Secours Young Adults

by NICHOLAS STEIN
*Young Adults Program Manager
 Bon Secours Young Adults*

GOD OFTEN COMES TO US
 IN A STILL, SMALL VOICE.
 WHILE 2020 WAS ANYTHING
 BUT QUIET—WITH NOISE
 COMING AT US FROM EVERY
 CONCEIVABLE ANGLE IT
 SEEMED, EVEN WHILE MOST
 OF US WERE COOPED UP
 AT HOME MORE THAN WE
 EVER HAD BEEN BEFORE—
 GOD CONTINUED TO ARRIVE
 IN STILL, SMALL WAYS.

For Young Adult Ministry
 information, follow us on
 Instagram and Facebook:
 @bonsecoursyoungadults



Bon Secours Young Adults connect through video calls on Zoom.



Materials were distributed in advance for the Bon Secours Young Adults Virtual Retreat.

As Bon Secours Young Adults, we have learned over the years that good ministry is rarely flashy, showy or even picture worthy. It is made up of hundreds of small moments, insights and connections: conversations between a pair of friends; checking in and simply walking with people in their everyday lives; sending a new book of spiritual reading and knowing that God is working in the quiet of the reader's heart; and texting on birthdays and anniversaries.

These items don't make for good articles in magazines or even social media posts. They do, however, follow the example of the Sisters of Bon Secours tending to those in need and the example of Jesus caring for those he encountered.

We did a lot of checking in with each other this past year. Not just the ministry staff checking on the community, but the community members checking in with each other. In so many small ways, the dozens of Bon Secours Young Adults spread compassion, healing and liberation in their own corners of the world, moment by moment, knowing they always had a community standing behind them that cared for them and their well-being.

As a community, our connections this past year continued to grow deeper, even while we remained physically apart. Our ministry grew wider, as our understanding of mission, inclusion, diversity and communion were brought into clearer focus.

Over the last 12 months, Bon Secours Young Adults have done our best to evolve with the digital and socially distanced realities of pandemic life. This has included adapting elements of hospitality, community and spirituality, while trying to ward off the negative effects of too much screen time.

We have leaned into the challenging hurdles of overcoming "Zoom fatigue" and created space for intentional community. When creating events like our virtual retreats, advocacy series or prayer partner groups, we have been extra mindful of counting the minutes of screen time, the importance of sending out physical care packages and leaving plenty of time for Spirit-led conversations.

Retreat boxes with the necessary cookies (gluten-free, if needed), a new running group using the Strava app for working out in a socially distanced way, sharing of Spotify playlists and music recommendations, cooking classes within retreats and international prayer groups with Ireland were some of the creative ways that we tried to help bridge the digital divide of pandemic life.

We have had the privilege of expanding our young adult reach — welcoming new friends and reconnecting with those who have previously moved away from the mid-Atlantic region. As young adults are a traditionally transient cohort, we see this as a benefit moving forward beyond COVID-19. Our hope is to continue providing opportunities for young adults who are accessible no matter one's geographic location, in addition to gathering together again once it is safe to do so.

Although we long to be together, this time has been filled with ample creativity and unique time in community. We have learned so much from this season and look forward to continuing elements of what we have gained moving forward.



Sharing Our Healing Hospitality

“IN THIS TIME OF
WORLD TURMOIL,
BON SECOURS
OFFERS PEACE.”

by JENNIFER MURPHY
Manager of Retreats and Events
Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center

The need for spiritual nourishment has been even more poignant during the pandemic. Stress and isolation can create circumstances that are new and intimidating. The Retreat and Conference Center has always been a place of respite, leaving guests with renewed faith and a sense of peace, and this has been even more deeply appreciated during the pandemic. Guests frequently mention how desperately they needed the time away, either in person or virtually, to reconnect with their faith. Those who visit share how safe they feel at the Center, due to the thorough protocols that have been put in place. The healing hospitality of the Retreat and Conference Center and its programs has provided a great sense of renewal, and we are so grateful to be able to continue to share this hospitality with guests.



2021

Join Us for a Retreat This Summer!

JUNE, JULY & AUGUST

**Broken, Beautiful, and Beloved:
Learning to See Ourselves Through
God's Eyes**
Guided by Author Mary DeTurris Poust
June 25-27

Silent Directed Retreat
*Guided by Joy Aker, Sr. Bernadette Claps,
Fr. Phillip Cover and Sr. Pamela Jablon*
June 27-July 3

**Enter the Chaos: Engage the Differences
to Make a Difference**
*Guided by the Institute for Communal
Contemplation and Dialogue (ICCD) with
Nancy Sylvester, IHM; Margaret Galiardi, OP
and Dr. Vernice Solimar*
July 8-11

**Drawn to the Road of Fire:
Teilhard and Struggle**
Guided by Kathleen Duffy, SSJ
July 18-24

8-Day Ignatian Retreat
*Guided by Paul Gallagher, Fr. Patrick Bergquist
and Dee Papania*
July 24-August 1

Searching for Mary Magdalene, Women's Retreat
Guided by Sr. Mary Ellen O'Dea, OP
August 1-7

Desert Spirituality Retreat
Guided by Gordon Creamer
August 6-9

Silent Directed Retreat
*Guided by Sr. Ann Belmonte, Fr. Phillip Cover,
Fr. Michael Schleupner and Rev. Stephen Wade*
August 15-21

Simple Care of a Hopeful Heart
Guided by Dr. Robert Wicks
August 21 with Overnight Option August 20

For more details on these retreats and a complete listing of our retreat schedule through the end of the year, including virtual options, visit our website www.RCCBonSecours.com. Please note that the schedule is subject to change, and our website will be updated accordingly.

“IT IS THE MOST PERFECT
PLACE TO REFLECT,
STUDY AND BE NURTURED
WITHOUT DISTRACTIONS.”

CONGREGATION NEWS

AROUND THE



Staff Donate Artwork

We thank two of our staff for donating their artwork to the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center:

LINDA CULP, bookstore associate, created a watercolor (*pictured above*) of the bridge over the pond in Marriottsville. A digital image of this painting was sent as a thank-you gift to those who contributed to the Retreat and Conference Center's recent fundraising campaign. Postcards and prints of the painting are available at the bookstore. Linda also created a series of watercolors based on photos of the Retreat and Conference Center, and they are displayed on the first floor next to the new elevator.

TARA MULDER, guest services coordinator for the Retreat and Conference Center, created a series of art panels (*pictured on the right*) titled "God's Love Poured into Our Hearts" inspired by scripture from Romans 5:1-5. One of the panels is made of collage pieces that create a mosaic with a cross in the center. Maintenance Supervisor Tim Cugle made a frame for it, and it is displayed in the lobby of the Retreat and Conference Center.



SISTERS *ON THE MOVE*

Our sisters are on the move with Sr. Anna Mae Crane moving into the apartments on the Marriottsville campus and Sr. Peggy Mathewson moving to Marian Hall. We wish them well in their new homes.





CARING for Creation Through Composting


The Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center recently began a new project to care for the environment by composting food scraps and paper towels. These efforts will help to reduce the amount of waste going into landfills and cut back on the number of plastic trash can liners used throughout the building. "Eventually, we hope to expand these efforts to the entire Marriottsville campus," says Daniel Babcock, the Center's environmental services and audiovisual manager.

Composting will lower the Center's carbon footprint by turning food waste into a usable product — natural fertilizer. It is a very impactful first step toward a better environment.

CONNECT WITH US ON ALL OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS:

 Instagram.com/
SistersofBonSecoursUSA

 Facebook.com/
BonSecoursVocations

 @SrsBonSecours

New Elevator Adds Safety and Peace of Mind



Pictured (l to r): Srs. Elaine Davia, Ji Kyung Choi, Pat Eck, Mary Shimo, Fran Gorsuch and Rose Marie Jasinski.

The sisters celebrated the completion of a new elevator at the Retreat and Conference Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "Having a second elevator provides peace of mind should our original elevator need repairs," says Building Engineer Hamid Esfandiari. "I am very glad that we were able to add it to the outside of the building and still maintain the building's unique and rare cross shape."

WELCOME New International JPIC Committee and JPIC USA Team Members:

RACHEL MOCCIA
International JPIC Committee
& JPIC USA Team

JIL KRUEGER
JPIC USA Team

CLINTONETTE ROBINSON
JPIC USA Team

*Sisters of Bon Secours
Health Care Ministry:*

**A History
of
Courage
&
Compassion**

by JENIFER KIRIN
Special Collections Archivist



◀ Sr. Rita Thomas.

St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond, Virginia, in 1966. ▼



◀ Srs. Justine Cyr (l) and Theophane Klingelhofer (r) in the 1960s.

THE SISTERS OF BON SECOURS ARE FAMILIAR WITH LIVING THROUGH TRYING TIMES THAT REQUIRE TURNING TO FAITH, STAYING CONNECTED TO GOD AND EACH OTHER, AND RENEWING THE STRONG INTERCONNECTION WITH THE LARGER BON SECOURS FAMILY.

As summarized from the book “Courage and Compassion, Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, 1981-2016:”

“Starting in the 1960s, the great benefit that Medicare and Medicaid brought in providing hospital care for elderly and impoverished Americans also resulted in the imposition of wage and price controls on hospitals. This added to challenges that the sisters were experiencing in their independently run hospitals, where modest budgets for medical equipment could not keep pace with offerings of new lifesaving medical technologies, and shortages in sister nurses posed staffing issues. Additionally, the doctrine from the Second Vatican Council enabled sisters to engage in pastoral counseling and community health services in order to be of direct assistance to people impacted by recession, deindustrialization, the AIDS epidemic and violence and addiction related to drug trafficking.

“To find a way forward, leadership teams led by Srs. Rita Thomas, current Provincial, and Justine Cyr, who later succeeded her, were created. Their work initiated the origins of the Bon Secours Health System, Inc., which was formed in 1983 and was the solution to the issues that Bon Secours hospitals were facing.”

This happened thanks to many years of hard work. There was communal discernment to include individual prayer, group prayer and conversation meetings in which sisters explored what God was calling them to do. Changes included Sr. Regina Clifton replacing Sr. Justine as health care coordinator in 1979 and Sr. Theophane Klingelhofer moving from nursing into hospital administration. In 1970, Sr. Theophane was replaced by Alvin Powers, the first lay CEO of a Bon Secours hospital. The Bon Secours family of lay persons shared their expertise and accepted leadership positions. Sr. Rita Thomas instituted CEO roundtable meetings and other meetings a few times a year to share strategies and learnings, a practice that became an industry standard. And, just as it happens today in all Bon Secours ministries, there were the sisters and affiliates engaging in ongoing prayer and discussion.

Housekeeping Staff are Living Our Mission



Daniel Babcock

Daniel Babcock is the environmental services and audiovisual manager for the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. He has served at the Center for 13 years and oversees the Housekeeping department, conference services and audiovisual setups. His background in technology has been an asset for transitioning to virtual events during the pandemic, and he applies his degree in biology to researching cleaning chemicals and ensuring they are safe for staff, guests and the planet.

“COVID-19 has given me a new appreciation for life and mortality and reminded me to focus on the present and the people in my life. As a manager, I feel a lot of pressure to keep the sisters, our staff and guests safe. I have implemented new training and

procedures and made sure we have the supplies in place to get through this challenging time.

The sisters recognize that doing the right thing is not always the most cost effective. I appreciate their support on projects that help reduce waste and have a positive impact on the environment.

It is awesome to have an employer who cares about you in the holistic sense. During my tenure, I have been afforded the flexibility to attend college. My wife and I held our wedding at the Marriottsville campus, and the sisters secretly planned a surprise poolside reception for us. The sisters' care infuses the ministry and allows me to do the same with my staff. I am eternally grateful for the sisters, what they do and how they make the world a better place.”

Nigisti Abreha

Nigisti Abreha has served in the Housekeeping department of the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center for 16 years. She cares for the guests and their rooms. She is known around the Center for her green thumb and keeping everyone's plants alive. Nigisti also works at Walmart as a team lead, where she supervises 16 staff members. She was instrumental in getting two Walmart stores to donate community grants totaling \$7,000 to the Center's fundraising campaign last December.

“During the pandemic, I have been active in my church and with the Women's Association of Tigray, to help people in need of food and to raise funds to help women in my home country of Ethiopia afford the costs of staying in quarantine shelters.

The Retreat and Conference Center was raising money to help cover the expense of paying employees, even though there was very little work. It meant a lot to the staff, especially during these difficult times. We appreciate the sisters and love working here. I knew Walmart donated to local nonprofits, and I drove my manager crazy making sure he followed up on



all of the emails and paperwork, encouraging him to ask for the maximum and reach out to other stores to do the same.

The sisters have always been there for me, and that has motivated me to do what I can in return. In 2011, I had open heart surgery. The sisters supported me emotionally and financially, and my co-workers donated their vacation time so my paycheck would not be interrupted while I recovered. It was such a blessing. I would not have survived without their help. I do my best to reflect their mission in my work and in the rest of my life.”

...Living Our Mission



Rashad Polk

Rashad Polk is a Housekeeping lead and supervisor of environmental services for the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. He has worked in hospitality since 2010 and served at the Center for a little over three years. He began his career at the Center covering the night shift, where he arranged conference rooms, dealt with audiovisual issues and maintained the facilities for guests. After transitioning into the lead role, he has had the opportunity to focus on improving the Center's environmental impact.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Louis Vanlandingham, a beloved member of the Retreat and Conference Center's Housekeeping department. His friendly smile will be truly missed.



“Working with the sisters is such a privilege. Their core values and mission align with my own, making work feel less like work and more like a personal mission. With that perspective, there is a deep sense of gratification that comes with the work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a trying time and a true test of faith. I have found comfort in knowing that everything on this earth—both painful and joyous—is a part of God's plan. Lately, I have found comfort in praying for the strength to not get wrapped up in the loss and instead focus on developing a new appreciation for all of the little things in life that I had previously overlooked.

Our department has changed how it operates in response to COVID-19. We have adopted different cleaning methods and solutions that allow us to target the virus and keep the building clean and sanitized while also continuing to be mindful of using products that are safe for our co-workers, our guests and our planet. We try to do everything in-house, and COVID-19 has driven us to expand our technology, as we host virtual events and hybrid virtual and in-person events in observance of capacity restrictions.”

IN MEMORIAM

Sr. Frances McCabe

1938-2021

Sr. Frances McCabe died on March 2 at the age of 83 at her home on Marian Hall. She was born and raised in Pennsylvania. She entered the Congregation in 1955, professing her final vows in 1963. She attended the Bon Secours School of Nursing in Baltimore where she earned her R.N. degree and continued her studies at Florida International University where she earned a bachelor's degree in health services administration.

She began her nursing career as a nurse supervisor at St. Edmond's Home for Children in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, and held many nursing and administrative positions over the years in Bon Secours facilities in Grosse Point, Michigan; Methuen, Massachusetts; and Miami, Florida. Sr. Frances came to the headquarters of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, in Marriottsville, Maryland, in 1985 as head nurse on Marian Hall.

She returned to Miami in 1992 as vice president of mission at Villa Maria Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. She also served as manager of Project Good Help in Miami for many years, and she was the coordinator of the sisters on Marian Hall from 2009 until she retired in 2013. “One of the best parts of this job is just to be present and able to listen to the sisters, understand them and help them in whatever way I can,” Sr. Frances said at the time.



“Looking back, one of my most satisfying ministries was working with the children who had physical and mental disabilities at St. Edmond's Home and especially teaching medical residents about children with cerebral palsy and other physical disabilities,” said Sr. Frances. “This was a wonderful place with year-round programs including a summer camp.”

Sr. Frances served her Congregation as superior in the early 1970s, as a board member of Bon Secours Villa Maria and as coordinator of the Baltimore sisters and later the Florida sisters. She also was coordinator of the of the Provincial General Assembly in 2000.

“Sr. Frannie will be missed by all, and we are thankful for all the many gifts she brought to our community and those she served,” says Sr. Elaine Davia, area leader, Sisters of Bon Secours, USA.

Sr. Frances is survived by her brother James McCabe, brother David McCabe and his wife Diane, sister-in-law Jeanne McCabe and many nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her parents Charles and Anna McCabe and brother, Charles McCabe.

\$7,000

IN MINISTRY GRANTS AWARDED

BON SECOURS MARYLAND FOUNDATION RETURNING CITIZENS PROGRAM — \$15,000

The Returning Citizens Program collaborates with local prison systems to help prepare individuals about to be released from prison into the Bon Secours Community Works' West Baltimore neighborhood for a new post-prison life. The program began in 2014 and addresses the more than 1,000 individuals being released annually into this region. The Returning Citizens Program seeks to address the well-being of the local community by assisting individuals with major sociological, psychological, moral, financial and mental challenges confronting them post prison. The funds will be used for the salary of the program manager and for incidental needs of clients – food, shelter, clothing and transportation. This program is the only one of its kind in the area.

JASMINE ROAD HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUPPORT — \$15,000

Jasmine Road represents a one-of-a-kind outreach and residential program for women in the Greenville, South Carolina, upstate region, who are recovering from human trafficking, drug addiction, homelessness and other sociological and psychological challenges that have rendered them at great risk to themselves and others. Since its 2018 inception, Jasmine Road enjoys the support of many local institutions and seeks to expand its work by opening a second residential program in the Greenville area. The funds will go toward the salary of a residential care specialist. The carefully crafted healing infrastructure has offered great help to women seeking to rebuild their lives and become productive citizens.

MERCY HIGH SCHOOL TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT — \$15,000

Mercy High School, a Catholic college preparatory high school for 427 girls of diverse backgrounds, is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and located in Baltimore City. Typically, its annual gala is a critical source of tuition assistance monies. Its 2020 gala was held virtually, and while excellent, did not achieve the same level of financial success as past in-person events. To meet the significant financial aid needs of its students and their families during this pandemic year, the school had to raise a total of \$40,000. Of this goal, \$30,000 was earmarked for financial aid. The \$15,000 grant was applied to a one-to-one challenge grant that served as powerful leverage to inspire Mercy High School alumnae and friends to support the financial aid needs of the current student body.

ST. MARY'S HEALTH WAGON — HEALTH CARE IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA — \$12,000

The Health Wagon is a nonprofit organization providing a range of health services to the medically underserved in Southwest Virginia. Of the 133 counties in Virginia, Dickenson County ranks 119 in health outcomes (a measure of how long people live and how healthy they feel) and 127 in health factors (that influence longevity and quality of life). These rankings illustrate a significant disparity compared to residents in the rest of the state. Shortages of local health care providers are a major factor accounting for health care disparities in addition to social determinants of health including low socio-economic status. The funds will be used for salaries to staff two mobile units and two stationary units.

“We have realized that we are on the same boat,
All of us fragile and disoriented,
But at the same time important and needed,
All of us called to row together,
Each of us in need of comforting the other.”

— POPE FRANCIS

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 Sisters of
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