



Building to Meet the Future in 2009



Sister Cecilia Dolores Conant prepared to leave her room at Marian Convent in January

Dear Friends,

Greetings during this joyful season of spring! We celebrate new life in colorful flowers, fresh green leaves, longer brighter days, and the warmth of sun.

We Sisters of Mercy are, as always, changing with the season. The retired sisters at Marian Convent uprooted and transplanted themselves this January to the Motherhouse, just across the road, so that Marian can be renovated. They are enjoying new spaces and sister companions in this very familiar building. They plan to return in January or February of 2010, and will call the renewed retirement convent Marian Oaks.

In both fall and spring the Burlingame sisters joined with other Sisters of Mercy in the West Midwest Community for a day of sharing, praying and discussing current issues. Meetings took place in Burlingame, Phoenix, Auburn and seven other sites throughout the Community of 800 sisters. We envisioned what our life might be like in 2013, shared our images of hope, and engaged in spirited discussion of the future of religious life. At our spring meetings we celebrated the jubilees of 85 sisters, marking 25, 50, 60 and other milestone years of dedication and ministry. It is always an inspiring event that calls forth entertaining stories from "the good old days."



L-R: Sisters Melanie O'Brian, Sheila Devereux and Cris Caballero confer at spring meetings in Burlingame.

As we have joined together to form a larger Community, we have created three sponsorship councils to relate to the many ministries for which we are responsible. One council relates to educational institutions, another to health care, and the third to spiritual and social outreach ministries. These groups will keep in touch with the ministries locally and make some of the decisions that the former regional leadership teams made, while working closely with the current West Midwest Community Leadership Team.

In these difficult days of economic downturn, all the ministries are being as responsive as they can to the

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needs of persons who find their resources diminished and their future uncertain. Mercy Center is offering a series of reflection days called "Retreat in Times of Stress" free of charge to persons seeking wisdom in the midst of turmoil and transition.

I wish you the joys of spring as it comes to us from God's hand each day. In this season, we experience once more the rhythm of suffering and resurrection, and we recognize that we cannot have one without the other. May you be blessed with new life!

In Mercy,

Sister Judy Cannon, RSM

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West Midwest Leadership Team

Marian Convent moves up the hill

The sisters at Burlingame's Marian Convent began January 2009 by moving, lock, stock and suitcase, up the hill to the Mercy Motherhouse. Carefully organized by Cherie Thibodeaux, administrator of Marian Convent, they were making way for remodeling of the 34-year-old building into a more senior-friendly home. The sisters have come to Marian over the years not just because they needed care, but because they were ready for a new kind of community. "I came because of age and grace," said Sister Geraldine McDonnell, RSM, who has had a distinguished nursing career and was dean of the University of San Francisco School of Nursing. "Marian offered a smaller community and relationships. I liked the atmosphere. It was wonderful for me – being with the sisters again."

The building had increasing physical problems. The floor in the hallway to the chapel buckled. Here and there heaters wouldn't work and couldn't be repaired. Summers were unbearably hot inside the one story building with skylights which let in light but intensified the heat.



Project Manager Pete McKean, Sister Ellene Egan, and Campus Administrator Jean Hastie survey an empty Marian Care.

A retirement committee had met over several years and had decided that changes were needed to accommodate the sisters who have devoted their lives to their ministries and now deserve a safe, comfortable space in their elder years. To save costs, demolition has been done by campus staff. Many materials and fixtures were salvaged and have been sold or recycled. Landscaping will be done by staff members as well.

The needed renovations, which will be entirely interior, include:

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- an improved heating and air conditioning system,
- spaces redesigned for easier use for those with walkers or wheel chairs,
- improvements to windows throughout the building, especially the skylights that focus immense summer heat into the living areas, and
- other mechanical, electrical, and equipment upgrades.

Ecologically friendly materials will be incorporated into the building whenever possible.

The emphasis will be on maintaining the sisters' active and independent life as long as possible. "I look forward to the plan which gives the sisters more room – not spacious but nice," said Geraldine. We will have meeting rooms for activities and programs. But getting back to the core – the chapel will have an advanced hearing system."

Meanwhile the sisters are adapting to living in the Motherhouse again. Cherie says the sisters don't complain. They are building community in a new space. Sister Geraldine looks around her room and says, "I'm living in rooms that were a dormitory where four of us novices lived when I entered. But now the corridors are so long, I forget what I came for when I come to the end of them." Soon she'll have a "greener" space with shorter corridors and lots of light. A good place to continue the long tradition of Mercy community.



Sister Kathleen Connolly is teaching girls in Sudan and having adventures which she records in her blog:

www.mercyinsudan.blogspot.com

Ministry with the Poor Fund helps St. Peter's School

Each year, the Sisters of Mercy gives grants to programs for the poor. These funds, from donors who gave to our Ministry with the Poor, are important to help keep these many programs working. This year, St. Peter's School was one of the recipients. They recently sent this note of appreciation:

How grateful St. Peter's School is to have the Ministry with the Poor Fund respond to our call for help with our needed after school program. Now, we are prepared to give scholarships to those who are facing very challenging economic times.



St. Peter's students helping out with lunches.

In May 2009 the country's economic situation became a great challenge in our community of the Mission District of San Francisco. Presently we know of over 20 families who have lost their jobs or had their hours cut. They cannot afford afterschool care, but they need it so they can work when there is work available. Now, a scholarship is possible because people like those who give to Mercy's Ministry with the Poor Fund are responding.

As we look at the needs of next year, we are so grateful to hear from The Ministry with the Poor Fund which has enabled us to keep Mercy alive in time of need.

The families at St. Peter's say "Gracias, Muchas gracias. Thank you for making a difference in our lives." At the same time they show their gratitude by volunteering in the cafeteria, yard and office on their free days. Some of the families help direct traffic, or come to the school work parties on weekends.

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SISTERS OF MERCY

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Yes, we care for our children and for their future. Thanks to each of you who respond to their needs and make Mother Baptist Russell's dream of Mercy a living reality at St. Peter's today.

Providence can provide. Providence did provide. Providence will provide.

This is the miracle of 131 years you are continuing!

Victoria A. Butler - Principal
Sister Marian Rose Power, RSM - Vice Principal

Ways to Support the Sisters of Mercy

Gifts of Cash

Gifts of cash are best conveyed by check made payable to the Sisters of Mercy. Please use the enclosed envelope.

Tribute Gifts

Tribute gifts offer an opportunity to honor a relative, friend, Sister of Mercy or special occasion.

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

Giving stock may provide great tax advantages. Please call the development office at 650-340-7408 to discuss the transfer of these securities.

Matching Gifts

Many corporations have matching gift programs for their employees and retirees.

Planned or Legacy Gifts

Planned gifts are usually made in the context of the donor's estate plans. We encourage you to discuss these options with your attorney, tax professional or accountant.

Donate on line

Did you know you can visit our website www.mercyburl.org, click on "Donate Now," to contribute with your credit card? It is completely secure; no more filling out envelopes or going to the mail box!

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