



Connections

March 2022

Women's History Month 2022



St. Teresa of Calcutta with Sr. Teresa Webber and Sr. Marie Thérèse Wight in May, 1976

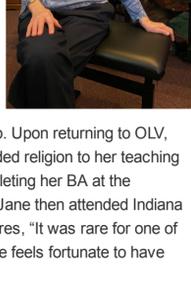
March marks the celebration of Women's History and we are proud to share some tidbits about the remarkable and influential work of the Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur. How many of these did you already know?

- When the original three Sisters left New York and headed to Texas in 1873, they disembarked the train in Waco. Their intention was to "do a little good." Who knew that with those humble beginnings the sisters would affect so many people's spirituality and lay an educational foundation for years to come?
- Before building Our Lady of Victory College and Academy (OLV) in 1910, the Sisters had already established schools in Corsicana, Denison, Sherman, Fort Worth, Dallas, Ennis, and Wichita Falls.
- OLV Elementary was the first integrated school in Fort Worth.
- The Sisters provided **St. Teresa of Calcutta** a place to stay when she visited Fort Worth in 1976.
- The Sisters helped found Habitat for Humanity in Fort Worth by serving on the founding board and donating a residential lot for building their first house.

Here's to celebrating the remarkable, strong women we all know who have inspired so much good in our world.

A Sister, Her Piano and the Gift of Music

Sister Jane Conway first met the Sisters of Saint Mary in grade school. She attended high school at the Academy (OLV) and joined the sisters after graduation. By this time her passion for music, especially the piano, had been growing for years and the sisters were eager to encourage her talent.



In the early days of her formation, Sister Jane had the opportunity to live in Belgium and study music at the Conservatory in Antwerp. Upon returning to OLV, Sister Jane taught piano lessons, led chorale groups and later added religion to her teaching repertoire. She continued to develop her musical giftings by completing her BA at the American Conservatory over the course of five summers. Sister Jane then attended Indiana University for her Master's degree. About the experience she shares, "It was rare for one of the sisters to attend school at a college that was not Catholic." She feels fortunate to have been able to receive the extensive education given to her.

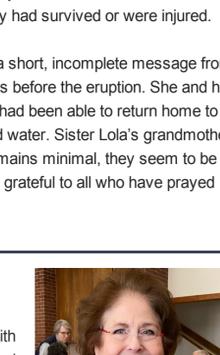
Sister Jane went on to use that education to teach music for 38 years at the St. Thomas University of Houston. She now practices daily on a 1923 Steinway that she treats with tender loving care. She has researched the history of the piano and learned it was originally delivered to someone in Dallas, presumably a family. Somehow the piano went to Our Lady of Good Counsel and when the school closed, the piano moved to OLV where it lived on the auditorium stage for many, many years.

Sister Jane now serves her life sharing by playing the organ for Mass and other services in the chapel. She has spent her life sharing and passing on the gift of music. We're all grateful for the chance to stop and listen.



Sister Lola's Tongan Home Update

As you may have seen on social media in January, **Sister Lola Ulupano** has been awaiting word from her family ever since the monitory Hunga volcano erupted in Tonga, her native country. Located in the South Pacific, Tonga is comprised of 170 islands, 36 of which are inhabited.

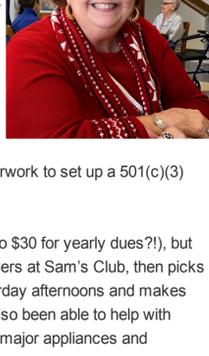


The volcano reportedly had the magnitude of an atomic bomb and created a tsunami and spread ash throughout the islands. Sister Lola, who currently lives in Belgium, was devastated by the news and waited weeks to hear word from anyone in her family. She received updates from friends and family in the U.S. who had better access to the latest international news, but even in the U.S. news came slowly as all communication with the islands was wiped out. She had no way of knowing if her family had survived or were injured.

Finally, nearly 14 days after the eruption, Sister Lola received a short, incomplete message from her cousin Ana. Ana shared that she had given birth two weeks before the eruption. She and her family had stayed with another cousin during the disaster and had been able to return home to begin cleaning and repairing. They are now in need of food and water. Sister Lola's grandmother and other family live in another town. While communication remains minimal, they seem to be fine. Her family is thankful to God to be alive and Sister Lola is grateful to all who have prayed for them.

The Work of a Faithful Friend

One day in 2003 when **Rosemary Hayes** first began working with **Sister Anselma Knabe** at the North Texas Catholic Bookstore, she asked why the Sisters of Saint Mary didn't have an auxiliary. Sister Anselma said she didn't know and that short answer spurred Rosemary to action.



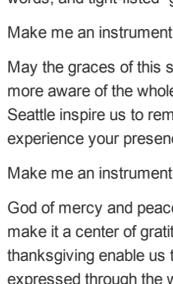
Rosemary said she thought, "I grew up with the SSMN and know them, so maybe I should be helping them." She soon spoke with the regional leadership, then personally completed all the legal paperwork to set up a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and create the SSMN Auxiliary.

In time Rosemary amassed a large membership (who can say no to \$30 for yearly dues?!), but she continues to do a lot of the work herself. She places weekly orders at Sam's Club, then picks up and delivers them to OLV. She also brings fresh flowers on Saturday afternoons and makes smaller arrangements for each dining room table. The Auxiliary has also been able to help with big items as needed, including refurbishing the kitchen with new major appliances and purchasing laptops for some of the sisters.

Thank you, Rosemary, for all you and the Auxiliary do to directly impact the wellbeing of the sisters!

A Peacemaker Prayer for the Start of Lent

by **Sister Dorothy Powers**



Most Merciful God,
Bless our journey as we enter these 40 days of Lent. We desire to faithfully follow you, but often we stumble on our way. As we begin again, our hearts are full of gratitude for your many gifts and countless blessings.

In our daily journey, help us to be more aware of injustice, inequity, and inequality

Make me an instrument of your peace.

Inspire us to fast from harmful negative thoughts, unkind words, and tight-fisted "generosity."

Make me an instrument of your peace.

May the graces of this season strengthen us to walk gently upon the earth and to become more aware of the wholeness and holiness of Mother Earth. May the words of Chief Seattle inspire us to remember that "every part of the earth is sacred." Each day, help us to experience your presence in the beauty of creation.

Make me an instrument of your peace

God of mercy and peace, forgive us our failings and sins. Create in us a new heart and make it a center of gratitude. May that gratitude help transform us and may our thanksgiving enable us to be instruments of your peace. May the love we have for us be expressed through the witness of our lives and be a blessing of peace to others during this Lenten season. Wherever we are, may we bring your peace, light, and life. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Events

Regional Assembly

A Regional Assembly brought together all the Sisters of the Region at Our Lady of Victory on Friday, **Feb. 18**. Sr. Rosemary reported on Pope Francis' call for a Church/Synod of Listening, **Sr. Patricia** gave a rose of the union address and **Theo Thompson** gave an update on the possible sale of the OLV elementary school building and property. The Communications and Development Committee presented an informative report on their efforts for public awareness and community relations.



Dede Barth, Sr. Rosemary Stanton, Sr. Joan Markey, Oblate Ann Smith



Oblate Diane Murray and Sr. Patricia Ridgley



Sr. Rosemary Stanton



Theo Thompson

Birthdays To Celebrate!

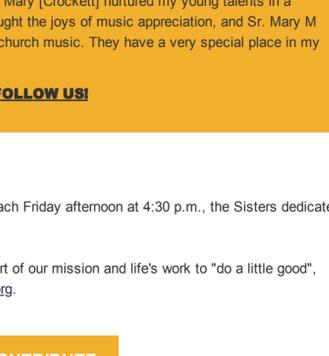
- Feb. 6: **Sister Yolanda Cruz**
- March 2: **Sister Ines Diaz**
- March 14: **Sister Rita Claire**
- April 11: **Sister Rosemary Stanton**



Sr. Yolanda Cruz

Follow our Sisters on Facebook

Here's a comment recently posted by **Helen Neilon Jauregui** on the Sisters' Facebook page. A former student, we loved hearing her share the impact the sisters have had on her life. If you'd like to join in and see what the Sisters have been up to, search "Sisters of St. Mary, Western Region" on Facebook.



"Without **Sr. Mary Crockett**, **Sr. Louise Smith**, and **Sr. Mary McLarry**, I would never have become the musical and music-lover that I am. Sr. Louise [Crockett] nurtured my young talents in a methodical yet motherly way. Sr. Louise taught the joys of music appreciation, and Sr. Mary M literally set me on the path to my career in church music. They have a very special place in my heart." --Helen Neilon Jauregui

FOLLOW US!

The Giving Spirit

We receive [prayer requests](#) from you daily; each Friday afternoon at 4:30 p.m., the Sisters dedicate a Holy Hour to pray for your intentions.

If you would like to learn more about being part of our mission and life's work to "do a little good", please contact development@ssmnwestern.org.

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