

# CONNECTIONS

Newsletter



October 2022

## FOUR BELOVED SISTERS AND A GRAND JUBILEE CELEBRATION

On August 13, 2022, the Sisters of St. Mary celebrated four Sisters, **Sister Mary Fulbright**, **Sister Adelaid e Valtierra**, **Sister Camella Menotti** and **Sister Roberta Hesse**, for achieving remarkable landmarks in religious life. These Sisters were honored with Mass and renewal of their vows. We're proud to share a little of each of their stories in this month's newsletter.

### **Sister Mary Fulbright**

Sister Mary celebrated 75 years as an SSMN, having entered the community on September 21, 1947. In 1948 she became Sister Mary Venard, and professed her perpetual vows in 1956.

She taught in SSMN schools all over Texas and California. In some places, she was also principal. She served as Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Fort Worth Diocese. In 1974, she and Sister Mary Bonaventure, SHSp founded Cassata Learning Center, now Cassata Catholic High School in Fort Worth. Sister Mary later moved to the University of Texas at Arlington where she ultimately became Director of the Community Services Development Center. Through her work at the UTA Center, Sister Mary provided assistance to Head Start and AmeriCorps programs.

Sister Mary retired from UTA in 1997 and is now part of the community at OLV Center.

### **Sister Adelaide Valtierra**

Sister Adelaide grew up in a rural area of Weatherford and credits her grandmother with teaching her the importance and beauty of the Eucharist. Though she had never met a Sister before, Sister Adelaide



Jubilee honorees renew their vows

visited SSMN after being encouraged by a friend who graduated from OLV. She entered the community on September 15, 1952.

Sister Adelaide attended Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio and taught in many Catholic Schools and programs including Head Start and Follow Through. Sister spent two summers translating for medical mission teams in Honduras. She has also conducted many visits to homebound persons and volunteered for hospice.

Now in retirement after 70 years as a SSMN Sister Adelaide says, "It is a joy to be with the other Sisters at OLV Center. I am blessed to have the time to admire and smell the flowers, and to absorb the beauty around us as prayerfully as possible."

### **Sister Camella Menotti**

Sister Camella attended public schools in Dickinson and her first love was for horses and rodeos. She was chosen as Rodeo Queen in Dickinson, Houston, and Texas City. But when she went to work for True Cross School, she met the Sisters of St. Mary. Two years later she entered the convent and moved to OLV College. Since then, she, like many other Sisters, has spent many years teaching in schools and working as a principal.

Years later, Sister Camella returned to True Cross School in Dickinson and served as principal for 12 years. While there, she introduced computer literacy and taught computer classes to other teachers and people in the diocese. In her retirement (if you can call it that), she works as the maintenance

(Continued)

## FOUR BELOVED SISTERS AND A GRAND JUBILEE CELEBRATION CONT

supervisor and computer consultant for the other Sisters.

She has been a Sister for 70 years.

### **Sister Roberta Hesse**

Even as a child, Irma Margaret Hesse felt called by Jesus. After her freshman year in high school (a very young age!), she entered the Sisters of St. Mary and became known as Sister Roberta. She studied nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital and went to work in the Infirmary at OLV.

Sister Roberta later served as a missionary in Congo, Rwanda, Cameroon, and Tanzania. She was with 40 other Sisters and six young girls in Rwanda during the genocide of 1994 until rescued by French soldiers in "Opération Turquoise."

Sister Roberta, after 70 years as a SSMN, is now in retirement at OLV Center.



**Sister Mary Fulbright**



**Sister Adelaide Valtierra**



**Sister Camella Menotti**



**Sister Roberta Hesse**

---

## SSMN STAFF MEMBER PLAYS MAJOR ROLE WITH MARIANIST CAMP

Before working for the Sisters of St. Mary at OLV, **DeDe Barth** worked at St. Rita Parish with **Sister Miriam Nesmith**, and then with **Sister Rosemary Stanton** on the Campus Ministry team at Nolan Catholic High School. Twelve years ago, while on the faculty at NCHS, DeDe was invited to get involved in the Marianist LIFE summer program.

Marianist LIFE (Living in Faith Experience) is a national faith-formation program for high school students

offering an experience of small faith communities, sacraments, prayer, leadership development, and social justice education, mixed with a lot of fun activities. The mission of LIFE is building Christian communities based on the vision of **Fr. William Joseph Chaminade**, founder of the Society of Mary.

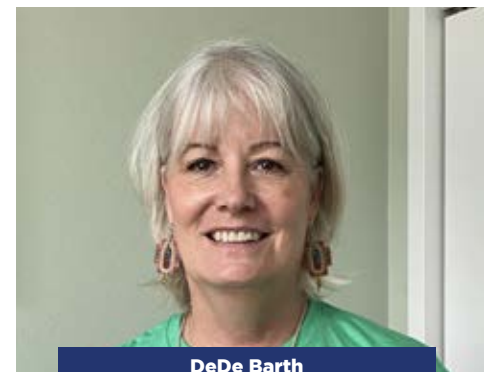
The teens and adult monitors give up their phones for the week to be wholly present to the experience through daily Mass at the Water Chapel, community-

building games and activities, planning prayer experiences for each other and attending leadership workshops.

There are three regional Marianist LIFE programs held across the country. The program for South Region this summer was held at TECABOCA Marianist Retreat Center near Mountain Home, Texas. DeDe was recently asked to serve as the Regional Coordinator for Marianist LIFE South, a job which will surely keep her busy.



**Outdoor chapel at TECABOCA Marianist Retreat Center**



**DeDe Barth**

## MARKING THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

**Sister Ginny Vissing** came from Wichita Falls on August 6 to lead the Sisters at OLV in a day of recollection on the Transfiguration. She brought pictures of Mount Tabor so that everyone could get an idea of the height of the mountain. She made the assumption that the climb was not bad for Peter, James, John, and Jesus as it might be for any of the Sisters!

**Matthew 17:2** states that on the mountain Jesus “was transfigured before them; his face shining as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.” At that point the prophet Elijah, representing the prophets, and Moses, representing the Law, appear and Jesus begins to talk to them.

Sister Ginny had the Sisters look at the synoptic gospels and compare the versions of the Transfiguration in each one. They were all different and mainly

compared Jesus’ face, clothes, the words of the Father, and the reactions of the apostles.

After review of the gospels, Sister Ginny presented a prayer ritual while everyone held a candle and then listened to “Go Light Your World.” Afterward, the Sisters processed to the dining room to choose places at tables where various pictures and decorations had been prepared for the sake of quiet meditation to end the day.



Sister Ginny Vissing



## THREE-DAY RETREAT EXPLORES ST. IGNATIUS’ SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Probably the most important part of the life of a Sister of St. Mary is her unique spirituality. As with many human relationships, each Sister’s relationship with God is one that can grow more and more intimate with time and attention. It is for this reason that the Sisters not only pray and attend Mass daily, but they set aside time for deeper meditation, prayer and guidance from spiritual directors. This requires that the Sisters set aside time to “make a retreat,” a block of time that is usually a period of days or weeks.

In mid-July, the Sisters at OLV participated in a three-day retreat led by **Father Pepe Ruiz, S.J.** Father Ruiz came to OLV and led the Sisters through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Exercises,

written by the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius, are a set of Christian principles, contemplations and prayers designed to be used to help people find God and to find Him in all things. Though the Exercises were written in the 16th century, Father Ruiz related them to life today. The Sisters found their time of retreat to be positive and life giving.



Father Pepe Ruiz

Visit our new website at [ssmnwestern.org](http://ssmnwestern.org)



Follow us on Facebook!  
[@SSMNWesternProvince](https://www.facebook.com/SSMNWesternProvince)



Submit Prayer Requests here:  
<https://www.ssmnwestern.org/prayer-request>

Submit donations here:  
<https://www.ssmnwestern.org/contribute>

## DEAR FRIENDS:

Do you detect the tiniest hint of cooler weather and autumn these days? (Remember, the official date for autumn is on September 22!) The gardeners and flower cultivators at Our Lady of Victory are anticipating better weather, for sure, and hoping to be able to walk the grounds before 8 p.m. very soon.

We have felt very close to our Sisters in the U.K. region as they mourn the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in these days. Thank you for the prayer intentions so many of you have confided to us. We receive them humbly, and with confidence that God hears the cry of the poor.

I want to close with something Pope Francis shared when he recently named 20 new cardinals. He reminded them of their mission, which – he said – includes: “an openness to all peoples, to the horizons of the world, to the peripheries as yet unknown.”

Isn't it the Call to each of us?

**Sr. Patricia**

