

BRIDGES



March 15, 2024

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING FOR HAITI FUND DONORS

On Sunday March 3, a Mass was held in the Marillac Chapel for the intentions of donors to the Haiti Mission Fund. Sisters from both the Marillac and Elizabeth Seton Residences as well as four sisters from Rhode Island and Toby Harkleroad, our Director of Mission Advancement, attended. Lists of the donors can be seen below on the left of the table. At the Mass alone, \$563 was donated to the Haiti Fund by the sisters at Marillac and an anonymous donor. A reception followed the mass.



Shown standing from the left: Srs. Mariam Norick, Helen Scarry, Claire Dandeneau, Diane Dube, Therese Picard, Priscilla Lemire, Gertrude Lavoie, Shirley Leveille, Loretta Knapp and Vivian Patenaude. Seated from the left: Srs. Jackie Crepeau, Agnes Bell, Dina Garcia, Bernadette Oliva, and Mary Crepeau.



ONGOING CONVERSATIONS WITH SISTERS - Marillac Visit

Toby Harkleroad, our Director of Mission Advancement, attended the Mass for donors to the Haiti Mission Fund and afterwards had conversations with many of the sisters. He says:

It was wonderful to meet all of the sisters at the Marillac/Seton Residences and the four sisters that came up from Rhode Island!

As part of our gathering on Sunday, I had two roundtable discussions. Afterwards several sisters mentioned that they learned things about each other that they never knew. The discussions were very valuable to me in understanding a lot of things about the province that I was vague about before. This trip was incredibly valuable to me!

At some point, I would like to do a recorded conversation with Sr. Helen and Sr. Dina about having been students at Thevenet Academy. Helen explained that when she was a student, the RJM recruited her class in such a way that it was 50% Anglo and 50% Latina. I had no idea that you all used that strategy back then, it is yet another example of the RJM using a strategy way ahead of its time; you are truly a community of pioneers. I was also very pleased to learn so much about the history of the RJM presence in El Paso, I think I understand the Southwest corner of the province much better now!

As we finished up the discussion with the large group of sisters at Marillac, I suggested that something useful for me might be for us to hold a few more gatherings of sisters for similar storytelling and reflection via zoom.

Lastly, in speaking with Vivian, I got a wonderful sense of the inter-relatedness of the RJM mission in Haiti as standing on the shoulders of other religious communities (I didn't know, for instance, that the original "tour" of Haiti was led by a sister of the Holy Names who had been a missionary there) as well as the importance of ongoing partnering with other congregations.

Many sisters commented on the conversations with Toby saying:

"It was great! Toby seems very interested in each one of us and hearing about our works and places we have ministered. He sounds like you chose the right guy to be director of mission."

"Toby was interested in our previous ministry and how we saw our mission now. We are still part of JM mission."

"Toby truly became part of our Marillac Community while he was with us. He shared the parts of his life with us that help us to better understand how he acquired the skills necessary for accomplishing the work he has been asked to do in our Province. He took to heart (and memory) all that each of us shared with him about our lives and ministries."

"Toby has a lot of enthusiasm and energy!! He has been given a mandate and seems very willing to develop every aspect and move forward in every possible direction. He listened intently to each one of us - weaving in some of his ideas and possibilities."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SR. MARY BERCHMANS!

The sisters of the USA-Haiti Province send a heart-felt **"HAPPY BIRTHDAY"** to Sr. Mary Berchmans, who celebrates her birthday on Friday, March 29th.



Care of Creation Committee

A Message from Creation Justice Ministries: www.creationjustice.org

(Below are excerpts from a recent Press Release)

Plastic Jesus: Real Faith in a Synthetic World

Plastic first started being created on a global scale in the 1950's. Since then annual plastic production has exploded to an estimated 460 million tons as of 2019. While plastic has many beneficial uses, single use plastics have become a real environmental threat. All manner of groceries and consumer goods come with plastic wrappings that ultimately end up in landfills, or worse, in our waterways. Those plastics then make their way into our food systems and ultimately into our bodies. Some studies estimate that the total mass of microplastic particles consumed by adults corresponds to 50 plastic bags per year or one credit card per day.

Plastic pollution is only one side of the problem. We also need to consider the health risks created by plastic production. People who live near plastic production facilities experience disproportionate levels of cancer, organ malfunction, impaired sensory organs and birth defects. These facilities are also disproportionately located near black, brown, and low income communities. Adding to this, over 99% of plastic is made from fossil fuels. It's estimated that by 2050, 20% of the oil consumed will be used for plastic production.



[DOWNLOAD Plastic Jesus](#)

This is not a problem we can recycle our way out of. Less than 14% of plastic packaging is recycled. And plastics can live in on in our ecosystem for up to 500 years.

All of these facts can be found in our Earth day resource, "Plastic Jesus: Real Faith in a Synthetic World". We believe that before churches can take action, they have to understand the scope of the issue.

- Submitted by Srs. Diane Dube and Doris Bissonnette

Editor's note: Plastic Jesus is background facts on the issue, as opposed to ideas on how to transition from plastics use.

FORMER KAMP KLODIN VOLUNTEER

Toby Harkleroad, our Director of Mission Advancement was on a Haiti Advocacy Working Group (HAWG) zoom meeting last week, when Corrine Paul share that "her first experience of Haiti" was as a Kamp Klodin volunteer with the RJM in July 2015, while she was an undergraduate at the University of Maryland.

Corinne later went back to Haiti and worked in Les Cayes. Now, she is focused on Haiti for the organization CARE as her work and the organization *Write to Be* as a board member.



Isn't it wonderful that RJM efforts to bring volunteers to Haiti has resulted in someone who has been educated in public policy and has made Haiti a primary focus in her various government and NGO positions throughout her career? The circle has come around and she is our partner in advocacy through the HAWG group.

"TO LIVE FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION..."



RJM's will recognize these words as coming from the mandate of our last General Chapter:

The experience of the merciful goodness of God impels us to live forgiveness and reconciliation, and to work with passion for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

In today's polarized society, this call takes us beyond care for our personal relationships, and into concern for the bitter divisions in our country and our church. A number of Catholic organizations, as well as other groups, are working to provide tools that address these deep divides. Toby Harkleroad, our Director of Mission Advancement, has compiled a list of these resources that can be a step to greater understanding and the "more perfect union" we seek, and we believe God wants us to foster. Attached is his list, with comments from Toby.

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

A correction is needed to Sr. Kathleen Scanlon's entry in the Community & Ministry Directory. Sr. Kathleen is correctly listed under the Ellison Avenue Community, but her old 122 South Broadway address that was inadvertently left under her name.

The email address of Aspirant **Roodjina Andy Joseph**, is roodjinaandyjoseph09@gmail.com (rather than roodjinaandyjoseph909@gmail.com).

PROVINCE OFFICE

March 12-22 Mary in Rhode Island and Highland Mills

March 20-22 Janet in Highland Mills

March 20-24 Rosemary in Highland Mills and at St. Tim's

April 5 Next Bridges published (articles due by Wednesday 4/3 at noon)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- April 16 Eileen Reid, RJM
- April 19 Rita Ricker, RJM
- April 21 Patricia Ryerse, RJM
- April 25 Mary Sanchez, RJM
- April 27 Rosemary Mangan, RJM



VIRTUTAL PRAYER SERVICE — March 19 at 7-7:30pm

Franciscan Action Network invites you to attend a virtual prayer service to remember all who have lost their lives, been affected by, or are survivors of gun violence.



Gun violence impact extends far beyond those killed or wounded. So many people are affected, not just those who have lost their lives but also survivors and the community, family, and friends of victims who forever carry the burdensome memories of how their loved ones suffered and, in too many cases, died.

Recently, the Rochester, NY and greater Franciscan community were directly affected by gun violence through the shooting death of Ryan Realbuto, a Cap Corp volunteer and 2023 St. Bonaventure U. graduate who participated in our 2023 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference. The Neumann University Franciscan Justice Circle proposed this online prayer service as a way of coming together in solidarity as a larger Franciscan family, asking God to intervene as we seek healing, peace, and support for the path ahead.

To register and attend, go to: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK FOLLOW-UP

For Catholic Sisters Week, held March 8-14, the esteemed Jesuit James Martin highlighted our own Janice Farnham on his Facebook page, as an example of a sister who has been important in his life!



 **Fr. James Martin, SJ** 
9h · 
Celebrate Catholic Sisters Week by telling a Sister what she has meant to you. Here's one of my favorite Sisters and favorite human beings: Sister Janice Farnham, RJM!



PRAYERS AND ADVOCACY FOR HAITI

The news from Haiti continues to cause great concern, and we have received many inquiries from persons who are praying for the people there and asking after the well being of our sisters. At this writing, the RJM's in Gros Morne and Jean Rabel tell us that they are safe, although some activities are being curtailed.



With the situation changing rapidly, it can be difficult to keep abreast, especially when we want to join those advocating for viable and just solutions to the violence. *Faith in Action*, a national organizing network that works against systems of injustice, recently posted a letter, suggesting it be used to ask government leaders to address certain issues. Within a day or two, the situations cited had changed.

However, as citizens of a country that has impacted Haiti's situation, we have a duty to try and influence our government. **Our sisters in Haiti welcome and appreciate any efforts to influence our leaders in ways that will benefit Haiti. Sr. Rose Kelly mentions specifically the sale of weapons and ammunition from the States that fuel the violence, and the deportation of those seeking asylum back into the terrible insecurity of a country spiraling into chaos. Sr. Pat Dillon affirms the importance of advocating against these practices, and notes that Quixote Center, which partners with us in Gros Morne, has been working hard on eliminating the flow of guns.**

These are clear issues that undeniably contribute to the suffering of our Haitian sisters and brothers. As we continue to raise our hands in prayer for Haiti, let us also raise our voices to speak against those things that foster this suffering, and advocate for actions that lead to justice and peace.

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR...

- Elaine Carroll, a former RJM, who is hospitalized in New York, following a stroke;
- Mr. Pat Scanlon, the father of Mary Scanlon, who celebrates his 100th birthday on March 16th;
- Catherine Crowley, a long-term member of the Family of Jesus and Mary and generous donor to the RJMs, who is at Calvary Hospital in Bronx, NY;
- Continuing Prayers for: Colleen Pusateri who is the daughter of Haiti Mission supporter Lorrie Kenney; and Jennifer Morse-Meisenkothen who is the niece of Sr. Teresia Morse;
- Madonna Manor (Sr. Mary Sanchez), as this week's community for special prayer.



**WE ALSO PRAY FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF
OUR RJM SISTERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

Praised Forever Be Jesus and Mary