

BRIDGES



April 17, 2025

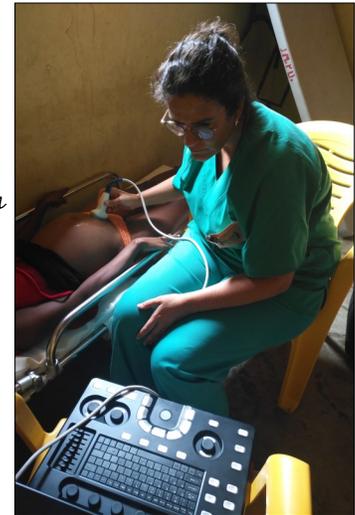
TRIBUTES OF THANKS - to Sr. Valle Chías, RJM

On behalf of the USA-Haiti Province, I offer sincere and heartfelt thanks to Sr. Valle Chías for her generous time of service to the Haiti mission in Jean Rabel.

With her skills as a medical doctor, Valle made great strides in improving primary health care in a region badly in need of that. Collaborating with Haitian co-workers and often with volunteer medical professionals from abroad, she led a health team that has reached 14 areas in northwest Haiti, working from a mobile clinic. Since 2021, there has also been a project to address child malnutrition.



Renaldo Gentilhomme (left) who translates, Wadley Lordeus who drives the Mobile Clinic van, Sr. Valle Chías, the doctor, and Sherline Petit-Homme, the health agent



Valle returned to Spain on Sunday, April 6th. "Vaya con Dios" to a wonderful RJM, dedicated to the service of 'those made poor.' You have been a blessing to us!

- Mary Bourdon, rjm

I remember and appreciate that after Valle spent some time with Naza, who was always inviting our sisters from Spain to to work with her people in Haiti, Valle, who was already a doctor, went back to Spain and took a year to study tropical medicine.

In Jean Rabel, Valle developed ways of diagnosing the various illnesses that afflict people in the remote, rural section that Jean Rabel is.



Valle herself invited other Spanish doctors and medical support to come on medical missions. It was in her effort to find travel routes for them from Spain to Jean Rabel that I learned of the route I took when bandits shot at the airplanes in the Port-au-Prince airport resulting in a FAA ban on US flights to Haiti. Valle is very missed.

- Sr. Pat Dillon



Standing: Srs. Pat Dillon, Rosario Fumanal, Rosemary Mangan, Mary Bourdon, Jackie Picard, Nazareth Ybarra; seated: Srs. Marie-Jo Désir, Valle Chías and Liz Cornejo Carpio

Care of Creation Committee

A Message from *Beyond Plastics*

www.beyondplastics.org

(Below is an excerpt from a recent Press Release)

Recent studies have found small fragments of plastics known as microplastics in the human brain and in the arteries leading to the heart; the presence of these particles is also linked to adverse health outcomes.

How do these tiny bits of plastic enter our bodies and make their way into our brains and arteries? What happens when they lodge there?

Join Beyond Plastics, Physicians for Social Responsibility - NYS, and Environmental Advocates of New York for a **free educational webinar** on these questions with Dr. Sanjay Rajagopalan, a physician scientist whose work has helped transform global perceptions and understanding of the impact of environmental risk factors on cardiovascular disease and Marcus Garcia, PharmD, RPh, MA of University of New Mexico Medical School, co-authors of two ground-breaking recent studies on the presence of microplastics in the human brain and carotid arteries.

Join us for a free webinar on:

MICROPLASTICS' IMPACT ON THE BRAIN & HEART



Thurs, May 15, 2025
at 7:00 PM ET US



Register now at:

<https://bit.ly/microplastics-brain-heart>
or scan the QR code below



With Sanjay Rajagopalan, MD and
Marcus Garcia, PharmD, RPh

via Zoom

Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 7:00pm (Eastern)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

- Submitted by Srs. Diane Dube and Doris Bissonnette

CARE FOR CREATION AT BETHANY - Program Director

Care for Creation at Bethany is pleased to announce Dr. Anne Wibiralske, as its very first Program Director. Read about Dr. Wibiralske's goals for CfC, as well as all the other news in CfC's Spring Newsletter which is attached to Bridges.



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS - Proposed Elimination of Legal Protections

The Alliance to End Human Trafficking recently released the following statement and they request that you share it through your networks:

The Alliance to End Human Trafficking (AEHT) strongly opposes the Trump Administration's decision to eliminate critical legal services for 26,000 unaccompanied children in the United States, including support for legal representation, case coordination, and safety screenings.

Katie Boller Gosewisch, Executive Director of the Alliance, states, "Removing these protections increases the vulnerability of children, many of whom have fled violence or instability, to human trafficking, exploitation, and other forms of harm. Without legal guidance and representation, these children will be unable to navigate complex immigration proceedings alone, making them far more vulnerable to traffickers and other predators."

These legal services have long been a critical safeguard, helping ensure that children are not lost in the system, denied due process, or placed in harm's way. This action destroys a critical pathway to justice and protection, and it contradicts the government's own stated commitment to preventing trafficking and supporting child welfare.

The impact will be immediate and devastating—not only for the tens of thousands of children affected, but for the communities and systems responsible for their care.

Congress must act.

For years, bipartisan legislation has funded legal services for unaccompanied children, recognizing their essential role in safeguarding vulnerable youth and ensuring fair, efficient immigration proceedings.

Boller Gosewisch continues, "The Alliance to End Human Trafficking urges Congress to include funding for these services in the FY 2026 federal appropriations package to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, including full legal representation for all unaccompanied children. The safety of thousands of children, and our nation's commitment to preventing human trafficking, depends on it."

- submitted by Sr. Marge Perron

Note: photo was generated using AI



PALM SUNDAY VIGIL - San Diego, CA

On Palm Sunday vigil many people gathered to walk together in an event of our Diocese 'Journeying with Immigrants, Defending the Vulnerable'.



Clergy from several different faith groups, Christians and Muslims, all cultures prayed at the government office building, listened to presentations, then walked to the Government Office Building in San Diego to conclude with additional presentations and prayer.



Then on Palm Sunday, Srs. Natalia Mejia (seated), Sandra Salazar (center), and Rosie Nicholson, joined Methodist Pastors Seth Clark and John Fanestil and group at the border wall celebrating Palm Sunday.



We held the wall asking for forgiveness and love that are stronger than these walls.

There was a new 'crown of thorns' welcoming the vulnerable at both 30 foot walls and additional structures at the top of the walls. Both events and the circles of barbed wire along the walls led us into Holy Week questioning how we see, how we respond, how we recognize the Lord in our midst today.

Please pray for a Venezuelan mom, her 16 year old daughter and her 20 year old partially paralyzed son who is in a San Diego hospital. We are hoping they can return to a facility closer to the son. Thank you for your prayers. Blessings during this Holy Week and Easter season!

- Sr. Rosie Nicholson



EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN AWARD - Received by Sr. Joan Faraone



Congratulations to Sr. Joan Faraone who on April 6, was an honored recipient of an *Extraordinary Women Awards*, for women of “strength, vision and achievements” who are “making extraordinary contributions to their communities”.

Here, she stands with New York State Assemblymember Christopher Eachus who bestowed the award and Proclamation he holds.



Sr. Joan was nominated for this award by a group of Thevenet Montessori School parents, where she is the Administrator.

TAKE ACTION - Sign Petition To Assist Haiti

The Quixote Center will submit a petition to Kristi Noem, Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security, containing suggested actions to help stem the crisis in Haiti, such as decreasing the arms flow to Haiti, extending Temporary Protection Status to Haitians and ending deportation flights.

Sr. Rosie Nicholson sent a photo of the razor wire that Homeland Security is installing between the two border walls to keep women, men and children from coming into our country (see story on left), but the same Homeland Security could devote resources to stop the flow of guns and bullets illegally leaving the US and ending up in Haiti.



Here in Haiti those guns and bullets are used to drive women, men and children from their homes - to their graves, to camps, to drown in the sea, to the US border!

Please sign the petition by clicking here [Action | Quixote Center](#) and circulate it among family and friends.

Stopping the flow would make a great difference here. Thank you.

- submitted by Sr. Pat Dillon

ST. FRANCIS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - Raising Funds for Haiti

This Lent, the students at St. Francis International School (formerly St. Mark - Hyattsville) have been raising awareness about the RJM Mission in Haiti and their "change4change" almsgiving campaign to support RJM ministries in Haiti, especially Lekol Jezi-Mari.

Last week, they celebrated their weekly mass with a focus on Haiti. The students with Haitian heritage were the lectors, etc. and Fr. Luc Philogene, the Archdiocesan Chaplain for Haitian communities concelebrated.

Sr. Janet Stolba spoke at the mass to connect the St. Camillus and St. Mark legacies to the RJM commitment to the Haitian people.

Shown here are: Sr. Janet Stolba, RJM (left), Mrs. Johnson the former St. Mark School librarian and whose children all went to St. Mark, and some of the SFIS students of Haitian back ground who served in the mass.

Click here to view the video of [Sr. Janet's talk to the SFIS students.](#)



The archdiocesan newspaper was there and will run a story soon about the connection between SFIS and the RJM in Haiti.

- Toby Harkleroad, Director of Mission Advancement

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH MAY BIRTHDAYS



- May 5 Lucie Jusseaume RJM
- May 7 Brittany Galvin, NJM
- May 23 Norene Costa RJM
- May 27 Janice Farnham RJM
- May 31 Kathleen Scanlon RJM

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Sr. Michelle Authier has a new address: **Madonna Manor, 85 North Washington Street, Room 22B, North Attleboro, MA 02760.** Her cellphone remains 774-254-2206 and her email mauthierjm@comcast.net.

PROVINCE OFFICE

April 18 Provincial Office closed for Good Friday

May 2 Next *Bridges* published (articles due by Wednesday 4/30 at noon)

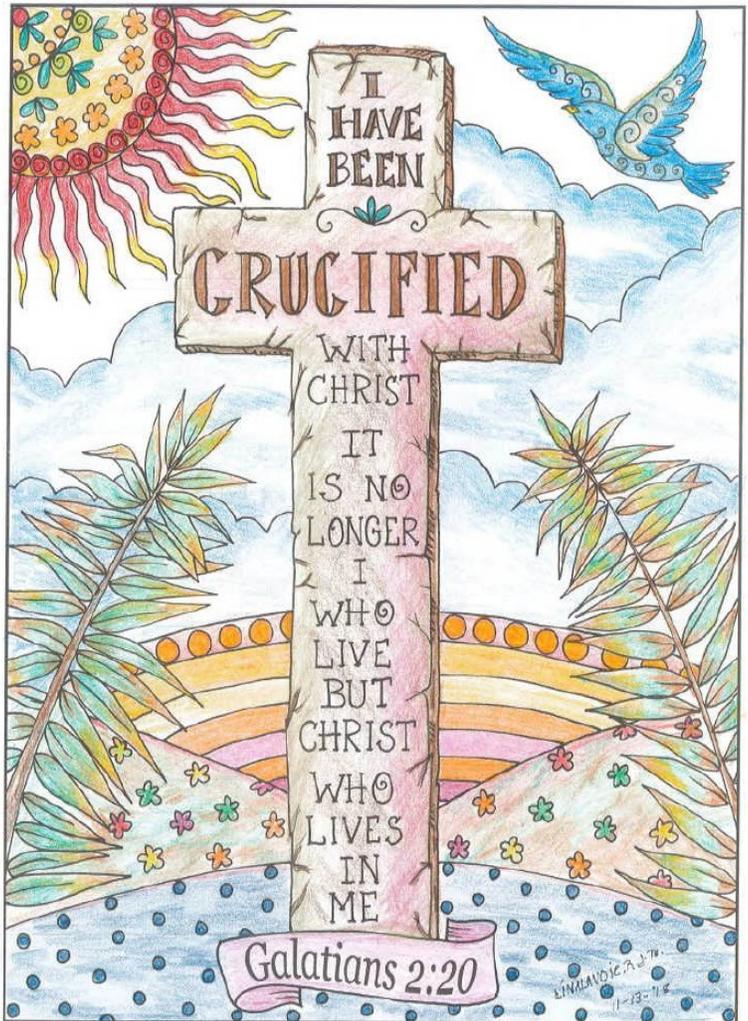
MESSAGES OF THANKS

My sister, Michele Higgins, and her husband Frank and family thank everyone for their continuing prayers. Frank is home from rehab and slowly recovering. Thanks again.

-Pat Dillon

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR...

- Diane Picard, the sister-in-law of Sr. Jackie Picard, who is recovering at home, following hospitalization for a heart attack;
- Sr. Helen Scarry, as she recovers from the flu;
- Continuing prayers for: Frank Higgins, the brother-in-law of Sr. Pat Dillon, Edward Stolba, the brother of Sr. Janet Stolba; Jayson Nichols, step-brother of former-RJM Cheryl Nichols; Carmen Silva, the sister of Sr. Bernadette Oliva; and Maggie Zamora, the sister of Sr. Dina Garcia;
- The repose of the soul of Gabrielle "Gail" Paquin Leake, sister of former-RJM Dr. Louise Paquin. Gail died April 7th after an extended illness and was a student at St. Charles Elementary and High School in the 1960s. Please also pray for comfort for her loved ones;
- The repose of the soul of Jean Rabel, Haiti's Parish Priest, Fr. Pe Ronald Jeannite, who died April 10, and for comfort for his loved ones;
- The Bethany Five: Srs. Norene Costa, Joan Faraone, Stella Herrera, Loretta Knapp, and Teresita Morse, and 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