

NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY MISSIONARY SISTERS

# Visions

July 2019

EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER LAW

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**MANA DE ALBUQUERQUE**  
**Developing Latina Leaders**



Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters is a community of women religious founded in 1922 by Father John Joseph Sigstein. The Victory Noll Motherhouse is located in Huntington, Indiana.

Victory Noll Sisters:

- Proclaim the Word of God
- Stand in solidarity with those living in poverty and oppression
- Foster justice
- Promote the development of leaders

## WHAT'S INSIDE

- 4** **A 20-year Journey**  
Victory Noll Center made an impact on many lives
- 7** **Standing Together**  
Young Latinas gain valuable leadership experience
- 10** **Life away from the gangs**  
Program offers second chance to make a positive impact
- 13** **Jubilee Celebration**  
Four Victory Noll Sisters honored on anniversaries
- 14** **Doing a lot with a little**  
First Sisters had few resources to provide for themselves, others

## ON THE COVER

Members of MANA de Albuquerque stand in front of the Supreme Court Building while attending the annual Hermanitas Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C.

**W**hen I talk with Victory Noll Sisters, they are quick to mention they stand on the shoulders of the Sisters who came before them as they continue the mission of the community, which is now reaching 100 years. In addition to the special charism of the OLVM Sisters that passes from generation to generation, so does the tremendous work ethic that was borne of the experiences those first Catechists faced, overcoming their own personal hardships to serve those who were even more in need. As each class of Sisters passed the halls of Victory Noll, they benefitted from

## PERSPECTIVES ALONG THE JOURNEY

the wisdom and knowledge of the previous. They went off into mission work to proclaim the Gospel, stand in solidarity with those in poverty and oppression, and give voice to the marginalized. And as they developed leaders among the communities they served, they were also creating leaders within their own ranks. This *Visions* issue shows this evolution, starting with the history piece of those early struggles and on to the creation of Victory Noll Center 20 years ago. Today, we see how the mission continues to create leaders through OLVM-supported programs like Rise Up Industries and MANA de Albuquerque. ❖

— Paul Siegfried, OLVM Communications Coordinator

## OLVM LEADERSHIP TEAM

*Sister Mary Jo Nelson,*  
*Sister Lucille Martinez,* *Sister Ginger Downey*

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# Approaching Leadership

Each of us is called to be a part of the conversation

By Sister Mary Jo Nelson, OLVM President

**A**s we scan the ideas and concepts of leadership in the recent literature, we discover topics like conversational leadership, collaborative leadership, facilitative leadership, leadership practices, contemplative leadership, levels of leadership, and transformational leadership. Each of these ideas reveal that leadership is not just a role or



Sr. Mary Jo Nelson  
OLVM President

position of authority and power. The emerging theme begins with a focus on personal inner work — growing one's capacity to be in relationship and to think clearly about the other person(s) and what they need. It is something we do,

rather than a role or position we might hold for a time. Without diminishing the critical role and responsibility of positional leadership, it is also important not to miss that every person, in some way, is called to develop a “leadership way of life.” Leadership is a commitment and contribution to the quality of our personal lives, our work lives, our lives in the Church and in the world.

There is a crisis of leadership in our world, our country and in the Church. Our institutions at every level are fractured. The common good of all people is threatened both spiritually and materially. Even the US military has defined our world as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Although our institutions and

organizations are always in need of excellent leaders, building a culture of leadership belongs to all of us. We are called in some way, to be part of the change, to be a light, to be part of the conversation in discovering and offering a different way back to our common home.

The poet, David Whyte, has written that the core of leadership must be the act of making conversations real...having conversations that forge real relationships between the inside of a person and their outer world, between our organizations and the world we serve. Real conversations — whether they be conversations of exploration, conversations of reflecting on experience and reality, conversations of visioning something new for what no longer works, or conversations of planning — are leadership conversations.

Leadership is about transformation. Peter Block suggests that change and transformation can happen if we change the context of how we gather and meet with each other, and if we change the conversation among us, be it in our families, in our Church, in our neighborhoods, in our schools, or in our workplaces.

Leadership is a quality of living — a way of seeing others, a way of seeing the bigger picture, a way of working with others for the common good. It is a commitment to stay in the conversation, to be in relationship, and open to mutual influence. It is developing the best version of ourselves, because in the end, we lead who we are. ❖

# The journey of 20 years

## Victory Noll Center served as 'spiritual oasis'

By Paul Siegfried  
Communications Coordinator  
OLVM

**T**housands of people have passed through the doors at Victory Noll Center over the last 20 years, and the goal for them each time they depart has always been a simple one.

"We want them to be more of what they are called to be," says Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sister Francesca McGarry.

Victory Noll Center opened its doors in 2000 on the Victory Noll campus in Huntington with that basic idea of providing enrichment, whether it be as small as putting a smile on someone's face or as large as changing the course of a person's life for the better.

"Victory Noll is not just for us. It's for the enrichment of God's people, whoever they are. They don't have to be Catholic. They don't have to be anything except wanting to grow in their relationship with God," says Sr. Francesca. "We're hoping we all can grow and become more of what we're called to be, and help each other along the journey."

Even though the Center will close its doors at the end of 2019, there is a lasting legacy.

"No one can fathom what God has done in and through the work of Victory Noll Center," says Sue Wilhelm, who served as the Center's director from 2008-18. "God is at the



OLVM photos

**Victory Noll Center opened in 2000 with Sr. Grace Golenberke, Sr. Lucy Marie Vega and Sr. Francesca McGarry serving as directors.**

heart of all Missionary activity and Christ is the Center of Victory Noll Center. Through the hospitality and care of all who have served at the Center, through the gracious witness of Sisters who have participated and assisted in programs and hospitality, through the solid formation and transformation of the Gospel message in many forms, people have been touched, hearts have been awakened, hands have been opened in service. That's quite a legacy."

In 1999, discussions in assemblies of OLVM Sisters gave birth to

what was then known as the Victory Noll Ministry Center. The Sisters desired to have an ecumenical, on-site center to provide personal and spiritual growth to all people.

The Center officially opened in September of 2000. With a nod toward the mission and charism of the Sisters, there was an early emphasis on creating programs for the local Hispanic population as well as events for women. Sister Lucy Marie Vega was the initial director, with assistance from Sr. Francesca and Sr. Grace Golenberke.

## MISSION CENTERS

“The Hispanic population was being underserved. There was a challenge of the language and finding jobs,” says Sr. Lucy Marie. “Not only language, but skills training. For women, we did sewing classes and baking and the like. For others, we helped them to understand how to go in and fill out applications, interview for jobs, or even going to a doctor’s office, overcoming that anxiety if English was not their first language. It helped with their confidence.”

The first floor of the Sacred Heart Building was remodeled to provide dedicated space for the Center, creating offices and two meetings rooms. That permanent facility opened in June of 2002, and welcomed more than 1,000 people for programs in its first year in the new space.

“It took off with a lot of enthusiasm. A lot of people coming,” says Sr. Francesca, who took over as director when the new area opened. “We invited youth groups from parishes from all around the area to come out for retreats. Word got around and we got requests from all over.”

Programming continued to expand. There were multicultural workshops that celebrated people of all faiths and backgrounds, including those from the native Miami Indian population, Burmese, African-American, Filipino, and other Asian cultures. There were youth retreats from area parishes, and numerous prayer and support groups from many organizations and collectives. Local groups used the center for special events, meetings, and conferences.

Bishop John D’Arcy made a visit to the Center, and called it “a spiritual oasis in this part of the diocese.” In 2005, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman presented Sr. Francesca and the Center with the Hoosier Hospitality Award.

In 2004, the Center added another spiritual dimension with the construction of the Labyrinth in the space outside the Center overlooking the Wabash River Valley. More than 30 volunteers, including many young people from local youth groups, assisted in the project of laying the bricks.

Over the last 15 years, thousands have walked the sacred path of the Labyrinth as a method of prayer, contemplation and meditation.

Because of the growth of the Center, the OLVN Sisters decided to hire a full-time director. Jan Parker was the first lay director, and Wilhelm came to Huntington in 2008, bringing a background in spiritual formation that added to the offerings of the Center.

“Participants come to Victory Noll Center for many and varied reasons,” says Wilhelm. “Some are tired spiritually. Some are struggling with a church that both serves them and disappoints. Some recognize a hunger so deep that they long for it to be filled and



OLVM photos

**Early programming at Victory Noll Center focused on the Hispanic population (above) with skills training and celebrating culture. Below, youth volunteers were among those helping to build the Labyrinth in 2004.**



are willing to sit in the stillness so that God may satiate their need. Others are seeking answers to their own deep questions about who they are and what God may be calling them to. Still others seek a place of continual discernment for what it means to serve. And others long to learn how to meet the needs of

## MISSION CENTERS



OLVM photos

**Above, the most recent staff included Business Manager Paula Goff, Social Justice Coordinator Jenna Strick, Director Sue Wilhelm, and Administrative Assistant Sr. Rose Zita Rosonke. Above right, Sr. Rose Zita organized the Matthew 25 project to make hats and blankets for donations. Right, Victory Noll Center hosted many social justice programs, including this one on human trafficking.**



those they recognize as brothers and sisters in Christ. These are just a sampling of why people of have come to the Center.”

Leadership development, another tenet of the OLVM mission, was also incorporated into Victory Noll Center programming.

“The Sisters have always believed that leadership was an interior attitude of taking responsibility for and with community,” says Wilhelm. “Leadership development at Victory Noll Center was advanced by helping others mature in their particular gifts for the church and community. Every individual who came to listen, to pray, discern and learn were being formed as leaders in their own households as well as their community.”

The Center continued to evolve with the changing needs and times.

With an increasing local population living below the poverty level, the Center began the Matthew 25 project led by Sr. Rose Zita Rosonke. Volunteers come to the Center weekly to make stocking caps and

blankets to be delivered to local agencies for distribution.

The Center also reached out into the community and joined with other organizations to help sponsor local discussions and actions on social issues of the day.

“While many have come through the doors of Victory Noll Center to be formed, renewed and transformed, the work of the Center was not confined to the walls on West Park Drive,” says Wilhelm. “Collaborative efforts across the region in areas of community dialogue, immigration, human trafficking, to name a few, have encouraged partnerships that have influenced the deep work that cannot be done alone in Social Justice.”

The Center also provided an opportunity for the OLVM Sisters to participate. Most of the Sisters living at Victory Noll have retired from an active missionary life, but attending or assisting in some of the Center’s programming allowed them to continue offering their wisdom and interpersonal skills.

“Our Sisters have been so pleased having this here so that they can continue their missionary work, too,” says Sr. Francesca. “It’s not just the religious work; it’s the people who are struggling in some part of their lives. The Sisters have been so used to working in the midst of a real-life community that they were very comfortable communicating with those whose were in need. They loved to participate in any way they could, just so they could be with the people.”

The work of the Center comes to an end, but Sr. Francesca says the Sisters will look for new ways to continue their mission, just as they have done for nearly a century, with the same ideals leading the way.

“Our whole stance in anything we do is concern for the poor, concern for the disadvantaged, concern for those who don’t have choices in life,” she says. “And to empower them in some way with personal enrichment and self confidence that they can have a voice and can take part.” ❖



Photo provided

The Hermanitas of MANA de Albuquerque stand in solidarity during their annual visit to the New Mexico Legislature in Santa Fe, where they met with the governor and local legislators.

# Standing together

## Program empowers Albuquerque Latinas with leadership, education, involvement

By Diana Rael  
President  
MANA de Albuquerque

**M**ANA de Albuquerque is a chapter of MANA, a National Latina Organization. It is an all-volunteer driven organization committed to empowering Latinas to create a community of informed and active women serving in their respective communities.

MANA de Albuquerque promotes the access and the expansion of economic opportunities to Latinas, their families, and the Greater Albuquerque Metropolitan Area. The successful delivery of services around three key program themes reaches far into the community and has positively impacted tenfold the actual membership numbers of more than 60 adults and 40 Hermanitas. The three program themes consist of leadership development, education,



Empowering Latinas by developing and delivering local programs and services, and by advocating (in partnership with MANA National and the other 23 MANA Chapters) on local, state and national issues. Founded in 1985, MANA de Albuquerque members have generously contributed their time and skills providing services and advocating on behalf of Latinas.

community service and advocacy.

A program that has grown under the leadership of the MANA de Albuquerque chapter is the HERMANITAS Program. The program is a national initiative that serves adolescent Latinas between the ages of 11-17.

It is based on a three-year research study commissioned by MANA National and was funded in part by U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The inclusion of all three program themes delivered in a blended approach has provided adolescent Latinas with the opportunity to participate in a positive, supportive program.

The holistic approach to working with young Latinas and their families has had the most potential for continued positive impact on the girls, their families, and the community.

The HERMANITAS program focuses on promoting:

1. Educational achievement and personal enrichment
2. Developing leadership qualities, skills, and abilities
3. Promoting cultural identity, respect, pride and multicultural awareness
4. Promoting proactive community involvement

The program is designed to provide opportunities that will instill strong family and cultural values, integrity, self-esteem, self-awareness, pride and civic and cultural responsibility.

The workshops they attend monthly include goal setting, journaling, the legislative process, cyber-security, financial literacy, art workshops and self-defense.

The collaborative nature of the program design requires partnering with the families of the young Latinas, their schools, and other organizations within the community, such as the Girl Scouts of America. The Albuquerque Hermanitas program is also a stand-alone Girl Scout troop which, provides additional resources and benefits to the girls.

Incorporated into the Hermanitas program is a one-on-one mentor program, formally called Madrinas. Translated, Madrina means “godmother.” At MANA, it refers to a trusted adult in a young Latina’s life, who keeps the health and well-being of the young person as a priority. In designing a mentoring program, MANA recognized the need to have mentors who understand the responsibility to both the parents and to the youth with whom they work.

For this reason, mentors who serve in the MANA



Photo provided

**Hermanitas attended the MANA National Hermanitas Youth Leadership Conference in July 2018 in New York City. They toured Liberty Island among other New York City landmarks.**

HERMANITAS program are called Madrinas. Madrinas attend all Hermanitas monthly meetings and other events and commit to ongoing communication with their Hermanitas.

As of Spring 2019, there were 40 girls were enrolled in the program. The enrollment has steadily increased since 2009 when the enrollment included 11 girls from four separate middle schools and 10 girls from four high schools. The increasing enrollment and participation in the program from year to year is a testament to the need for such a program and the success of the services provided.

Community service has been found to be of great importance to the development of identity and pride, which stems from civic and cultural responsibility.

# MINISTRIES



Photos provided

**Left, Hermanitas go through drills in a self-defense workshop. Above, Hermanitas stand with OLVM Sister Teresa at Casa de las Comunidades after cleaning and reorganizing one of the classrooms.**

Over the years, the Hermanitas have participated in an extensive number of community events, which include volunteering at foodbanks, holiday events sponsored for women transitioning from prison/jail, Cesar Chavez spring event, animal humane events, international dialogues, and participating in conferences.

We have also formed a strong partnership with Casa de las Comunidades, a Catholic Worker House where Hermanitas and adult MANA de Albuquerque members volunteer two Saturdays a month distributing food for the homeless and immigrant families and organizing the food storage rooms and offices.

The building of leadership skills supports the effectiveness of advocacy. Several Hermanitas have served on the Albuquerque Mayor's Youth Council.

Hermanitas have participated in yearly trips to the New Mexico Legislature where they meet with the Governor and their local legislators. They also are introduced on the Senate and



Photo provided

**The 2018-19 Class of Hermanitas at the Annual "Lideres Latinas" Leadership and Scholarship Banquet.**

House floors in the capital and round out the two-day event at a luncheon with Enlace New Mexico, a statewide organization promoting higher education. Hermanitas also attend the yearly Hermanitas Leadership Institute; last year in New York City and this year in Washington, D.C. They participate in leadership, STEM, legislative and cultural workshops. They have the opportunity to meet with Hermanitas from across the country and form long lasting relationships.

What is important to remember is these opportunities would not have

been possible for the majority of girls in the HERMANITAS program. This program has provided Hermanitas exposure to Latina leaders locally and nationally, and experiences designed to foster personal growth, education, leadership, advocacy and community service. ❖

MANA de Albuquerque website: [manadealbuquerque.org](http://manadealbuquerque.org)

**NOTE:** MANA de Albuquerque is one of the agencies receiving grants from OLVM's John Joseph Sigstein Foundation.



Photo provided

**Machine Shop Social Enterprise of Rise Up Industries offers former gang members training and experience, and contracted work generates revenue to help offset operating costs.**

# Life away from the gangs

## Program stresses making a positive impact in society

**By Joe Gilbreath  
Executive Director  
Rise Up Industries**

**R**ise Up Industries (RUI) is a new non-profit located in San Diego, California, that is focused on reducing street gang activity in San Diego County. RUI was founded by several men who volunteered with Kairos International Prison Ministry at the R.J. Donovan State Prison in San Diego. Kairos is a non-denominational, Christian-based international program that provides three-day retreats in prison. The program is very effective in changing lives.

The RUI founders were inspired by a presentation made by Father Greg Boyle, in Yard A of R.J. Donovan. Father Boyle is a Jesuit priest and founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles. Homeboy Industries has been around for 30 years and is recognized as the most effective gang intervention and reentry program in the country. After significant research, the RUI founders recognized there was a need for a similar type program in San Diego, and ultimately founded Rise Up Industries.

Street gangs have a significant negative impact on communities. It is reported that street gangs

are responsible for between 50-90 percent of violent crimes in most jurisdictions. In San Diego there are 110 gangs involved with human trafficking, with between 8,000-11,000 victims annually. There is also a reported connection between the Mexican drug cartels and San Diego street gangs, with an estimated \$4.75 billion in drug trafficking annually. These are significant negative impacts, however, perhaps the greatest negative impacts are on the youth in our low income and underserved neighborhoods. These at-risk youth are being recruited into gangs as early as age 10!

RUI's vision is to serve those whose lives have been impacted by, or are at risk of being impacted by, gang involvement. The long-term vision is to eliminate the conditions that lead our at-risk youth to believe that gang life is their only alternative. The achievement of this vision will require community involvement in a comprehensive set of integrated gang prevention, gang intervention and post-detention reentry services.

Of the three-prong approach of gang prevention, gang intervention and reentry services, RUI decided to begin with their reentry program to assist former gang involved individuals to successfully depart gang life and reenter society upon their release from incarceration. RUI's Reentry Program is modeled after Homeboy Industries' successful program.

There are four specific aspects that RUI has modeled:

### **Environments of Kinship**

One of the primary reasons youth give for joining gangs is to have a place to belong. RUI creates a welcoming environment that is focused on team work. Here, former enemy gang members are working side by side and supporting one another in their journey. The program includes an alumni program where graduates are encouraged to continue this fellowship for life.

**Long-Term** The RUI Reentry Program is 40 hours per week for 18 months, followed by life-time membership in the alumni program.

The logo for Rise Up Industries features the words "RISE UP" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letter "I" in "RISE" is replaced by a stylized upward-pointing arrow. Below "RISE UP", the word "INDUSTRIES" is written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the word "INDUSTRIES".

*... a place to belong*

Rise Up Industries' goal is to provide an array of in house and out sourced programs and services – funded through donations, philanthropy, and grant monies – in an effort to provide hope, counsel, support, and teach an array of professional and life skills. The overarching objective of Rise Up Industries is to create environments where gang life and a criminal life style is no longer an attractive alternative to participants, encouraging them to redirect their lives while reducing recidivism rates and eliminating gang membership.

**Wrap Around Services** A comprehensive set of services is provided to address physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of the members. These services include: case management, mentoring, counseling, tattoo removal and interim employment with technical skill training and work experience.

**Employment** *"Nothing stops a bullet like a job."* - Fr. Greg Boyle. A key component of the Reentry Program is work experience and training in RUI's Machine Shop Social Enterprise. Here members are provided on-the-job training (OJT) to be Computer Numeric Control (CNC) machine operators. This prepares them for careers in a well-paying trade that is in high demand. Employment is essential for successful reentry.

RUI opened its Reentry Program in a 500-square foot garage in March of 2016. It

began with one CNC mill that Haas Automation entrusted to RUI at no cost for two years. RUI began training two members on contracted machining work. After seven months of experience, RUI launched their expansion program in October of 2016. The goal of the expansion project was to move to a larger facility (3,200 SF) and to go from one CNC mill to five CNC machines. The ultimate goal of the expansion project was to increase the enrollment capacity of the Reentry Program from two members to twelve. The expansion project was successfully completed in October of 2017, three months ahead of the projected schedule.

The training program relies on contract work to provide the trainees both technical training and real world work experience in preparation for successful long-term employment. To date, RUI has had 35 customers (most of whom are repeat customers) completed over 285 jobs and generated over \$416,000 in gross

# MINISTRIES



Angel is RUI's 2nd graduate, pictured with two of his grandchildren.

Angel's goal in life when he was 11 years old was to go to San Quentin prison in order to link up with his Father and Uncle. Angel ended up spending 42 years incarcerated. He joined Rise Up Industries in May of 2017. He graduated the program in November 2018 and was immediately employed by a local manufacturing company. He now has custody of two of his grandchildren, as his son and the mother of his grandchildren are incarcerated. Angel is passionate about breaking the generational gang life cycle.

revenue to help off-set operating expenses.

RUI has had four graduates to date, all of whom were immediately employed by local manufacturing companies. Not only have these individuals successfully



John, RUI's third graduate, with his mentor.

*"Growing up I didn't have positive role models. Joining Rise Up Industries was like joining a loving, healthy family....It gives us the role models we need to become successful, productive members of society."*

John

reentered society as employed, tax-paying citizens, but they are also involved in helping to break the generational gang life style. Four RUI members, all of whom had life sentences, co-authored a book with the assistance of a local graduate student. The book was published in 2018 and is entitled "Writing After Life." The authors share their experiences of early childhood, incarceration and reentry. These authors have also been active in speaking engagements at local high schools, elementary schools, a college campus and with at-risk and justice involved youth at the local Salvation Army and youth detention facility. They are passionate about helping youth to



Joe, RUI's 4th graduate, with his mentor.

*"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the Rise Up family. I'm humbled by the fact that so many people are making investments on my behalf and that these same people are investing their vision of a better world in all of us."*

Joe

avoid gang life and assisting them to direct their lives in ways that will enable them to reach their full potential.

The OLV M Sisters and the John Joseph Sigstein Foundation have been supportive of Rise Up Industries since its inception. The Rise Up Industries' Board of Directors, staff and members are grateful for the interest, support, guidance and financial assistance received over the years! ❖

Rise Up Industries website:  
riseupindustries.org

**NOTE:** Rise Up Industries is one of the agencies receiving grants from OLV M's John Joseph Sigstein Foundation.

# JUBILEE CELEBRATION



**Celebrant Father Dale Bauman greets the Jubilarians on May 24 in the Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel. Celebrating this year are (from left) Sr. Millicent Peaslee (80 years), Sr. Alodia Carney (70 years), Sr. Sharon Rose Eshleman (60 years) and Sr. Margarita Moreno (60 years).**

Photo by Paul Siegfried



Photos by Paul Siegfried

**OLVM Sister Alma Bill (top, left) proclaimed the first reading during the Jubilee Mass, while OLVM President Sr. Mary Jo Nelson (above, right) gave the reflection. Above left, Ken Jehle provided music for the celebration.**



The Catechists in the 1920s lived like the people they served. Here they are doing their laundry outside their residence in Watrous, N.M. by heating water in tubs outdoors and using washboards.

# Doing a lot with a little

Even with meager resources, the Sisters found ways to provide

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** As Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters approach their 100th anniversary in 2022, we will be taking a look back at the history of the community in a series of articles, researched and written by OLVM archivist Jeff Hoffman. This article details how early Sisters, then known as Catechists, had to be resourceful in managing their scant funds and resources to not only take care of themselves, but to tend to the needs of the local poor population.*

**By Jeff Hoffman**  
**OLVM Archivist**

**C**atechists Julia Doyle and Marie Benes arrived in New Mexico, on August 5, 1922, which happened to be the feast of Our Lady of the Snow. Following a retreat conducted by Fr. Anthony Blaufuss, the Catechists began their mission work at Watrous on August 10. They began making their home visits and teaching of Catechism, but also provided basic health care for the sick, and food and clothing for those in need. All of these tasks were done without remuneration.

OLVM Founder Fr. Sigstein saw the purpose of the Catechists was to serve the poorest of the poor, and not receive payment for their services. He wished that the Catechists would be supported by burses, which were to be funded by benefactors in the Midwest and East. At this time he felt that \$6,000 would be enough to sponsor a Catechist throughout her career.

Fr. Sigstein wanted the Catechists to establish a mission center, and train lay catechists before moving onto another town. After starting out in

# OLVM HISTORY

Watrous, they moved onto Ocate, New Mexico, in 1923 over the objections of Catechist Doyle. She realized that the Catechists were not leaving a firm foundation for those whom they trained to carry on the work alone. She felt that lay catechists needed oversight and encouragement from the Catechists. After a few years, Fr. Sigstein came around to her way of thinking and opened other mission centers in Anton Chico, Las Vegas, Holman, Cerrillos, Grants, and Santa Rosa from 1925-29.

Wherever the Catechists set up shop, they were always looking for a building in which they could work. In Las Vegas, N.M., the Catechists used a former Christian Brothers school. They converted some of the classrooms into a living space and supplied the upstairs dormitory with 14 beds.

The Catechists turned another portion of the building into a health clinic that served the poor of the area. To fund this endeavor, Catechist Genevieve Sullivan persuaded Louis Ifeld, a lawyer, and his brother Charles, a merchant, to donate cash and groceries to distribute to those in need. The Ifelds provided this aid even though they weren't Catholic, but were impressed by the goals and spirit of the Missionary Catechists.

As the effects of the Depression grew worse, the Catechists opened up a soup kitchen. They were able to obtain leftovers from the town restaurants, and flour from the Red Cross.

Whenever meat was running low, the Catechists could depend on Louis Ifeld to slaughter a dozen sheep from one of his many ranches. He also used his influence to obtain apples and other fruit that was in



**Residents of Las Vegas, N.M. line up outside the soup kitchen set up in 1932 under the guidance of Catechist Bridget Hynes in a refurbished school, that also housed a health clinic for the needy.**



**The Catechists would often use a hillside to teach classes. They would take their materials with them in this endeavor. Assisting is William Frey, the man in the back row with the bow tie. William Frey was the Catechists' chauffeur, gardener, mechanic, and whatever else they needed.**

season from others who had fruit trees. The Red Cross also donated bolts of material. The Catechists rented sewing machines and invited women from the local area to come in and make clothes for their families.

Louis Ifeld's generosity

continued after his death in 1950. He established the Auxilio de Don Carlos to be administered by the Catechists in Las Vegas, New Mexico. It provided funds that the Catechists could use as needed for the poor in the local area. ❖



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## Visions FROM THE VICTORY NOLL ARCHIVES



**L**eadership development has been a part of the work of the OLVM Sisters from the beginning. Here, Sister Mary Consuelo meets with young women in Ontario, Calif., in the 1950s to discuss social issues of the day. Sisters then and now work to develop leaders teach individuals to use their voices to make a difference within their communities ❖