

NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY MISSIONARY SISTERS

Visions

JUNE 2017

www.olvm.org

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS:
**Continuing the
Mission & Charism**





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

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ON THE COVER

In its new location, the familiar Bell Tower overlooks the completed Saint Anne Communities Building on the Victory Noll campus in Huntington, IN.

As this edition of VISIONS goes to print the words that come to mind are “partners and collaborators.” This issue gives a picture of our efforts to carry the charism and mission into the future with our sponsored and supported ministries. Sister Mary Jo’s article on Mission Integration

PERSPECTIVES ALONG THE JOURNEY

is a way to start the conversation about how we pass on and imbue our partners and collaborators with our charism. Our two sponsored ministries are featured: the John J. Sigstein Foundation and the Victory Noll Center. We also give an overview of our three supported ministries: Julia Center, Sister Evelyn Mourey Center, and Casa de las Comunidades. Last, but not least, we celebrate this year’s Jubilarians, and how they have lived and shared the charism throughout their lives. As we highlight how we are in God’s mission with our partners and collaborators, we continue to depend on your prayer, as we also remember you in our prayer. ❖

OLVM LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sister Mary Jo Nelson

Sister Lucille Martiny *Sister Ginger Downey*

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Shaping the future to preserve the footprint of OLVM

By Sister Mary Jo Nelson
OLVM President



The work of mission integration is the work of passing on the charism, mission, values, and vision of the Victory Noll Sisters. It is our work of passing on our legacy with the men and women who are not vowed members of the congregation, but nevertheless collaborate with us in the mission of God. Each congregation has a particular footprint of the gospel in which it shapes its life –its spirituality, its style of community, and its style and approach to ministry.

The particular footprint of the Victory Noll Sisters has been to go to the edges, where people are not being served by the structures of the church. Throughout our almost 90 years of missionary service in the United States we never built or staffed a school or college; we never built or staffed a hospital; but what we did do was to go to those unseen places where people were forgotten, where there was no leadership, or very few services and resources. We went to be with people and live among them. We were catechists; we were home healthcare workers; we were social workers; and, we were pastoral workers. Whatever gift and skill we brought, we also brought a huge dose of creativity, initiative, and determination to empower people to be their own leaders, advocates, and to be church. Each Victory Noll Sister has stories and memories of going and leaving...of building leadership gifts, of advocating for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, of walking with children, young people, and adults in their search for God and meaning. In whatever we did, wherever we journeyed, we were clothed in two values ... always to have a heart for the poor, and to proclaim the presence of God in every dimension of life.

In the past we left our legacy through our individual ministries, and the way we collaborated with dioceses and parishes. One important legacy we have left is the

development of catechetical ministry and the formation of catechists and catechetical leaders throughout the United States. We were also instrumental in the beginnings of the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress.

Over the years our demographics and our presence and ministry have changed. In order to respond to new needs our Sisters created three centers: the Evelyn Mourey Center—a center for the poor living in low-income housing, located in El Centro, CA.; Julia Center — a neighborhood outreach center located in the West Town area of Chicago; the Victory Noll Center — a center which fosters spiritual growth, personal development, and social justice education in an ecumenical and multicultural environment, and is located on the Victory Noll campus in Huntington, IN. We have recently entered into a partnership with Saint Anne Communities of the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese to create a person centered care Community for our Sisters and other lay persons. The presence and prayer of our Sisters in this Assisted Care Center will be a continued dimension of our mission. Moreover, we continue to have Sisters who respond to particular needs throughout the country. In addition, during the last 35+ years we have had Associates who have lived the Victory Noll footprint of the gospel in their unique settings.

(Turn to Page 5)



Photo provided

Jenna Strick (center), Social Justice Outreach & Development Coordinator at Victory Noll Center, talks with attendees at the Center's Harvest of Blessings annual event.

Extending the Mission of OLVM

By Sue Wilhelm
Victory Noll Center Director

Victory Noll Center's Vision and Mission statements declare: Victory Noll Center is a place where people are formed in and for God's Mission. We extend the charism and legacy of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters by inviting all people to discover and develop their capacity for God's Mission.



Extending the charism of the Sisters is at the heart of the Center. The board and staff embrace and express all the components of the OLVM mission through the varied programs they offer to their constituencies. Programs offer participants many opportunities to deepen their faith life and their



Photo provided

Yewande Austin speaks during the Human Trafficking program at Victory Noll Center.

relationships with God, and include study of social justice issues.

Board members and Staff extend the Legacy of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters by living the Gospel, offering hospitality, educating and forming leaders, and providing space where all can discover and develop their own capacity for God's Mission. A very important part of the programming of the Center is to provide retreats and programs forming people in prayer. The Spiritual Formation Program offers formation for those discerning a call to Spiritual Direction. Alongside of Spiritual Formation, an emphasis on Social Justice has become a lived expression of the spirituality component. We

educate those in the community to open their eyes to the injustice in this world and empower them to change these injustices. Programs include collaborative partnerships like the Poverty Simulation; taking a lead in the Anti-Trafficking Task Force and in the Community Conversations on Diversity issues happening through the Prevention Task Force. We are very excited to be co-sponsoring “Blessed are the Peacemakers” a conference

and training on nonviolence this summer with the Congregation.

We adapt to the changing needs of those we serve through intentionality in program and activities. Flexibility is a strong suite among the staff as they adapt to changes for guests, presenters and situations quickly and gracefully. St. Paul writes: God’s Word is alive! Discernment, prayer, collaboration and openness assist the Center in adapting its mission

so that people can be formed in God’s Mission –to where and how God is inviting them to manifest the love and light of Christ.

In 2016 the Victory Noll Center became a separate not for profit entity and formalized the first Board of Directors. An endowment was formed through the Huntington County Community Foundation, and several fundraisers have been organized and have been launched with successful results. ❖



To register for conference online at:
www.conferenceonnonviolence.com

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, July 28 • 7 to 10 p.m.
 Saturday, July 29 • 9 to 4 p.m.

COST: \$95 through July 1, \$110 after July 1
 Friday only \$25 • Saturday only \$75
 Students \$30

GUEST SPEAKERS



**KEN
 BUTIGAN**



**KIT
 EVANS-FORD**



**JOHN
 DEAR**

Shaping the future

(Continued from Page 3)

With the changing demographics of our congregation, we are challenged to find a way to pass on our legacy in new ways. In the past, Sisters passed on the Victory Noll footprint of the gospel; now, we must expand our horizon to pass on our charism through those who may never be vowed members of the congregation. The key question is: how do we find new and creative ways to pass on our passion for justice, our passion for walking with the poor, our passion to be with people in their journey with God, our passion to develop leaders for the future?

One way to do this is to invite all those who collaborate with us into a more conscious and mean-

ingful partnership with us. We now have a Mission Integration process for associates, co-workers, board members, colleagues in supported and sponsored ministries to deepen their understanding of the Victory Noll charism, mission, values, and vision, so that they can be the Victory Noll footprint of the gospel in the future. This is important because the charism and footprint of the Victory Noll Sisters is not a private gift for us Sisters. It is a gift for the Church.

The shape and texture of this gift may look very different in the future. However, it is imperative that we, the Victory Noll Sisters, find creative and sustainable ways to pass on our particular footprint of the gospel to those who are our partners in the mission of God. ❖

John Joseph Sigstein Foundation

MEETING Modern Needs with Modern Means



By Keith Lawson
OLVM Finance Director & JJSF Board Member

The membership of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, through the leadership and founding of Father John Joseph Sigstein, have devoted their lives to serving the needs of those who are less fortunate. Father John Joseph Sigstein asked for modern needs to be met with modern means. OLVM sisters travelled throughout the US and to foreign countries to mission at the source of the need with the means they had available. This may have meant helping to start a homeless shelter, a local habitat for humanity, a prison ministry, or offering catechetical service.

The John Joseph Sigstein Foundation (JJSF) began operation in 2014 to continue the work of OLVM sisters. JJSF is a grant making foundation focused on meeting the needs of the marginalized. JJSF makes grants to organizations throughout the United States and to date has completed three annual grant cycles. The JJSF board of directors is responsible for examining the grant applications that are received each year and choosing which programs and how much an applicant will receive. Grant requests have exceeded the actual amount of grant awards expended in each of the three years. To date JJSF has provided funding to 28 different organizations in 11 different states.

Organizations must submit an application detailing the program for which funding is requested. The application requires that the organization describe the activity or issue that it is addressing including the percent of low income that are served by the program. Grant applications are reviewed and the recipients are selected by the board of directors. JJSF does not make multi-year grant commitments and each grant is limited to \$25,000 per year. JJSF uses the limit to ensure that no organization becomes dependent on JJSF for its sole source of

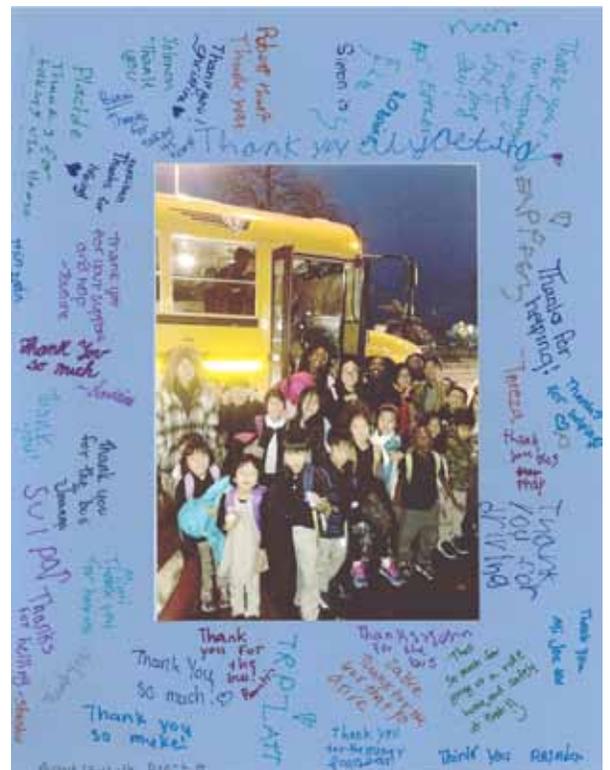


Photo provided

The John Joseph Sigstein Foundation provided funds for an after-school bus to help support the Madonna Mission in Chicago, an organization for education and resettlement support for refugee families. The children using the bus sent this “Thank You” card.

funding and that a variety of applicants are awarded each year.

Each organization that applies submits its own request for funding. There is great di-



Photo provided

Children are taken on a hiking trip as an activity with Casa San Jose in Pittsburgh.

iversity in the needs that have been identified and programs funded including: mentoring programs for youth offenders, advocacy for day laborer and domestic worker rights, catechetical formation, assistance for immigrant detainees, housing programs for low income, literacy training, support for the homeless, and others.

There is also diversity in the size of the organizations that have been funded. The grant recipients have ranged from new startups to more well established organizations. Ascent 121 provides advocacy and recovery services for teen survivors of human trafficking in Indiana. Place of Grace operates a transitional home for women leaving jail in Huntington, Indiana. JJSF was able to provide grants to both of these organizations early on in their formation that were needed



A group of students learn about America's trafficked teens in a program by Ascent 121 in Fishers, Ind.

Photo provided



Photo provided

Place of Grace in Huntington, Ind., opens their transitional home for women leaving jail.

to hire a chief executive officer at Ascent 121 and a development director at Place of Grace.

JJSF has also provided funding to organizations that operate in the southwestern United States, a region that was a focal point for Father John Joseph Sigstein and Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters. In 2016, a grant was provided to Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico. This funding is helping them to offer low-cost legal assistance to detainees. Court Appointed Special Advocates of Imperial County, California has been supported by JJSF and provides advocacy for abused and neglected foster children.

JJSF funding for an organization may mean that an additional service is offered, or it may help to offset the operational costs of the organization. At Madonna Mission

in Chicago, education and resettlement support programs for refugee individuals and their families are provided. In 2016, JJSF provided funding to support the cost of a literacy intern and an after-school bus service for refugee children. The mission of Casa San Jose in Pittsburgh is to empower Latinos by promoting integration and self-sufficiency. In 2016, JJSF provided partial funding for a part-time youth education director and an additional AmeriCorps staff person.

What becomes clear in reviewing the list of applicants is that there are already competent and qualified individuals at organizations doing meaningful work to combat injustices. The role of JJSF and its board of directors is to identify and partner with those organizations that are best addressing the needs of the day. ❖

Leaders take ownership at Julia Center

By Teresa Meza
Julia Center Director

Julia Center is a neighborhood outreach Center serving hundreds of immigrant families in the West Town neighborhood of Chicago. It was founded by Victory Noll Sisters 27 years ago and offers education and enrichment programs that are designed to meet the expressed needs of the participants and promote self-esteem and life skills. An atmosphere of loving hospitality with respect, appreciation and concern for each person is the hallmark of Julia Center.

Many classes and programs have been offered over the years: English as Second Language (ESL), Sewing and Tailoring, Health and nutrition, Mexican Folk Dancing, Citizenship, Parenting Skills,



Photo provided

English as a Second Language (ESL) is one of the programs Julia Center offers as part of its neighborhood outreach in the West Town area of Chicago.

Immigration Issues, Leadership and Scripture Reflection, to name just a few.

Mexican Folk Dance is one of the very popular classes. Our dancers have become well known in the city and have been asked to perform at various functions. Two classes are offered each week, one for children and one for youth, both boys and girls. The dancers grow in self-confidence, poise and grace and learn team spirit. They also learn something about the culture of the former country of their parents.

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of Julia Center is the leadership skills that have developed among the participants, who have taken “ownership” of the Center. Teresa Meza, one of the first ESL students, is now Director of the Julia Center. Another participant, Maria Antonieta Zermeno is on the Board of Directors. Eight of the women participants form “Liderazgo,” the Leadership Group. These women plan, implement and evaluate all that goes on at the Center.

Julia Center is unique in that mothers and/or fathers can bring their preschool children to the Center and while the parents are in class the children are cared for in the next room. This gives mothers, especially, a few hours during the day when they can concentrate on developing their own potential, knowing that their children are safe and happy.

Celebrations are an important part of Julia Center. We honor and celebrate traditional holidays of the participant’s first country as well as national holidays of their new country, the United States. These celebrations are family affairs where all are welcome, grandparents, older siblings, aunts and uncles.

Julia Center is a warm and welcoming place where love is our basic language, where new friendships are made and a life-giving community continues to grow and flourish. These 27 years of Julia Center would not have been possible except for the support of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Mary Seat of Wisdom Parish, many private donors, volunteers and a very competent and generous Board of Directors.

We especially appreciate the moral support of our Bishops over the years, Most Reverend John R. Manz and Most Reverend Alberto Rojas.

All of us at Julia Center rejoice with gratitude and will strive to carry on the work begun and be faithful to the mission of Julia Center. ❖

Building community

Casa de las Comunidades was started 17 years ago on Albuquerque's east side, an area of the city that was known as the "War Zone." OLVN Sisters Teresa Aparicio and Angeline Walczyk were the original founders of this ministry. They based this ministry on the work of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement, with the aim of providing direct aid to the poor and homeless through hospitality, ultimately leading to the goal of creating community.

One of the main areas of focus at Casa is the empowerment of women. This comes directly from the OLVN Mission Statement, which calls for the development of leaders. Sr. Teresa says the focus has been successful in the revival of the local community, led by the local women and their experiences of coming to terms with their own power and sense of dignity and fulfillment. Many of these women have learned to drive and have obtained driver licenses. They are now empowered to find jobs outside the home and become less dependent on others. The women take courses offered by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and are able to offer their talents in ministry.

Casa continues through the efforts of women and children. There are expanding leadership programs for women, and youth programs and a scholarship fund for children who want



Photo provided

Volunteers help to make tamales for a fundraising event at Casa de las Comunidades in Albuquerque.

to go to college. The ministry at Casa goes beyond feeding and providing basic needs for the poor. The people who come to Casa imbibe the spirit of compassion and hospitality, a value of the charism and mission of the Victory Noll Sisters. Many seeds have been planted in Casa by all the volunteers who have been a part of making Casa a community of communities. ❖

Creating self-sufficiency

The Sister Evelyn Mourey Center (SEMC), founded by Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, is a non-profit charitable organization located in the northwest end of the city of El Centro, CA and has been serving the Imperial County for over 20 years.

SEMC is comprised of 9 Board of Directors, 33 Volunteers, 2 San Diego State University Interns and 3 staff who are all passionate about the mission and committed to the cause of serving those in need.

SEMC provides residents with Emergency Services such as: emergency food and clothing, utilities and rent assistance. Through our Seguir Creciendo Programs SEMC offers educational opportunities such as: Computer Skills, Citizenship, English as a Second Language (ESL), Cake Decorating classes, and Enrichment Presentations. Through these programs and services, individuals can obtain the basic entry level skills necessary to seek employment and achieve self-sufficiency to improve their socio-economic situation.



Photo provided

Clinicas De Salud provided free blood pressure and glucose testing at Sister Evelyn Mourey Center in El Centro.

More importantly, SEMC provides a helping hand to improve the wellbeing of those in need, while fostering hope, compassion and dignity to all who enter our doors! ❖

Jubilees 2017

Seven members of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters are celebrating Jubilees in 2017. Six were honored with a special Mass May 24 at Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel at Victory Noll.

Sister John Francis Radler, a native of Milwaukee, Wis., celebrates 80 years as a Victory Noll Sister. Her ministry work has taken her to California, Indiana, Washington D.C., Arizona, Wisconsin and Ohio.



Sister John Francis Radler

Sister John Francis entered the Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters on March 12, 1938, and made first vows on August 5, 1940. In 1946, she received her certificate of completion from the National School of Catholic Social services and this began her journey of social work. She helped to start the St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic in Tucson, Ariz., and served as the administrator, a mission she served for 20 years. She also served as administrator for St. Barnabas Villa, a residence for older adults in Northfield, Ohio. After returning to Victory Noll in 1992, she served as the Holy Family Health Care Center Coordinator for several years, and then as activities director before retiring in 2000.

Sister John Francis continues today making sure that lights are turned out and the shades are drawn on her floor each night before retiring to her room.

Sister Martha Molohon is celebrating 75 years with OLVM, having entered the community on October 27, 1942. Originally from Curdsville, Ky., Sr. Martha has served in Texas, Indiana, California, Missouri, Kentucky, Michigan and New Mexico.



Sister Martha Molohon

“I feel at peace and am grateful for the life God has given me as an unlikely servant,” said Sr. Martha. “I enjoyed a variety of fulfilling assignments. On the border in El Paso I had an appreciation for the Mexican-American culture and experienced their humility in the hardships they endured. I also spent 20 years working with the mentally challenged in Michigan.”

Two Sisters are celebrating their 70th Jubilees in 2017.

Sr. Alma Bill joined OLVM on October 30, 1947. From Arcadia, Wis., Sr. Alma’s ministry work took her to California, Indiana, Florida, Missouri and Arizona. She authored two textbooks and teachers’ guides and also wrote “The Story of Victory Noll II,” the second edition of the OLVM history.



Sister Alma Bill

“I was enlivened by the beauty of God’s presence among His people, and their meaningful and prayerful response to that presence. I shared God’s Word to children through catechetical instruction and sacramental celebration, and to adults through parent education, RCIA instruction, and teacher preparation,” said Sr. Alma. “Throughout my years of accompanying people on their Faith journey, I found my own faith-life enlivened and sustained. I was privileged to support them through times of trial and fear, and celebrate with them their living relationship with the Lord.

My oft-repeated prayer furnished strength for the journey: ‘Show me, O Lord, the way in which I should walk, for to You I have lifted up my soul.’”



Sister Marilyn Schatz

Sr. Marilyn Schatz, a native of Ellicott City, Md., entered OLVM on October 30, 1947. She has been missioned in New Jersey, Indiana, Alabama, Michigan, Texas, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland and New Mexico.

“I enjoyed being in Texas. I was in Mathis for 10 years, and the people were so wonderful. They had simplicity and sincerity,” says Sr. Marilyn. “I took great comfort being there when you are needed, for example, with the death in a family, or when you went and someone was sick and you held their hand. Also, it was wonderful being there for people in joyful times when they were celebrating something, like first Communion or a wedding anniversary.”

Sr. Rita Musante and Sr. Rose Zita Rosonke are celebrating 60 years as Victory Noll Sisters, both having entered OLVM on September 5, 1957.

Originally from Warren, Pa., Sr. Rita has worked in mission centers in California, Indiana, Utah, Pennsylvania, Michigan and New Jersey.

“Helping people become aware of how much God loves each of us with all our mistakes and sins, achievements and dreams, is such a joy! Assisting people to become conscious of God’s intimate presence and offer of friendship in their lives — that they are never alone, that they are ‘walking tabernacles’ of God’s presence and divine activity in their lives and in our world: this, too, fills me with joy,” said Sr. Rita. “My favorite ministry is retreats and spiritual direction — because these are for me the best and most direct ways of assisting people to become aware of and respond to God’s amazing invitation to them to enter into an intimate friendship like no other.”



Sister Rita Musante

Sr. Rose Zita Rosonke, a native of Mt. Carmel, Iowa, has been missioned in Indiana, Michigan, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Arizona. Her current ministry is with Victory Noll Center in Huntington.

“I continue to grow in understanding that life is not so much about what I accomplish but more about what God’s great love accomplishes in and through and among others,” said Sr. Rose Zita. “Each ministry location connected me to new people and experiences with all ages wishing to know Christ better and participate in the mission of Jesus together.”



Sister Rose Zita Rosonke

Sr. Francisca Olvera will celebrate her 50th jubilee on August 5 with a special Mass at Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel. A native of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, Sr. Francisca entered in 1967 with the Claretian Missionary Sisters of the Religious of Mary Immaculate in Barcelona, Spain. She transferred to OLVM in 1984. She has been missioned in Texas, Colorado, Illinois and California.

“A Spanish writer, Calderon de la Barca, once said, ‘Life is a dream.’ For me, life is mystery. When God and I met, I was very little. As our relationship developed, I grew older, but I am still very little, dependent on God,” said Sr. Francisca. “My life is mission, and I felt called to serve the poor, especially the farmworkers. I come from a farmworking family, and I know what it is like to be in the fields.” ❖



Sister Francisca Olvera



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Visions FROM THE VICTORY NOLL ARCHIVES



The Victory Noll Sisters certainly wanted to let everyone know who was involved in the construction of Holy Family Building in 1958. The size of this sign was approximately 25 feet high, as measured by the two Sisters in the lower right of the frame who are dwarfed by the sign. That new building utilized advanced construction techniques for the time, involving pouring each concrete floor on the ground, then lifting them into place. It was the first time the technique had been used on a building in the Midwest. ❖