

NEWSLETTER OF OUR LADY OF VICTORY MISSIONARY SISTERS

Visions

January 2026

www.olvm.org

Art & Ministry

Celebrating the creativity
of the Victory Noll Sisters

St. Dorothy Anas L.



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 **The Art of Ministry**
Highlighting the creative talents of Victory Noll Sisters

10 **Mission Tour/Pilgrimage**
Road trip by Sisters one of faith and friendship

12 **A Common Purpose**
Oblate School of Theology shares vision with OLVM

14 **Preserving legacies**
HARC facility readies to house archives of communities

ON THE COVER

OLVM Sister Dorothy Anne Lengerich's pencil artwork of Michelangelo's "Pieta" sculpture is one of many artistic creations by Victory Noll Sisters throughout their history.

OLVM Photo

Many years ago, my first profession was as a photojournalist. I seemed to have a natural eye for it and, without patting myself on the back too much, I was pretty good at it. I understood how to capture a moment to tell a story, and how powerful a single image can be in conveying emotion—whether tragedy or triumph.

PERSPECTIVES ALONG THE JOURNEY

Art works in much the same way. It's why we have museums and galleries, and why we

place artwork on our walls and shelves. These pieces evoke something in us. They may recall a place we've been—or wish to be—or they may be a treasured creation from a child or friend that stirs love and gratitude.

Many of the OLVM Sisters have been artists and creators. In their life's work as missionaries, serving among the people they are called to accompany, it was only natural that they would weave artistic expression into their ministries.

Throughout their history, the Sisters have been resourceful, using whatever tools were available to reach out, form relationships, and meet people where they are. Art has helped bridge divides, open conversations, and offer moments of beauty and solace to those who are suffering. That sharing builds trust and helps relationships blossom.

Each edition of *Visions* continues to tell these stories of connection through the history of OLVM—how they began, how they continue today, and how they will endure into the future. ❖

— Paul Siegfried

CONGREGATION LEADER

Sr. Jenny Howard, SP

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Sisters' service takes many forms

The opening section of the Constitutions of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters is entitled “*Charism and Mission.*” Section 1 states:

“Jesus, anointed by the Spirit, was sent by God ‘to bring glad tidings to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free.’ (Luke 4:18) We, Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, commit ourselves to Jesus and to his redemptive mission. We are called to serve God’s people.”



Sr. Jenny Howard, SP
Congregation Leader

As I read through the articles of this January issue of the Our Lady of Victory Missionary *Visions* newsletter it is indeed an issue of celebration! I am struck by the variety of ways in which the OLVN Sisters reach out to others through their ministry of art and music; their passion and action on behalf of social justice issues; their sharing in relationship with former OLVN Community members, and OLVN Associates; and their generous sharing of their financial resources through their annual Victory Noll Empowerment Grants, and through their Major Gifts. It is the ripple effect...who can actually grasp the number of lives that are touched by the ministry and mission of the OLVN community. Thank you for your interest and prayer. We are indeed all united in this Mission!

As we enter into this New Year – 2026 I am reminded of the reflection by Howard Thurman:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins.

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations.
To bring peace among all,
To make music in the heart.

Wishing you blessings of joy and peace in this New Year - 2026! ❖

the Art of Ministry



Victory Noll Sisters have used their creative talents in advancing mission

By Paul Siegfried
OLVM Communications Coordinator

In founding Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Father John Joseph Sigstein had the foresight to know his community would have to be adaptive and imaginative in ministry if they were to survive and advance their mission.

The OLVM Constitutions lay out the blueprint and the challenge:

We proclaim the gospel in creative and flexible ways ... continually evaluating and reforming the vision of our life and ministry in light of the signs of the times and the particular needs of the people. We are all called to participate in this process according to our unique gifts and limitations.



Sr. Dorothy Ann Lengerich

Of her many artistic creations, Sr. Dorothy's beautifully-detailed pencil renderings (top) of the Pietá by Michelangelo are her masterpieces. Her visions of the original (above) provide unique angles of the sculpture depicting Mary holding Jesus after he was taken down from the cross.

More than 100 years later, the formula has been successful. Sisters have been inventive in their ministries, drawing on their many gifts, including using artistic ability.

Artwork created by the Sisters has graced the walls of every building on the Victory Noll campus, nearly every mission center, and in the homes of family, friends, co-workers or even strangers. Countless pieces have been given to those in need of inspiration or just to lift a spirit with a beautiful scenic landscape.

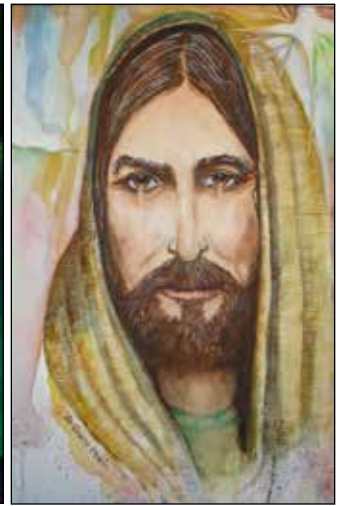
Sr. Mary Louise Rowney has seen first-hand the reach of incorporating art into ministry.

"The special artistic gifts some of our Sisters have recognized and honed within themselves were very personal and are or were nourished and shaped by their study, reflection and prayer life which helped them become gifts they shared with others in and through their ministry, fostering a deeper connection with God, or understanding of scripture and the Christian message," she says.

"Our Victory Noll Sisters have always been challenged to adapt their ministry to the circumstances around them. Adaptation requires sensitivity, reflection, and creativity. These same skills inspired our sisters who were gifted with special artistic ability. I believe they found their spiritual leadership enriched by the people and culture they served even as their artistic ability enhance the pastoral care they were giving."

The following pages provide a snapshot of some of the art of Victory Noll Sisters. ❖

Sr. Grace Marie Samblanet



Perhaps Victory Noll's most prolific artist, Sr. Grace Marie Samblanet was always working on a project, even through serious illness and up until her death in 2015.



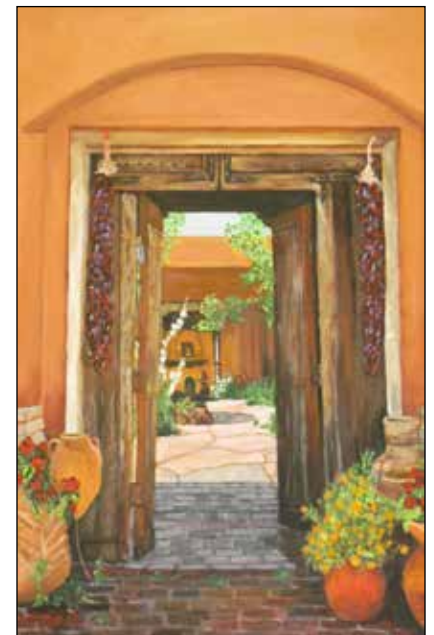
She painted wide-ranging subjects, from religious imagery to nature she viewed around the Victory Noll campus. She created artwork for community events and cards for any occasion. Co-workers often asked her to make a painting of families. She painted portraits of other Sisters and even made self-portraits.



Sr. Grace Marie made creating art part of her ministry. When she was teaching GED and art to inmates at the Cook County Jail in Chicago, she did portraits of the men to take home. Those paintings helped lift their spirits and to raise their self-esteem. She led activities at a nursing home where she taught painting classes. She tried to integrate her art into her ministry wherever she was missioned.



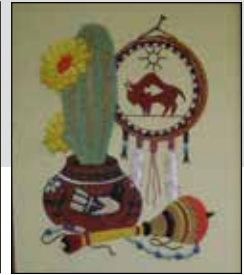
Her artistic eye carried over to other mediums, including ceramics and photography. Most of her creations were given away as gifts and are still treasured memories for many.





Sr. Mary Joan Ginsterblum

With a ministry focused on nature and care for the Earth, Sr. Mary Joan channeled her passion into many different ventures, including artwork. From a fallen tree, she carved and painted the Peace Pole that stood in the Victory Noll Peace Garden for years. The Peace Pole included many Native American symbols honoring the Miami people who once lived on the land that is now the Victory Noll campus.



Sr. Clarita Trujillo

Drawing on her roots, the artwork of Sr. Clarita represents her native New Mexico style, whether it is a carving of a religious figurine or paintings on wood typical of the Southwest. Her work meshes with a ministry of support for the immigrant populations that has been a focus of OLVM since their founding.



Sr. Martha Wordeman



A staunch advocate for social justice, Sr. Martha made her voice heard in protest of the death penalty and war in any form. "Mighty Marty" also was a talented artist, which included creating posters calling for justice for all. She even created a welcome sign for OLVM Sisters arriving in Chicago, featuring caricatures of each of the Sisters.



Sr. Melanie Persche



Sr. Marie Benes



Sr. Effie McConnell



Sr. Florence Garbacz



Sr. Carmen Montoya



Sr. Pat Knapp



SUPPORTING OUR MISSION

IN GRATITUDE TO OUR BENEFACTORS

Contributions from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025

Through your generous contributions, you support Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters in their mission to proclaim the Word of God, to stand in solidarity with those living in poverty and oppression, to foster justice and to promote the development of leaders. The Victory Noll Sisters thank you and continue to keep all of you in our prayers.

MEMORIALS

Paul Angel
for Sister Margaret Gutierrez

Mary Alice Bramming
for Sister Dennis Kerr
for Helen Gallagher

Catherine & Paul Corsaro - Wellnitz
for Sister Paula Wellnitz

Ruth DeMeulenaere
for Sister Irene DeMeulenaere

Robert & Peggy Foltz
for Sister Valeria Foltz

Cheryl & Christopher Haase
for Carol Dombrowski

Steve & Susan Jenco
for Sister Chrysostom Deliman

Maria Tassia
for Sister Agnes Ganse

Chonita Vasquez
for Sister Martin Ksycki

DONATIONS

Salvatore Ales

DG Cooper

Raul & Isabel Delgado Jr.

Joseph & Phyllis Drilling

Loretta Fowler

Sarah Garcia

Roxanna Guerra

Marjorie Hooley

Fr. Eugene Marcone

George Norvilas

Robert Perl

William & Christine Pulice

Janet Schaefer

Eugene & Barbara Schramka

Myra Smith

Jessie & Jesus Valenzuela

Janet Young & Cynthia Olinger

Grant recipients named for 2025-26

Each year, Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters provides grant funding through Victory Noll Empowerment Grants. Organizations may apply for up to \$50,000 in funds.

The grant committee looks for groups that closely align with the OLVM mission of promoting justice for those living in poverty and oppression, empowering persons to contribute to a more just and peaceful society, protecting and sustaining the environment,

and contributing to the well-being of families.

A total of 18 recipients were selected to receive funding for the 2025-26 grant cycle. Those organizations are listed below including their location and the focus of their missions.

Grant applications for 2026-27 are now being accepted. The deadline is May 1, 2026.

Information and application forms are available at www.olvm.org/grants. ❖

RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	FOCUS
A Mother's Hope	Fort Wayne, IN	Pregnancy Crises
Catholic Mobilizing Network	Washington, DC	Capital Punishment
Center for Non-Violence	Fort Wayne, IN	Domestic Violence
Comboni Sisters	Richmond, VA	Education/Empowerment
Community Care of NE Indiana	Bluffton, IN	Transitional Housing
Court Appointed Special Advocates	El Centro, CA	Neglected Children
Cypress House	Scranton, PA	Reentry from Incarceration
Domestic Violence Outreach	Chicago, IL	Domestic Violence
Habitat for Humanity of Fort Wayne	Huntington, IN	Stable, Affordable Housing
Madonna Mission	Chicago, IL	Supporting Refugee Children
Mary's Pence	Saint Paul, MN	Support for Women
New Mercies Ministries	Fort Wayne, IN	Women Empowerment
Place of Grace	Huntington, IN	Transitional Housing
Proyecto Desarrollo Humano	Penitas, TX	Immigrant Support
Redemption House Ministry	Fort Wayne, IN	Transitional Housing
Santa Fe Dreamers Project	Santa Fe, NM	Immigrant Legal Services
Sojourner Truth	Gary, IN	Homelessness
Talitha Koum Institute	Waco, TX	Children's Health

Mission Tour/Pilgrimage

Sisters' road trip becomes journey of faith and friendship

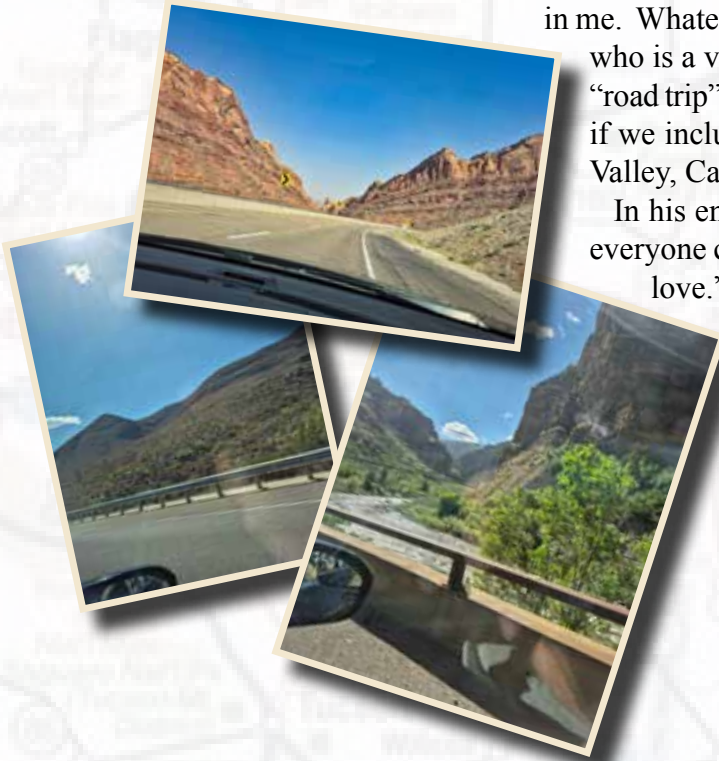
By Sr. Beaty Haines
 OLVM Social Justice Coordinator

Victory Noll Sisters' first places of Mission were in the Southwest and West and expanded from there across the United States. I personally was sent to East Los Angeles, California, in my first years in the Community and later to El Paso/Fabens, Texas. In the late 70's and early 80's I served as our Southwest Area Coordinator and traveled to visit our Sisters who were missioned in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

For some reason, last Spring a desire to visit some of these places of mission started to tug at me. It might have been a card I received from a man who was in high school when I was in Fabens, recalling that time with gratitude. Now he is an immigration lawyer in a small town in East Texas. Or

maybe it was the call to Pilgrimage during this Jubilee Year that stirred up this desire in me. Whatever the cause, one day I asked Sister Leora Linnenkugel, who is a very good driver, whether she would consider going on a "road trip" with me in June. She was definitely interested, especially if we included a visit to a place she had been missioned in Apple Valley, California.

In his encyclical, "*Evangeli Gaudium*," Pope Francis states that everyone can say, "I am a mission, for each of us is a fruit of God's love." This trip was truly a "mission tour." We visited places one or the other of us had been missioned, as well as the homes of some of our sisters, associates, friends and former members of Victory Noll. We even visited my nephew who is working temporarily in California. I am reminded of the Emmaus Journey as I reflect on



OLVM photo

OLVM Sisters Beaty Haines and Leora Linnenkugel stopped to visit with friends in California (top). Their road trip included driving through many scenic areas.



The Sisters' road trip included a visit to Julia Center in Chicago (left) where they were once missioned. Below, Srs. Beaty and Leora met fellow Victory Noll Sister Mary Alice Murphy and friend Pat Wiedower in Colorado. In the bottom photo, the Sisters visit with Betty Baca and Palmira Perea Hay in New Mexico.

our experience, and how Jesus walked with these two disciples, who shared their story, broke bread with Jesus and experienced his risen presence. We, too, shared both joys and sorrows, broke bread together and experienced Jesus in this gift of hospitality.

As I look back with gratitude on this mission tour/pilgrimage, I am reminded of something I read in Journey-Faith in an Entangled World by Nancy Sylvester, IHM. She says that "journey faith" emerges on the journey, i.e., God reveals God's self on the journey as the story. We certainly experienced God's presence and love in the hospitality given so generously and friendships renewed.

The experience of God being with us on the journey inspired us to sing the following mantra as we started driving each day: "I Am With You on the Journey" by Kathy Sherman.

I am with you, on the journey
 And I will never leave you.
 I am with you, on the journey
 Always with you.

A kind of "bonus gift" of this two-week trip, was the experience of the beauty of our country from Illinois to Oklahoma to Texas to New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Nebraska, Iowa and Illinois and back home again in Indiana. The fruitful farmlands, the grandeur of the mountains and the broad expanses of land and sky, were occasions to praise our Creator God. At the same time it was sad to see the signs of drought and forest fires in the West. We were, however, encouraged by the many solar panels and wind turbines we saw as alternatives to the fossil fuel threatening our Planet Earth.

Last, but not least, was the joy of sharing the fruits of our Mission/Pilgrimage with our Sisters after we arrived home, especially the Sisters at Heritage Point in Warren. It brought back memories of the many places they had been missioned over the years, the people whose lives they shared and the blessings they experienced. We prayed together in gratitude for those we touched through our ministries over the years and for the many ways they touched us. ❖



Photo provided

**Graduates from the
Espiritualidad y
Dirección Espiritual
program exit the
Whitley Event Center
following the May 2025
OST Commencement
Ceremony.**



United in Mission

Victory Noll Sisters empower Oblate School of Theology's ministry to Hispanic communities

By Bianca Soto
Communications Manager
Oblate School of Theology

Founded in 1903 by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Oblate School of Theology (OST) has been committed to providing philosophical and theological education for laypeople, women and men in religious life, and spiritual seekers across all faith traditions. The institution cultivates a multicultural, multilingual, and interfaith community, serving as a microcosm of the universal Church representing students from countries, ethnicities, and cultures across the world.

Through graduate degree and certificate programs, OST strives to educate and prepare students for priestly ministry and lay ministries, as well as offering opportunities for continuing education and spiritual renewal to those who seek to enrich their faith. Inspired by the charisma of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, OST educates, forms, and renews men and women to “preach the Gospel to the most abandoned.”

“Oblate School of Theology is a graduate and professional school, proudly rooted in the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church,” said Father Louis Studer, OMI, president of OST. “Our students represent a broad range of cultures and countries. They are men and women of all ages from multiple faith traditions and ways of life.”

Rooted in Catholic tradition, OST initially served as a seminary for Oblate and diocesan seminarians that were called to minister to the poor and most abandoned, particularly among the Hispanic communities along the Texas-Mexico border. The institution’s deep-rooted commitment to serving the bilingual and bicultural communities in South Texas and northern Mexico originated from early Oblate Missionaries who ministered on



Photo provided

Martha Rodriguez, a Master of Arts in Sacred Scripture student, reads in the library on the OST campus.

horseback along the Rio Grande Valley from 1849 to 1904. Their ministry is depicted in the famous Cavalry of Christ photo (at right) that shows Oblate Missionaries riding from parish to parish sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to marginalized Mexican-American communities.

Since the middle of the last century, the Victory Noll Sisters have ministered in various parishes with the Missionary Oblates, fostering a long-standing relationship that has empowered Hispanic laity over the years. Today, that mission continues with the establishment of the Victory Noll Sisters Chair of Hispanic Engagement, further solidifying OST's leadership in Hispanic ministry and its commitment to forming leaders to serve the future of the Catholic Church.

"We are very grateful to the Victory Noll Sisters for aiding Oblate School of Theology and allowing us to continue our efforts to elevate ministry by contributing toward a Chair of Hispanic Engagement," said Father Bryan Silva, OMI, associate dean of Hispanic engagement at OST. "This Chair will augment our training of ministers and bring renewed leadership to the many national initiatives already underway."

This milestone underscores the Victory Noll Sisters' and OST's commitment to serving the Hispanic community, a dedication set at the heart of their missions. The mission of Father John Joseph Sigstein, founder of the Victory Noll Sisters, echoes the mission of St. Eugène de Mazenod, founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, as they were both called to serve and empower the poor and vulnerable. In 2021, this shared mission and ongoing partnership enabled

OST to receive a legacy gift from the Victory Noll Sisters, supporting the continuation of the Instituto de Formación Pastoral/Pastoral Formation Institute (IFP/PFI) – a two-year certificate

program, taught in Spanish or English, that prepares students for parish ministry.

Today, the Victory Noll Sisters remain dedicated to advancing OST's efforts to better serve the growing Hispanic population in the United States. The Chair of Hispanic Engagement will fund the full-time

faculty position of Associate Dean of Hispanic Engagement, a role dedicated to research and teaching in Hispanic theology and ministry. This position will serve as an opportunity for a scholar deeply engaged in Hispanic theological research to share their expertise and passion with OST students, faculty, the community, and more.

"This new Chair will allow us to continue our excellent work in training new ministers for the Hispanic population in the United States and beyond," Fr. Silva said.

The Chair will also guide the work of the Hispanic Engagement Committee, a group of OST faculty and staff members whose main goal is to facilitate and enhance access to theological education at all levels

for people of Hispanic/Latine origin.

This contribution from the Victory Noll Sisters ensures that OST remains a leader in theological education and ministry for Hispanic communities, allowing the institution to embody the Oblate charism in reaching out to the poor and most abandoned. ❖



Photo provided

OST students take notes during a lecture on Church History



HARC photo

Ground was broken for the Heritage and Research Center (HARC) at St. Mary's at Notre Dame, Indiana, in July 2024. The 12,000-square-foot archival facility is scheduled to open in 2026.

HARC prepares to house archives

By Jeff Hoffman
OLVM Archivist

With Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters in a time of transition, the question of what to do with their archives has been an important one moving forward. The sale of campus buildings has left limited space for storage. Many items have been donated or sold, but there remains a large collection of artifacts, papers, and other materials that need to be preserved and housed.

In the spring of 2018, the Holy Cross Sisters at Notre Dame, Indiana, hosted a “Day of Dreaming.” The event brought together congregations of women religious from across the Midwest to discuss preserving each community’s archived materials, as many congregations were facing transitions similar to OLVM. After ongoing discussions and collaboration, the Victory Noll Sisters decided to join nine other communities to form the Heritage and Research Center at St. Mary’s (HARC). Ground was broken for the facility in July 2024, and it is scheduled to open in 2026.

By creating the 12,000-square-foot communal archive facility, these congregations can secure their legacies and continue to tell their stories. The archives of each congregation and their sponsored ministries will be preserved and made available for visitors and researchers in one location.

Bringing together the histories and artifacts of these communities under one institution will make HARC a resource that shines a light not only on innovation, community development, social justice, and women’s leadership within the Catholic Church and the wider public, but also on the continuing ministries of women religious. HARC will allow laity and religious to come together to re-envision ways to develop new models of working in partnership.



HARC photos

An artist’s rendering (above) shows how the new HARC facility will look. Below, mobile shelving is installed in the archival section.



While serving on the OLVM Leadership Team, Sr. Ginger Downey assisted in the early development of HARC. She later transitioned to working with the National Archives Project for Women Religious, which assists congregations in preparing their archives as communities head toward completion.

As the Victory Noll footprint grew smaller in Huntington, many items from sold buildings were added to the archives, quickly overwhelming the available space. The space allocated for OLVM materials at the HARC facility is limited as well, so it became clear that not everything could be housed at St. Mary's.

We began looking for places that might be a good fit for some of the items. Many were sent to the Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend Museum. Among the pieces donated from Our Lady of Victory Chapel was the communion rail, which is now on display. Some of the statues found homes in various parishes throughout the diocese. The diocesan museum also received numerous artifacts tied to Archbishop Noll. Other items were placed in local parishes, including SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Huntington, which received the marble statues of Mary and Joseph. The Huntington County History and Education Center also received several items from the print shop. These are just a few of the places that will help carry on the Victory Noll legacy.

Currently, the Victory Noll Archives are preparing for a move in the coming year to the Holy Cross Sisters' campus. HARC will help the Victory Noll legacy continue by preserving our stories and making materials available for researchers. Working together with other congregations of women religious will help raise awareness of the contributions Sisters have made to the story of Catholicism in the United States.

As part of assessing progress in this transition, HARC staff visited each of the participating congregations over the past two months. HARC Executive Director Barbara Gordon, Associate Director Jennifer Head, and Archivist J.A. Pryse visited Victory Noll in November. They reviewed archival holdings to determine what materials would be sent to HARC as plans are made for integration with the other congregations. They were pleased with our preparation and commented that we were further along than



OLVM photos

Staff members from HARC visited Victory Noll in November and were given a tour by OLVM Archivist Jeff Hoffman.



many congregations. We have created a digital inventory of our holdings, allowing easier integration into the system HARC will use. The HARC staff also expressed interest in some of our equipment, especially movie and slide projectors, cassette recorders, and View-Masters.

The current plan is to begin moving archival items to HARC after the first of the year. Moves for each congregation will be scheduled at regular intervals, with each shipment placed in quarantine for 30 days—a standard archival procedure to prevent and address issues such as mold and insects. The expected move date for the OLVM archives is between January and April, with HARC's opening planned for early summer. ❖



OUR LADY OF VICTORY
MISSIONARY SISTERS
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Visions

FROM THE VICTORY NOLL ARCHIVES



Artistic talent takes many forms. For some, it's a painting or a sculpture. For others, beauty is created through other outlets. The poetry of Sr. Mary Ellen Descourouez became a beloved OLVM hymn. Sr. Valeria Foltz made beautiful quilts and made countless Raggedy Anns and Andys. Sr. Agnes Kozla taught liturgical dancing. Several Sisters have had the gift of being able to play a musical instrument, ranging from Sr. Martha Molohon on her harmonica to Srs. Judy Turnock and Rose Zita Rosonke playing the accordion. In this photo, Sr. Mary Magdalene Heim plays her violin. ❖