



## NEWS from the Northside

### 400 Years: All in the Relationships by Sister Karen Mohan

*"Time past and time future  
What might have been and what has been  
Point to one end, which is always present."  
—TS Eliot*

When our community considered how we might celebrate our Order's 400th anniversary, we knew that any activity planned was really about the relationships that have enriched our lives here. As this special year progressed, neighbors, friends and associates have unwrapped the gift of this quadricentennial year by their friendship and dedication.

How invigorating it was to inaugurate the year's special events with a 20th anniversary Eucharist and open house on Oct. 2, 2009! Many guests processed from the Church to our monastery after the Mass, following the banners created by Sr. M. Margaret for our celebrational year. The North Minneapolis drums corps added their youthful "step" to the party with performances at each of our houses. Talk about "upbeat"! For me, the momentum sparked by this kick-off celebration signaled us to "move forward with confidence," and "fully live the present moment"! This is the spirit of our Founders for now and our future.

Some of the 400th anniversary events have already been recorded in this newsletter:

Two Sisters participated in the pilgrimage to our French roots in the summer of 2009;

A "window of vision," the stained glass window cre-

ated by John Scanlon and named by his wife, Mary, was installed in the Girard house at the beginning of our anniversary year;

Our monthly Salesian Monday nights focused on the theme of "pilgrimage" to explore sacred Salesian sites and our own sacred journeys.

Our annual women's retreat had Mary and Elizabeth's visit as its focus. The national Salesian Conference also chose "Visitation" as its theme, and a number of our neighbors joined us for both of these retreat opportunities.

We invited three groups affiliated with us to visit and pray at the monastery in honor of the 400th: our Visitation Companions on the feasts of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal; our Visitation Neighbors "Alum"

and their families in October; our adult "Windsock Kids" with their children in November.

We joined with our Mendota Sisters for some of their special events: the alumnae award that Sr. M. Paula received, the Eucharist for family and friends on the feast of St. Francis de Sales, Merrie Market in the spring, and a community Mass

and lunch on the feast of the Visitation. Praying with our Mendota Sisters at Sr. M. Antoinette's funeral Mass on Sept. 20 and at Sr. M. Aimee's funeral in St. Louis in July reminded us of the many heavenly relationships that we share with countless Sisters who have preceded us.

Our Federation helped to finance three books in honor



Our 400th celebration at the Capri Theater in N. Minneapolis. The marquee said: "The Visitation Sisters Thank you! 1989 - 2010"



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We are an urban monastic community. Please contact us for more information about our way of life.

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## 400 Years, *Continued from page 1*

of the “400th”: a book on Visitation spirituality and mission in the U.S., a children's book and a graphic novel on the life of St. Jane. Two radio spots and two newspaper articles highlighting our Minneapolis community and the NCEA recognition of Visitation's 210 years of Catholic education ministry in the U. S. were gratifying moments for the sisters of our Federation. Our Vocation Partners have done an amazing job of making our presence known in the world of websites, blogs and facebook, and collaborating with Mendota Visitation students has been an ongoing joy for us and blessing to our neighbors.

Two high points give testimony to the richness of the relationships developed here:

The 400th anniversary Mass and birthday party on the actual birth date of the Order, June 6, which coincided with the feast of Corpus Christi, and the response received from our 400th Anniversary Campaign from June 24 – Oct. 2, 2010. The funds raised here will help us continue and broaden our ministry of presence in the neighborhood. Under the guidance of Sharon Ferraro and Sarann Slattery and our dedicated steering committee chaired by Sr. Mary Frances, we were able to raise the money we had hoped to receive, and we are deeply grateful for your support! A reception in St. Louis and a grand finale celebration in Minneapolis on the 21st anniversary of our foundation in North Minneapolis brought many friends and benefactors together to receive our gratitude in person.

The community also had a few intimate celebrations. On June 4, we united in spirit with Visitation Sister- representatives from each country who met in Anney for a special week of prayer and reflection on the actual birth date of the Order. Our community had a special holy hour using prayers and music that were being used that very day in Anney. Afterwards we “ate French” by enjoying a crepes dinner complete with French wine! On the night of June 6, we drove through the neighborhood in our own version of a Corpus Christi procession, praying at the sites where young people had been gunned down during this past year, and leaving a peace message at each place. In addition to our annual retreat in September, we look forward to our renovation of vows retreat in mid-November as a way of gathering the graces of this anniversary year into our own commitment to “Live Jesus” as Visitation Sisters.

The end of this anniversary year is near, but just as life unfolds, there is more to come!

In June, 2011, our U.S. Visitation Sisters will have a special week to share Visitation history, spirituality, ministries, and best of all, friendships! This meeting will honor the 400th anniversary of St. Jane de Chantal and our first Sisters taking their vows in 1611.

Living Jesus in relationship with others is what the Christian life is all about. Let the celebration continue—until we all come together in the great feast of eternal life!

As St. Francis de Sales once wrote, *“The beginning of good things is good... Its progress is better ... But the end is best of all!”*

## Reunion

by Tom Connery, Professor, University of St. Thomas

It was a typical summer scene. A warm, sunny day on a quiet suburban street. Men, women, and children piled out of cars in front of a familiar house that was a comforting sight to all. Doors opened to big smiles, big hugs, and big shouts of joy. Genuine joy. The kind of bright satisfied joy that only comes from a gathering of friends and loved ones following a separation. In so many ways, it was a homecoming. But for sure, it was a family reunion.

There are three distinct branches in this family tree: the Visitation Sisters of the north side, Valerie Hughes and her four children who lived in the north side but are now scattered about the Twin Cities, and the Mascias of Roseville. Pat and Karin Mascia brought the three branches together at their home in August, but it was the Sisters who originally planted the seed 18 years ago.

Back then, the Mascias's son-in-law, DeWayne Franks, was already connecting with kids and families through the Sisters, including with Valerie and her children, who were early "Windsock Kids" at the north side monastery after showing up at the monastery homeless and hungry in 1992. And Karin, a Visitation Academy graduate, had helped the nuns move into their north side home when they first established themselves there, and daughter Angie, DeWayne's wife and another Vis grad, also became a part of this Visitation-grown family.

The connecting of Valerie and her children with families outside the north side, bringing together people of different backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and race and ethnicities, has been a key goal of the sisters right from the start. They call it "bridging," connecting families from their north side neighborhood with families from more affluent neighborhoods and the suburbs. Valerie's children had spent lots of time with Pat, Karin, DeWayne and Angie. Time together included visits to the Mascia home in Roseville, where there were indoor and outdoor games constantly and lots of horsing around, especially between DeWayne and the boys. It was just a wonderfully safe and comfortable place to hang out.

Although Karin keeps in contact with Valerie by phone throughout the year and they get together for lunch once or twice a year, Valerie's children live in different parts of the metro area and get together occasionally on holidays but they hadn't seen the Mascia family or the sisters for a while. So, Karin and Pat decided to reunite the clan.

The Windsock kids had grown and they all came: the oldest, Lashawna, 35, the big sister, and Dquion, 33, Ray, 31, and Shan'te, 29. But over the years, the family has grown—they brought along their nine children. The Sisters arrived in two separate cars and as they entered into the festivities, they were greeted like dear aunts, family matriarchs who came carrying a photo album of precious family memories.

Pat fired up the grill, plates were filled, handclapping thanks was given. Tales were told, stories shared, and laughter filled the house. Valerie's grandchildren and two of the Mascias grandchildren, DeWayne and Angie's kids, romped and frolicked in the backyard with games and balls. But right in the middle of the kids, horsing around and gently roughhousing with them was DeWayne, playing with Valerie's grandchildren just as he had with Valerie's children. The bridge constructed with care and love and deep faith by the Sisters was still sturdy and in use.

## "Where is England?" \*

On September 5, Joanna left our community permanently to return to England.

As you can imagine, we are very sad to have her leave, but we want her to do what will give her optimum well being. We think she has made a wise, though difficult decision. She knows that we love her, and she loves us, making her departure painful. We ask your prayers for Joanna as she begins a new phase of her faith journey.

\*A question of endearment when Sister Joanna did not answer the door



Valerie and Karin made the "bridge" happen!



—St. Francis de Sales

“Our little congregation is a work of the Hearts  
of Jesus and Mary;”

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**“Come and See,”**  
**November 8-9, 2010**  
for single women,  
ages 20-45

Come, get acquainted with  
the Sisters and their way of  
life.

Pray, hear vocation stories  
and relax at the monastery.  
Discern your vocation with  
others doing the same.

Contact Sr. Katherine at:  
mullinkf@aol.com or  
612-52-6113



A grand finale 400th anniversary of the Order of the Visitation on the 21st anniversary of our foundation in North Minneapolis brought many friends and benefactors together to receive our gratitude in person.