



# CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION

CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL  
UNITED STATES AND PHILIPPINES

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The Sisters of Mount Carmel treasure the relationships they have established through their ministries with God's people. In this issue the sisters reflect on their lives and ministries in New Iberia, Louisiana.

## In This Issue

A Harvest of Relationships	1-2
Harvesting Years	3
Building a Vocation	4
History Highlights	5
In Memory Of	6-9
In Honor Of	9-10
News of Note	2,3, 10-14
Encounters in Ministry	15

## A Harvest of Relationships

Southwest Louisiana is awash in sights and sounds, aromas and colors of autumn. Green fields of sugar cane sway gently in the breeze; leaves change and fall to the ground. Aromas fill the air as sugar cane is harvested, mills begin to grind, sugar and syrup are being processed. Harvest season is announced by honking geese flying south for the winter. Adding to the cacophony, huge trucks rumble along the highway hauling their great loads of harvested cane.

Hard work and difficult times bring the harvest to fruition. But now great excitement is in the air. Celebrations of all kinds mark the harvest time. To thank God for a bountiful harvest, Liturgies of thanksgiving abound. The Sugar Cane festival and other festivals throughout the area bring friends and family together in joyful celebration.



This is a snapshot of life in New Iberia at harvest time. Harvest comes of hard work yet it is richly rewarding to see the fruit of one's labor. God has richly rewarded the Sisters of Mount Carmel with an abundant harvest for their labors in New Iberia beginning in 1870.

Over those years, thousands of young women, imbued with the spirit of Carmel, graduated from Mount Carmel in New Iberia until 1988 and brought that spirit of prayer and love of God with them to their work place, families and friends. Some of them answered God's call to share in the work of the sisters - Sisters Hyacinth Breau, Libby Dahlstrom, Theresa Drago, Donna Girard, Barbara Nell Laperouse, Sacred Heart Melancon, Catherine Riggs, Ann Carmel Segura and others of earlier history.

*continued on page 2*

## A Harvest of Relationships *continued from cover*

Many became teachers spreading their love of God and of Carmel throughout Louisiana in Catholic and in public schools. Some are at the two Catholic schools in New Iberia - Catholic High and St. Edward's Elementary.

Graduates and their friends came to the aid of the sisters when Hurricane Hilda slammed into New Iberia. After Hurricane Katrina, they came to the aid of the sisters residing in Lafayette who were displaced from their convents in New Orleans. The sisters were in residence in a parish convent no longer being used and this loving band of Mount Carmel graduates came, and still come, bringing food, furnishings, comfort and love.

Countless numbers of these Carmel girls share in the sisters' ministries through their regular contributions to the development office. Their generosity helps to fund the sisters' ministries. Some assist the congregation by serving on boards which oversee the ministries and maintain Carmel spirit and traditions.

And so many perpetuate the spirit of Carmel as prayerful, devoted wives, mothers, grandmothers and as role models of service in their communities and parishes. Through them, Carmel is alive and well where Carmel graduates live and work.

The Sisters of Mount Carmel are no longer physically present in ministry in New Iberia, but they continue to reap the abundant harvest that God and the people of New Iberia provide. Life, like the harvest, is not without difficulties but God's gentle hand on the congregation is present and felt. God's work goes on. Thank you, Bountiful God, for your care and protection through many seasons.

*Sister Rose Marie Penouilh, O. Carm. ministers in the professional and spiritual development of faculty at Mount Carmel Academy, New Orleans and Mission Effectiveness Representative for Mount Carmel Alumnae, New Iberia, LA.*



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## News of Note

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From left to right: Three postulants were received as novices: **Sisters Jenilyn Basadre, Elsie Villason and Juliet Naga.** The Sisters also welcomed three women into the postulancy on May 31, 2012: **Glaiza Granaderos, Juniza Vismanos and Christilyn Rubio.** Glaiza is a graduate of the University of Cebu with an Associate degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Juniza attended Holy Cross of Davao College, Inc. for a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Christilyn is a graduate of Central Mindanao University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Food Technology. All will reside at the Formation House in Balugo, Dumaguete City. They are pictured with Eucharistic Celebrant **Msr. Gammy Tubaling.**



# Harvesting Years

Three years ago I retired from active ministry. It was an end to fifty-four years of being assigned to ministry within our congregation. All that changed; I didn't really understand the challenges I was to face. After a honeymoon phase, I had to make an effort to find myself as a retiree in religious community.

My first task was to recognize what I was missing: a purpose to get up and to get out each day; working with others to accomplish what none of us could do alone; sharing in the lives of those I worked with daily for years. I loved to read so I could use my time that way; but, there is more to life and I wanted that more.

I had to make the effort to reach out in a new and different way. I did not have the role to play, the structure of a full or part-time ministry. I had to create, to discover, my role in retirement.

I've learned that retirement is a time of transformation. We never stop caring for others; we change what we do, our work. I've learned that in retirement it is less what we do and more what we ask God to accomplish through us that matters. As my physical energy lessens and my mental acuity has lost some of its sharpness, I find that my need "to do" is fading. In my own poverty of person I have recognized the poverty of others – physical, mental or emotional. And, my faith has deepened with a profound belief that if we ask God to accomplish what we cannot for others, God will hear our prayer.

Retirement allows for a certain amount of resting in God, of prayer. Prayer of presence. A resting in God, is important. Awareness of God in the quiet time I experience at work, or simply in my thoughts of the needs of others, is the prayer I am called to in retirement.

This I am learning. This I am attempting to live. This ministry, I am most grateful to be called to at this time in my life.



*Sister Barbara Nell Laperouse, O. Carm. serves as an Executive Councilor, Assistant to the Motherhouse Administrator and an assistant in the congregation Development Office.*

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## News of Note

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**Sister Margaret Safford**, center, celebrates her 80th birthday at the Carmelite Spirituality Center during the Congregation Assembly on July 14th.

# History Highlights

## Building a Vocation

On a bright sunny day in New Iberia, Louisiana, in early September, 1954, I began what would prove to be an extended career in education. It was my first day of school, and I was very excited. I was enrolled at Mount Carmel, an all-girls school owned and staffed by the Sisters of Mount Carmel, and I would spend 12 years there, finally graduating in May, 1966.

In thinking about those beginning days of first grade, I remember some of the other little girls crying to go home. I was confused by their tears because I just couldn't imagine anyone not wanting to go to school! When I was in the first grade I actually preferred week-days to the week-ends because on week-days I got to go to school! (Of course, that attitude did not last beyond the first grade and I soon began to treasure the gift of week-ends.)

The Sisters of Mount Carmel were special people. Mother Dorothy was the school principal when I began first grade; later Mother Rita replaced her, and by the time I was in high school, Sr. Rose Marie had become the principal. Sr. Veronica was my first grade teacher and like most first grade children, my world revolved around her. Other sisters were also part of the elementary years: Sr. Genevieve (4<sup>th</sup>), Sr. Sacred Heart (5<sup>th</sup>), Sr. Patrick (7<sup>th</sup>), and Sr. Roberta (8<sup>th</sup>). Other sisters filtered through my life in high school: Sr. Joan, Sr. Isidore, Sr. Alberta, Sr. Regina, Sr. Augustine, Sr. Rose Marie as both teacher and principal. And all through the elementary and high school years was a great sprinkling of many dedicated lay teachers.

All of these wonderful women shaped my early years and influenced my growing desire to be a teacher one day. Somewhere around the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, this desire to be a teacher began to be linked to the beginnings of a desire to be a Sister. Throughout my high school years I tried to ignore this emerging desire, but it would not go away, and finally, on senior retreat, I made the decision to enter the convent after graduation, which I did on Sept. 6, 1966.

There was much academic knowledge learned from all of them, but what remains with me the most, especially in remembering the Sisters, is their availability to us as people. As an example, I have great memories of a few of us showing up on Saturday afternoons at the Home Economics department to surprise Sr. Joan and ending up spending the whole afternoon with her. There was a welcoming spirit about the Sisters I knew and loved during my years at Mount Carmel, and I found myself being drawn more and more to join them.

It is hard to pinpoint their exact role in my vocational development and how it plays out in my present ministry with the Lay Carmelites. However, my years at Mount Carmel New Iberia provided a solid foundation upon which God "built me" into a Sister of Mount Carmel and led me into the ministry of education, both in school situations as a classroom teacher for 25 years and now, for the last 14 years, in the context of working with Lay Carmelites throughout North America. New Iberia: small town; Sisters of Mount Carmel: big impact — Thank you!

*Sister Libby Dahlstrom, O. Carm. serves as Associate Provincial Delegate of Lay Carmelites, Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, Darien, IL.*





# History Highlights



MT. CARMEL ACADEMY, NEW IBERIA

Knowing of the success of the Sisters of Mount Carmel in the school established in 1846 in Lafayette, Reverend Father L.A. Chasse of St. Peter's Catholic Church in New Iberia called on the Sisters to educate the children of his parish. In 1870 Mother St. John of the Cross Aucoin, Sister Stephen Altheimer, Sister Albertine Passon and Sister Mary Joseph Leo arrived in New Iberia to open the school. It began as a boarding and day school. Located near St. Peter's Church, it was the fifth mission of the Sisters of Mt. Carmel established in Louisiana.

With the growing school, the space next to the church became inadequate. In

1872 the sisters purchased the Duperier Home, built in 1826 on the banks of Bayou Teche. It had its own colorful family history for another telling. The home, as described by author and poet, Mother Augustine Guelfo, O.Carm., (1874 -1944) "stood on a hill, and the gentle slope toward the stream, the beautiful lawn, the arching moss-covered old oaks, the many beautiful plants, the sweet-scented atmosphere, the ever warbling birds made this humble dwelling seem in the center of the 'Garden of Eden.' It shone by the reflective light of Mother Nature and has ever been the delight of the lovers of God's natural beauty, the lure of the hearts of poets." The Duperier home became the school and convent. The campus grew with construction of new buildings and the eventual purchase of the old Dauterive Hospital to support the school's expansion.

In 1877 under the caring concern for children of color, the Sisters' foundress, Mother Therese Chevrel, directed the opening of a school for black children where the original school for girls had been located near St. Peter Church. In 1889, according to St. Peter's Church records, 26 boys and 40 girls were enrolled. With mounting racial tension in the town, enrollment decreased, and a fire destroyed the school in 1904. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament resumed the education of black students a few years later in a new location.

In 1903 the Sisters were asked by Father Jouan to begin a school for boys. He built the school, named St. Berchman's Hall, on the spacious convent grounds. By 1918, the Christian Brothers arrived in New Iberia and opened a school, St. Peter's College, for the education of boys. The boys transferred to the Brothers' school while the girls were educated by the Sisters.

A strong and active Alumnae of Mount Carmel had its beginnings in 1929 organized by Anna Blanchet Schwing. Mount Carmel Academy of New Iberia closed in 1988 as Catholic High School became co-educational. The alumnae remain active supporters of education and loving supporters of the Sisters of Mount Carmel.



# In Memory Of

**Abbott, Mrs. Vanessa Links** by Bob and Kathleen Broggi  
**Anzalone, Elsie Elaine** by Mr. and Mrs. Linus Regan  
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**Armbruster, Lourdes** by Helena LeBlanc  
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**Bouterie, Mrs. Gwen H.** by Mr. and Mrs. Laury Dupont, Mr. and Mrs. Ted  
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**Broussard, Ms. Eva Dell** by Ms. Theresa Doucet  
**Broussard, Robert F.** by Sister Joan Broussard, O. Carm., Wilda and Gleada  
 Broussard and Joan Sloan  
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**Clement, Mrs. Ida** by Mrs. Myrtle Boudreaux

These listings include donations received from March 1 - June  
 30. Memorial donations or donations in one's honor assist  
 the sisters in their ministries. For more information contact:

**Sisters of Mount Carmel**  
**Office of Development**

P.O. Box 1160

Lacombe, Louisiana 70445-1160

(985) 882-7577 or (504) 524-2398

e-mail: [development@sistersofmountcarmel.org](mailto:development@sistersofmountcarmel.org)

# In Memory Of

**Cogan, Hilda DeRouen** by Ms. Betty Jane Timmreck  
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**Hart, Mrs. Lela** by Mrs. Virgie Bender  
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**Hebert, Mr. Fred** by Mrs. Maisie Rodrigue  
**Hebert, Mr. George Norris** by Mrs. Alberta Winch  
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**Hotard, Marie** by Mr. and Mrs. Dale Hotard  
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**Jaynt, Lucille Babineaux** by Mrs. Theresa Guidry and Family  
**Johnson, Harold and Vivian** by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hollingsworth  
**Jolivet, Ms. Theresa** by Mr. John A. Key  
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# In Memory Of

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**Pierce, Jaime Lynn** by Wilda and Gleadia Broussard

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**Segura, Mr. Gateson** by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Gulotta, Sr.

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**Young, Mrs. Samantha B.** by Mr. and Mrs. Laury Dupont

**Zaunbrecher, Mrs. Anita P.** by Ms. Peggy Gossen  
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---

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**Deshotels, Mrs. Ginger** by Mary Ann Lavergne  
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**Duhon, Mr. Daniel** by Mrs. Alberta Winch  
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# In Honor Of

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**Wall, Mrs. Marlene** by Sister Andree Bindewald, O. Carm.  
**Warren, Linda** by Ms. Peggy Comeaux

## News of Note



**Sister Beth Fitzpatrick**, left, president of the congregation, offers a “mock interview” to communications teacher, **Linda MacDonald**, who offered techniques in crisis communication during a meeting of religious congregation leaders at the Region V gathering of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious held in Chatawa, MS.

# News of Note



**Sister Rose Marie Penouilh** was named Alumna of the Year at the Mount Carmel Academy Alumnae banquet in April.

Pictured are: From left to right standing are **Sisters Ursula Diassellis, Denis Rodrigue, Gwen Grillot, Rose Marie, Beth Fitzpatrick, Camille Anne Campbell, Lawrence Habetz**. Seated are **Sisters Lucie Leonard and Barbara Nell Laperouse**.

Congratulations to **Sister Camille Anne Campbell**, President/Principal of Mount Carmel Academy, New Orleans, who was presented with the Innovations in Education Award at NCEA in April, the Excellence in Education award at the AdvancED International Summit in June, the Top Female Achiever Award by New Orleans Magazine in July and for being named "The Nun of the Year" by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus in Louisiana in July.

Pictured is Sister Camille Anne with Beth Ann Simno at the New Orleans Magazine award luncheon on July 17.



At the closing of the school year, **Mount Carmel Academy** hosted a luncheon for the faculty. Seated from left to right are **Rev. Michael O'Rourke, O.P., Sister Rose Marie Penouilh and Dena Cheramie**.



# News of Note



Edward Douglas White Catholic High School in Thibodaux awards a Carmel Charism award to a young senior girl who best exemplifies the charism of the Sisters of Mount Carmel. The recipient this year was **Alicia Boudreaux**, daughter of David and Mary Boudreaux of Houma. Alicia was involved in Campus Ministry, Liturgical Music, band, and many other service organizations at school and in her church community and exemplified a fidelity to Christ in her school and church parish.



Students from Mount Carmel Elementary, Abbeville visit Cub Corner, New Orleans and the Motherhouse archives during their 8th grade trip to New Orleans.



Standing from left: **Sisters Catherine Martin** and **Kathy Farrelly**, and **Hilary Hernandez**, seated, are honored at the Jubilee celebration held for religious of the Lafayette diocese.



Pictured right: **Sister Josephine Deveras**, second from left, is joined by friends at the Archdiocesan celebration of jubilarians in New Orleans. Other jubilarians include **Sisters Barbara Breaud**, **Margaret Safford** and **Maryphilip Surban** to be celebrated by the Congregation on September 22.

## News of Note



Pictured left: At a Congregation Assembly, July 14, presenter **Nancy Schrek, OSF**, left, converses with **Sister Barbara Nell Laperouse** (center.) Pictured right: **Sisters Francesca Truxillo and Denis Rodrique** enjoy a break during the assembly.



In a missioning celebration on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel the Executive Council, from left to right, **Sisters Andree Bindewald, Barbara Nell Laperouse, Donna Girard, Janet LeBlanc and Sister Beth Fitzpatrick**, President, extend hands of prayerful blessing on the sisters as they accept their individual ministry assignments for the coming year.

Pictured below: Sisters listen attentively to the encouraging words of **Sister Beth Fitzpatrick**, President, during their missioning ceremony.





# News of Note

From May 1 to May 13, 2012, **Sisters Beth Fitzpatrick, Gina Yabo** (Coordinator of the Philippine Region) and **Mailyn Batocabe** visited with members of the Carmelite Family and the local church in East Timor as part of the Congregation's discernment regarding the establishment of a mission in Zumalai, East Timor.



**Brother Antonio, O. Carm.** (prior of the Carmelite Community at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Zumalai), **Father Bruce Clark** (Novice Director), **Sister Mailyn Batocabe, Sister Beth, Brother Albino** (novice and translator), **Sister Gina Yabo**, and the pastor of the parish in nearby Suai.

The sisters were received with the traditional Timorese welcome. In this photo, Timorese women and children clothe **Sister Beth** in *tais*, beautifully colored cloth woven by the local women. Sister Mailyn is standing to Sister Beth's right.



The sisters exchange greetings with **Dom Norberto Do Amaral**, Bishop of Maliana. Seated left to right are **Father Augusto**, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, **Sister Mailyn, Sister Beth, Father Bruce, Sister Gina**, and **Bishop Norberto**. The Bishop's message to the sisters: "Fall in love with the people of Zumalai. If you do, come. You are welcome!"



## Encounters in Ministry

Every moment brings a unique encounter. Even in my routine schedule I find the uniqueness of everyday's events. Study and work together bring me on a roller coaster experience. It is true that one cannot serve two masters at a time as one may be devoted to one and forget the other (cf. Mt. 6:24). But sometimes our creativity is called on if we are put in a situation. Considering my limitations, I need to be prudent so as to know what to prioritize.

As a student, I am exposed to the youth and I feel refreshed by their energies despite pressures brought about by my studies. I find it good to listen and become part of their stories, to hear their sad and happy experiences as well as their faith. Knowing that they come from different family backgrounds and faith orientations, as many of them are non-Catholics, it does not hinder me from establishing good relationships with them. Our ordinary conversations help both of us to deepen our faith and accept one's differences.

While being in the health care ministry I am exposed to different challenges which become an opportunity to grow. Though I am not directly involved in giving care to the patients in the hospital since I am doing more paper work, I do see the patients at a glance as I sometimes pass by in the hallway of the hospital. I can feel their sufferings and pains as I too once experienced. Though I have no way to give comfort, even to stop and listen to them because I am also catching my time for work, yet, in my own little way, in the silence of my heart I offer a prayer that they may find meaning in their sufferings and receive healing.

Actually it is in the constant practice of awareness and attentiveness that I find meaning in whatever I do and my work becomes my prayer. And most importantly it is in this way that I am always reminded that it is Christ's ministry that I am doing through the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit no matter how small it is. My presence to my classmates and in the hospital, despite my limitations, I do believe, in one way or another becomes a visible witness of the body of Christ and I remember that we are one body of Christ responding to different demands for the fulfillment of one purpose.



*Sister Elma Calajatan, O. Carm. is currently studying at Foundation University while serving as part-time office clerk at Holy Child Hospital and Assistant Vocation Animator, Philippines.*

# CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION

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The **Congregation of Our Lady of Mount Carmel** is a community whose prophetic call moves the sisters to be in active ministries that help bring about a more peaceful, just and loving world. They are nourished by contemplative prayer, community and devotion to Mary, a woman of simplicity and faith.

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## Share the vision; be a *Contemplative in Action*

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