

*f*OCUS

A publication of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

SPRING 2026





“WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR
THE POOR? IT IS FOR THE
POOR I AM CONCERNED.”

— MERE ANGELIQUE GEAY

*Adapted from the “CBS Statement on the
Preferential Option for the Poor,” 1995*

SPRING 2026

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is published bi-annually by the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA.
For additional copies, questions or comments regarding this publication
or the Sisters of Bon Secours, contact the Sisters of Bon Secours,
1525 Marriottsville Road, Marriottsville, MD 21104 or 410-442-1333.



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DEAR *friends*

Every spring, I prepare my garden and marvel at the transformation from winter to summer. I invite you to join me in embracing the blessings change can bring. Each new season is an opportunity for spiritual renewal — a reminder of the resurrection, rebirth and divine grace. Our faith is rekindled and hope blossoms anew.

The Sisters of Bon Secours in the USA are celebrating a new beginning of our own as we welcome Kathy Connerton, our first executive director of mission and business operations. We ask for your prayers as we walk together in mission and ministry.

In this issue of *Focus*, we reflect on what it means to be a Sister of Bon Secours. We share stories of our commitment to social justice and how being good help to those in need is integral to our charism of healing, compassion and liberation. We rejoice with Sr. Ji Kyung Choi in the United States, who renewed her vows, and with our Sisters in Peru: Sr. Carmen Mejía Gutiérrez, who professed her final vows, and Sr. Asly Jiménez Lopéz, who professed her first vows. We also congratulate Sr. Alice Talone on her 65th jubilee and Sr. Pat Eck on her 60th jubilee. We are grateful to them for the many gifts they have brought to our Congregation over the years.

On the international front, Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski and I joined the Sisters of Bon Secours to celebrate the opening of a new home and chapel for our community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Congregation Vocation Director Sr. Pat Dowling accompanied students from the Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing on a visit to Kenya.

The Gospel inspires us to put our faith into action, to stand with the poor and speak out against injustice. I encourage you to reflect on where you feel called to serve and be open to your divine calling.

Sincerely,



SR. ELAINE DAVIA
Area Leader
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA



A CALL TO ACTION

We, Sisters of Bon Secours in the United States, feel impelled to speak out about the events happening in our own country. Our social structures and mores are breaking down, and human dignity is being assaulted on multiple fronts. Regardless of our political persuasions, we are all people of faith, called to love, forgive and live as women and men of peace.

We want to share a part of our Chapter Statement from Sept. 19, 2024, which guides us into the next five years:

We share this charism and mission with the Bon Secours family, as we commit:

We will live as peacemakers.

We will cry out with others against injustice and all that diminishes life on Earth.

As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us, **“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”** (1/28/1963)

We invite you to join with us in prayer, advocacy and the struggle for a more humane world in whatever way the Holy Spirit might lead you. One suggestion is to take a moment of silent prayer together every evening at 9 p.m. Another is to share our concerns with our congressional representatives and with our families, friends and neighbors.

Please share your thoughts and ideas with us so that together we are strengthened on our common pilgrimage of faith, hope and love. Let us continue to pray with, and for, one another as we work together for peace with justice.

Thank you, and may the God of peace and hope be with you and those you love,

SISTERS OF BON SECOURS AND THE USA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Embracing Tomorrow:

WELCOME KATHY CONNERTON



Kathy Connerton, inaugural executive director of mission and business operations for the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA.

Please join us in welcoming Kathy Connerton, who has been appointed the first executive director of mission and business operations for the Sisters of Bon Secours in the USA.

A special ceremony was held in the chapel at the Marriottsville campus to mark the transition of leadership.

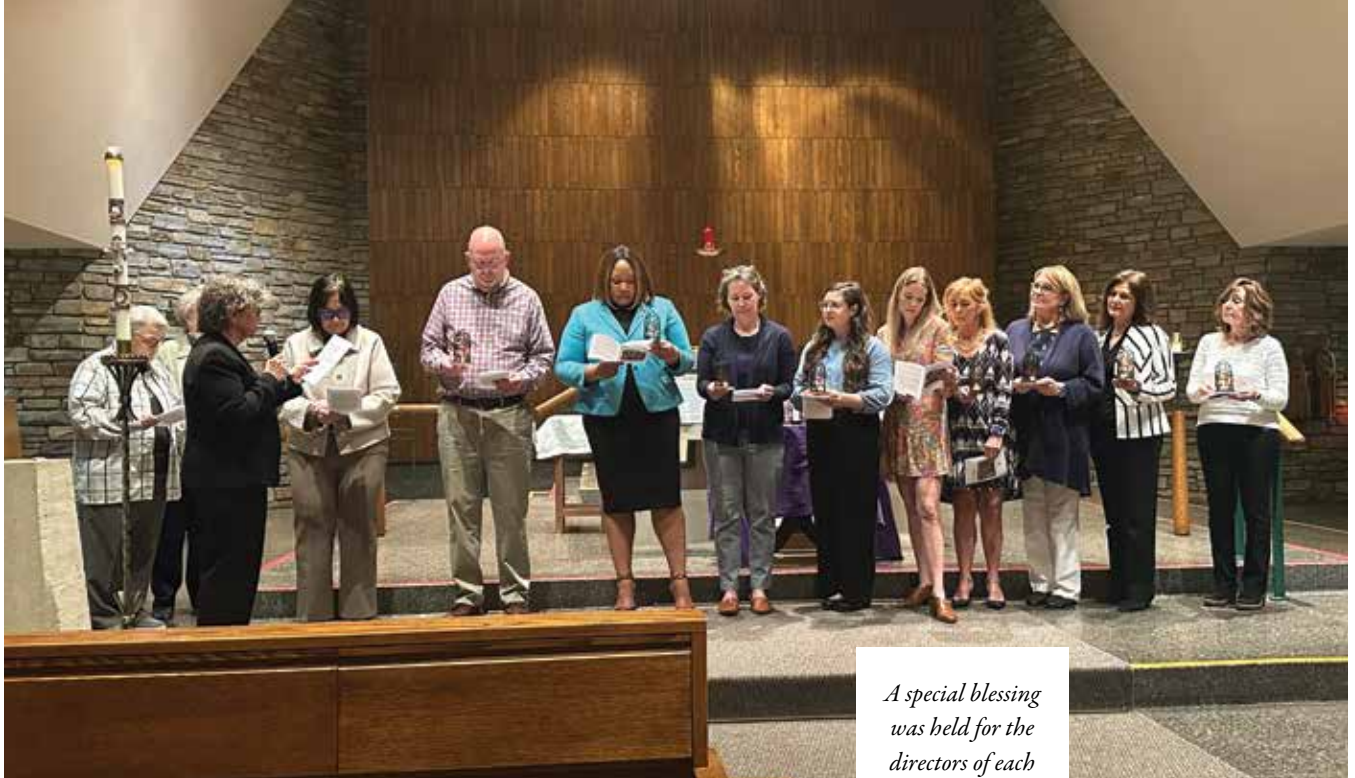
“The Sisters of Bon Secours have a long history of inviting laypeople to help us carry out our mission,” said Sister Elaine Davia, USA area

leader. “With Kathy as executive director, we take one more step in this direction and move forward confidently. Kathy’s deep understanding of our charism and history and her overflowing compassion will help us continue to bring good help to those in need.”

Kathy’s position carries significant responsibilities for shaping the future of the Sisters of Bon Secours and advancing our 200-year legacy. She is deeply connected to the Sisters and has more than 25 years of expertise in healthcare administration and operations, including service with Bon Secours Health System, as well as legal and public policy experience.



Sr. Elaine Davia, USA area leader, was honored for her leadership.



*A special blessing
was held for the
directors of each
ministry.*

“I have been blessed over the past 25 years to know many of the Sisters of Bon Secours in the USA,” said Kathy. “They have always inspired me to do more and encouraged me to take many leaps of faith. Each time, I have grown in my personal faith and my devotion to the Sisters of Bon Secours and what they mean to the countless lives they touch.”

For the past 12 years, Kathy has served as president of Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton, New York, where she has been responsible for growth, operations and business development, ensuring the consistent delivery of high-quality care. From 1999 to 2014, she held several leadership roles with Bon Secours Health System, including vice president of internal consulting, chief operating officer and vice president of Bon Secours Venice Hospital. She began her career as an associate attorney in Binghamton.

“I feel like I am coming home to a place I love,” she said. “The opportunity to take on this new role is the most

humbling and important of my life. My prayer each day is that the Holy Spirit will guide our hands and our work to reflect and carry on the charism that the Sisters of Bon Secours have exemplified since their founding.”

**“I FEEL LIKE
I AM COMING
HOME TO A
PLACE I LOVE.”**

During the ceremony, a blessing was held for the directors of each ministry who will now be reporting to Kathy, and there was a tribute to Sr. Elaine, honoring her leadership and contributions over the past six years. Shannon Curran, director of the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry, described Sr. Elaine’s leadership as “deeply rooted in compassion, attentive listening and a nurturing spirit that allowed longstanding traditions and new initiatives to flourish.” Sr. Elaine will continue serving as USA area leader, and she and the leadership team will collaborate with Kathy to discern which responsibilities will remain with the Sisters and which will become Kathy’s.



Kathy Connerton





ANSWERING THE CALL TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

Every person is uniquely formed for a sacred purpose. Where is God calling you? Are you truly listening? Responding to the call to religious life requires deep exploration of who you are and what you want to do with your life. Today, women have so many choices that the call to become a Sister might remain a whisper, especially if God is not recognized as the source of vocation or invited into the decision-making process. If you discern a path for your life that will be fulfilling and bring meaning, will you have the courage to say yes?

(continued on next page) >



Women are drawn to religious life by the deep desire to put God at the center of their lives, to belong to something greater than themselves and to share in a mission that brings change to the world. They hope to embody God's message of love so fully that others experience God's presence through their actions. Belonging to a religious order provides a supportive community and the spiritual encouragement to transform the pursuit of social justice into a sacred calling. Being a Sister is more than just carrying out charitable acts; it is about taking part in a collective effort to create lasting change as a reflection of God's love in the world.

The Sisters of Bon Secours have made many contributions to society, dedicating our lives to bringing God's healing, compassion and liberation to people in need, with particular care for the poor, sick and dying, as well as care for creation. Our lives are rich and fulfilling, shaped by our commitment to be good help. On the following pages, several Sisters share what it means to be a Sister of Bon Secours.

“BE WHO GOD MEANT
YOU TO BE, AND YOU
WILL SET THE WORLD
ON FIRE.”

— ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

DEAR FRIENDS,

Many young people have never had the opportunity to meet Sisters. That's why I am reaching out to ask for your ideas, suggestions and questions to help spread awareness about the Sisters of Bon Secours. We are a vibrant, international community of women seeking women of faith, courage and hope to carry forward our mission of healing, compassion and liberation. As St. Paul asks, “How can they hear unless someone preaches?” (Romans 10:14) We're not asking you to preach — just to share your thoughts on how you think we can connect with more people!

I would be truly grateful for any suggestions you may have to support our vocation efforts. No idea is too small! Thank you, and please know that you and your loved ones will remain in my prayers.

Sincerely,



SR. FRAN GORSUCH
Vocation Director
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

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SR. FRAN GORSUCH

“Religious life is life-giving. I’ve had the opportunity to grow spiritually and to develop very deep, caring friendships. Most importantly, I’ve had the opportunity to meet people from all over the world and be enriched by their lives and touched by those who are much less advantaged than I am — people who are in migration, people fleeing violence in their own countries, people who have lost family members. To be able to walk with them and be invited into their lives has so deeply touched my heart that I cannot begin to describe what that means, except to say that I feel my life has been the richest I ever could have imagined.”

SR. ELAINE DAVIA, USA AREA LEADER

“We often say that in a religious community, we can do more together than we can alone. We can take courageous and creative actions knowing we have the support of our community. Our collective voice is louder than one individual voice. Sisters often come together to discern issues, such as social justice concerns, and to consider our responses. Often, ideas emerge spontaneously just from spending time together. I suspect that’s how the first 12 Bon Secours nurses conceived the idea of becoming a religious community and caring for people in their homes. They were sitting around talking about the problems and needs they found in nursing the sick and their desire to improve things, and the idea of becoming a religious community that does things just a little differently came to birth.”





SR. NANCY GLYNN

"I cannot imagine living any other life. I have found happiness, adventure, friendship and deep fulfillment as a Sister of Bon Secours. There's freedom in being a Sister and being able to address issues that might be controversial. I have security. I am not going to offend my boss or lose my job.

I am especially motivated by the inequality in our world. A pivotal moment in my commitment to social justice occurred while I was volunteering at a soup kitchen in Richmond. I looked up and thought I saw my brother in the food line. It took me by surprise and stopped me in my tracks. I quickly realized he was not my brother but someone who closely resembled him. That man might

not have been my blood-related brother, but he was still my brother. I was so deeply affected that I asked to be transferred to West Baltimore, where I could dedicate myself to addressing systemic inequality.

One of my most treasured memories is when Sr. Rita Thomas asked me to become the director of the spiritual center (now known as the Bon Secours Retreat & Conference Center). It required taking a risk, which is not my favorite thing to do, but it was affirming because she saw something in me that I didn't know was there, and it helped me realize the importance of community. I could not have done it without my community's support."



SR. ANNE LUTZ

“Being a Sister has given me access and credibility to speak on behalf of those in need. I feel a deep commitment to use my voice wisely. Historically, the Sisters have a reputation for being on the right side of faith and justice, lending weight to their words and actions.

What drew me to the Sisters of Bon Secours was the Sisters themselves. I met them while in high school, working as a nursing assistant in a nursing home where they ministered. They motivated me by the way they engaged with the staff, not dictating what needed to be done, but rolling up their sleeves and working alongside us, showing us how to take care of the residents and teaching us how to be of service.

I always knew I wanted to be a nurse and never considered any other path, but the Sisters saw potential in me and encouraged me, particularly Sr. Rita Thomas,

to take on new roles. Through their guidance and support, I found strengths I didn’t know I had.

I am one of many, and I see life and ministry as a mosaic. If we’re all doing what we’re created to do, the mosaic can be beautiful. When I was a nursing home administrator, I did not personally provide care to all 300 residents. I worked alongside my staff, as the Sisters did with me in my high school days, to ensure everyone was functioning at their highest level and able to reach their potential. Some of my fondest memories are of working alongside people in a shared ministry.”



SR. MARY SHIMO

“Many young women are passionate about social justice, yet they don’t think about their spiritual life or consider religious life, even though social justice and religion are connected. For Sisters, the call to religious life goes hand-in-hand with social action, and as members of a congregation, we are more effective together. Sisters have many advantages and opportunities to become well educated about causes and respond responsibly. People want Sisters to speak out, and when we do, people listen.

Being a Sister means I am in service to the people and the Church. I am free of encumbrances such as family, children or a job outside of my ministry, and there’s a lot of freedom in that.

I have found being a Sister of Bon Secours very satisfying. As a nurse religious and later as a chaplain, I met people at their most vulnerable and was a trusted friend in their time of need. I have been at the bedside of many people in their dying, and it is a place of honor. For some, it’s scary, but for me, it is sacred, because when someone is passing over to the other side, God is very close. At other times, I have helped people dealing with a cancer diagnosis or the death of an infant during or right after delivery. I have brought prayer, honor and hope during a very difficult time and let people know they’re not alone and that God hears their prayers and to not give up.”





Sr. Pat Eck was invited to Mass at Santa Marta and met Pope Francis.

Sr. Pat Eck Celebrates 60th Jubilee

Sr. Pat Eck is widely recognized as a leader in Catholic healthcare. “From an early age, I knew I wanted to be a nurse, but I truly didn’t know what the impact of entering the Sisters of Bon Secours would have on my life and those I serve,” she says.

Early in her ministry, Sr. Pat visited Haiti with the Richmond diocese: “I saw poverty in a way I had never seen before.” It was the same when she visited Peru and South Africa. Those experiences profoundly influenced her worldview and call to service.

“Within a congregation, you receive the love and support needed to use your talents to do the challenging, important work that speaks to your heart,” says Sr. Pat. “I have traveled the world, met three Popes and journeyed with others to be in the struggle for a humane world as the *Justice in the World, No. 6, 1971 Synod of Bishops* calls us to do. Being a Sister has given me opportunities to make a difference I never dreamed possible.”

Caring for the sick and dying has been at the center of Sr. Pat’s vocation. She has served in nursing, management, governance and sponsorship roles within the Bon Secours Health System and has been a member of the Bon Secours Mercy Health board of directors since its formation in September 2018. She is a former member of the Mercy Housing board, the Catholic Medical Mission Board and the Resource Center for Religious Institutes board. She is also a past chairperson of the Catholic Health Association (CHA) of the United States Board of Trustees.

In 2007, Sr. Pat was honored with the Sister Mary Concilia Moran Award from CHA for her visionary leadership and commitment to Catholic healthcare. In 2011, she received the Papal award, the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, the Vatican’s highest honor for a member of a religious community.

From 2009 to 2019, Sr. Pat served as congregation leader, guiding the restructuring that shaped the congregation that exists today.



A native of Richmond, Virginia, Sr. Pat earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), a master’s degree in nursing from the Catholic University of America and a master’s degree in healthcare administration from VCU.

Sr. Alice Talone Celebrates 65th Jubilee

A beloved force in the West Baltimore community, Sr. Alice Talone is known for her commitment to the poor and dying. She has served as a nurse, chaplain, patient advocate and vice president of Mission at Bon Secours Hospital in Baltimore. She has also worked as a parish associate and parish nurse in several churches in West Baltimore.

“Being a Sister of Bon Secours has allowed me to devote my life to developing the gifts God has given me and share them freely and joyfully in ways that would not have been possible without the support of my congregation,” says Sr. Alice. “God has really touched me to be able to serve with the poor, and that is what brings me happiness and fulfillment: to go forth in God’s name and in the name of the Sisters of Bon Secours to help those in need and promote their health and well-being.”

Sr. Alice has served on the boards of Bon Secours Community Works and Sisters Academy of Baltimore as well as the Bon Secours Health System’s board of directors and its committees. She was president of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA, from 2004 to 2009, and has also served as vocation director.

“I’ve been blessed with many wonderful, treasured experiences in ministry,” Sr. Alice says. “In the 1960s, I was asked to visit a woman with ovarian cancer. She was quite sick, lived alone and was very reserved. She had difficulty letting me in, but after a while, we developed a beautiful relationship. One day, she told me, ‘God says he will never leave us alone, and he sent me you.’ Her words moved me deeply. It was God’s providence that brought me to her, and that has happened repeatedly in my life as a Sister. Being a Sister of Bon Secours is truly a gift from God.”

A native of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, Sr. Alice attended St. Colman’s grade school and Villa Maria Academy. She graduated from Bon Secours Nursing School in Baltimore and earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and a master’s degree in pastoral ministry from Trinity Washington University in Washington, D.C.



Celebrating the Journey

With great joy, we celebrated Sr. Ji Kyung Choi in the United States as she renewed her vows. In Peru, we rejoiced as Sr. Carmen Mejía Gutiérrez professed her final vows and Sr. Asly Jiménez López professed her first vows. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide each of them as they embark on this new chapter in their journeys as Sisters of Bon Secours.

Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski traveled to Peru to witness the beautiful vow ceremonies of Sr. Carmen and Sr. Asly. She reflected, “The ceremony was a solemn and very meaningful liturgical celebration. The church was filled with family, friends, parishioners, co-workers from the Catholic Medical Mission Board and Caritas, and Sisters, all of whom contributed greatly to the festivities.” The celebration continued in the parish hall following the Mass, with Champagne, food, dancing, a live band and countless photographs memorializing the joyous occasion.

“WE JOIN IN PRAYER TOGETHER FOR SR. JI, SR. CARMEN AND SR. ASLY IN GRATITUDE FOR THEIR COMMITMENT. IT IS A GIFT TO US AND TO THE CHURCH, A SIGN OF NEW LIFE AND HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE.”

— SR. ROSE MARIE JASINSKI
CONGREGATION LEADER





▲ Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski (c.) attended the vow ceremonies for Sr. Asly Jiménez Lopéz (l.) and Sr. Carmen Mejía Gutiérrez (r.) in Peru.

◄ Sr. Ji Kyung Choi renewed her vows in the United States.

Sisters Against the Death Penalty

by JENIFER KIRIN
Special Collections Archivist

“GIVE YOURSELF TO THE
SERVICE OF LIFE.”

— ST. JOHN PAUL II



The Sisters of Bon Secours oppose the death penalty, a stance rooted in the Gospel that has guided them since their founding — a message of forgiveness, repentance and choosing life over death. The Sisters have faith that systems of detention will protect society from those convicted of serious crimes, and they cannot support a response that ends a person’s life, as it denies that individual’s dignity and closes off their opportunity for redemption. In accordance with this position, the Sisters have issued policies calling for the abolition of the death penalty and have taken actions to support its elimination.

In August of 1988, the Sisters issued the following corporate statement: “We are strongly opposed to the death penalty because of our moral and ethical beliefs, and we pledge to work toward its elimination in the United States.” The Sisters’ stance was fortified by Pope Francis’ 2018 revision of number 2267 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the death penalty to state, “The death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person and she [the Church] works with determination for its abolition worldwide.”



The Sisters have taken action to end the death penalty in board rooms, through ministry grants and in writing emails on behalf of death row inmates asking for stays of execution. Sr. Alice Talone served as a board member for the Baltimore-based P. Francis Murphy Initiative for Justice and Peace (2006-2022), an organization opposed to the death penalty, which worked within the Biblical imperative for social change, having a mission of fostering peace through justice.¹ From 2017-2019, the Sisters' ministry grants provided funds to Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, an organization that educated Virginians about capital punishment and worked toward its elimination. In 2021, that goal was realized when Gov. Ralph Northam signed legislation ending the death penalty, making Virginia the 23rd state to abolish it.²

Today, the Sisters of Bon Secours actively support the Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN), an organization committed to ending the death penalty, advancing justice and bringing about healing. Many Sisters participate in CMN's email alerts, which provide the condemned person's name, personal story and case details, along with the contact information for a decision-maker (such as a court officer, state governor or the president) who has the authority to stay their execution. The Sister then writes to the decision-maker, urging them to grant a stay of execution.

¹ *Focus*, Fall 2017, pg. 13

² *Virginia Governor Signs Death Penalty Repeal*, ETWN, March 24, 2021, www.ewtnnews.com/world/us/virginia-governor-signs-death-penalty-repeal

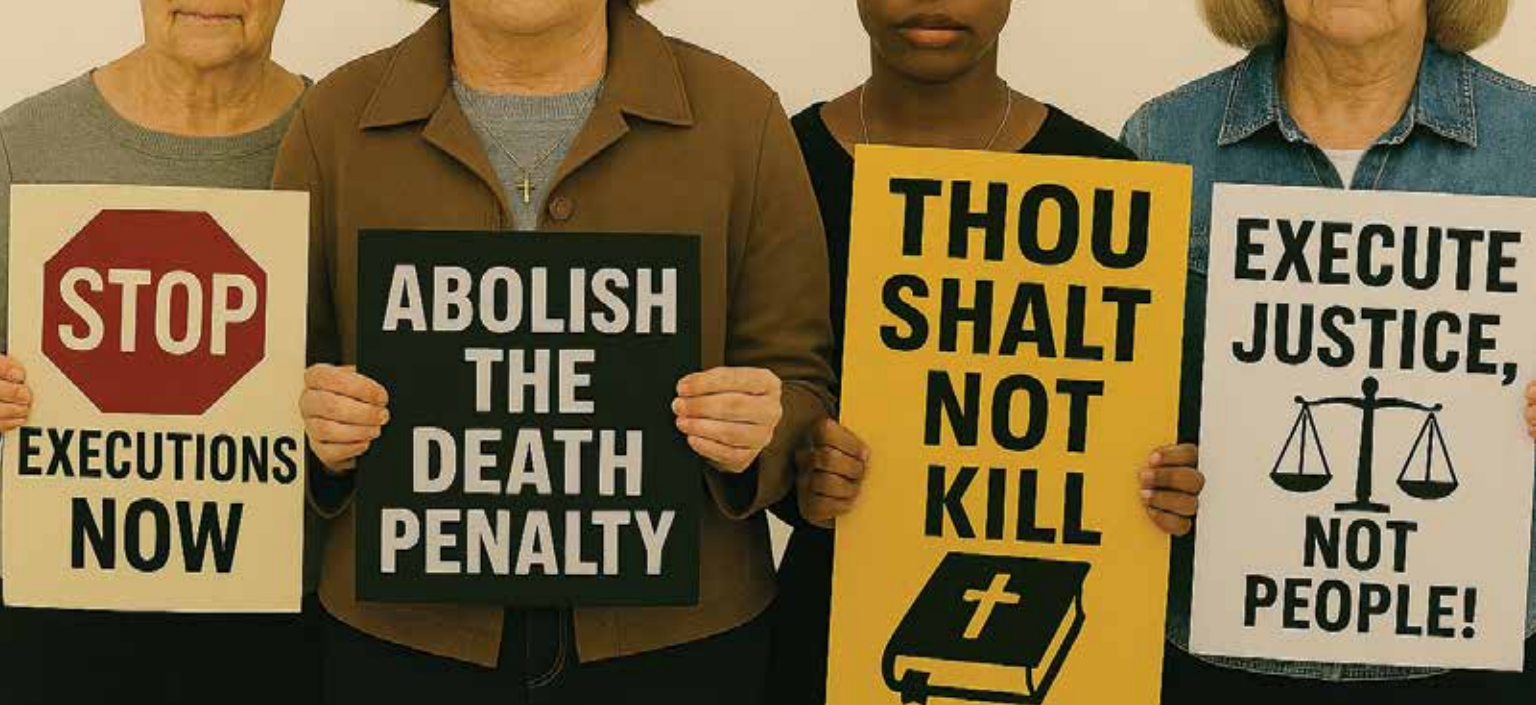
Ending the Death Penalty



Our Catholic faith upholds the sacredness of all life, regardless of the harm someone has experienced or caused. The death penalty contradicts this divine vision of justice.

“The Catholic Church’s pro-life stance extends to all people, not just the innocent,” says Sr. Eileen Reilly, SSND (pictured left), religious engagement associate for the Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN). “The death penalty disregards the inherent dignity of the human person. We advocate for the end of the death penalty and the pursuit of a justice that upholds the sanctity of life.”

The death penalty perpetuates racism and a cycle of violence, targeting vulnerable populations and risking innocent lives. It disproportionately affects people of color, people living in poverty and people with severe mental



illness and intellectual disabilities.

Sr. Eileen notes that Black people are more frequently given death sentences in cases involving white victims.

Sr. Eileen also points out, “The death penalty is not an effective crime deterrent. In fact, the murder rates are higher in states with the death penalty compared to those without it.”

The Sisters participate in CMN’s semiannual fundraisers and have been involved in First Friday vigils, monthly events dedicated to praying for those scheduled for execution.

“The Sisters of Bon Secours have been wonderful allies in this movement,” says Sr. Eileen. “They not only provide financial support to CMN, but they actively disseminate execution alerts amplifying the reach of CMN’s advocacy.”

Another part of CMN’s mission is restorative justice, which seeks to foster understanding and healing between victims and offenders. Sr. Eileen explains, “One of the myths is that executions bring about closure for the families of the victims, but over and over, we hear that isn’t true.” She emphasizes that true closure for victims’ families often comes from dialogue and restitution rather than execution.

She continues, “The death penalty reduces a person to their worst action, denying the possibility for growth, redemption or forgiveness. No one wants to be defined by their worst act. Hurt people hurt people, continuing the cycle of violence and trauma. We have found there is a possibility of healing and reconciliation over time, even in the most severe cases.”

Join the Sisters in advocating against the death penalty whenever an execution is scheduled in the United States. Sign up for CMN’s execution alert emails and receive a notification along with prewritten letters addressed to relevant authorities, such as governors and boards of pardon and parole, which you can personalize to advocate for clemency.

Sign up here:
bit.ly/Advocate4Mercy



(continued on next page) >

BY THE NUMBERS

23

non-death
penalty states

27

death penalty
states

47

executions in
2025 across

11 states

4

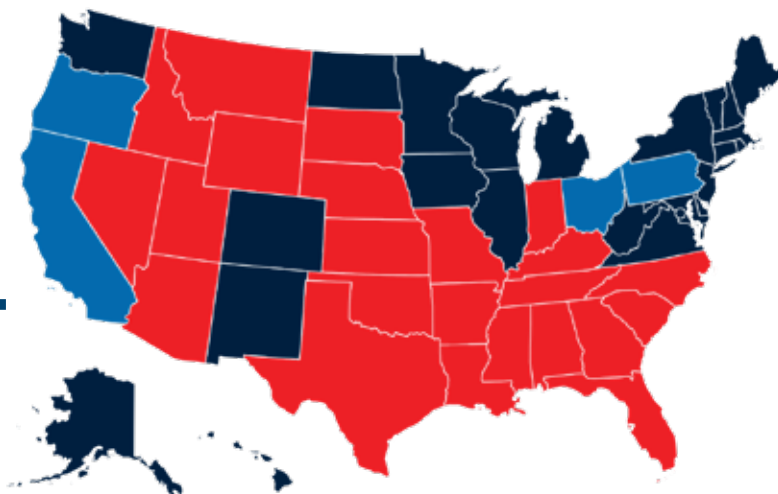
of which have
paused
executions
by executive
action

1,654

individuals executed

and 202

individuals exonerated
since the 1970s



- State has abolished the death penalty
- State has paused executions by executive action
- State actively has the death penalty

Map created by Catholic Mobilizing Network, available at catholicsmobilizing.org.

“I LIKEWISE OFFER MY SUPPORT TO THOSE WHO ADVOCATE FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND AROUND THE WORLD. I PRAY THAT YOUR EFFORTS WILL LEAD TO A GREATER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON, AND WILL INSPIRE OTHERS TO WORK FOR THE SAME JUST CAUSE. WITH THESE SENTIMENTS, I CORDIALLY INVOKE UPON ALL OF YOU THE DIVINE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM, JOY AND PEACE.”

— POPE LEO XIV, 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN ILLINOIS, APRIL 24, 2026



SR. ELAINE DAVIA, USA AREA LEADER

"In 1988, the Sisters of Bon Secours publicly took a corporate stand against the death penalty. Initially, some Sisters were opposed to making the death penalty obsolete, but after learning more and talking about it together, we had more than sufficient votes to take a corporate stance against the death penalty. Living mercifully means extending it to all people, including those on death row."



SR. NANCY GLYNN

"My experiences as a resident of West Baltimore have given me a deep understanding of the structural barriers marginalized communities face and the pervasive impact of gun violence. Despite these challenges, I am inspired by my neighbors' kindness and resilience. My views on the death penalty go back to the Ten Commandments. 'Thou shalt not kill.' It's the very basis for our morality. We do not have the right to take another life — not to mention how often convictions are overturned after many years. The work of Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ, first made me aware of how unjust, immoral and uncivilized the death penalty is. I am very grateful for the opportunity to advocate for someone on death row when I receive CMN alerts."

SR. MARY SHIMO

"The death penalty is a societal evil that perpetuates violence and denies opportunities for repentance and forgiveness. I agree with the Church in respect for, and the dignity of, every human being and the opportunity for repentance and forgiveness. Some people really can do that. I work with reentry and recidivism programs in Baltimore and strongly believe that if we had greater education, exposure to conflict management and more nonviolent outlets, our society would be in a much better place. I am thankful so many states have put a stop to the death penalty, but there is still so much more work to be done."



SR. ANNE LUTZ

"Life is a sacred gift we're called to protect. As the child of a police officer, I was raised to respect the law and be responsible for my actions. As a result, I supported the death penalty, but with life experience, I have come full circle, and now I am a committed advocate for its abolition. Working with reentry and recidivism programs in Baltimore, I have seen how second chances transform lives. Many incarcerated people committed crimes at a young age and spend the greater part of their lives in the prison system without guidance or resources. While I do not justify their crimes, I do believe in the power of forgiveness. If God forgives me, wouldn't God forgive them too?"



A small, light-colored dog, possibly a Shih Tzu or similar breed, is sitting on a white surface. The dog is wearing a blue bandana with a black pattern around its neck. A person's hand is visible, resting on the dog's back. In the background, there is a white surface and some papers or a calendar.

- ▶ Mickey brings Shumi, a trained therapy dog, to visit patients at local hospitals.
- ▶ A young participant in the early literacy program for at-risk mothers where Mickey volunteers. She delivers books, toys and parenting training directly to their homes.



*Mickey models
reading techniques
to help families
build early
literacy skills.*



Mickey Reed was seeking a community of women dedicated to making a difference in the world when she discovered the Sisters of Bon Secours. In the early '80s, she explored a vocation with them but ultimately felt called to remain in secular life. However, her deep connection to the Sisters' spirituality and values never wavered. She shares, "I reached a point in my life where I asked, 'What's my purpose?' and decided, 'Let me see where my gifts might connect with the ministries of the Sisters of Bon Secours.'"

Some of the Sisters had remained in touch with her. Sr. Alice Talone invited her to attend Joyce Rupp's Boundless Passion retreat at the Bon Secours Retreat & Conference Center. She did, and that sparked her interest in becoming an Associate. However, Mickey lived in Connecticut, and there were no nearby Associate communities. Instead, Mickey became a facilitator for the Boundless Passion program and began leading a variety of retreats for the Sisters including Women's Wellness, Soul Collage® and Living the Legacy of Bon Secours: Service as a Spiritual Practice. (Visit BonSecoursRCC.org to learn more.)

In 2019, Mickey retired from her career as an occupational therapist and moved to North Carolina. With the freedom to travel, she began discerning as an Associate with the Maryland community. The Associates' move online in response to COVID-19 opened even more possibilities for connection and participation.

Inspired by the spirit of the Sisters, Mickey has embraced service as a way of living. "Healing often begins with ordinary things. I serve very simply — showing up where people are lonely, anxious or starting over — bringing presence, a meal, a song, sharing a book or a conversation," she explains. "Much of what I do is motivated by a desire for justice and equity for those who are marginalized — people with dementia, families in rural areas and men in a reentry home." She organizes efforts in her neighborhood to help immigrant workers identify which homes would serve as havens in an emergency. She has trained her dogs as therapy animals, and they visit hospitals, senior centers and colleges.

Mickey believes the Sisters' charisms have the power to touch everyone and everything. She says, "When you align the gifts you have with the Sisters' charisms, the good help will flow."

**If you would like to learn more about the
Bon Secours Associates, call 410-442-3313 or
email: associatesbonsecours@bonsecoursusa.org.**

Strengthening Young Adult Ministry

The leadership of the Bon Secours Young Adults (BSYA) ministry participated in two transformative conferences this spring. “These conferences provide a valuable space to connect with our peers and return rejuvenated and inspired to accompany young people in their faith journeys,” says International Director of BSYA Nick Stein.

The **NFCYM Exchange**, hosted by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, took place in Louisville, Kentucky, and brought together ministry leaders from across the United States. The conference explored the “art of accompaniment,” offering opportunities for learning and collaboration, with workshops and conversations focused on supporting young people in their faith and fostering vibrant, connected ministry communities.

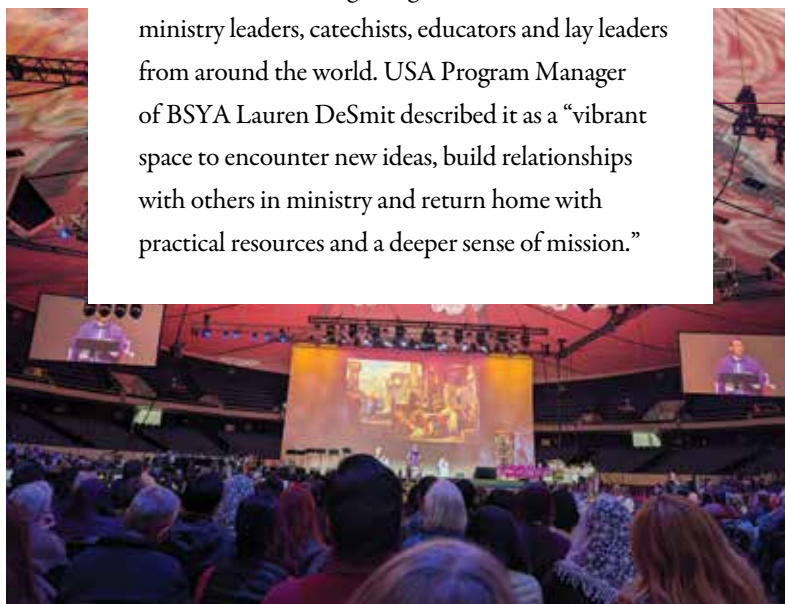


▲ *NFCYM Exchange: (l. to r.) USA Program Manager of BSYA Lauren DeSmit with Vicky Hathaway and Cassie Schutzer.*

► *LA Congress: (l. to r.) Erick DeGuzman and Madeline Brydges with International Director of BSYA Nick Stein.*



The **Los Angeles Religious Education Congress** kicked off with a surprise message from Pope Leo XIV encouraging attendees to open their hearts to God’s love. The congress took place in Anaheim, California, and brought together thousands of ministry leaders, catechists, educators and lay leaders from around the world. USA Program Manager of BSYA Lauren DeSmit described it as a “vibrant space to encounter new ideas, build relationships with others in ministry and return home with practical resources and a deeper sense of mission.”



BSVM: An Avenue for Young People to Practice God's Justice

by SHANNON CURRAN

Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry Director, Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

You can hear the Spirit at work in the life of Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry (BSVM) — in the organic flow of formation deepening and evolving, in the intentional and thoughtful work of making consistent, mission-centered decisions and in the work of remaining committed and tending to how BSVM has been called to become an avenue for young people to grow in “becoming God’s justice” (2 Cor 5:21) so they can more fully become known by God (1 Cor 8:3).

In their Common Vision, in 2008, the Sisters of Bon Secours wrote:

“As prophetic women totally committed to do justice in radical solidarity with the poor, the suffering and those most in need, we proclaim the Gospel where it is not. Our witness to God’s presence is marked by a passionate spirit and enthusiasm for the Kingdom.”

Inspired by this vision, BSVM added a fifth core pillar, “practice God’s justice,” to uphold our mission of

“transformation through service with others.” Decades of experience have taught us that practicing God’s justice is quite distinct from how our society perceives justice; even, and especially, what is often referred to as social justice.

Being precise about naming the type of justice at the heart of our ministry helped shift our focus to the building of right relationship that God’s justice requires. Since introducing this pillar, much of the volunteers’ experience has involved uncovering symptoms of structural injustice and reflecting on how these symptoms point us to restoring relationships and the lifestyle changes inherent in this restoration, within our one human family and with creation. Building relationships “right” helps us to reflect God’s justice and resist unjust social structures.

Building right relationship is the heart of BSVM’s mission at work. Shaped by this formation, our BSVM alumni continue to center their lives in the restorative relationship work of practicing God’s justice.

MEET OUR 2025-2026 VOLUNTEERS



MAKAYLA JARMÓN

Xavier University of Louisiana

Hometown: Los Angeles, California

Placement: Richmond Community Hospital, Spiritual Health



VIR TRIVEDI

Loyola University Chicago

Hometown: Libertyville, Illinois

Placement: Richmond Community Hospital, Emergency Department



BENNETT SNYDER

William & Mary

Hometown: Roanoke, Virginia

Placement: Cristo Rey Richmond High School, Corporate Work Study

RETREAT HIGHLIGHT:

Exploring African American Mystics



The Rev. Deacon Joan Crawford returns to the Bon Secours Retreat & Conference Center to lead a retreat exploring the spiritual wisdom of Sr. Thea Bowman, Pauli Murray and Howard Thurman. “This retreat delves into the lived experiences of these extraordinary African American faith leaders, focusing on their legacies of faith, justice and contemplation,” Joan says. “African American spirituality is shaped by profound challenges of racial injustice alongside the deep assurance of knowing that you are a cherished child of God.” The program features opportunities for reflection, journaling, music, poetry and prayer and concludes with a special Juneteenth reflection.

“The common thread among these three faith leaders is that each was somewhat outside the sphere of what was accepted

as Christianity during their day,” says Joan. She points out that Christ challenged the status quo in his day, and the Sisters of Bon Secours have also defied convention. “They felt God calling them, and they marched forward, even though they were sort of out of water.”

**African American Mystics:
Bowman, Murray, Thurman
Guided by Rev. Joan Crawford
Three-Night Retreat
June 16 to June 19**

Commuter Options Available

**Learn more and register:
bit.ly/MysticsRetreat**



A self-described “African American-Catholic-Quaker,” Joan prefers to be called by her first name. Her faith and spirituality are rooted in the Black Church and formed by an ecumenical journey. She has always leaned toward a less traditional spiritual path. “As a young child, I began attending Mass with my Irish Catholic neighbors. (We were the first Black family on the block.) Mass was

so different from my parents’ African Methodist Episcopal (AME) service. Even as a child, the contemplative approach of Catholicism appealed to me, and my parents allowed me to continue going to Mass, believing it was more important that I went to church than which church I attended,” recalls Joan.

“I wondered well into adulthood if there were other African American people who were drawn to contemplative spirituality. When a friend introduced me to Howard Thurman, I immediately connected not only to his contemplative writings but also to his ecumenical approach to faith and religion.

“I hope this retreat encourages people to really pay attention to the Spirit and what they are being called to do. It’s important to know that it’s okay to be a fish out of water. As we say in the Black Church, ‘It’s gonna to be all right. God is always with you.’”

Joan is an African American spiritual director, deacon and Benedictine Oblate whose ministry bridges Christian traditions and communities. She leads retreats and workshops on African American spirituality and racial healing, grounded in her conviction that the divine presence lives in every person.

Upcoming Retreats 2026

Falling Upward, Living Whole, Discovering True Self

Guided by Arianne Rice

Day Retreat: Saturday, June 27

Silent Directed Retreats – Two Summer Options

Guided by Various Spiritual Directors

Six-Night Retreat: July 12-18; August 9-15

May Stillness Be Your Companion

Guided by Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil

Weekend Retreat: July 17-19

Creator and the Cosmos Retreat

Guided by Donna Bilek

Day Retreat: Thursday, July 23

Ignatian Silent Directed Retreat

Guided by Various Spiritual Directors

Eight-Day Retreat: July 25-August 1

Hidden Treasure Retreat for Couples

Guided by Robert and Lori Fontana

Weekend Retreat: August 7-9

Growing Old for Heaven's Sake

Guided by Sr. Sara Dwyer

Day Retreat: August 27

Kaleidoscope of Holiness: Seeking Authentic Spirituality

Guided by Sr. Sara Dwyer

Six-Night Retreat: August 28-September 3

Beautiful & Broken: Seeing Ourselves Through God's Eyes

Guided by Mary DeTurris Poust

Weekend Retreat: October 2-4

Healthcare Workers Retreat

Guided by Dr. Pat Fosarelli

Day Retreat: Friday, October 16



KENYA: A GLOBAL LENS ON COMPASSIONATE CARE



by SR. PATRICIA DOWLING
*Congregation Vocation Director,
Sisters of Bon Secours of Paris*

Jambo — *hello!*

In the heart of East Africa lies Kenya, a land of breathtaking landscapes, vibrant culture and extraordinary hospitality.

Karibu sana — *you are most welcome.*

We felt that warmth the moment our group from Bon Secours Memorial College of Nursing stepped off the plane. Our study abroad cohort — eight nursing students, three faculty members and one grateful companion — traveled to Kenya to explore public health through a global lens while



◀ *On safari at the Maasai Mara National Reserve, home to the Maasai people. The men wearing red are warriors from a local tribe.*

▶ *The nursing students gave candy to the children they met at each stop.*



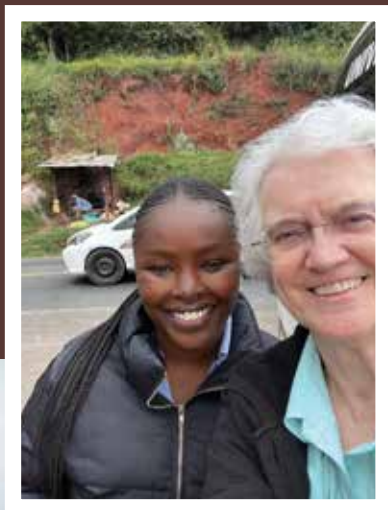
honoring local traditions and meaningful service. Over 14 days, we journaled our impressions, questions and insights, reflecting on how culture and healthcare intersect.

We quickly became a close-knit community, bonded by shared awe, purpose and laughter. After an overnight stay in Nairobi, we traveled to Eldoret in the Great Rift Valley, where our learning truly began. Guided by Sally, a Moi University nursing professor, we experienced healthcare across settings — from a rural health center in Chepkorio

to Uasin Gishu County Referral Hospital and the 1,100-bed Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Kenya's second-largest hospital. Serving more than 25 million people, it is home to Shoe4Africa Children's Hospital — the only public pediatric hospital in Eastern Africa — and AMPATH, Africa's largest HIV/AIDS treatment center. These institutions reflect the power of global collaboration and community commitment.

(continued on next page) >

Sr. Pat Dowling with a woman who sold hand-carved scenes from volcanic rock.



On safari at the Maasai Mara National Reserve with guide David Ole Kipees (l.).

We also witnessed public health beyond hospital walls: at a tea factory and at the Chepkorio Water Treatment Plant, where lack of funding for parts rendered the system nonfunctional — a powerful reminder that infrastructure is inseparable from health.

Later, we traveled to the Maasai Mara, where we were immersed in the seminomadic Maasai culture. We learned about traditional healing practices, entered homes built by women from natural materials and experienced the community's resilience and deep connection to the land. On safari, we witnessed the wonder of the Great Migration and encountered wildlife in its untamed habitat.

We returned home carrying more than memories. We carried stories, friendships and a renewed understanding of compassionate, culturally responsive care — living expressions of the Bon Secours charism of healing and liberation. Kenya changed us, and its spirit continues to shape how we serve, lead and connect with others.

With gratitude to Drs. Amy Feurer and Kip Bingat, Ms. Theresa Crane and students Aleia, Charley, Marian, Reagan, Chante, Kerrie, Cece and Marzi for living this shared call together.

Living Our Mission



*Carol Jessee (l.)
with her daughter
Meaghan Hess (r.),
who also works for the
Sisters of Bon Secours.*

Carol Jessee is an executive assistant, supporting both Executive Director Kathy Connerton and USA Area Leader Sr. Elaine Davia. During her 16 years with the Sisters of Bon Secours, she has become known for her welcoming presence and attention to detail. She readily accepts extra responsibilities and takes the lead in planning special events. Her previous experience in the Mission Department of the Bon Secours Health System continues to shape her dedication to ministry and service.

“The Sisters have taught me so much, and I am still growing in my faith.

Working with the Sisters makes me a better version of myself. We are all God’s children, and unity is at the top of my mind these days. As my former boss Thomas Butler, director of Mission Services for Bon Secours Health System, always said, ‘You don’t know what people are carrying in their heart. Always try to forgive them when they act out.’

“One of my spiritual testimonies is my job with the Sisters and the Bon Secours Health System. I had prayed diligently, asking for guidance, and then I was offered this job. Bon Secours was God’s plan for me. After being hired, I was diagnosed with

breast cancer. God knew exactly where He wanted me to be. During that time, I was loved and supported by the Sisters and my colleagues, who exemplified the true meaning of being good help to those in need.

“I am beyond blessed to work for the Sisters and grateful for my co-workers. They are true family — always uplifting and helping me in the dark times of life as well as the ones up on the mountain. It is a pure joy to come to work and know the day ahead will be wonderful.”



BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH'S GLOBAL REACH:

GROWING TO SERVE MORE,
ONE BEDSIDE AT A TIME

The Sisters of Bon Secours in Ireland attended the blessing ceremony for the new Bon Secours Hospital Limerick.



Bon Secours Mercy Health (BSMH) continues to expand across countries, viewing growth as a way to extend compassionate, dignified care to more people and communities around the world. At its core, our global work reflects a long-standing conviction that every individual, regardless of geography, deserves respect, accompaniment and healing during moments of need.

This belief originates with the Sisters of Bon Secours, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, who historically entered war zones, impoverished neighborhoods and remote rural regions to provide care



◀ *Bishop Brendan Leahy (standing) led the blessing of the new hospital.*

▶ *The Sisters of Bon Secours visited the chapel of the new hospital.*

*Photo credit pages 34-35:
Brian Arthur*

where suffering was most acute. Their willingness to cross geographic and social boundaries established a model for global outreach long before a modern health system existed. This legacy affirms a foundational principle of the ministry: location should never determine access to essential healthcare.

Ireland offers a contemporary example of this enduring commitment. In Limerick, families who once traveled long distances for specialized services can now access care closer to home through Bon Secours Hospital Limerick, a new, modern acute care hospital designed to meet community needs. Representing a \$250-million investment, the hospital is the first new private acute hospital to be built in Ireland in almost two decades and marks an important milestone for healthcare in the region. The hospital adds 99 beds, advanced cardiac and neurodiagnostic capabilities and expanded surgical capacity. Shorter wait times and care delivered nearer to home contribute to a more stable healing environment, echoing the Sisters' early ministries of meeting people where they lived and building care structures grounded in human dignity.

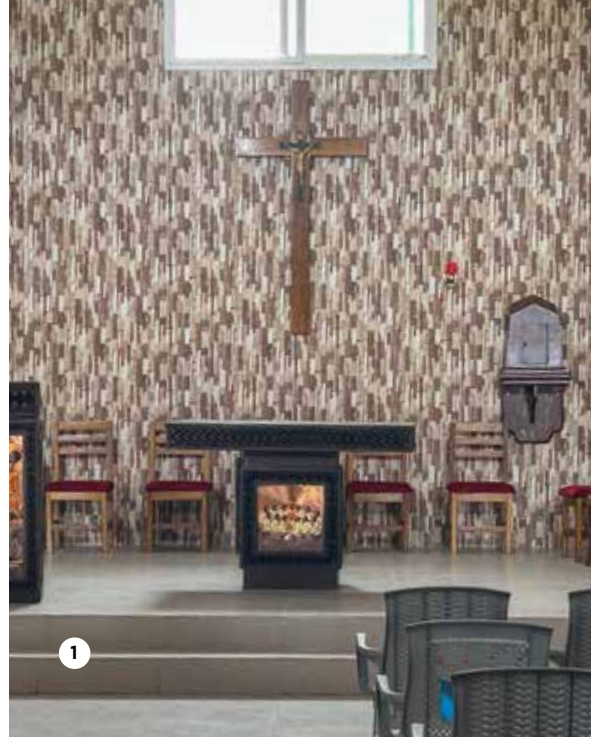
BSMH's Global Ministries further advance this mission by focusing on improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations in Peru, Haiti, South Sudan and the Philippines, particularly mothers and children. Through partnerships with trusted local organizations, Global Ministries supports

training, infrastructure development and health education initiatives that strengthen communities over time. Efforts related to water, sanitation and hygiene reduce preventable illness, while emergency-preparedness initiatives support continuity of care during crises. This work reinforces the system's commitment to barrier-free care by helping patients access lifesaving treatment and safely return to their families.

Together, these efforts reflect a consistent guiding principle: mission first, patient first and dignity first. Bon Secours Mercy Health's global strategy is not solely about expansion; it is about extending a healing ministry rooted in the Gospel and carried forward by generations of women devoted to compassionate service, ensuring high-quality, dignified care reaches people and communities most in need, wherever they may be.



Around the Congregation



NEW HOME IN THE DRC

Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski, Congregation leader, and Sr. Elaine Davia, USA area leader, celebrated the opening of a new home and chapel built by the Sisters for the Sisters of Bon Secours community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Bishop Eduardo led the liturgy, and more than 120 guests rejoiced with the Sisters.

(l. to r.) Sr. Elvia Rose Valle Muñoz, USA Area Leader Sr. Elaine Davia, Bishop Eduardo and Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski.



1 The new Bon Secours chapel in the DRC.

2 Sisters and staff in Marriottsville were delighted to find a horse calmly strolling the grounds. **Jean Barnum**, guest services coordinator for the Bon Secours Retreat & Conference Center, was among the many people who stopped to pet the horse and kept her company until she was reunited with her owner.

3 **Simone Blanchard**, Bon Secours director of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), joined JPIC promoters from across the globe for the International Union of Superiors General JPIC workshop, “Building a Global Family for Systemic Transformation Towards Just and Lasting Peace” in Rome. More than 400 participants joined online, including members of the Bon Secours JPIC International Committee.

4 The Sisters held a volunteer appreciation luncheon and ceremony to thank the sacristans who serve at the chapel in Marriottsville. Fr. James Day, O.S.S.T., led the presentation, “Holy Hearts Inspiring Holy Hands to Touch Holy Things.” Pictured are sacristans (l. to r.) Sr. Mary Shimo, Pat Kraemer, Sr. Bernadette Claps, Kathleen Pence, Sr. Elaine Davia, Darlene Imbach, Tara Mulder, Sr. Ji Kyung

Choi, Carol Stromberg and Tom Billings; Fr. James Day, O.S.S.T. (fourth from right); and Liesel Rupprecht, program coordinator for the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry (back center).

5 **Sr. Fran Gorsuch** (l.) welcomed **Claire Kimilu** (r.), a 2017-2018 alum of the Bon Secours Volunteer Ministry, who made a special visit to Marriottsville to say hello to the Sisters and the Bon Secours family. Claire currently lives in Rwanda, where she works as a consultant for the World Health Organization’s Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative.



1



2



4



3

Thank You for Your Dedication

LOVING CREATOR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR THE
MANY GIFTS OUR STAFF
AND VOLUNTEERS BRING
TO OUR MINISTRY.
MAY YOUR BLESSING BE
UPON EACH OF THEM
AND THOSE THEY LOVE.
MAY ALL KNOW YOUR
GREAT LOVE AND
CARE FOR THEM.
THIS WE PRAY, AMEN.

As part of Founders' Day, the Sisters host an annual celebration to honor and thank the employees in Marriottsville for their dedication to the Bon Secours mission. We extend heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to the following employees for reaching service milestones:

25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Patricia Bailey

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Negisti Abreha
Robin Gundersen
Della McIntyre
Patricia Sullivan

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Carol Jessee
Crystal Kunkel

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Mike Dunn
Hamrat Henock
Sherry Vieweg

5 YEARS OF SERVICE

Sheila Kiani
Tracey Wilson

- 1 Della McIntyre (c.) with supervisor Alvin Rich (l.) and Sr. Elaine Davia (r.)
- 2 Patricia Bailey (c.) with supervisor Sherry Vieweg (l.) and Sr. Elaine Davia (r.)
- 3 Robin Gundersen (r.) with Sr. Elaine Davia (l.) and Congregation Leader Sr. Rose Marie Jasinski (c.)
- 4 Negisti Abreha

\$87,500 IN MINISTRY GRANTS AWARDED

JASMINE ROAD — \$15,000

Jasmine Road transforms the lives of women in South Carolina who have survived sex trafficking, prostitution and addiction. Many survivors say it is impossible to do this on their own. This grant will fund case management support for survivors, giving them much-needed resources to reclaim their lives and achieve independence. Offering a two-year, comprehensive, housing-first model, Jasmine Road provides safe housing, an individualized care plan, meaningful employment and a lifelong community of support.

SISTER VISITOR CENTER — \$15,000

The Sister Visitor Center (SVC), a program of Catholic Charities in Louisville, Kentucky, supports underprivileged families in West Louisville through its Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA) program. SVC combats homelessness by providing targeted financial aid for rent and utility bills and works directly with utility providers, landlords and property management companies to help people remain in their homes. This grant will supplement SVC's existing resources with 100% of the funds going directly to the EFA program.

UNLOCKING COMMUNITIES — \$15,000

Unlocking Communities equips individuals in underserved, climate-vulnerable regions with tools to build local supply chains for climate adaptation products. It offers a training program to aspiring eco-entrepreneurs in rural Haitian communities, empowering them to sell affordable clean cookstoves, water filters and other tools that help rural households preserve natural resources, reduce carbon emissions and improve community health outcomes related to respiratory and waterborne illness. This grant will fund expansion into two new communities in Haiti.

UNITY PROPERTIES INC. — \$15,000

Unity Properties Inc., a program of Bon Secours Community Works, has developed 800 award-winning, nationally recognized, affordable housing units in nine locations in West Baltimore. These units house 635 seniors as well as people with disabilities, families and the formerly homeless. On-site service coordinators serve as a vital link for residents, assisting in locating and acquiring services and supports with local service agencies and advising on eligibility and application procedures. This grant will help fund service coordinator salaries.

MERCY HIGH SCHOOL — \$15,000

Mercy High School is a Catholic college preparatory school in Baltimore City, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy High School is celebrating its 65th birthday this year and has a goal to raise \$50,000 at a special anniversary gala. The funds from this grant will be used to hold a 1:1 challenge grant to raise tuition assistance monies for Mercy families to help cover tuition expenses for spring 2026.

MARY'S PENCE ESPERA PROGRAM — \$12,500

The Mary's Pence ESPERA program partners with 19 women's organizations in five countries to support women in their pursuit of economic independence. More than 700 women are involved in the program. In communities where women face economic and social barriers, having control over resources for their economic well-being creates opportunities for positive change. As these women develop leadership skills, their collective influence increases, shifting how their communities view and treat women. This grant will provide funds for leadership training in Honduras and Nicaragua.

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a publication of the Sisters of Bon Secours, USA

 Sisters of
Bon Secours, USA

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