



Sisters of  
the Holy  
Spirit and  
Mary  
Immaculate

# Sisters' Journey

Winter 2011-2012

## When God Says "Yes," It's Hard to Say "No!"

My vocation journey started in Zambia, when I was in fourth grade. My mother worked in Santa Maria Hospital with Holy Cross Sisters and I had an opportunity to meet them. One of the Sisters, who worked in the hospital was very kind to me, and I became fond of her. I always admired her veil, so she gave me a small white veil, which I would wear from time to time at home, pretending I was a Sister.

When in sixth grade, I moved to live with my sister, Angela. Far away from home, the desire to become a Sister faded. However, I loved being of help to peers, family and school. My family and neighbors marveled at my generosity and willingness to be of help to others.

In eighth grade I returned home to mom, and the desire to become a Sister was rekindled. One evening, while attending Mass at my parish Church I saw a brochure for the Sisters of the Holy Spirit on the notice board. I read it and I

remember feeling without a doubt that this was my congregation. What it said is what I wanted to be: *"We are called to be women of faith and trust, who live together in simplicity and love, manifesting the compassion of Jesus to the poor, especially those denied respect for their human dignity".*



*Sister Maimbolwa on campus at OLLU on a typical class day.*

I went home excited and confided in my cousin Annie, my "guidance counselor," who became equally excited. She located an address for the Sisters for me, and I began communicating with Sister Mary Margaret who shared about the congregation with me! I attended my first "Come and See" with the Sisters



*Sister Maimbolwa in her traditional dress.*

of the Holy Spirit in 1996. In 1997 I completed high school and entered the convent in 1998.

My transition from home to the convent was exciting! My mother and cousin Annie supported me. In 2003 I made my First Vows, then I went to college to train as a Secondary School Teacher. In 2008, with great joy, I made my Perpetual Profession in the presence of my family and hundreds of relatives and friends.

In Jeremiah 1:5 we read "I called you before you were born, in your mother's womb I anointed you." God said, "YES" and it was a YES with which I resonated, even before I was born.

My blessings and Joy of being a Holy Spirit Sister are overflowing. I have been able to reach out to my own Zambian people who are living on the margins of society. I have experienced that love and simplicity which the Sisters live. Our beloved foundress, Mother Margaret, encouraged us to

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## 90th Anniversary in Natchez: Serving Holy Family Church and School



Participating in the Natchez celebration were Sisters who have served Holy Family School (L-R): Sisters Carmen, Margaret, Kay Jo, Maureen, Kathleen, Rosetta, Bernie, Bernadette, Martha, Miriam and Marguerite. Seated L to R: Sisters Mary Green and Catherine.

On November 5th, several Sisters traveled to Natchez, Mississippi to join in a two day celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Sisters of the Holy Spirits Ministry at Holy Family School in Natchez. The Sisters were honored for their dedicated service to the parish and school throughout their long history ministering in the African American community in Natchez.

In a moving ceremony during Mass on Sunday Morning each Sister received red roses, and Sister Miriam, General Superior, was given a bouquet of white roses in memory of all of the deceased Sisters who dedicated so many years to providing an excellent education to the children. As one parishioner said, "today there are graduates of Holy Family School, living in every State, working in every profession imaginable because of the foundation they received at Holy Family elementary and high school."

The Sisters also received a Citation from the City of Natchez, read and presented by the Mayor of Natchez, and a Resolution from the Natchez School System presented by the President of the School System.



Organizing the 90th celebration was Mrs. Frances Morris, pictured here with Sisters Marguerite, Martha, and Margaret.

## SHSp Heritage Notes: Led By the Spirit

The following vignette continues our series on the heritage of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate.



The photo above depicts the transatlantic travel of many of the young girls from Ireland who responded to God's call and Mother Margaret's dedication to the poor and marginalized through the Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

Margaret Mary Healy Murphy was widowed in 1884, and she was determined to use the wealth left by her husband to aid the poor and neglected of society. After hearing a sermon which inspired her to work for black people, she purchased a piece of property and built a church, convent, and school in San Antonio. The project was besieged by prejudice and stunted by a shortage of dedicated teachers. After it became clear that the only way to continue operating was to form a new congregation of religious sisters, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost (presently known as Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate) was established, the first such community to develop in Texas.

From an article by Sister Bernice Mallory, S.H.Sp., "HEALY-MURPHY, MARGARET MARY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fhe47>), accessed January 12, 2012. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.



## When God Says "Yes..."

(Continued from page 1)

trust in Divine Providence and not to fear.

Today, I continue to live that "Yes" that God and I together chose. I say to the young people who are searching, if you feel deeply that call every so often in your heart, simply say 'YES' and begin to live your life fully. Religious life is a life filled with countless blessings and joys.

At present I live at our Motherhouse in San Antonio, while attending Our Lady of the Lake University working toward a degree in Psychological Counseling. It has been challenging to adjust to the school system here, but I am in a routine that is working well for me now.

Additionally I have an opportunity to get to know many of the Sisters I might not meet if I did not have this opportunity. For example, Sister Eugenius is my "math professor," helping me with many of the concepts I had forgotten and coaching me so well that I made a 100 on my first test! Sister Veronica Cahill helps me with her editorial exper-

tise, and Sister Madeleine makes sure I have what I need to concentrate, as she makes sure I have my sandwich and fruit for lunch every day!

I am being blessed everywhere I go! I feel that Mother Margaret is watching over me.

I am grateful that when God called I received the

grace to say a resounding YES to that call to live as a "woman of faith and trust . . . to bring the compassion of Jesus to the poor, especially those denied respect for their human dignity".

—from two reports by  
Sister Maimbolwa Lutangu, S.H.Sp.



*Sister Veronica has enjoyed helping Sister Maimbolwa with her graduate school studies.*

## Sister Matilda Studies at Loretto House in Ireland

Sister Matilda Chanda is currently participating in a training program for Formation Directors at



*Sister Matilda in Ireland with Sister Miriam on a recent visit.*

Loretto House in Dublin, Ireland. There are twenty one participants in this experiential training program, eight brothers/priests and thirteen Sisters from seventeen different Third World countries.

"The program requires no papers to write or examinations, but it emphasizes personal reflection and it is calling us to inner transformation," explained Sister Matilda. Their program includes various pilgrimages, and there

have been two so far, one to the Dublin Mountains and one to Glendalough. Each emphasized the beautiful and the sacred, and both experiences included Mass and a picnic afterward. The Glendalough experience was especially moving, "We finished with Mass in the old Church building — like the early Irish did in hiding."

Sister Matilda also allows that the group has fun together, too, celebrating birthdays and going into town. She closes her report with "Pray for me as you have been doing."



*On a visit into Dublin with a new friend also in the Loretto House program!*

## From Shanghai to San Antonio: Zhen (Jane) Liu

During October and early November the Sisters were host to Zhen (Jane) Liu. Jane joined Crosspoint (which occupies our former Motherhouse) in October as an intern from the Shanghai University Community Corrections Research Center. Her mission was to learn as much as she could about transitional reentry services to improve China's fledging community corrections movement. This internship was jointly co-sponsored by Crosspoint, The University of Texas,

San Antonio's Criminal Justice Department and the Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

As a fun part of her time with us Jane wanted to participate in everything with us in community. She wanted to learn how to cook "American food," and our cooks were happy to help her learn! The Sisters also learned a great deal about China and its people from Jane, and we were sorry to see her return to her homeland.



*To the far left Jane is pictured with Fanny, one of our Motherhouse cooks.*

*She also joined the Sisters for meals every day. To the near left, Jane is pictured with Sisters Maimbolwa, Vera, Genevieve and Rosetta*

### *In our next issue...*

*The next Sisters' Journey will feature the work of Sister Therese Cunningham at La Posada Providencia in San Benito, Texas.*

*Sister Therese's ministry there includes work with refugees from Cuba, Mexico, and El Salvador.*



## "Thursdays in Black"

**Make a stand against gender-based discrimination and violence worldwide.**



Every Thursday people around the world are invited to wear black as a symbol of strength and courage, representing our solidarity with victims of violence, demanding a world without rape and violence. Thursdays in Black, as a human rights campaign, was started by the World Council of Churches during the 1980's as a peaceful protest against rape and violence - the by-products of war and conflict.

The campaign focuses on ways that individuals can challenge attitudes that cause rape and violence. It reinforces at both a personal and public level that there is something wrong with a world that will allow the human rights of women, men and children to be abused and threatened. It provides an opportunity for people to become part of a worldwide movement which enables the despair and pain and anger about rape and other forms of violence to be transformed into political action.



## Recent Activity at The Motherhouse

### A Visit from Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller

The Sisters recently welcomed Archbishop Gustavo Garcia to the Motherhouse for Mass and a short visit. It was the Archbishop's first visit since his installation, and the dynamic Archbishop was obviously familiar with the work of the Sisters. Archbishop Gustavo applauded the work of the Sisters from the early days with Mother Margaret to their work in various ministries today: "always with a willingness to step beyond their comfort zone and face the new challenges of the unknown and unfamiliar."



### Sister Maimbolwa Shares

#### Zambia National Independence Day



*Celebrating together are (L-R): Sisters Marguerite, Madeleine, Pat, Maimbolwa, Margaret and Maureen.*

Sister Maimbolwa shared a few of Zambia's traditions with the Motherhouse community recently when she sang her country's national anthem and spoke to the Sisters about her native land. *(Pictured at right with Sister Maimbolwa is Sister Engenius.)*



## SHSp Jubilarians 2012

**Preparations are underway for the  
2012 Jubilee!**

**Our celebrants are:**

**60 Years**

*Sister Anne Finnerty*

*Sister Beatrice Donnellan*

*Sister Bernadette McNamara*

*Sister Mary Margaret O'Grady*

*Sister Mildred Gordon*

*Sister Sheila Sullivan*

**50 Years**

*Sister Christina Mitchell*

## New Novices: Sister Ruth Solochi and Angela Kashela



Angela Kashela and Ruth Solochi entered the noviate this fall in a ceremony held at Moya O Kenile House in Mongu. The ceremony was attended by all of the Holy Spirit Sisters in Zambia.

The two women responded to Sister Geraldine's question, "What do you ask of us?" by affirming their call to follow Mother Margaret's footsteps, their desire to learn from us how to live our religious commitment, and their willingness to consecrate their lives to the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate. Sister Rose read a passage from Scripture and Sister Geraldine provided an inspiring reflection, after which the two novices sang "The Magnificat."

Sister Monica presented them with the documents that will guide them through the novitiate: The Constitutions, the Liturgy of the Hours, Directives for the SHSp Novitiate, and a copy of the book *Margaret: Trailblazer for the Poor*.

Following this, Sister Christina removed the wooden symbols of the Holy Spirit that they have been wearing during the pre-novitiate and replaced them with the symbols of the novitiate that they will now wear: the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate. The ceremony closed with the whole community blessing them and a song led by the novices, "We Praise You, Wonderful Lord," which expressed so well the gratitude and love for our God that filled the hearts of all of us.

After the ceremony, we gathered for a lovely repast and lots of fun. The next morning, Sister Ruth and Sister Angela began an eight-day retreat to get started on the journey that we hope will carry them to falling in love with Jesus Christ over the next two years.

—taken from a report by Sister Anne.



*Sister Christina places symbols of the novitiate around the neck of Sister Angela and Sister Ruth.*



*Friends join the new novices for celebratory treats after the ceremony.*

**The Novitiate Phase:** The Novitiate phase is the time of formal initiation into religious life. It is a period of more intense prayer and discernment, of studying the mission and history of the Congregation, the religious vows and other aspects of religious life. During the novitiate phase, the novice meets regularly with the Novice Director; she also participates in the Inter-Community Formation Program. The Novitiate phase lasts two years. The first year, referred to as the canonical year focuses on spiritual growth and development and integration into the life of the Congregation. During the second year of the novitiate there is more involvement in ministry.

## Supporting Our Mission to Serve Others

Dear Friends,

On behalf of all the Sister of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate, thank you for the many ways by which you continue to help us bring the compassion and love of Jesus to some of the world's poorest and most oppressed people.

We, as a Congregation, are blessed by your partnership with us as we carry out our mission to serve the poor in their need! Our mission is carried out through our work with children, families and individuals from all walks of life and from a variety of faiths. Thank you so much for all you have shared with us this past year: you have supported us in prayer, you have given moral and financial support, and many of you have spent time with us. For all these gifts we are most grateful. We continue to try to "live simply, so that others may simply live."

We continue to carry out the mission and charism of our beloved foundress, Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy. I am so grateful to those of you who have supported us on a regular basis over the years, especially at times that have been marked by economic change or difficulty. In such challenging times, those in most need of support are the first ones to suffer and be affected by economic constraints!

The Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate live simply and frugally, building resources to meet our own needs and the needs of others. Our work takes our Sisters across the states of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. We also minister among some of the world's poorest people in Mexico and on the African continent in Zambia.

We pray that you will continue to support our work. Your prayerful support as well as financial contributions are critical to the success of our ministry. We are grateful beyond words for your generosity in the past, and we pray that you will be able to continue to that support during the coming year. Together we CAN make a difference!

Gratefully in Christ,



Sister Miriam Mitchell, SHSp  
Superior General



*Note: Our legal name is: Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate. We are a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization, and all gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by federal law. Contact your financial or tax advisor for details relevant to your personal circumstances. If you would like to discuss your gift, I welcome you to contact me at [holyspirit@shsp.org](mailto:holyspirit@shsp.org).*





## Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate

*Founded in Texas in 1893  
to be a passionate voice for justice*

300 Yucca Street  
San Antonio Texas 78203-2399

Phone: 210-533-5149

Fax: 210-533-3434

E-mail: [mmitchell@shsp.org](mailto:mmitchell@shsp.org)

### Next Come and See: March 23-26, 2012

Come and experience what it's like to live in a convent! Participate in prayer, meals, and recreation with the Sisters. Walk in the shadow of Mother Margaret, our foundress. Learn about our charism, our ministries, our spirituality, and our great love for God's poor. Spend a day, a weekend, a week with the Sisters to learn first-hand how the Sisters live out their lives through the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience.

We have two "Come and See" weekends annually, but if you feel you would like to visit at any other time, please let us know.

For more details or other vocation information, contact Sister Gabriel Hession at [sghession@hotmail.com](mailto:sghession@hotmail.com) or check our website: [www.shsp.com](http://www.shsp.com)



Scenes from previous Come & See Weekends

When you have finished reading this newsletter, kindly pass it along to a friend.