



## Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate

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#### General Council

Sister Miriam Mitchell, SHSp  
General Superior

Sister Marian Murray, SHSp

Sister Mary Fagan, SHSp

Sister Marguerite Connors, SHSp

Sister Gabriella Lohan, SHSp

We are moving closer to our goal to build a new Motherhouse for our Sisters! Our new convent will be simple but beautiful. It will include facilities for the care of our retired and semi-retired sisters: bedrooms, chapel, dining room, with provisions for the care of sisters who are ill. The new convent also will be the site of our administration offices.

Built in 1922, the current Motherhouse can accommodate up to 240 sisters, but today with a large percentage of our community retired or semi-retired, our building is too old and too large: it has become a heavy financial and maintenance burden for us.

## A New Home for Our Own

After a careful study of our plans for the future, the Congregation decided to plan for a new, smaller Motherhouse to better meet the needs of the Congregation and be more manageable for our future maintenance and upkeep.

As a result, our efforts to serve the poor domestically and in Mexico and Zambia will have a more secure future as well, with less of our income being required to maintain the original Motherhouse.

We are currently in negotiations to sell our Motherhouse and have broken ground to build a smaller 46,389 square foot, 60-bedroom residence. We are

blessed to be building on land adjacent to our current location, property we purchased many years ago. Shown below are two renderings of the new facility which is estimated to cost more than \$10 million.

The Congregation is actively engaged in an effort to solicit grants and gifts to support this building project. We are approaching corporations, foundations, and individuals for support. If you or someone you know would be interested in supporting this very worthwhile project, please call or write Sister Miriam Mitchell, our General Superior.



View from Yucca Street - North Elevation



View from Anita Street - West Elevation

PLANNED NEW FACILITY FOR THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## The Legacy Continues: Mt. Echo Ranch in Mathis, Texas



Sisters walk the grounds of Mother Margaret's home in South Texas.

*“Andi told us that when she feels overwhelmed, she reflects on Mother Margaret for inspiration and strength.”*

It was a single week before the Congregation would be celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the death of Mother Margaret, when Sister Miriam received a call from Andrea (Andi) Estes.

Mrs. Estes said that she and her husband, Monte, bought Mt. Echo Ranch in May 2006. Mt. Echo was at one time owned by J.B. Murphy and the Congregation's foundress, Margaret Mary Healy- Murphy.

In conducting some research on the property and its former owners, Mrs. Estes discovered that Margaret Mary had founded our Congregation. Mrs. Estes went to the Congregation's website

and called to ask about some of the historical information contained on the website.

Sister Miriam was struck by the timing of the call from the Estes family and told Andi Estes about the upcoming celebration. In the conversation, Mrs. Estes invited Sister Miriam to come and see the ranch.

On the Sunday before the celebration, Sister Veronica accompanied Sister Miriam to Mt. Echo and met the Estes family.

Mrs. Estes had done extensive research on Margaret Mary and J.B. Murphy, and the Sisters were immediately impressed by her deep spirituality. Estes said that, because Mother Margaret used to take the young Sisters to the ranch house for days of retreat, she wanted it to be a kind of retreat house for people who needed a place to “retreat” and rest.

Andi and Monte Estes are caring for three mentally challenged members of Monte's family. Sister Miriam recalls “Andi told us that when she

feels overwhelmed, she reflects on Mother Margaret for inspiration and strength.”

As a memento, Mrs. Estes gave the Sisters a few nails from the home. These nails will be added to the construction projects at both the new Motherhouse and the new formation house in Zambia as symbols of the past fortifying the future.

The Sisters invited Andi and Monte Estes to the 100th Anniversary celebration, and they suggested that the couple come to the Motherhouse the evening before the celebration to spend time visiting our heritage room. The Estes graciously accepted our invitation.

Before they left the Motherhouse, the Estes reciprocated the hospitality by extending an open invitation to any of the Sisters who would like to visit and spend time at Mt. Echo. Since then, two groups of Sisters have made the short trip to Mathis to explore the former home of Mother Margaret and to enjoy the warm hospitality of the Estes family.

## Ministry Develops in Zambia: Limilunga

Since 2006, the Holy Spirit Zambia Mission consists of three communities including the Limulunga Multi-Purpose Centre.

One project in Limulunga is the Language School, which was organized in response to the need of missionaries who did not know the local language, Lozi.

In addition, the Holy Spirit Sisters are involved in the renovation and upgrade of Limu-

lunga Basic School as well as a project to improve housing and a tree project.

Our Congregation also assists with the *Limulunga Project of Hope*, an umbrella for the following initiatives:

- Identification of infants at-risk from malnutrition
- Preschool For Orphans and a Grief and Loss Program to help orphans and their guardians to deal with the many losses they have suffered.
- Vegetable Garden that supplies all the vegetables needed for the programs on a daily basis.
- Elderly Program: For destitute elderly whose children have all died from AIDS
- Home-crafts to supplement income, especially for women and girls.

## Developing Our Past; Building for the Future

Dear Friends,

The Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate are encouraged by your partnership with us as we carry out our mission to serve the poor in their need .

Whether that need includes children and families or the homeless and marginalized, these individuals come from all walks of life and of a variety of faiths.

The Sisters live simply and frugally, building resources to meet our own needs and the needs of others, and with your added support we are able to carry out Christ's

work on earth.

As we begin the new year, the Sisters pray each day for those with whom they have come in contact over the years.

We pray that our friends will be likewise mindful of us and pray for our continued success in ministering to the poor. We also pray that those who are in positions to be helpful financially will keep us in mind as we build for the future. Every gift makes a difference to us as we work to fulfill our mission of service to others!

**Many lives have been touched in a positive way by the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate, and we hope that your life is one of those.**

To our friends and family who gave so generously to our Winter Mission Appeal, we are most grateful for your support. You are remembered in the prayers of our Sisters daily. We ask that you keep us in your prayers also.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Sister Miriam**

Sister Miriam Mitchell, SHSp  
General Superior



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## Now Featuring: Sister Laura Melody

Sister Laura Melody, S.H.Sp., Ph.D. has developed many talents and pursued many interests. When she left Ireland in 1939 to join the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, Sister Laura never dreamed that the road she would travel would include education at universities from Our Lady of the Lake to Dominican College, to Harvard University and the University of Illinois. Neither did she anticipate teaching math and chemistry at numerous schools, serving as principal at St. Bernard's in Dallas for six years or an administrator at St. Phillip's College in San Antonio for 25 years!

Sister Laura will not name a favorite school or career or own up to a favorite student or course of study, but she does say she has always wanted to travel: “God created so many wonderful places and lovely things great and small – I will never get to see them all in person, so now I set about to capture them in my paintings.”

In her tiny painting studio up in the garrets on the top floor of the convent, she can look out and watch the progress on the new convent as she works on her own creations. Her deft hand places color on canvas in unique compositions that Sister Laura makes her own after examining photographs in magazines and on postcards. She adds “I will see a place in a calendar or on a greeting card and think about how beautiful or interesting it is. Sometimes days after I am inspired to set it in place with my oil paints.”

At the urging of several friends, and to share her work with as many people as possible, Sister Laura will be duplicating many of her paintings as prints suitable for framing and note cards. More information will be forthcoming soon.

Sister Laura would love to hear from you! She may be reached c/o Holy Spirit Convent, 301 Yucca, San Antonio TX 78203.



Sister Laura with several of her favorite oils.





## General Council of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate

Pictured left to right: Sister Marian Murray, Sister Gabriella Lohan, Sister Miriam Mitchell, Sister Marguerite Connors, and Sister Mary Fagan.

## The Legacy Continues: 100th Anniversary Celebrations

August and September 2007 featured commemorations of the 100th Anniversary of our own Mother Margaret Mary Healy Murphy. Grand festivities at the Motherhouse included a Mass and celebration on August 25.



The celebrant for the liturgy was Archbishop Jose Gomez and several priests of the archdiocese serving as concelebrants.

In his homily, Archbishop Gomez said, "One hundred years ago, Margaret Mary Healy Murphy went to heaven after a long life of dedication to God and others...We give thanks to God for her life and her ministry in Texas."

In addition to the liturgy, the Sisters celebrated the anniversary with a gathering at the Motherhouse with the students, faculty and staff of Healy-Murphy Center on September 7.

The Sisters and students celebrated Mother Margaret's life with a prayer service. Students shared essays about how their lives are being changed today by the mission Mother Margaret began so long ago.

The celebration culminated with presentation by Sister Miriam Mitchell to Healy-Murphy Center of a

**\$500,000 gift from the Sister Mary Boniface O'Neill estate.** Sister Boniface dedicated 60 years of her life to this ministry. This gift will be used as seed money to begin the upcoming Capital Campaign and it will assist in continuing the legacy led by two remarkable women, Mother Margaret and Sister Boniface.



Gene Brown sings the meditation at the 100th Anniversary Mass. (Photo courtesy Jordan McMorrough, *Today's Catholic*.)



*Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate*

*Founded in Texas in 1893  
to Serve the Poor in Their Need*

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