

# Salvatorian News



*Sisters of the Divine Savior*

www.sistersofthedivinesavior.org • Summer 2003

## Hola from Ecuador!

Health, housing, food, and education remain huge issues in this country of contrasts. Some of the greatest socio-economic inequalities between rich and poor are part of the Latin American fabric. In this land of beautiful people, lush rain forests and breathtaking beauty, there exists grinding poverty and minimal opportunities.

As an international Congregation, the Sisters of the Divine Savior try to bring the goodness and kindness of Christ to the vulnerable and forgotten. Two Sisters from Colombia have been ministering in Quito, Ecuador since June 1997. Sisters Rosa Irene Garcia P. and Eulalia Fonseca B. teach Christian formation to preschool and elementary students.

The Sisters live and serve in South Quito, which is filled with barrios of small shacks. Many are just one room with dirt floors, no electricity or running water. Unemployment, alcoholism and splintered families are commonplace. The latter happens as parents leave to find work. The children are then raised by other family members or trying hard to survive on the streets.

Bringing hope to the families through education is the Sisters' mission. In many classes, they have sixty students. The children have beautiful smiles and an eagerness to learn. In many ways, school hours are the most stable and safe times of their days. They know that education, learning a trade and good health habits will help forge a way to a better life.

Serving others is a large part of why Sisters Rosa Irene and Eulalia became Salvatorian Sisters. Their work in Quito is challenging, but hope is alive in the faces of their students. Some day they hope to have a school of their own. In the meantime, each morning they find strength to face the day's challenges because they know that Maria, Guillermo and hundreds of other students are counting on them. For everyone involved, a shared faith is a beacon of hope.

(Photos and text courtesy of Bill Daily, teacher, Working Boys' Center)

Sisters Rosa Irene, left, and Eulalia are teachers in Quito. The children of the barrios are eager to learn because they want to improve their lives.



# Her Priority: Patient Care

Her job and her heart work closely together at the Wausau Community Health Care Center. Sister Francine Kosednar came to this northern Wisconsin town in 1963. Her ministries have changed dramatically even as health care needs have changed. When she first came to Wausau, she was director of the occupational therapy department at Saint Mary's Hospital, sponsored by the Sisters of the Divine Savior. Later, Saint Mary's and Memorial Hospital merged in order to meet the heightened medical, technical, and financial challenges of the ever-changing health care profession. The result was Wausau Hospital.

"Our healing mission continues. Our goals and objectives are good care of our patients - concern for our staff and our community. Our leadership is forward looking, the staff is dedicated and we continue to grow and offer so much to this community," Sister Francine said.

Sister Francine received her degree in occupational therapy at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. She was drawn to this profession because of

her love of art and the connection between the two areas. She was the first director of the Occupational Therapy Department at Saint Mary's Hospital. She remembers designing her own hand splints for patients. She was instrumental in founding and directing a new Neurodevelopmental Clinic concentrating on pediatric therapy.

Today Sister is a patient advocate. Each day she visits and surveys patients on how the hospital can improve its care. Sister has the opportunity to make immediate changes in the hospital experience if patients are having a particular difficulty. "We want to know how to make this the best experience for the patient and the family while he or she is here, not after they go home."

"I love walking these halls, saying hello to friends just as I do on the streets of our downtown. People here are friendly and concerned."

Her coworkers feel the same way about her. "I love Sister Francine. She is friendly, warm, and cares about the patients," says Patty Eckers, medical secretary for the cardiac intensive care



Sister Francine is a patient advocate.

and medical surgical care units.

Sister Francine is also a gifted artist. When she arrives home, she puts on a huge apron and begins her wood-carving. Her work ranges from crosses, angels, and ornaments, to old world chip carvings.

"Working here keeps me connected to our healing ministry and this hospital community. I love this ministry," she concluded.

## Focus



Sister Sheila Novak, SDS

Have you ever found yourself saying, "I had a burst of new energy!" Or, "It felt like a breath of fresh air?" Can you think of a time when you had a second chance at something? The first showed you something that needed more attention or adjustment or a mistake to be avoided. Then you get another chance to improve what you had done. At the time, you may not have labeled this as resurrection—but that is what resurrection is often like in our daily lives.

This is a wonderful time of new life

bursting forth. Our Church is celebrating the season with promises of new life and the urgency of a mission to accomplish. Jesus is a reassuring presence to his disciples—handing over to them the continuation of His work. "I am with you! You will do even greater works than I did," He tells them. The good news of the Easter stories is—after floundering, after fearfully locking themselves away, they emerge with courage and conviction and take up the mission.

In this issue of *Salvatorian News*, you will see how some of our Sisters are living that mission today. They bring healing to those who are sick in body or in spirit. Their focus is always on the whole person of those to whom they minister. They give people a second

chance at that breath of fresh air that is resurrection.

Our community will also have a fresh start with our newly elected leadership: Sisters Marion Etzel, Carol Thresher and Jeanette Clarke. They will begin their responsibilities on June 20, so this will be my last newsletter column to you. It has been my privilege to speak and write on behalf of our Salvatorian mission. Your support has enabled us to provide new life, "resurrection," for many people. Our gratitude comes to you through this thanks and our continued prayers for you. You are a vital link in keeping resurrection going!

*Sister Sheila Novak*

Sister Sheila Novak, SDS  
Provincial

# Counselors Address Domestic Abuse

“You are so ugly. Who else would be with you?”

“You don’t want to know what I will do to you and the kids!”

One woman’s abuser tried to run over her with a car. Another victim had a nervous breakdown.

They know what fear is...how it feels, looks and tastes and what it can do.

And the day comes when they know they must leave. They have made a decision to leave the abuser. They are afraid to stay in relationships that have become terrifying and brutal verbally and or physically. But they have to wait until he is at work, at sleep or on a trip. They don’t want to go to their parents or friends and endanger them. So they leave alone or with their children. One victim may be a mom, but not married, another may be married for over thirty years. They are the victims of domestic violence or sexual assault.

But where to flee? One place is a home in Washington County near West Bend, Wisconsin. It is an emergency housing facility offered to families by the Friends of Abused Families. The home has no address. But the location is known by victims, certain agencies and area police. There are security locks and cameras and a 24-hour crisis line. This is a home for desperate women. It is also a safe house that offers them time to think and to begin the healing process.

One of the shelter counselors and coordinators of the transitional living program is Sister Elizabeth (Liza) Segleau, SDS.

“It would be hard to describe a typical victim of abuse. Victims come from every socio-economic group, and ethnic and racial background. They decide to leave when the

situation becomes very dangerous or the abuse affects the children,” she explained.

On the walls leading to the home’s family room are handprints of some of the children. They are able to continue in area schools. They are also offered art therapy programs to help deal with the tragic violence they have observed and experienced in their homes. The small handprints suggest hundreds of stories.

Sister Liza said that domestic violence impacts every aspect of a person’s life—their family, friends and job. Many times the abuser will attempt to isolate the victim by moving to a rural area. Each day is filled with fear and the “walking on eggshells” syndrome.

Sister Liza participates in group support sessions with the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. She also conducts a support group monthly for the women in the transitional living program. The latter live in HUD-subsidized apartments. There are some women who are abusers, but the majority of the victims of domestic violence are women. She and others at the shelter help the women to prepare safety plans before they leave.

In addition to the shelter’s group sessions, the women work on parenting skills and conflict resolution. After four weeks, the women who qualify are moved to one of four transitional apartments.



Sister Liza works with abused families

They try to find a job, participate in ongoing counseling, and provide a semblance of normalcy for their children.

“I am in awe of the strength of these women as they are rebuilding, of their survival skills. I have learned to trust in the wisdom of the victim. I know I cannot save them but I can make resources available to them. The latter can include social service agencies, police, friends, neighbors, parents,” she continued.

What drew Sister Liza to this ministry that confronts so much inhumanity every day?

“Every now and then one of the women will learn that I am a Sister and is afraid to share her story. But I am proud to walk with these families and just want to help them rebuild their lives.”

Please visit our  
vocations website at:  
[www.SDSsisters.org](http://www.SDSsisters.org)

# At St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic, “We Care for the Poor”

Sister Darlene Pienschke is a missionary, nurse, daughter and woman religious. For the last three years, she has been a full-time nurse at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Clinic in Tucson, Arizona. In some ways, she has come full circle since she was at the clinic in the early 1990s. She served as a missionary in Brazil and then as a pastoral associate and hospice nurse at St. Catherine’s Apache Nation mission in Cibecue, Arizona.

Today she coordinates one whole wing of the clinic. Her days begin at 7 a.m. and include a range of activities from cardiac surgery, pediatrics, cancer, orthopedics, breast biopsies and removal of cysts. In addition, she administers the electrocardiograms, urine tests, diabetic and pregnancy tests. The days fly by.

The clinic is fortunate to have 52 physicians who volunteer one-half day a month. The majority of the patients are Spanish-speaking and many are uninsured. However, most of the doctors do not speak Spanish and so Sister Darlene is able to translate from patient to doctor. She also coordinates the doctors’ schedules. These volunteers enable the clinic to serve the poor.

“Let’s say one of our patients gets a breast cancer diagnosis and does not have insurance. We are able to help them apply for emergency assistance. We do not leave our patients without care. The state offers emergency medical care through a program called Access at the Tucson Medical Centers,” she stated.

Today’s technology enables the clinic to have a telemedicine unit. This means the clinic, using computers and some special equipment, can arrange “electronic” medical visits and diagnosis for children without leaving the school nurse’s office. With parental permission, the students now have access to quality medical care without leaving campus. “School telenursing improves school attendance and emphasizes prevention and early detection,” Sister Darlene observed.

“I have always appreciated the mobility and flexibility of our Congregation. We have great ministerial flexibility and so I am able to minister as a nurse and also take care of my mother. How wonderful that I can continue my ministry and help my mom.”

“Collaboration is a value for Salvatorians.

I worked collaboratively in Brazil, Cibecue, Arizona, and now at the clinic. It becomes harder to leave one ministry for another. I form friendships and it is painful to say goodbye and leave a ministry and people I care about,” she explained.



Sister Elizabeth Segleau (left) and Sister Bernice Smith

## Final Vows Set for July 27th

Sister Elizabeth Segleau and Sister Bernice Smith will be making final vows with the Sisters of the Divine Savior on Sunday, July 27, at 1 p.m. at St. Mary’s Church in Elm Grove.

Sister Elizabeth is currently a domestic abuse counselor for families in West Bend, Wisconsin. Sister Bernice is a homebound and human concerns minister at St. Mary’s Parish in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. Families and friends will gather to celebrate this new life for our Congregation.

---

## Kathy Schneider Will Receive Woman of Faith Award on October 15th

Kathy Schneider reflects the kind of service the Gospel demands, reaching out to the poor and marginalized. She is the founder and executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Free Clinic in West Allis, Wisconsin. We invite you to attend this annual event and learn how this remarkable woman has addressed a national health care issue on a local level.

Wednesday, October 15th, 7 p.m.

SDS Community House,  
4311 N. 100th Street, Milwaukee  
Free, but reservations are requested.  
Please call 414.466.7414.



Sister Darlene, far left, is a nurse at a medical clinic.