



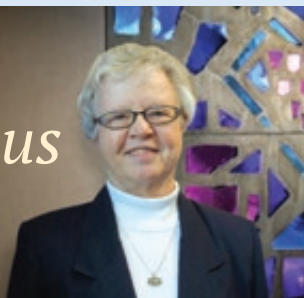
That all may  
know the Savior

Spring 2018

# SISTERS OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR

## Salvatorian News

*Walk  
with us*



Sisters of the Divine Savior have served on the tiny island “pearl” known as Sri Lanka since 1954. Natural disasters and prolonged civil strife have kept many Sri Lankan people in dire need. You can read here how our sisters address that need. It’s not a quick fix. It’s an enduring commitment to improve quality of life by empowering Sri Lanka’s next generation with education.

Inside, we feature one Golden Jubilarian along with six sisters professed for 60 years. We look forward to honoring them in June. Also in this issue, we continue our Years on Fire celebration of Salvatorians first coming to the U.S. Our year of Passion for Remembering commemorates the 100th anniversary of five events that changed their lives.

By the time you read this message, we’ll have elected our Province leaders for the three-year term that begins July 1. We couldn’t share the news here due to our press deadline, but you’ll find it on our website at [sistersofthedivinesavior.org](http://sistersofthedivinesavior.org)

As 2018 unfolds, I ask you to stay with us, pray with us and walk with us in our mission to make known the goodness and kindness of the Divine Savior.

Holding you in prayer,

*A. Beverly Heitke, S.D.S.*

Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS  
Provincial Leader

## *Sisters weave life lessons into classroom fundamentals*

Sisters of the Divine Savior in Sri Lanka know all too well the way to a child’s mind can be through his stomach. Their project to supplement government schooling for children in impoverished villages addresses a variety of needs and nutrition is a priority. Many families can’t feed their children three meals a day. It’s meager by our standards, but a bun and packet of milk three days a week gives children more energy to learn.

In 2017, the sisters started a program to support students from low-income families in Illuppaikulam, Katugastota and Wijekatupotha where our sisters live. They refer to the program as “tuition classes” but it doesn’t fully capture the breadth of their support.

Government-run schools in Sri Lanka are free, but in rural areas facilities are lacking and have poor standards for science, math,

language and social studies. Parents with little or no income can’t afford the cost of supplies, travel and tuition for remedial classes to make up for learning deficits. Without such classes, children are at risk for ending up in the same plight as their parents.

Sadly, alcohol and drug addiction among men is common. Those who have jobs labor for low wages. Many mothers leave their families hoping to earn money to help their children, often leaving them in a grandmother’s care. These realities are born of natural disasters and a 25-year civil war that began in 1983.

Sister Rani Fernando, SDS, Provincial Superior in Sri Lanka says, “These students struggle in a hand-to-mouth economy. They lack security when both parents go in search of day-to-day jobs, leaving them without

*continued on back page —>*

Our Salvatorian Province in Sri Lanka has 67 sisters in 13 communities. Their diverse ministries include a home for orphaned girls and a shelter project to replace fragile huts with modest cinder block homes.





# Companions in Mission

*"I have talked about Sister Mary and the wisdom and love she has taught me to many friends near and far. I know the stories I've shared have made an impact on them."*

— Patti S., Brookfield, Wis.

Patti S. of Brookfield, Wis. began bible study classes led by Salvatorian Sister Mary Frost, SDS about five years ago. Over time, Patti's friendship with Sr. Mary has grown, and so has her bond with the Sisters of the Divine Savior. Patti points to Sr. Mary's class on Ignatian Spirituality as a turning point that deepened their friendship.

"It was a small class of only four people and we did a lot of faith sharing. Part of Ignatian Spirituality is learning to see God working in your daily life. Sr. Mary's example of faith and the way she lives her life was a great example to me of how to find God in the everyday moments. Finding those 'God moments' is when you sense His love, guidance, presence and joy, even when you're having hardship, and feeling God's protection and strength."

Patti calls Sr. Mary an excellent teacher who has shared many stories of her time teaching in Africa. There she learned about the oral tradition and now in her classes she relates it to parts of the bible. Patti also describes Sr. Mary as one of the strongest women she knows.

"She has belief in herself and is a wonderful leader. She has taught me to believe more in my own abilities and talents. Sr. Mary once told me that if all you ever ask of God is to 'Help me to love better,' it would be the only prayer you'd ever need. It has become my daily prayer, that God help me to love better." Patti adds, "It's the greatest gift anyone has ever given me, teaching me to pray for that."

Weekly bible study brought together Patti S. (left) and Salvatorian Sister Mary Frost.



Over the last several years, Patti has honored her teacher with financial gifts to the Sisters of the Divine Savior. But perhaps her greatest tribute is calling Sr. Mary her "hand hold" from God.

"I know that God sent me someone to hold on to my hand and show me the way," says Patti. "Sr. Mary teaches real forgiveness. She teaches you to be kind and just, to pray for the one who hurt you, and to trust in God's mercy and love."

## How has a Salvatorian Sister touched your life?

We'd love to hear your story. Email Lori Land at: [missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org](mailto:missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org)

## Counting Your Blessings

### You're making change for good

Just as our sisters have adapted traditional ministries to changing needs, your support for our mission has evolved over the years. We've witnessed it, as



you affirm your trust in us with generosity from all corners of the country. Last November and December, we received donations from 36 states and the District of Columbia. We're grateful for each prayerful decision you make to share your worldly blessings with us. As we hold you in our prayers of thanksgiving, we will continue to steward each and every gift to serve the greatest need in our Savior's name.



Tip

If you're still paying premiums or have paid up an old life insurance policy, there might be a better use for it. As more people outlive the need for a long-held policy, they forget about the asset until an annual statement comes in the mail. After providing for your loved ones, consider naming Sisters of the Divine Savior as a partial or full beneficiary. You can designate proceeds to support one of our international mission projects or for our retired sisters' ongoing needs. For more information, go to [sistersofthedivinesavior.org/support/planned](https://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/support/planned) Or contact Lori Land at 414-466-7414 or [landl@salvatoriansisters.org](mailto:landl@salvatoriansisters.org)



In this second of five Years on Fire celebration, we focus on the 100th anniversary of the death of Father Francis Jordan, founder of the Salvatorian Family of sisters, priests and brothers, and Lay Salvatorians. Our 2018 theme, “Passion for Remembering” commemorates Father Jordan’s death in 1918, along with four other events that deeply touched the hearts of Salvatorians newly arrived in the U.S.

Father Michael Hoffman, SDS, Archivist for the Society of the Divine Savior shares a powerful reflection on the word *remembering*:



**W**henever we use the word *remember*, we tend to imagine ourselves going back in time, reliving a past event, or recalling a relationship with someone who is no longer with us. We think of it as “taking the present back into the past.” But the true root of the word, which goes all the way back to our Judeo-Christian beginnings, means “bringing the past into the present.” It literally means *re-membering* someone who was once a member of our family or community, making them a member again here and now, alive and present.

The people of the Old Testament did not have a strong belief in an afterlife. Their concept of Sheol was not heaven or hell in the way we mean them. It was merely a place of the dead. At that time, there was no strong understanding of or belief in immortality. The only way to be truly immortal was to be *re-membered*. As long as people recall your life and tell your story,

they *re-member* you in the present, and you live on.

Today, when the Jewish people come together each year and *re-member* the first Passover meal and the Exodus, they are not simply telling the story or recalling a people who were freed from slavery in the past. Their understanding of *re-membering* is bringing those people and that event from the past into the present, here and now, and *all* are saved from slavery in this event.

## re-member

This understanding explains why the biblical story reads as though thousands of people are present at that first Exodus. They are trying to portray *all* the people of Israel being saved in this event — those from the past, the present, and yet to come.

This understanding of the word *re-member* gives us new and greater insight into the

Last Supper, when Jesus and his disciples celebrated that ancient Seder ritual. This time, Jesus gives his disciples a new meaning to the meal. When he took the bread and the cup and shared them with the disciples, he said: “From now on, whenever you do this, *re-member* me.” Each time we come together to celebrate the Eucharist, we aren’t simply recalling stories about Jesus. We are truly *re-membering* him, making him a member of our family here and now, and he is alive and present to us once again.

Throughout 2018, Salvatorians will take time to share our “Passion for Remembering.” In the true understanding of that ancient word, we won’t simply be recalling stories about events and people from our past. We’ll be bringing them here to us in the present, *re-membering* them once again, and making them come alive to us here and now.



## In Memoriam

**Sister Diane Goetzinger, SDS** (formerly Sr. Mary Louis) died on October 8, 2017. In 59 years professed as a Salvatorian, Sr. Diane ministered in teaching, elder care, and pastoral care at Mother of Good Counsel Parish in Milwaukee.

**Sister Bernice Smith, SDS** died on October 15, 2017. She was professed 19 years. Sr. Bernice ministered at St. Mary’s Parish in Elm Grove, Wis., before moving into administrative and leadership roles for the province starting in 2007.

Read about the lives of Sisters Diane and Bernice here: [sistersofthedivinesavior.org/memoriam/](https://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/memoriam/)



# The 100th Anniversary of 1918 A Year of Armistice and Anguish



In 1892, Salvatorians began arriving in the United States. Within a decade their numbers increased considerably. Most of the Salvatorians who came were originally from Germany or nearby countries and most spoke German. By 1910, young American-born women and men were joining the Salvatorian Family. By 1918, things should have looked promising for Salvatorians in the U.S. but all was not well.

On April 6, 1917, the U.S. had declared war on Germany and began sending soldiers, doctors, nurses and others overseas. The war affected everyone. Anti-German sentiment was freely expressed in public and all German-born people in the U.S. — including Salvatorians — had to register with the government. Salvatorians in America anxiously awaited news from Europe. Much of what they heard was not good. By 1918, there was little peace — even in people's hearts.

For Salvatorians living in America, five significant events made 1918 "A Year of Armistice and Anguish." Here we share about the St. Nazianz Fire and World War I. The fall *Salvatorian News* will conclude our remembrance with the death of our founder Father Francis Jordan, November Armistice, and Spanish flu epidemic.

## The St. Nazianz Fire

In 1896, Salvatorians settled in St. Nazianz, Wis., a village established by German immigrants in 1854. The villagers were proud of their heritage. They followed German customs and often spoke German. By April 1918, one year after America declared war against Germany, it was common to hear public expressions of hatred toward Americans of German descent. Villagers and businesses in St. Nazianz had received anonymous, threatening letters criticizing an "excessive pride in their German heritage."

On April 5, a huge fire broke out in St. Nazianz that affected everyone in the village. The official cause is recorded as "explosion of a gasoline tank," but many people believed it had been set deliberately. Some villagers "thought" they heard an automobile passing through before the fire started, but there was never official evidence of arson. No one was ever charged and there were no official suspects. Still, the question always remained.

## World War I

Although World War I was being fought in Europe, people in America were directly affected by it too. The U.S. sent soldiers and support personnel overseas and many lost their lives. Soldiers' families back home had to find work to support themselves, and people had to ration goods that were needed for the war effort. Most Salvatorians in the U.S. had come from Europe. They found it difficult to get news from family members and fellow Salvatorians back in their homelands. In Europe, German-born Salvatorians, including Father Francis Jordan had to find neutral places to live, or risk being drawn into the war.

These WWI photos come from a collection from Father Ralph Fontaine, SDS. He had served in Salvatorian missions in India until all German missionaries were forced to leave the country after the war began. Many photos from that era were ordered destroyed when Hitler rose to power in the 1930s. Only photos taken out of Germany before that time survived — including Fr. Ralph's. His photo album came to the Society of the Divine Savior Archives after he died in 1943.

We're grateful to Salvatorian Archivists **Father Michael Hoffman, SDS** and **Sister Mary Jo Stoffel, SDS** for their research of photos and stories for "1918 — A Year of Armistice and Anguish."



Many local people questioned what could have set a gasoline tank ablaze in the middle of a cold night in St. Nazianz, Wis.



When Salvatorian Father Ralph Fontaine returned to Germany from India, he was ordered to serve as a chaplain to German soldiers.

Throughout Europe, soldiers and civilians were being killed by the thousands daily.



See more photos online at:  
[sistersofthedivinesavior.org/years-on-fire/](https://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/years-on-fire/)





# Celebrating 2018 Jubilarians

60 years

50 years

## Sister Jane Eschweiler, SDS

When **Sister Jane (Sr. Jane Marie) Eschweiler, SDS** celebrated her 40th Jubilee in 2008, she said, "My vows are more relevant than ever as a witness of alternative values in our world that tends towards greed and violence." Her words still ring true in 2018.



Sr. Jane is a Milwaukee native taught by Salvatorian Sisters at Mother of Good Counsel Grade School and Divine Savior High School. "The Sisters were my role models, and I felt called to prayer and service in community at a very early age. I also had three aunts who were Franciscans and three uncles who were priests in the Milwaukee Archdiocese."

Today, many people know Sr. Jane from her 12 years on the Jordan Ministry Team (JMT). Traveling to schools and parishes in the sprawling Diocese of Tucson, Ariz., she led catechist certification classes, retreats and workshops to train the laity for ministry.

Sr. Jane calls Jordan Ministry "an investment in the future of our Church." Her master's degree in pastoral studies from Chicago's Loyola University and experience as a high school teacher, retreat leader and pastoral associate were gifts to the JMT. She put her work on hold briefly in 2006 to lead spirituality workshops for Salvatorians in India, and in summer 2009 to teach English to Salvatorian Sisters in Africa.

After retiring from JMT in 2015, Sr. Jane wanted to adapt her pastoral work to a hospital setting. She felt God's creative Spirit at work when she was asked to help lead Eucharistic services in a Tucson hospital chapel. Patients tune in via closed-circuit TV. Sr. Jane says, "It blends ministry to the sick with my preaching fervor. And, since I've been a patient many times, I draw on what I'd want to hear spun off the Word of God."

Sr. Jane also offers spiritual direction for deacons-to-be, and continues training lay ministry candidates for the Tucson diocese. She finds joy in helping them discover their growing spirituality. Her prison ministry often has the same effect. Several times a month, she visits women at a county jail and men at a facility northwest of Tucson, places she calls fertile ground.

"Incarcerated people have time to think about what really matters in life. Many folks in prison are transformed by grace, and I love being part of that mystery. It gives me hope."

## Read more about these jubilarians we'll honor in June:

[sistersofthedivinesavior.org/2018jubilee](http://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/2018jubilee)



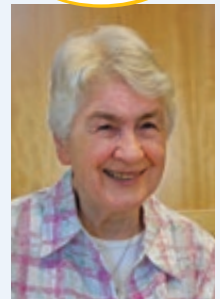
You can send Jubilee greetings c/o:

Mission Advancement Office  
4311 N. 100th St., Milwaukee, WI 53222 or  
[missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org](mailto:missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org)

A gift to support our mission is a meaningful way to honor a jubilarian. You can mail your donation to the address above, or donate online: [sistersofthedivinesavior.org/donate](http://sistersofthedivinesavior.org/donate)

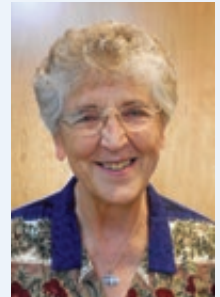
## Sister Grace Mary Croft, SDS

**Sister Grace Mary Croft** (Sr. Mary Gerald) calls her vocation a love story. "The gift of my religious vocation has put into my life people who have challenged me, believed in me, called me out of myself and shown me who God is."



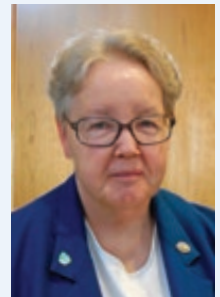
## Sister Jenada Fanetti, SDS

In her longtime pastoral ministry, **Sister Jenada Fanetti** (Sr. Anthony Marie) feels connected to parishioners as they face joys and sorrows of life with a strong faith. "My goal is to support and encourage individuals and families as they realize our loving God is intimately united with them."



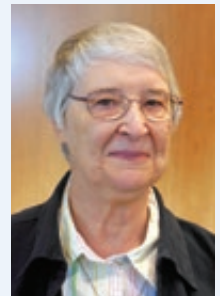
## Sister Mary Frost, SDS

"My vocation is to love!" **Sister Mary Frost** (Sr. Mary Albert) calls on words of St. Therese of Lisieux to describe her life. "Religious life is an opportunity to love many people in many ways. If we trust in Divine Providence, God has great things in store for us."



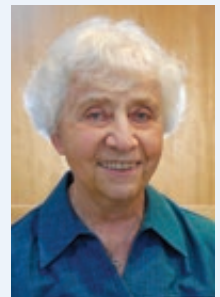
## Sister Francine Kosednar, SDS

Still today, **Sister Francine Kosednar** cherishes memories from her longtime ministry in occupational therapy. "I forged deep ties with patients. Many were heroes to me because of their courage and determination. They expressed deep gratitude for the blessing of another day."



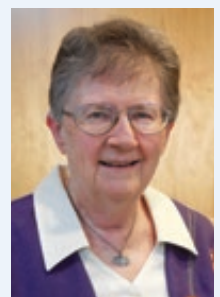
## Sister Deanna Schroeder, SDS

Religious life has fulfilled a desire in **Sister Deanna Schroeder** (Sr. Mary Eugene) to serve others. "It has given me a freedom to minister in many different places and work with many interesting people. I have been blessed with the gifts needed to do the ministries to which I've been called."



## Sister Mary Jo Stoffel, SDS

After 60 years, **Sister Mary Jo Stoffel** (Sr. Boniface) still feels her vocation has been life-giving for her and for those she has served. "Grounded in prayer and community support, it is a loving and challenging way of life."



guidance and direction. Our sisters try to gather these children after school, give them a meal and supervise their homework, that one day they become good citizens of our country.”

The sisters offer supplemental instruction after school and on weekends for students in grades 6-11. They work with them in small groups to enable better understanding, and use innovative teaching methods to spark interest in learning. The sisters also offer opportunities for the children to develop athletic skills, despite lack of sports and recreation facilities.

A teacher with special education experience works one-on-one with children who have special needs. These children are often shunned by the other students. The goal is to help them gain acceptance by their peers and society, and feel hopeful for their future.

Sister Edith Bramberger, SDS, General Superior in Rome, witnessed the great need on her canonical visit to Sri Lanka. “Our sisters are working for greater human dignity of people — especially children — who are on the edge of society, discriminated against, and deprived of a quality life that is God’s dream for all. This project is life-giving to many children in Sri Lanka.”

Sisters of the Divine Savior from Germany and Austria founded our mission in Sri Lanka in 1954. Today, local sisters advocate for justice and peace for their beloved Sri Lankan people in a variety of ministries. They serve in parishes, health care and elder

*“Our sisters are engaged in working for greater human dignity of people — especially children — who are on the edge of society, discriminated against, and deprived of the goods of a quality life that is God’s dream for all . . . This project is life-giving to many children in Sri Lanka.”*

Sister Edith Bramberger, SDS,  
General Provincial, Rome



care, run a home for orphaned girls and a shelter project to build more stable housing.

Education is a priority, but book learning only scratches the surface of the sisters’ goals for their tuition classes program. The sisters also address behavioral issues in a series of counseling sessions, and offer workshops to build leadership skills and promote cooperation. Programs for both children and parents guide them to cope with day-to-day struggles by calling on their faith. Alcohol awareness programs are also in the mix. High incidence of alcohol addiction among

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*“Building leadership skills and cooperation are important to help our people understand how a community can thrive, by finding strength in their commonality rather than division in their differences.”*

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Sister Rani Fernando, SDS,  
Provincial Superior in Sri Lanka

fathers stems from their despair to provide for their families. It’s a vicious cycle the sisters hope to break.

Above all, the sisters strive to instill curiosity and love for learning, self-confidence and a sense of personal responsibility. As they redirect negative behavior, reduce malnutrition, and instill healthy living habits including exercise, the sisters also hope to uncover creativity often smothered by the struggle to survive.

Inspired by our Salvatorian core value to improve the quality of life for people in need, our sisters in Sri Lanka hope to build a more responsible, self-reliant and healthier society by empowering the next generation. Metrics for success include testing, class attendance and monitoring students’ weight. Some measures are more subjective, such as students’ growing self-confidence and greater peace and harmony among families.

The program has its challenges, including natural disasters and outbreaks of contagious illnesses that disrupt progress. Still, deep trust in Providence inspires our sisters to help students and their families stand on their own. It’s about empowerment: helping parents take responsibility for their children, and preparing students to manage their own lives as young adults.

Some outcomes are things we might take for granted: mature behavior as children grow; commitment to share and care for one another; desire and confidence to work toward self-sufficiency. And most of all, a strong faith life to sustain students and their families as they strive toward those goals.



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