

**Members
and
Mission
in the News**

Loretto

Reprints

NOVEMBER 2011



By Jesus L. Lopez

An organized system of formal education in New Mexico was non-existent until the late 1800s. In fact, when Gov. Albino Pérez proposed a tax levy in 1837 to help fund a system of public education, he was more than just rebuffed — he was beheaded. This was the Revolt of 1837, an uprising against Gov. Pérez, who was assassinated. The rebels temporarily overtook the capital in Santa Fe, but the revolt was quickly put down, and the infant son of Gov. Pérez rescued. (The infant was Demetrio Pérez, who later made his way to Las Vegas and was the great-grandfather of noted Las Vegas artist David Pérez Escudero).

Thus it was that during both the Spanish and Mexican eras, in centuries-old tradition, the only formal education in New Mexico was that provided by Catholic clergy or by private tutors retained by wealthy Dons, who resided with the family as live-in teachers.

This changed in 1851 with the arrival of Jean-Baptiste Lamy as bishop of the newly created diocese of Santa Fe, which was established

by the U.S. Catholic Church soon after the American occupation.

Until then, and since 1620, New Mexico had been part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Durango, Mexico. (In a later column I hope to relate the hostile and explosive relations between Lamy and the native Hispanic priests, led by Fr. Antonio José Martínez of Taos, who was excommunicated by Lamy).

After his arrival, Bishop Lamy began in earnest to recruit priests and nuns to provide independent educational instruction, albeit religious. In 1852 Lamy made a trip to Kentucky, returning with four nuns of the Sisters of Loretto, a teaching order. (Six sisters accompanied Lamy, but one became ill and returned to Kentucky, and another died during the arduous journey.) Those nuns first established a school in Santa Fe, and by the early 1860s, the Sisters of Loretto established schools in Bernalillo, Mora and Albuquerque.

In 1869, the Albuquerque nuns moved to Las Vegas and set up school in a three-room adobe house provided by Rumaldo Baca across the street from Our Lady of

Sorrows Catholic Church, which was then under construction. (Baca, a successful freighter and businessman, achieved perpetual fame for later building at the same location a three-story hotel in anticipation of the railroad, which missed “Baca’s Folly” by more than a mile.)

At the house made available by Don Rumaldo, the three pioneer nuns established the first formal education setting in Las Vegas, opening a school for girls, and providing instruction in the three R’s, music, painting and needlework. The Sisters enrolled 75 pupils the first year, and soon needed additional space.

In 1876, Don Rumaldo and other townspeople raised enough money to begin erecting a two-story building for the nuns on the east side of South Gonzales Street, a short distance from the Plaza, in an area which would be known as El Distrito de las Escuelas. (Pictured)

Always known as the Sisters’ School, the new building served as both a school and convent for the Sisters of Loretto, where they remained for almost a century, providing a formal and disciplined

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education for several generations of Las Vegas children. (The building was destroyed by fire in the 1970s.)

By 1884, the Sisters added high school subjects to their curriculum, and by 1888 they had 180 pupils, both boys and girls, and graduated their first high school class. The Sisters' School continued at the South Gonzales site for almost a century, until 1963, when the dilapidated condition of the building caused the school to be moved to makeshift quarters at the Parish Hall on the Plaza. (At this location the writer graduated eighth grade, the classroom for which was the very small, one-room kitchen of the Parish Hall).

By 1965 the Archdiocese

began plans for a new school and convent for the Sisters of Loretto, and Hilton-Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School on New Mexico Avenue was completed in 1967.

The new school was financed almost entirely by international hotelier Conrad Hilton, a native New Mexican, devout Catholic and benefactor for many church projects, including several schools. Hilton was personally involved in the planning and location of the new school, working closely with Sister Catherine Michael and Las Vegas contractor Nash Lucero, who is now 87. (The school building was later purchased by the West Las Vegas School District, and still later named Tony Serna Elementary).

The Sisters of Loretto were soon followed by the Jesuits, who established a private school for boys and a prestigious college in El Distrito de las Escuelas, and Las Vegas soon became a celebrated center for education.

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Next: The Jesuits establish a college in El Distrito de las Escuelas. Jesus L. Lopez is a native of Las Vegas and a local historian. He may be reached at 425-3730. Sisters of Loretto School, South Gonzales Street, 1885.

Las Vegas Optic
Las Vegas, NM
June 30, 2011

International Alumni Network

Radboud University Nijmegen, Holland

Nasreen Daniel

After finishing her PhD at Radboud University some years ago, Dr. Nasreen Daniel returned to her home country of Pakistan where she is now using the knowledge she gained to improve the lives of women there. Although this is often an overwhelming task, she is glad to be able to make a small, though very real, difference. Read on to find out more about Dr. Daniel's mission in Pakistan.

When did you attend Radboud University?

First I was there from 2000-2002, then later from 2007-2009.

What did you study there and at what level?

MA in Intercultural Theology, Phd in Religious Studies

Where are you living now and why are you living there?

I am living in Pakistan and this is my homeland. We (Sisters of Loretto) started a mission with the underprivileged women and children.

Why did you originally choose to come to Radboud University?



In Pakistan I knew the Dutch missionaries FIC Brothers. They introduced the first catechism in Pakistan. I was their student and was very impressed by them. After they left Pakistan I kept contact with them. Because of them I wanted to come to the Netherlands. Radboud University started an English programme in 2000 and that is why I opted for it.

How would you describe your experience at Radboud University?

I had very rich experiences. The relation with some of the staff members was like with my own family members. They were approachable, kind and knowledgeable. The atmosphere among the students, too, was good. I have kept up the contacts with some of my fellow students even now.

Could you give an overview of what you've been doing since you were

in Nijmegen?

When I came back from the Netherlands we started the Loretto mission in Pakistan. We started a survey in the slum area and made the decision to start the school for the slum dwellers. We also decided to work for the uplift of women by running awareness-raising programmes and providing free legal aid.

Do you still have contacts from Radboud University?

As time and circumstances allow I do keep in touch with my teachers and some friends. Mostly we have no electricity so can not write e-mail easily, but sometimes I call as well.

Have you been back to Nijmegen since you finished your studies here?

I went back to Nijmegen and shared a PowerPoint with my teachers about my work at the grass roots.

What do you like most about the field you are in? Least?



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I love that I am so close to the reality and I can help. Least that I can help only on a very small scale.

Is this the field you intended to be in when you began your studies?

Yes, the focus of my study was women in Pakistan.

Is there a website that you'd like to share with other alumni?

We have our community website, where the specific mission in Pakistan is included. Here you can also read about the general mission and work of the Sisters of Loretto: lorettocommunity.org

What do you find to be the most challenging/rewarding factors in conducting your career in your country?

The situation of Pakistan is very challenging for all the Pakistanis, but being a member of a minority group (Christians) and being a woman keeps me down some times. And rewarding is that we are making a difference in people's lives.

Can you give 2 examples of how you think the international experience you gained in Nijmegen has helped you?

I learned the richness of the other cultures. The students who came from different parts of the world shared their life - that was the richest experience for me. It opened my view on different matters of life.

What are the main differences between your home country and The Netherlands?

Main difference between Pakistan and the Netherlands is the dignity of human beings, the respect for women and equality for all. These things are mostly missing here.

How do you think you view your country differently after having lived in Nijmegen?

That we do have all the resources in Pakistan but few have the ownership. I realised that more when I returned from the Netherlands.

What do you think the main advantages/challenges are for an international student going to Radboud University?

The housing was the biggest problem but the kindness of university staff was remarkable. They stood by whenever the need arose.

What did you like most/least about living abroad?

I liked the weather and openness of the Netherlands to other cultures, but I missed the food.

What would you say have been

your most significant achievements since you began your studies at Radboud University?

Knowing my teachers and finishing my PhD.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned that you would like to share with Radboud's current international students?

That our own home land is very dear to us but when some other country opens the arms for us we must not take unfair advantage of them.

What are your fondest memories of Nijmegen and Radboud University?

Being loved by my teachers and class fellows.

If you had the opportunity to "do it all over again", what would you have done differently?

Nothing.
Is there anything else you would like to share with the international students and alumni of Radboud University?

You are lucky to have come to Radboud University. It is home, therefore respect it and make it proud of you.

*International Alumni Network
Radboud University
Nijmegen, Holland
May 4, 2011*

Decade after defiance, Jeannine Gramick as hopeful as ever

By Jamie L. Manson

It's been more than a decade since the Vatican attempted to silence Sr. Jeannine Gramick and Fr. Robert Nugent from their work with gay and lesbian Catholics.

Though Nugent agreed in 2000 to abide by the church's prohibition on speaking and writing about homosexuality, Gramick politely declined. In a statement that has become a mantra for many Catholics who seek reforms in the institutional church, Gramick responded, "I choose not to collaborate in my own

oppression."

A newspaper story about her struggle with the Vatican caught the eye of a straight, feminist, New York filmmaker. Barbara Rick, herself a lapsed Catholic, was stunned by the nun's courageous story of defiance. "A woman standing up to the church really got to me," she told the audience.

Rick's nonprofit documentary company, Out of the Blue Films, is "devoted to exceptional storytelling that explores, articulates, and celebrates humanity." Like a true documentarian, she saw film in Gramick's story.

Four years later, *In Good Conscience: Sister Jeannine's Journey of Faith* premiered at Lincoln Center as part of the 2004 Independents Night series.

Barbara Rick and Sr. Jeannine Gramick speak during a session at New York's Strand bookstore June 22. (Photo courtesy Out of the Blue films)

Gramick and Rick reunited in Manhattan during New York City's Pride Week this year in a program titled "Clips and Conversation," hosted by the Strand, a legendary independent book store in the heart of Union Square. Seeing the chemistry between the pair, with their equal wit and passion for justice, it is little wonder they were able to create a film that is as humorous and playful as it is moving and inspiring.

Rick recounted the story of bringing aboard Albert Maysles, considered by many the "dean of documentary filmmaking," to shoot the

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film. During a meeting with Maysles, Rick ran through a bunch of ideas for film projects. Gramick's story made him sit up in his seat and ask eagerly, "Do you have anyone to shoot it?"

Grasping Maysles attention was no small feat given that his works include the cult classic *Grey Gardens*, a riveting portrait of an eccentric mother and daughter secluded in a deteriorating mansion, and *Gimme Shelter*, a profile of the Rolling Stones widely considered one of the greatest rock and roll movies.

With Maysles behind the camera, Rick followed Gramick for over two years. They shot some candid, amusing scenes, like Gramick's morning exercise regimen and her friend's poking fun at her new, "poofy" hairdo. But they also captured compelling moments, like when Gramick encounters anti-gay protestors on a picket line during the U.S. bishops' 2002 meeting in Dallas.

The picket line scene is the most popular episode in the movie, Rick told the audience at the Strand. It's also a scene that almost didn't happen.

"I didn't want to go talk to the protestors...I don't like conflict," Gramick laughingly admitted. But Rick knew well that all films need tension, so she sent Gramick over to talk with a particularly impassioned picketer. Her good direction proved to be revelatory.

Gramick approaches the man, named Michael, who is protesting gay priests, and tries to converse with him. At first, he is belligerent, insisting that there is an underground gay agenda ruining the priesthood. Gramick, seemingly with little effort, interacts with Michael at a human level.

After they talk for a while, he realizes that he is speaking to Sister Gramick, a woman he asked his bishop to remove from diocesan property years ago when she offered a retreat to parents of gays and lesbians. A flash of sorrow runs across his face as Gramick gently tells him how much that action hurt the families.

Though they ultimately cannot agree on their beliefs about homosexuality, they are able to hold hands and pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be to God. Maysles positions the camera perfectly so that their hands were in the center of the frame.

The scene captures a living example of the beatitudes. Watching Gramick engage the protestor, one understands how blessed peacemakers truly are. Their joined hands brilliantly exemplify why Jesus asks us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. With her patience, Gramick finds compassion for this man and together they are able to find mutual respect for their mutual love of the Church.

For Gramick, the scene shows how crucial it is to establish a personal connection with our "opponents" before engaging in heavy intellectual disagreements with them. It is an opportunity increasingly lost in our virtual age where detractors can viciously attack one another anonymously, for all web surfers to read.

Reflecting on the clip of this scene, Rick still seemed struck by the power of its example: "Until Sister Jeannine, I have never met anyone who is able to get this positive message across and follow her conscience and what she believes in without rancor... To do this work without any venom... it's pretty close to Jesus."

For Gramick it is rancor that separates the holy anger of a prophet from destructive anger.

"Anger that eats you up inside and makes you feel badly about yourself and the person you're angry at," she says, is unhealthy for the spirit. "But anger that makes you want to do something positive, anger that 'puts gas in your tank' is the type of anger that leads to justice."

Though the film centers on Gramick's defiance of the Church's edict, she believes it's time to move beyond negative terms when we talk about our conscientious objections to church authorities.

"It's following the call of God," she says. "It's thinking, studying, praying, in order to come to a decision which may or not be what a moral authority teaches. It's a positive thing. It's obedience to the Spirit."

While she maintains a remarkably hopeful disposition toward the institutional church, Gramick isn't unrealistic. When asked by an audience member whether she thought a greater acceptance of gays and lesbians by the hierarchy was on the horizon,

Gramick said that she believes change will happen because change is part of church history.

"But because I know church history, I know change takes centuries," she says.

Of course, she cannot leave that thought without a positive spin.

"We are planting seeds for change at the upper level of leadership," she said. Gramick reminded her listeners that before of Vatican II, scholars and liturgists spent years laying the groundwork for the reforms brought about by the Council. Vatican II, she said, was "more evolutionary than revolutionary."

Gramick is also honest about the fears plaguing the laity when faced with challenging the clergy: "It's hard to go against those we have been trained to think are 'the experts.' But we have to learn to trust God within us."

As greater numbers of lay people discover the courage of their convictions, the church will continue to change because "the church" is the people of God.

"When we started this work, only 20 percent of Catholics believed in equal rights for gays and lesbians," Gramick said. "Now it's over 73 percent. . . . The church is moving."

So, these days, when Gramick is asked what the church believes, she always tells the person what the majority of the members of the Catholic community believe, rather than the teachings of the hierarchy.

For Gramick, it is more important than ever that the laity exercise their consciences because that is what truly leads to change.

Harkening back to her film's title, she reminded the audience, "That's what conscience is. It's the voice of God speaking in our hearts. We need to trust that and not separate ourselves from the spiritual treasures of the church. That's our spiritual heritage."

National Catholic Reporter
July 11, 2011

Spirited vocation: Sister Liz a fixture at Loretto Academy

By María Cortés González



Sister Liz Deines meets with the Loretto Academy HOPE Club... (Vanessa M. Feldman)

As students walked out of class, the warm goodbyes flowed off their tongues.

"Bye, Sister Liz," most said. "You're so sweet" and "we love you," others said.

By now, both she and her students have become accustomed to the moniker "Sister Liz." But the Sister of Loretto still has moments when she can't believe it.

"There are moments, when I say, 'Oh, my gosh, I really am a Sister of Loretto' and I am just so amazed and really grateful to God that he was patient with me in spite of my thick-headedness," said Liz Deines, sitting in her classroom at Loretto Academy.

Deines will officially mark the first anniversary of her final vows of profession, or perpetual vows, on Saturday. But it has been seven years since she decided to enter a religious order, a journey she believes she put off for many years simply by doing other things.

Deines, who was once married but declines to talk about it, said she probably thought about being a nun when she was 7 or 8. She has always maintained close ties to her faith, attending private Catholic schools as a child and teaching catechism.

She received her bachelor of education degree at the University of Texas at El Paso and obtained a master's degree in pastoral liturgy from Santa Clara University in California.

As an educator, she has taught at Loretto Academy since 1997, except when she left in 2004 to pursue her vocation in Kentucky. It takes six to nine years to become a nun, including a year of study and several years of ministry to make first and final vows.

Deines said she believes her family and friends knew she was destined to be a nun before she did.

"When I finally told my brother,

he was cleaning his fish tank and I told him, 'Are you even listening?' And he said, 'The only thing that surprises me is that you were the last one to figure it out. Mom and I had already talked about it and the whole family knew,' " she said.

Deines said her life as a nun has not been an adjustment, especially because she lived in a community with the Sisters of Loretto before making her final vows.

Sister Mary Margaret Murphy, her roommate, said Deines' Mass of final vows in August 2010 was a "celebration of what was firm in her heart and how she wanted to live."

"And she did it very publicly with all the Loretto Academy student body and staff and faculty and the Loretto community, as well as family members from out of town," Murphy said. "So it was a public proclamation of how she had been living, and she makes that commitment every day."

If anything, Deines -- who didn't mind spending an afternoon watching TV before her religious life -- has become more social. The order is known for working on behalf of peace and justice issues. And the Sisters of Loretto are always welcoming of people who come to the convent for meetings, retreats or other events.

"There's a saying that if you've met one Sister of Loretto, you've met one Sister of Loretto," she said with a chuckle, referring to the diversity among sisters.

A typical day for Deines begins with prayer and meditation with three other roommate sisters in their home across the private school. Beyond that, there are few visual signs that distinguish her as a nun.

The order doesn't wear habits anymore. And she spends most of her time at Loretto teaching scripture to freshmen, and morality and justice classes to juniors. She also leads two student organizations, HOPE Club (Helping Other People Everywhere) and LEAP (Liturgy, Eucharist and Prayer). LEAP organizes the monthly student Mass.

About the biggest difference is her finances.

"My paycheck is not my money anymore; it is our money," she said. Her income is sent directly to the

Motherhouse in Kentucky, and Deines receives a living stipend, which she uses to budget her expenses with her roommates.

Sister Annie Stevens, who entered the Sisters of Loretto order the same year, said she and Deines both entered the convent in their later years.

"The midlife continues to be a time in which a lot of people see what the next chapter of their life is going to be. We both entered in 2004 and it gave us time to be educated, establish our professional lives and achieve success in a variety of work and volunteer work," she said.

Stevens, a college educator in St. Louis, believes the main change in their lifestyles is going from a "me"



culture to a "we" culture.

"It's kind of counter culture to the wider society that you achieve success and pile your possessions and money and do things your way," she said. "So it's that real awareness that it's not so much 'I,' but 'we.' "

Spiritually, Deines said, she's still growing.

"I'm still discerning and discovering," she said. "... How I respond to things is now through the lens of God and which I view my life. It helps shape me in my decisions. I identify myself with being a Sister of Loretto and seeing what the needs are and what I can do to meet them."

What has surprised her more than she thought is how deep her attachment has become to her order.

"When a sister died recently, it was so difficult to see that she was gone," Deines said.

"I was surprised at how deeply her death affected me. The saying is true that the strength of a community is in the strength of the lives of its members."

El Paso Times
El Paso, TX
August 19, 2011

Upon reading Tom Roberts' blog on the future of religious life

by Mary Ann McGivern SL

My head is spinning with multiple thoughts on the future of religious life.

In the opening of *New Wineskins*, Sandra Schneiders says there will always be men and women drawn to a communal, spiritual life. I found comfort in those words and I stopped worrying about the future of religious life. It has been a good life for me, and I do not know God's plan for the future.

I joined Loretto to do the work as well as participate in a sacramental kinship. Our founders saw work to be done in rural Kentucky in 1812. We've been working ever since, mostly in schools but also in cholera epidemics and caring for orphans, taking the Santa Fe Trail west and helping to open the frontier, refusing to sign a loyalty oath during the Civil War.

In 1918 Loretto became "canonical," that is subject to Canon Law and the oversight of the Roman Curia instead of the local bishop. The Vatican narrowed our mission from doing the work that we saw needed to be done to teaching in parochial schools.

Within 50 years, Pope Paul VI instructed us to return to our original charism, which we did, working to end war, unionize farm workers, teaching and housing women and children with disabilities and who were survivors of violence, providing spiritual direction, visiting prisoners -- always learning, always teaching.

Loretto will be 200 years old next year. We had 1000 vowed sisters when I joined 52 years ago. Now we are a little less than 450, half

with canonical vows and half co-members with individual contracts. All of us are aging. But when we began, we were only three. In another hundred years, who knows!

For 30 years I lived as a sister within the Catholic Worker community in St. Louis. That's a vibrant young Catholic community, most members in their 20s from St. Louis University, perhaps a different part of the Church's future from those who traveled to Spain for World Youth Day.

That was the starting point for John Allen's news story which mentioned a sisters' survey in passing and then Tom Roberts' blog that looked more closely at the survey data, comparing more conservative and more liberal communities.

Outsiders are eager to drive a wedge between sisters' communities. But three of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity live and work just a few blocks from where I lived with three other sisters plus another dozen women and men at the Worker (not to mention all the guests).

Cardinal Carberry had invited the Missionaries of Charity here, telling them no one in St. Louis was working with the poor. I admit that stung a little, but it wasn't the sisters' fault. The work is there, and not enough people to do it. We share food donations and call on one another for space for women when we were full up. I'm grateful to know they are there too, doing the work. I trust that their lives are as full of grace as mine has been.

And I am grateful for all those young Catholic Workers across the country, praying together, holding

discussions to clarify thought, publishing journals, and doing the corporal works of mercy -- feeding the hungry, visiting prisoners, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, burying the dead.

It's not a matter of which religious style will win out but whether we trust in the Spirit of God acting in each of us. And always the measure is whether we are standing with the poor, like Jesus who was born in a stable and died on a cross.

Mary Ann McGivern is a Sister of Loretto

National Catholic Reporter
August 25, 2011



Loretto Reprints

Loretto Reprints is a compilation of news about the Loretto Community's members and mission. The sisters and co-members of the Loretto Community work for justice and act for peace in a variety of settings. We live in 33 states in the U.S. and 8 countries outside the U.S.

If you would be interested in further information about the Loretto Community, please contact:

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Please send reprints to the above address.

This issue:
scanning and layout Susan Swain SL

Former Resident Celebrates



Sylvia "Penny" McMullen, former resident of Rock Falls, will celebrate her Golden Jubilee marking 50 years as a Sister of Loretto on May 31, 2011, at the Loretto Motherhouse in Kentucky.

After attending St. Andrew's and St. Mary's grade schools and graduating from Newman Central Catholic High School in 1960, she joined the Sisters of Loretto. She went on to earn a B.A. in mathematics from Webster College in St. Louis, an M.A. in math from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, and an M.A. in autism from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York.

She has served in many locations and capacities throughout the years, mostly teaching math at all levels in private and public schools, focusing on students who have difficulty learning. She also trained math teachers in Bolivia, gave workshops in a number of schools, coordinated adult education in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, gave GED workshops in prisons, and worked with the Farm Workers Union.

She also has authored and published several articles about autism

Sister McMullen currently collaborates with a coalition of organizations working for a nuclear-free world.

Correspondence may be mailed to her at the Motherhouse where she will be spending the month of May: Penny McMullen, SL, c/o Loretto Motherhouse, 515 Nerinx Road, Nerinx KY 40049-9999.

After May 25, correspondence may be mailed to her at 113 Camino Santiago, Santa Fe NM 87501.

Sauk Valley Gazette
Sterling, Dixon, Rock Falls IL
May 17, 2011



Golden Jubilarian Sr. Sylvia

Sr. Sylvia Sedillo celebrated her 50th Jubilee as a Sister of Loretto on May 31, 2011, with her classmates at the Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, KY. She is the daughter of the late Roque and Martina Silva Sedillo. Her siblings are Orlando and wife Jeanette; Daniel, Rosina and husband Jack; and Janis. Sylvia was born in Socorro, NM where she attended school with the Sisters of Loretto. She never forgot their kindness and spirit of freedom and joy. Her family moved to Albuquerque in 1950 and she attended St. Francis Xavier and St. Mary's High School, worked as a steno-typist at Kirtland Air Force Base before going to St. Joseph's College and the University of New Mexico. Her ministries included travel to four Republics of the former Soviet Union, seven countries of Western Europe, Mexico and five countries in Latin America.

Sr. Sylvia taught at Loretto all-girl High Schools in St. Louis, El Paso and Kansas City. She received her B.A. from Webster College and M.A. from UMKC. She was director of the Language Institute at the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, TX; director of

a home for single mothers in the Diocese of Gallup; on the national coordinating team of LAS HERMANAS, a national organization of Hispanic Women in the Church; administrative assistant to the Cabinet Secretary of the NM Health and Environment department; program coordinator of the U.S./Mexico Border Health Organization in El Paso, TX; taught at the Santa Fe Community College and Santa Fe High School. She was the founding director of the Women's Spiritual Center in Santa Fe (inter-faith and multicultural); and director of the Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of El Paso. Presently, her ministry is in Albuquerque as a family living provider for her sister Janis who has Down's syndrome.

Sr. Sylvia celebrated with a special Mass in Albuquerque with her family and local Loretto members last September 2010—50 years from when she left for the convent. She said this is when she made all her vows and she is most grateful for such an amazing life.

Reprinted from *People of God*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, August 2011



Speaker of the Day: Sr. Mary Kay Brannan, Sister of Loretto, Retired Teacher

Sister Mary began by expressing her firm belief that God loves all of us. And this belief is backed by the fifty years she has served Him as a nun. She knows that each of us receives a vocation to serve. Those with the vocation of marriage are given the privilege of raising children and grandchildren. Those who are single are loved infinitely, and have the ability to reach out to others that the religious and married cannot reach. These are loved by God no less than He loves those in religious life. God's plan is a plan of love for all people. We are God's beloved. And He is with us always at every single moment of our lives. No matter what we do or fail to do, God's love never changes.

Reminiscing on her life, she believes that she would not change anything. Even in the most difficult times God has been with her. He has sustained her, and strengthened her, and has placed people in her life so that she could grow. God will do that to all of us. This belief was instilled in her by her parents. Although her father was a drinker and her mother was extremely shy, they always believed and taught that no matter what they did God was always at their side.

Sister Mary Kay told of events in her life that led to her vocation. She was educated in public schools except for the 1st and 2nd grades. That was the first time that she met a nun. This nun taught her that God was her best friend. While in public school, an aunt gave her a book of prayer for girls that had a section on vocations. In high school she gave no thought to a religious vocation. But it did come back to her in her senior year. Needing a scholarship to continue her education she applied and received a scholarship at Loretto Heights. Sr. Mary Kay decided that being around nuns in a religious community would convince her that a religious life was not for her. However, she came into contact with a nun that said she would pray for Mary. This nun, Sr. Rose Margaret, convinced Mary to go to a vocation retreat. Mary decided that going to the retreat would convince her that a religious life was not for her. It was then that she found that she indeed had a call to be a nun.

In her life as a nun, she has taught in schools of every economical level, the wealthiest to the poorest. She has taught in rural and urban schools. She has worked as a Certified Nurse Assistant working with the elderly in infirmaries and hospitals. She has worked in their missions in New Mexico. In every one of those work areas, Sr. Mary Kay has found Christians and non-Christians that have taught her that we are God's beloved and he is always with us. She advises us to go and be the Eucharist for others.



*Serra Club of
Northwest Denver
April 2011*

Marin Independent Journal
marinij.com

Iraqi recalls what it was like in Baghdad on 9/11 and after

By Farah Mohsen
Guest op-ed column
Posted: 09/11/2011

LAST MONTH I was invited to speak at the Iraq Veterans Against the War convention in Portland, Ore. I was asked to reflect on my experience as an Iraqi student living in the United States. How does it feel living in the country that invaded mine? As I reflected on my memories of the invasion, I went back a little further in time, remembering the reasons that led to the invasion in the first place.

It was four in the afternoon in Baghdad. My older sister had just picked my younger sister and

myself up from school. I was in 10th grade.

The first thing my sister and I did when we got home, even before taking off our school uniforms, was turn on the television. My mother had just arrived from work and when she saw what was on the screen she was confused. The news was on and we found that odd until the footage of the attack was showed.

The strongest nation in the world was in chaos. The images were of the dead on the ground, people screaming and crying, and one man covered in dust as if he just been resurrected from under the bricks, holding his arms out as if saying "Why?"

Why? That's the question

that crossed the minds of Iraqis just as it crossed the minds of Americans and the rest of the world. Why would America be attacked? Why the Twin Towers? Why now?

Shortly after the attack, fingers started pointing in directions that seemed to make no sense at all

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for Iraqis, especially after Osama bin Laden spoke out in a video claiming full responsibility for the attack, saying revenge for the suffering of Afghani and Iraqi people was his intention.

But Iraqis still had no clue why accusations were coming their way; we were caught in the same storm. If the attackers were originally from Saudi Arabia, belonging to an extremist, Sunni terrorist group, living in caves in the mountains of Afghanistan, then why is Iraq in the middle of this all?

Remember, Saddam Hussein was never a fan of bin Laden; Iraq was a secular state and the majority of Iraqis are Shia. Why?

Using the premise of Iraq's association with al-Qaida and the hope of spreading democracy, both reasons seemed legitimate enough to invade my country, dismantle its infrastructure and bring a group of incompetent men to rule, allowing for hundreds of thousands of Iraqi men, women and children to die and more than 4 million people to live as refugees and suffer in dire conditions. Why?

The lives of many people have changed, including mine. I was only 18 when the invasion happened. I remember the skies

turning grey from the smoke from all the bombings, and the streets looked foreign to me for the first time. I went with my sister to her school and we found American tanks parked nearby. American soldiers were at the front door.

One of them spoke to me, he said "Assalamu Aalaikum" smiling, waiting for me to respond but I didn't. He said it again, this time louder as if he wanted to make sure I would hear him. "Assalamu Aalaikum!"

I looked up, staring into his eyes, and said nothing. As I walked into school with my sister, I was shivering with anger from head to toe, thinking "Why?" Why is a stranger standing outside of my sister's school? Why is he in my home? In my city? Why is he marching down my streets as if he knows where he is going? Why is he pointing his rifle at my people? What did they do to him? They are only simple people. All they want to do is live day by day and pray to God that tomorrow will be better. Why?

I was blessed to be able to come to the United States and get a quality education at a great private school such as Dominican University. Despite that fact I am

still traumatized by the invasion, and the fact my family is spread everywhere out of Iraq, and despite the fact that the politics of this country made the world believe that my people killed 3,000 innocent men and women on Sept. 11. Despite all of that I still believe that there is more to the American people than what their politicians conveyed.

I am here to educate and be educated. I am here to tell the story of Iraq and the Iraqi people and show that we are not what the world sees on their TV screens. We are at the end of the day the victims of the same storm; the storm of blood and anger.

This opportunity that I have here is priceless. I have the chance to experience the meaning of true peace, and that it can be a living reality. I see that people in America want an end to this unjust war as much as my people do. This is my story.

Farah Mohsen, an Iraqi, is a student at Dominican University of California in San Rafael. She is a former UN Loretto Volunteer.

*Marin Independent Journal
Marin County, CA
September 11, 2011*

Math professor returns to teaching after wife's death

Ed Sakurai, math professor, is returning to teach for the Fall 2011 semester after the death of his wife, Anna Barbara Sakurai, professor emeritus.

"Ed's doing the best as can be expected" said Larry Granda, math professor and former student of Ed Sakurai, "He did say he was excited to get back into the classroom."

Ed Sakurai will teach calculus I and calculus III.

Anna Barbara Sakurai died three days after a car accident on June 1 in Portland, Oregon. She was

80. Ed Sakurai was also injured, although not seriously.

Anna Barbara Sakurai started teaching at Webster in 1963, She joined the Sisters of Loretto in 1950, but left the order after falling in love with Ed Sakurai. Even after her departure from the convent, Anna Barbara Sakurai and Ed Sakurai still remained involved Ed Sakurai still remained involved with the Loretto sisters and sat as co members of the order.

Throughout her career, Anna Barbara Sakurai remained faithful to serving the homeless. She started a

service group of Webster students and faculty who served a meal to the homeless once a month at Sts. Peter and Paul Church.

To her friends and co-workers, Anna Barbara Sakurai was a faithful Christian and social activist.

Ed Sakurai is a Loretto Co-Member

*The Journal
Webster Groves, MO
August 17-30, 2011*

The misfit muscovy

By Cecily Jones



When he first came
uninvited and haughtily ignored
by the mallard and the pair of whites
I watched his dragging leg,
his fear-filled eye
wary in his bobbing head
with that mask of pebbled scarlet skin.

The others strutted squatty promenade
of circled pond, slope of yard, grotto path,
full of chatter quite triumphal
trying to outrun this novice on their turf.

I muse about the secret of the muscovy
so suddenly appearing on our land.
Did he flee the goat farm on the hill
or desert a migratory flock?

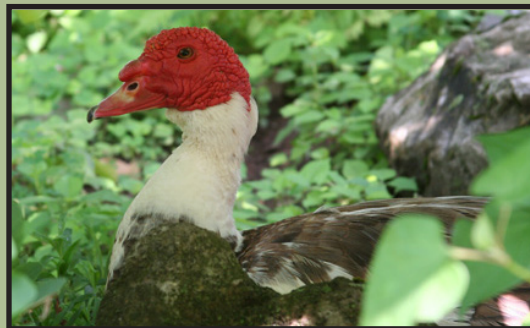
Or was he sent as messenger to us
who sometimes learn
from seers so unseemly?

Of the child unchosen for the team
or the girl who's never asked to dance,
the ones forever on the fringe
pulling nervously at sleeve or skirt,
waiting grimly for the party's end,
this muscovy is mirror.

As he edges toward the clustered clique
does he dream of fitting in?

O clumsy witness to the pain
of being shunned, beneath bravado
your masquerade's revealed.
In loneliness you help us learn to love.

Cecily Jones is a vowed member of the Sisters of Loretto, a congregation of Catholic Sisters. A retired English teacher at Webster College (now University), she lives in her order's motherhouse in rural Kentucky.



JUS+WOMEN
Disciples of Christ
Summer 2011

An invitation to reflection:

This week we received a poignant note from Marie Ego of the Loretto Community. She writes:

I would like to call everyone's attention to the first reading for the liturgy on September 11, 2011. It is from the book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 27:30-28:9. It is eerily appropriate for our remembrance of September 11, 2001. I invite you to read it again keeping what has been going on in the world regarding our relationship with Muslims, immigrants and foreigners. I find the reading both providential and prophetic for the occasion.

Reading I Sir 27:30-28:7

Wrath and anger are hateful things,
yet the sinner hugs them tight. The
vengeful will suffer the LORD's
vengeance, for he remembers
their sins in detail. Forgive your
neighbor's injustice; then when you
pray, your own sins will be forgiven.

Could anyone nourish anger against
another and expect healing from
the LORD? Could anyone refuse
mercy to another like himself, can
he seek pardon for his own sins?
If one who is but flesh cherishes
wrath, who will forgive his sins?

Remember your last days, set
enmity aside; remember death and
decay, and cease from sin! Think
of the commandments, hate not
your neighbor; remember the Most
High's covenant,
and overlook faults.

St. Dominic Parish Bulletin
Denver, CO
September 11, 2011

Personalist Perspective from Syria

By Gabe Huck and Theresa Kubasak

We began living in Damascus six years ago. The last four of those years have been given to the Iraqi Student Project, a small effort at reparation and reconciliation. Each year we help about a dozen young Iraqis who work hard for ten months to be ready for undergraduate study in good colleges/universities in the US. So far almost 50 students have gone off to study from Tufts and Dartmouth in the East to Gonzaga and the University of Oregon in the West. After studies we hope they will return to the Iraq they love so much. What follow is from a recent letter to our friends, many of whom asked: What's going on in Syria? What's going on in that ancient and biblical and Islamic and poor and vilified (by US media and politicians, you know why) land? We could only write to them of what we ourselves see and hear.

We read daily on the Internet some of what you are reading about Syria. Daily papers in English are sold in Damascus (Imagine that!) and maybe once a week we buy the *International Herald Tribune* and the *Daily Star* from Beirut. What we'd like to do is not analyze all that but share with you some of what we hear from Syrian friends. None of these are the real names.

Ahmed and another friend of ours work in a little store selling household items. Ahmed, probably about 40, lives with his family in a part of Damascus called Midan, a well-known neighborhood that was built up centuries ago as the place where people from the west, north and east gathered each year to form caravans for the journey to Mecca. We had heard once or twice that there had been clashes on Fridays after prayer outside one of the many mosques in Midan. Ahmed told us yes, but he said that lately this happens every Friday. When the midday prayer ends, those in the mosque know they will confront people who have gathered outside. The sense is those inside want change in Syria, those outside support the regime. He didn't speak of shooting but of confrontations, slogans, people on both sides with clubs, sticks.

Another friend told us later that he has been there in Midan with the Red Crescent on more than one Friday to care for the wounded. He described some terrible wounds he has dealt with and the

difficulty in getting people to medical care. He is worn out from so much time on duty in various areas of the city.

In June the Red Crescent sent Basim to the Golan Heights on the second of two occasions when the Syrian government allowed young Palestinians to approach and cross the border into that part of the Golan occupied by Israel since 1967. On the first such event, the anniversary of the Nakba, the 1948 catastrophe, some of these Palestinian residents of Syria were shot by Israeli troops when they tried to cross the line. A few weeks later, another group approached the same border point. This second time was different and it seemed to Basim that the young Palestinians were the victims not only of Israeli guns but also of the Palestinian organization that gathered them and the Syrian authorities that seemed to manage the whole event. Again, young Palestinians from Damascus were killed, fired on from both sides. Also Basim saw his co-workers with the Red Crescent attacked by men who seemed to be part of the Syrian contingent.

Mahmood is Palestinian but has lived his 50 years in Yarmouk, one of the areas of Damascus build up by Palestinians since they came in 1948 and 1967 as refugees. He did not go to the Golan border but was there when the dead were buried in the Palestinian community. The second time this happened the community moved from burying the young victims in the neighborhood cemetery to confront the organization that had sent these young people on the journey to Golan. The mourners walked together to the headquarters of this organization. Rock throwing by the crowd and shooting by the guards followed and cars were set on fire. Since then it has been quiet in this crowded area just south of Damascus. The mood in that community had changed, eyes had been opened to how Palestinian lives had been used.

Syria is a complex place with various strong identities: Palestinians who came as refugees 60 years ago, Iraqis who came as refugees from 2003 until now, Kurds, Christians, Ismailis, Druze, and of course everyone hears now of the Sunni majority and the Alawites,

a small minority in power since 1970. Mahmood thinks the number of people who want change is growing, in great part because of the way the government has responded to protests. But it is also important to know that many people trust the present regime and want it to stay in power. These are not just those close to the regime but include most Christians (roughly 10% of Syria's population) who have felt comfortable and safe with the regime and want to stay that way. We heard several stories in the past weeks indicating that those protesting are making great efforts to be inclusive and to show that this is not sectarian.

George is the oldest of four siblings in a Christian family. He is mid-20s and has finished college. Because there is no work in his area of study, he is helping his father run their store. Like many small stores in the *souq* area of the Old City, they depend on tourists. Last year the tourists came in the largest numbers ever, especially during the spring season. But this year, George and his father are going weeks without selling a single thing. Still, the family fully supports the regime and believes the "pro" side of the story. And this economic drought is the same at the hotels, the restaurants. And it trickles up and it spreads out. Among those affected are many families in the Christian quarter of the Old City whose livelihood depends on the rooms they rent to foreign students and tourists. Now there are no foreigners.

The Syrian economy, which went through the world recession of 2008-09 without any problems, is ruined. It will take years to get visitors coming again. The general mood is one of worry; people are not spending money when they know there may be no more money coming in. In many areas of the city now every day there are unemployed people putting rugs or blankets on the sidewalk and setting up to sell some item. This sidewalk selling (especially in front of merchants' stores) is illegal, but the police are ignoring it, presumably because most of these people might otherwise become part of the opposition. Shoppers are bargain hunting from the street sellers while merchants sit in their little shops and play backgammon the livelong day.

Rania, one of our neighbors, told
continued on page 12

us her father has a store selling pots and pans and such. He has several employees. There is almost no business at all, but he won't let his employees go because to him that would be unjust to them and their families. So he still pays their wages, still provides a midday meal for them as they wait for someone to come and buy something.

The airport, where we have been several times the past few weeks, is not, even at its busiest, what most of us would think of as the airport of a city of four to six million people. This is a poor country and the vast majority, even in the capital city, will never fly anywhere. But now? The Damascus airport is nearly deserted. These last weeks the airlines that fly to Damascus are cutting back on the number of weekly flights. Some Iranian pilgrims continue to come to visit the shrines of saints in Damascus.

Mariam is another young Syrian friend. One of her parents is Sunni, the other Alawite. She went a few weekends ago to visit them in Latakia, a Syrian city on the Mediterranean. During the nights she heard gun shots and explosions and chanted slogans from the streets. The tension was more clearly sectarian here. Some say the regime wants to foster this as an explanation for Syria's troubles. Few Syrians we know think that sectarianism has anything to do with the protest movement, that Syrians are proud yet to be a country of many large and small religious communities. Mariam goes about her life, as do all of these people, hoping there can be immediate movements to change without further bloodshed and without divisions between Syrians. Syrians killing Syrians causes such sadness and fear. All one need do to witness this sadness is look at the faces of people of Damascus.

Two doctors, both elderly, have separately expressed their conviction that enough is enough. They would welcome a meaningful way for other political parties to enter the scene. Both observations came without asking. Some of the ISP students who daily ride the minibuses that provide most of the public transportation in Damascus, have said that now they hear Syrians visiting about matters political as they ride, something fairly unknown before.

The women who work at the women's hammam (baths) weep for Syria, for all the dead, for the disruption

of normal life. And they support the President in every way. They most clearly distrust the hand of the US in all of this: in its call for US citizens to leave Syria, in its constant use of sanctions against Syria, in the blustering of Hillary and Barack and others against Bashar, in its support of Israel and its butting into the affairs of Syria. These women are well informed about the role of the US in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and of the US support for Israel. They saw the US Congress rise 29 times to applaud an Israeli Prime Minister who scorns 60 years of UN resolutions that even the US voted for. The women say to Theresa: "We know that in the US there are people who sleep under bridges and people who can't get health care." As if to say: Solve the problems your people have at home don't meddle here.

Until all this, Friday mornings were a wonderfully quiet time in neighborhoods and on the streets. The midday call to prayer then brought many people into the streets, moving toward nearby mosques. Little by little during the afternoon and into the evening, the city came partially back to normal busy-ness. Now people stay home all day Friday and may not even go to the mosque or to see parents and grandparents. The sidewalks and streets stay mostly deserted even in the evening. No one was told to stay home, but it has happened this way.

You may have read about a gathering at a downtown Damascus hotel on June 26. Nearly 200 people, including many who have long opposed the regime, met for hours of open discussion about what is needed. And of course some opposition people did not come. We have no knowledge of this meeting except for what the press reported in the West. The main thing is, it happened. If the regime is to dialogue, partners have to emerge. And now it seems possible they can emerge inside Syria. The regime has made concessions several times during these weeks, but most would agree that these do not go far enough. There isn't a consensus that Syria must do what Egypt and Tunisia did – sweep away the former government, send the leaders into exile. Bashar Al-Assad did have a lot of support. We would judge that in matters of foreign policy, particularly in matters relating to Syria's stance on Israel and toward the US, he had and still has near

universal support in Syria. That's a great difference from Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Bahrain, where the people opposed the leaders' collaboration with the US. But Bashar has badly misjudged the situation and missed opportunities to end the violence.

There's a feeling of bravado not to say bullying among the regime's car-honking, flag-waving, mean-sounding supporters on the street. But all of that may be quite shallow. In contrast to those elements, the regime has hired some fairly sophisticated PR people from somewhere whose well-done graphics and new slogans are on posters and billboards all over the city. There are new patriotic songs coming from the radio. All this seems to build not so much on "we love Bashar" as on "we love Syria" – because people do. Iraqis and Syrians seem to have a different notion of love of their country than Americans. Their love is about colors, smells, seasons, rivers. Armies and wars and governments play almost no part.

The facts are hard to know even living in central Damascus, maybe especially there. And the truth is even harder to know than the facts. Two people, both foreigners who have lived a long time in Syria, independently spoke to us of their worst fear: Syria becoming a sort of North Korea, cut off from the rest of the world by people-punishing sanctions imposed by the West. That is sobering to hear and very sad for us who have come to know Syria as a place of good and generous people (who else would take all the Iraqi refugees and let them stay on and on?).

At any rate, it would be well if all of us knew more about the history and reality of Syria and the larger Middle East. Recommendations from this year's reading would include Ussama Makdisi's *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations*. Parts of this story haven't often been told, others have but here they are told with a great sense for what we in the US have lost and then lost again and then again. Another excellent book on this larger picture is Jeremy Salt's *The Unmaking of the Middle East*.

Theresa Kubasak is a Co-member of Loretto

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