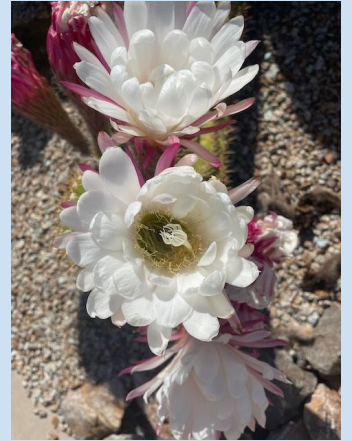




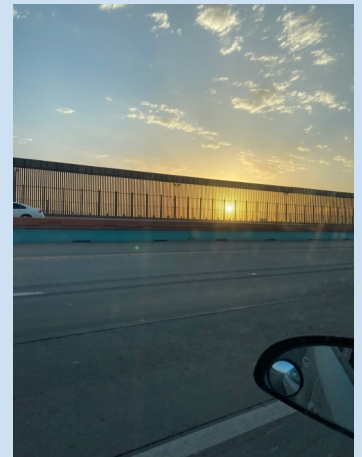
What's Up ? US Out West ! Special Focus Edition — April 2022



Arizona



El Paso/ Ciudad Juarez, and sunset through the wall



California

Celebrations !!!



Top Row: Srs. Yolanda Mendoza, Helen Timothy, Terri Stafford, Veronica Duggan (former IBVM), and Srs. Anne Fitzsimons and Judy Illig
Bottom Row: Srs. Dymrna Doran, Raphael Quinn, Elizabeth Carey



Sr. Mary Thomas Fullem and Sr. Laverne Fullem



Kathy Pidgeon and Sr. Raphael Quinn

Several occasions brought the Prescott/Phoenix communities and Companions together this month. There was the annual fundraiser—an auction—for the school. Sr. Augustine (Gus) reached her 99th birthday. The third annual golf tournament was held (in 95+degree weather!). And Sr. Raphael's 50th year as principal of SS Simon and Jude School was celebrated with class and much joy!

Sr. Helen Timothy and Sr. Judy Illig joined for the Golf Outing and for the luncheon celebration. Sr. Helen spoke for all of us, recalling steps along the way for Sr. Raphael and thanking her for her amazing gift to and for the people of SS Simon and Jude.

Veronica Duggan, former IBVM in Arizona, was present for the occasions, and was an invaluable help to the sisters in preparation and celebration. Also joining the festivities were Sr. Raphael's brother and sister-in-law, delightful and delighted, from Ireland.

Kathy Pidgeon, friend and donor, established a scholarship fund in Sr. Raphael's name, for students in need at SS Simon and Jude. Kathy is matching any donation up to \$50,000!

Though Raphael did not want a big fuss, she was grateful and very touched by the outpouring of love throughout the days.



Benny Aguilar, 8th grader, spoke from his heart to honor Sister Raphael at the luncheon. Benny also illustrated the book about Sr. Raphael written by Mary Jo Wahlers for the occasion.

Third Annual Golf Tournament, Phoenix Arizona



Hot and happy, Sr. Helen and her foursome



Sr. Raphael and Sr. Helen



The winners! All SSSJ graduates!

Grand Canyon University Golf Course in Phoenix was the site of the annual Saint Simon and Jude Golf Tournament. The 7200 yard course challenged golfers on every hole! The extended fairways and deep bunkers were as difficult as playing in 95 degree heat!

I was playing in a foursome that included Sr. Judy's niece's husband. He was a superior golfer whose skills made our team look good! After the 78 golfers finished the course, we celebrated our scores at a buffet that featured Mexican food. The winners of this tournament were SSSJ graduates and amazing golfers!

- Helen Timothy, IBVM



Companion Coordinator, Dana Wolze, was in Phoenix at the time and joined several AZ Companions for the celebration.



Left to right: Janice Flood, Wilma Martin, Lisa Grant, L'Jeanne Fairbourn, Sr. Judy Illig, Lynne Wyse, Gail Caretto, Mary Novotny and Sharon Ryan

<https://youtube.com/user/ssjschoolaz>



Dana Wolze, Sr. Judy and John Varani, our Mid-west/ Southwest Companion

TO HEAR THE CHILDREN SING THE IRISH BLESSING, CLICK ON THE LINK TO THE LEFT. THE VIDEO OF THE CHILDREN IS THE 5TH ONE, BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL MORE YOU CAN BROWSE!

Dana Wolze: I was very fortunate to return (to Phoenix) this spring, and attended the official 50th Anniversary Celebration in honor of Sr. Raphael who has served as principal of the SS Simon & Jude School since 1972. At every turn, the tender love was evident as the staff, students, parents, Companions and Pastor created a luncheon and reception for all to thank her for the love she has shared for so many years.

The Chorus students adapted the words from the Little Mermaid song, *Part of Your World*, and performed it live with the refrain proclaiming, 'We love that nun'! The teachers and pastor danced to a parody of ABBA's *Mama Mia*, and the Kindergarten and preschool students performed a song version of *The Irish Blessing*, with all the body movements to go along with those sweet angelic voices. Watch the attached link and just try to keep a dry eye! Love flowed all around!

Attending the celebration allowed me to meet many of the incredibly involved Companions that gather regularly, in person as well as via Zoom. Their love flows freely in relationship to each other as well as the sisters. I know I am blessed to be connected to such an incredible source of justice, tender love and those who walk humbly with God! The Arizona IBVM's and Companions are a wonderful group of love. Visit them and see for yourself!

-Dana Wolze, Wheaton Companion

Song by 8th Graders in Honor of Sr. Raphael

To the tune of "Part of Your World"
from The Little Mermaid

Look at this nun,
Isn't she great?!
Deciding to come here
Sealed her fate.
She's got memories and stories aplenty.
She's got banners and trophies galore.
You want spelling bee winners?
She's got twenty.
But who cares? No big deal. She wants more!
She wants to be where the students are.
She wants to see, wants to see 'em reading,
Scoring so high on their math tests with ease.
Wasting your time, you don't get too far.
Effort's required for growing, learning,
Service to others and don't forget SLE's.
Consistency, persistency, set your goals high,
high as can be.
Do not tell lies, get organized, and she says

you'll succeed.
What I would give, if I could live one
day as "Stir" Raphael!
What I would pay to walk a day
wearing her shoes!
Betcha it's fun to be a nun.
Bet they don't reprimand their Sisters.
Brightest women, sick of swimmin',
ready to stand.
I'm ready to know what
"Stir" Raphael knows,
Ask her my questions and she would
answer:
Remember to pray every day and do
your best!
How has she done all that she's done?

She's done a ton in a fifty year run!
She's a number one!
We love that nun!
She's part of our world!



Honoring Sr. Raphael on behalf of the Sisters of the US Region

50 years of Parent-Teacher Conferences

50 years of Teacher Contracts...

50 years of Faculty Meetings

50 years of leading a school - faith community – through world changes

Phoenix - April 9, 2022

Good Afternoon:

...In anticipation of being here today, I worked with our archivist and reviewed the highlights of Sr. Raphael's early history. From Mullingar, through elementary and Loretto High School—to her entrance in the Institute at Navan – even the early years were marked with accomplishments and service for others. I loved to read of her success in field hockey, tennis and badminton. I know you will not be surprised to learn that Sister was a Champion Irish Dancer!

In her time in formation, Sister Raphael prayed to be considered for missioning to Arizona. And, Thank God, those prayers were answered!

And the rest is history! Two things I want you to know...There are NO other IBVM's who have stayed 50 years in leadership – Principal of such a prestigious school for 50 years!...

Secondly --- there are not many Principals who have the "The Pope" come to them!

On September 14, 1987, Pope John Paul II entered your Cathedral to a packed house...of course, being the Principal, Sister could sit in the front row. Lisa Rensch, a parishioner stated in a newspaper interview – "Sister put all the kids in the front and she sat in the back of the Church"...

Of the many honors Sister has received over the years, her "Guardian of Hope" Award from the Diocese of Phoenix, struck me. Being interviewed Sr. Raphael stated, "My whole thing is to lead by example and give teachers that enthusiasm for spreading the gospel"....

"God talks to me through the scripture and the goodness of children."

Sr. Raphael, today 612 IBVM's around the world celebrate your dedicated commitment to the mission of the Institute. We thank you for your spirit, selfless love, and extraordinary accomplishments. We love you and wish you every happiness in the years ahead. - Helen Timothy, IBVM

More Celebrations !!!



Sr. Augustine Dempsey

Gus turns

99 !

Great turn out
for the auction!



**Auction Night at
School!**



**At the Borders
Tucson, El Paso
and Juarez**

**Parra families
celebrate life!**



**Greetings from the
Parra Family!**

Babies, Baptisms and a Wedding !

- Sr. Christa Parra

"Rejoice with me!"

February was a very special month for our family. We celebrated the baptisms of my nephew, Ralphy Rey (Ralphy and Felicia's son), and my niece, Lily Christa (Gabriel and Bobbie's daughter). I am over the moon to be one of the godmothers/madrinas/ninas! My brother William is also one of the godfathers/padrinos/ninos! Deacon Tony celebrated the baptism in Bisbee, Arizona at St. Patrick's Church. Fun fact: My mom and dad had my three brothers and me baptized in this same church as babies. It has been a few years since our family has come together for a celebration and you could certainly feel the love. God is so good!

A few days after the baptism, our family returned to St. Patrick's Church for a wedding! My brother Ralphy and sister-in-law Felicia were married on 2/2/22! It was another glorious and beautiful day! One of the traditions for a Mexican wedding is for the bride to present a bouquet of roses to our Blessed Mother and pray in front of her. One of my favorite moments was when Ralphy, Felicia, and their three children (Angelo, Angelina and Baby Ralphy) presented the bouquet to Our Lady while the song Hail Mary, Gentle Woman played. After the ceremony, we continued to celebrate with delicious Mexican food and dancing! The handsome groom and gorgeous bride were so happy!



Playdough project at a shelter in Juarez



That week, I returned to our ministry in Juarez, Mexico. I was blessed to accompany a woman and her 7 year old daughter to the International Bridge to cross into the U.S. These moments do not happen very often due to the current restrictions on the asylum process. This woman's life was in danger as her father had been killed by a cartel in Mexico a few years ago and her brother is still missing after being kidnapped. She was staying at the shelter where I am serving. When we got to the bridge, the little girl put on a pink sparkly headband in the shape of a tiara that she had just received as a gift. With their heads held high, they walked over the bridge, and presented themselves to the border patrol. Gracias a Dios they were processed and allowed into the U.S. The next day, I met them at a shelter in El Paso. From there, I drove them to the bus station where they would go to California to be with their family. I will say it again..."**Rejoice with me!"**



Happy Birthday in Juarez!

No one knew these three individuals, like minded and like spirited with regards to the refugees, would be like minded in what to wear!



Shelter workers gather in El Paso and Magnificat House (Sr. Christa's home) for a day of rest, relaxation and prayer.





APRIL IS POETRY MONTH



For over 20 years *Arizona Cowboy Poets* volunteer performers have visited 4th grade classes in Prescott, AZ to teach about cowboy history, AZ ranching, recite cowboy stories and poems and perform cowboy songs. This happens every April (National Poetry Month). The object is for students to write their own cowboy poems. 3 winners from each class are chosen to recite their poems alongside real Cowboy Poets from around the country, at the annual Arizona Cowboy Poetry Gathering in August.

The "Rusty Pistols Reloaded" (pictured with the class) taught about cowboy poetry and performed for Sr. Terri's 4th grade at Sacred Heart School. The students are now working on their entries, using cowboy lingo and poetry techniques to prepare a cowboy poem for the contest. The class winner in 2017 was Tahlia for "Into the Rodeo".



Into the Rodeo

Sitting in the grandstands
Waiting for the rodeo to
begin
Hearing the clanking of the
gate
As El Toro's hooves dig in!
The cowboy holds on tight,
With all his might!
The cowboy on El Toro
Is the main sight!
Finish up the rodeo!
Yippee ti yi yo!
Yippee ti yi ya!
Goodbye to El Toro!



California!

What would Jesus do? Two experiences of Companion

Bill Durborough who leads the St. Clare Parish Social Justice Committee in Roseville CA. I asked him for some 'slice of life' stories from his ministry:

I was out at "WWJD" (What Would Jesus Do) here in Roseville last week and met this gentleman who rode up on a bike. He was obviously homeless. He had borrowed the bike from his friend because someone had stolen not only his bike, but everything he owned. He got his food and I told him he could take anything from the clothes on the tables that he could use. I gave him a big bag and he filled it to the top with cold and warm weather clothing. I noticed he was limping, and I asked him how he rode his bike and if he was OK. He said that he was 56 years old and that a car pulled out in front of him when he was 19 while driving his motorcycle. It took 3 men to lift the front of the car up to get him out of the wheel well. He said at 19 he thought he was invincible, and he would be OK, but as he got older, he got worse. He could hardly walk but said it was no problem on the bike. I talked to him about getting early Social Security Disability insurance and he said it was too much of a hassle filling out the paperwork, so I asked him if he considered talking to an attorney and he hadn't. I will try and get him some names tomorrow if he shows up. We served about 10-15 men and women that Wednesday morning.



**What Would Jesus do
in California?**

I was at Railroad Drive by the Sacramento River giving out clothes. Later that same night we met a man who rode up on a bike and was complaining how he hated to be homeless and asked us about possible housing that he could get into. Unfortunately, since it is in Sacramento County, we couldn't help much because we are mainly just involved with Placer County. He said that he had only been homeless a short time. He said he used to make \$156 per hour and \$6240 per week (doing what he did not say) and then he had a major heart attack and lost everything. He seemed like a bright articulate guy, but very mad about the hand that life had recently dealt him. He got shorts and seven T-shirts, food and some batteries and was on his way. We served about 25-30 men and women that night.



MVP Moral Values Program—Sacramento

-Submitted by Companion Maria Victorio

Maria Victorio is a teacher and vice principal of St. Patrick Academy in Sacramento, CA. She and her extended family have been running the MVP program for 20 years. She is a “Jill of all trades” in teaching as well as in community action. I am not sure when she sleeps, but she seems tireless in the works of mercy in the south area of Sacramento. I think her theme song is Acuna Matata from Lion King—No Worries!

- Mary Carton, IBVM

Today more than ever we are in need of youth programs to help keep young kids out of danger. We have recently started seeing a rise in violence around our country and much of it is towards our children. This is why we must continue to support all programs, especially those that are grass-roots and have been created to meet the needs of our youth in their neighborhoods.

The Moral Values Program has been serving the South Sacramento community for over 20 years. The focus of MVP is to help the youth stay out of trouble and to encourage them to continue their education by empowering them with moral guidance such as - Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit. The program not only supports the children of the neighborhood but also assists their families and the community with food three times a week.

The program has changed over the years and now runs a school “MVP Diamond Academy” that caters to our most troubled youth in grades 6th - 8th. We continue to serve the community with after-school tutoring, homework help, and holiday gatherings like Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Moral Values Program exists today because of the generosity of individual donors who believe in the work that we do. Visit mvpsacramento.org to learn about the program and ways in which you can help.

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.

" Mother Teresa"



This beautiful sunflower was drawn and colored by Companion Peggy Weseloh in California. It represents her hope and her kindness. Hers is a wonderful ministry of presence.



Peggy Weseloh