

CONNECTIONS

Newsletter



April 2022

Sister Rita Claire and Hahn Vo at River Bend Nature Center



Hahn Vo enjoying an ice cream with Sister Rita Claire at the local Dairy Queen



OLV OPENS ITS DOORS TO A NEW ROOMMATE & FRIEND

Hahn Vo, Sister Clara Hoai Chau Vo's niece, is an international graduate student at UNT in Denton working on a degree in accounting. Currently, she is completing an internship in Fort Worth and living at OLV. After graduating this December, she hopes to find a job with a company that will sponsor her for a work visa. If not, she will return to Vietnam in 2023.

Hahn says, "I am so thankful for being approved to stay with the Sisters during my internship in Fort Worth. During my stay here, I have learned that, no matter how old you are, be present, and you will have a good day every day. The Sisters talk to and care about me, a stranger, like a family member. I am so touched and grateful. I like to spend time doing puzzles with the Sisters at night, which helps me relax and relieve stress. Besides the Sisters, I also have

a chance to talk to the nurses who are so nice, dedicated, and patient with the Sisters."

One day recently Hahn drove the Wichita Falls Sisters home after meetings in Fort Worth. **Sister Rita Claire** volunteered to accompany Hahn because she knew Hahn would be by herself when she headed home. According to Hahn, "We had a lot of fun on this trip. We stopped by the River Bend Nature Center in Wichita Falls on

the way back and had hamburgers with ice cream for dinner at Dairy Queen. Now I know Sr. Rita Claire is a big fan of ice cream!"



Sister Charles Marie, Hahn Vo and Sister Rita Claire enjoying a puzzle



Smiles for burgers

FESTIVAL OF TABLES IS BACK

Women's Club of Good Shepherd Catholic Community in Colleyville has been faithfully serving the Sisters for years through projects like Angel Tree at Christmas and a soup and salad luncheon every fall. The Festival of Tables, though, has grown into an annual tradition and fundraiser that has been greatly missed because of Covid. We're thrilled to report that the event was held once again last month and it was spectacular! Group members

volunteered to decorate tables and fill them for dinner. Then attendees got to choose the best decked-out table — and boy, the competition was fierce! The rabbit-themed table hopped to the winner's spot, but themes like Garden of Eden, Downton Abbey, pumpkins and Christmastime were beautiful as well. Four Sisters attended and according to the group's liaison, **Sabrina Fernando**, "We love to have them with us."

Sabrina Fernando, Tracy Vecchio, Susan Wegman & Pat Needham



BIRTHDAYS



Sister Rita Claire Davis celebrates her birthday



Sister Ines Diaz, Hahn Vo & Sister Rita Claire

OPEN WINDOW TO A LIFE WORTH LIVING

By Sister Clara

I am **Sister Clara Hoai Chau Vo** and I was born in Saigon, Vietnam. For 35 years I lived in the convent of another order. Following some difficulties, I asked for permission to visit my brother in Arizona and take time to think about my vocation.

Providentially, my best childhood friend named **Hoa** lives in Fort Worth, Texas. She came to visit me in Arizona, and I shared my sad story with her. She told me, "Don't give up your religious life. I will find somewhere for you in America!" She talked to a Catholic Vietnamese gentleman, **Thien Ta**, who lives in Fort Worth and ministers in a Vietnamese parish there. He knew **Sister Yolanda Cruz** and contacted her about the possibility of my joining her congregation.

In my heart I did not want to enter any

Congregation because of all that had happened to me. Reluctant as I was, I wrote to the leader of the Sisters of Saint Mary and asked to come and see. The first Sister I met was **Sister Barbara Wilson** who was in Arizona visiting her brother. That meeting made me optimistic. Then Sister Yolanda encouraged me through her email. Finally, I came and stayed with the Sisters at Mercy Community in Wichita Falls. From the first day I was warmly welcomed and received much healing when the Mercy Community prayed with me for extended periods. Day by day I was freed from my sad memories. The experience now reminds me of a line from the film, *The Sound of Music*: "When the Lord closes the door, someone else opens the window." The Sisters not only opened the window, but also their arms and hearts, embracing



Sister Clara Vo

me warmly. I have found with the Sisters of St. Mary a life worth living — a life of service, of love and a life that has respect for differences.

I lived in Wichita Falls for 15 years, working every day in the garden, cooking meals for my community and serving at daily Mass. Then two years ago, the Sister Provincial asked me to move to OLV. I live here now and strive to be of service in whatever way I can.

I now look back and see my journey to the congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur as a miracle. It's a sign, once again, that Jesus pursues me with His love.



Sister Rosemary Stanton

CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK

The week of March 8-14, the Sisters of Saint Mary participated in Catholic Sisters Week by sharing stories and photos on Facebook of how they “do a little good.” Here’s some of what they shared.

Day 1: Sister Gabriela Martinez meets with Sisters of **St. Mary Oblates Mercedes Ginez** and **Roberta Sanchez** each week via FaceTime or Zoom to share news, prayer and encouragement.

Day 2: Sister Dorothy Powers leads a special Tuesday gathering of the senior Sisters. They discuss an article or view a DVD focused on a topic related to justice and peace, ecology, spirituality/prayer, care of the earth, mission, aging with hope or consecrated life.

Day 3: Sister Charles Marie shared about two special online projects. She teaches English over Zoom to a Rwandan sister twice a week. **Sister Clara Hai Chau Vo** meets daily with a

Vietnamese Prayer Group.

Day 4: Sister Rosemary provided photos and insight from speaking at All Saints Catholic School with during Catholic Schools Week.

Day 5: Sister Charles Marie highlighted the history of SSMN’s International Missionary Community.

Day 6: Sister Yolanda detailed her work at the University of Dallas teaching many different groups in Spanish.

Day 7: Sister Rosemary shared about the intercessory prayer that happens at OLV on Fridays and how Sister Clara serves as sacristan for the community.



Sister Dorothy Powers speaks to her fellow Sisters



Sister Gabriela Martinez

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A FRUITFUL DECISION FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE SISTERS

By Theo Thompson & Paxton Motheral



Theo Thompson

*As we move forward with the sale of Our Lady of Victory School, here is an update from broker **Theo Thompson**.*

“In my 20 years of selling real estate I have had the fortune to work on a wide variety of transactions, ranging from institutional clients to not-for-profits. Quite simply, this one takes the cake. I would like to commend the Sisters for their great foresight to purchase the Shaw Dairy property. There is an

old adage in real estate that the three most important aspect are as follows: location, location, location. This decision made by Sisters long ago will likely be very fruitful for the current and future Sisters. Further, I would like to acknowledge the love and care that have gone into the building which has been kept in fine working order.

I would like to close in sharing a story from one of our tours. As we finished the tour, the potential buyer paused and commented that he was struck by how much OLV and its inhabitants had been prayed for over the 100+ years of stewardship and what a blessing to whomever purchases the property. That is an amazing legacy to the Sisters of Saint Mary of Namur and we are simply humbled to perhaps aid in the greater cause of doing a little good.”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: FLEET RINE

Growing up in a small Oklahoma town, **Fleet Rine** had never really been around nuns. That is, until she met **Sister Donna Ferguson** 30 years ago. Fleet still vividly remembers her first visit to OLV and how worried she was about her big earrings and bright lipstick. Like so many others, though, her worries quickly dissipated thanks to the Sisters' graciousness, love and kindness.

She started volunteering to answer the phone and greet visitors. For many years she also assisted **Sister Francesca Walterscheid** by doing laundry, driving Sisters to the doctor, feeding those that needed help and assisting with whatever else needed to be done. Fleet's involvement became a family affair when her sons got involved mowing the grounds and the whole family attended OLV's Easter Vigil and

Christmas Eve Mass. These days Fleet helps **Sister Rosemary Stanton** every week and likes to spend one-on-one time with the older Sisters. She tears up

when she speaks of the love she feels at OLV. We're just as grateful for the love she's shown the Sisters through the years.



Fleet Rine with Sister Anselma Knabe