

# Bringing the Pieces and Colors Together

# KALEID SCOPE

A Newsletter for Glenmary Sisters' Adopters and Prayer Associates



## *Caruthersville, Missouri*

**Sr. Darlene:** Happy New Year and Greetings from Missouri! I hope all of you had a blessed Christmas and are still filled with the peace and joy the Christ child offers. I have enjoyed a gentle and quiet start of this New Year and as I write this I must stress that the operative words are have enjoyed!! The year is now off and running and I am, as usual, running to catch up!

Now let's see, I do believe when we last spoke we had just enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving and were in the midst of planning the many Christmas projects. Pam, Justine and I spent the week after Thanksgiving baking for our Parish bake sale. The bake sale always coincides with the Christmas Parade on the first Saturday in December. We decided we would bake and decorate gingerbread people and sugar cookies. We had so much fun rolling and cutting out the cookies. We each found our challenge in the decorating process. Let me just say, we created some very scary gingerbread folks and in the process discovered we had all done poorly in art class! All of our cookies sold which means people either just felt sorry for us or they are into scary Christmas cookies - I am really ok not knowing which one.

Following the bake sale, we started sorting through the many boxes of children's clothing sent by our kind friends at Guardian Angels School in Ohio. It was so nice to have all the warm clothing. We also started work on the Ministerial Alliance Christmas baskets. We were again in charge of the toys and had great fun going through the toy donations and then shopping for the things we needed. It was such a joy to prepare the baskets this year. We had several students from the high school come to help this year. I love to see the young people learning to reach out and put others

first. We experienced this same joy at the Food Pantry in Steele when about 20 youth from the area joined us on Thursday evening to pack the Christmas boxes for the people in the southern portion of the county.

After completing our work with the Ministerial Alliance we began preparing for the Christmas in the Park project. Thanks to your kind donations and the many gifts we received from St. James Parish in Ohio, we were able to provide Christmas for 14 families. Right before Christmas there was a fire that destroyed 11 apartments in one of the housing complexes. It was a miracle that no one was injured. We were able to share many of the household items, blankets and coats we had received. I hope you can see what a blessing you are to those we work with. I thank God that we do this together!

We were so delighted to have Sr. Catherine come to Caruthersville for a visit the week of Christmas. It was a gift for me for as you know, Sr. Catherine and I opened this Mission together in 2005. I enjoyed taking her around to look at the sites and just reminiscing about the early years. I am sure we probably bored Justine and Pam to tears. She was a great help in finishing up the wrapping of the last presents. We all enjoyed a visit with our young family out in the county. We spent a few hours with them on Christmas Eve. The kids were so delighted to receive the blankets made by their special friends in Florida. I was even draped into one of them and called something, which I hope was a princess or another good word! They also received from you some warm clothing and much needed household items. It was hard to leave the pure joy we were experiencing but we had to. We were so happy to share our Christmas Eve dinner with one of our Parishioners who lives alone. Following dinner and watching the movie "The Nativity Story", we were off to Midnight Mass. What a beautiful time we have had.

Christmas Day Izzie and I said goodbye to Pam and Justine as they left for Owensboro to begin the pre-Novitiate phase of their formation. They will be living at the Mother House in Owensboro while doing their studies. Izzie is excited about this change because it means that she will be able to see Sr. Bernadette more often. Since I will continue as their director I will need to meet with them at least twice a month. I might need to start viewing things through the eyes of Izzie; for her, everything is an adventure and fun. She sees only the love at the other end!! Well, speaking of the little furry one, I am getting those desperate looks so it must be time for a stroll!! You will remain in my thoughts, prayers and heart until we meet again.



### *Frenchburg, Kentucky*

**Sr. Kathleen:** Greetings from Eastern Kentucky. I just want you to know since my last sharing with you, many wonderful things have happened. During the holidays we

were able to help many folks, especially the children, have a good and peaceful Christmas. Several of the families did come into the center and picked out various toys, food, and new clothing while their children were in school. It gave them the joy of taking the goodies home, wrapping them and hiding them until Christmas Eve. For the families who could not get in, we went to their homes with the gifts and it was a good and sad experience. The parents were so grateful and many shed tears, feeling that without our help, many would not have had even a toy. Some of them sent a special thank you along with a small gift. We let them know that they themselves are the real gift and we assured them of our love and prayers.

We just got all the folks taken care of when old man winter snow and ice came in. In this severe weather, schools are closed, many cannot get to town and have a hard time with heating bills. As we visited some of the homes, I thank God for the dedicated work our volunteers have done. Many have better living conditions and good insulation. One woman called to say how grateful she was that she had good plumbing and can have a bath or shower. We take so much for granted. As I write this, we still have the snow and ice. Please pray for the many in this area who have serious family issues, broken homes and children who suffer. One special family has had a tragedy and they

are facing a tough court case for their son. We keep in touch with them and assure them of our prayers. Once again, may God love and reward you for your continued support.



### *Millen, Georgia*

**Sr. Aida:** Since our last letter, we celebrated Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and a convivio with a potluck. For Epiphany, we had three new parishioners as the Kings.

The children broke the piñatas and played games. The parents played and had a good time too – especially with the “musical chairs” game. The potluck was delicious.

We are starting this week with religious education again now that a couple of the rooms have been cleared out. I have begun prayer meetings in people’s homes as well as English classes on Friday nights. I continue to help people with their medical needs. We’re going to be having a 2-day retreat for young people 18 and older in February and also a 1-day retreat for 13- to 17-year-olds. We have quite a few signed up for each group and are looking forward to that. Father Luis will be lending me his van to transport the young people to the retreat location which is about 2 hours away in McRae, Georgia.

February will be a busy month as our annual Men Who Cook fundraiser will be taking place. We’re looking forward to coming to Owensboro for the event and I especially look forward to seeing the other Sisters and enjoying time with them.



**Sr. Ellen Frances:** I grew up in an immigrant and ethnic subculture. The culture helped carry the faith we lived. Faith and Religion were part of the very fabric of our lives. As I look back, I realize that it would have taken a strong deviant

action not to go to Church. Today, in our culture, it seems to be just the opposite. It takes a strong inner anchored act to go to Church. It is almost as if we - in this country and other first world countries - live in a moral and ecclesial diaspora and experience a special loneliness that comes with that. We have few outside supports for our faith.

This is especially true of Catholics in the rural south - where they are such a minority. The Diocese of Savannah had undertaken (as well as the Diocese of Atlanta and South Carolina) a campaign to help “*bring Catholics home.*”

Over the Christmas season - well into January - there were ads on television inviting Catholics to come home. Now that the ads have completed...our work begins. Sister Aida is visiting the migrant families who have not been coming to Church...and I and one of the parishioners are visiting the Anglo community who have stopped coming. We ask for your prayers on this endeavor.

The culture we live in no longer carries the faith and the church. In the past, we knew how to be believers and church-goers when we were inside communities that helped carry that for us, communities within which most everyone seemed to believe, most everyone went to church, and most everyone had the same set of moral values. It was not an accident that these communities were often immigrant, poor, under-educated, and culturally marginalized. In that type of setting, faith and church work more easily. Why? Well, as Jesus said, it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Many of those we work with now live in situations where to believe in God and church is to find themselves without the support of the majority and at times without the support even of those closest to them, spouse, family, friends, colleagues. Please hold them in your prayer daily.



**Sr. Mary Ellen:** When I returned from Thanksgiving vacation with my family, we were already into the first week of Advent. The comings and goings continued in our household. I arrived home on Monday and Sr. Ellen Frances left for Kentucky on

Tuesday. On Wednesday, Sr. Aida returned from her vacation in Connecticut which was just about the opposite of mine as I was in the sunshine state of Florida and she was in the cold, snowy north. All of us were home for the whole month of December and that was good because there is always so much to do to get ready for Christmas. The big celebration before Christmas was Our Lady of Guadalupe. We celebrated on Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, the day before the actual Feast Day. It

was a long day for us. The celebration began with a procession at 4pm and we didn't get back home until around 1am the next morning. The procession went about 6 blocks around the church with a police escort. We were singing hymns and praying the rosary as we walked. As we processed back into the church, Mass began. After Mass, we went to the parish hall for a fiesta meal. After the meal, we returned to church for a program called Mañanitas where we had prayers and songs in honor of Mary. The whole celebration was well attended.

In our immediate preparations for Christmas, we drew names among the three of us and then went shopping for gifts and to buy a tree two days before Christmas. As it turned out, we were looking in Lowe's Hardware where they were selling Christmas trees but they were all so huge, none would fit in our house. As we were getting ready to leave, a man approached us and asked if we were looking for a tree, he had one he would give us. He said it had a little gash in it and wouldn't last but about 3 weeks which was all the time we needed it for. Thanks to his generous spirit, we got it for free and loaded it in the car.

After Christmas, we had a Glenmary cluster meeting at our mission here in Millen. We had Priests and Sisters from the whole area come in for it. It was an opportunity for them to see our newly renovated church. Some of them had been stationed here in the past and they were amazed at the beautiful changes. Then we went to our house and Sr. Aida had cooked a really good Puerto Rican meal which everyone enjoyed.

After the Epiphany party, I left for Kentucky for our council meetings but as it turned out, I got as far as Atlanta and got snowbound there. I wasn't able to go anywhere for three days. It was an experience to remember - you couldn't even get out to buy food. Luckily the hotel served breakfast and we were able to get by with the generosity of another fellow who was stranded and was willing to brave the weather to go out for food. The hotel was kind enough to give me two breakfasts one morning so I was able to take the extra back to my room for later. We ended up having our meeting by phone and I was back home Wednesday evening. It was a rare experience.



## *Owensboro, Kentucky*

**Sr. Sharon:** Just a little Hello from the President's Office in Owensboro. Hope you are staying warm and dry. I for one will be very happy to see the spring flowers take the place of the snow we have been having...and I know it is nothing compared to some of you. Since the last issue of "Kaleidoscope" we have celebrated Advent, Christmas, and entered a New Year. Today as I write this note, there are people, both young and old, gathering in Washington, D.C. for the March for Life. We are truly with them in spirit even though we cannot be there in person. Hopefully their witness will change the hearts of both legislators and individuals to realize the sanctity of life.

On Christmas, Sister Bernadette and I were delighted to welcome our two postulants, Pam Hageman and Justine Presley, into the Motherhouse here in Owensboro as they begin the pre-novitiate phase of their formation. During this time they will be studying and reflecting more deeply into the history of religious life, specifically the history of the Glenmary Sisters, as well as taking a few theology courses at St. Meinrad. If all goes well they will formally enter the Novitiate in March to begin looking at the vows and what that will mean for them as they try to live in community. I ask for your prayers for them during this time as they discern God's will.

My position as the major superior of the Glenmary Sisters does not allow me the opportunity to minister one on one with families in our missions, which is why I can hardly wait each year till I am able to set up visitation time. I am always in awe as I talk with the Sisters and visit with the folks, because it is very apparent that God is doing marvelous things.

Most of my month of January has been taken up in meetings, although I did make a trip up to Wisconsin recently to the funeral of Fr. Tom Kirkendoll's mother. Fr. Tom is a Glenmary priest and a very good friend. I was glad I could change my schedule and be with him and his family and community members during this special time. I ask your prayers for him as well.

Next month, we will have a yearly fund raising event, "Men Who Cook." The committee has been working diligently getting the last minute details worked out

and this year they are especially nervous since there are three other organization who chose the same date to have an event. As I explained to our development director, there is nothing you can do about that. Just "let go and let God." It will be fine and those who come to our event will have a good time.



## *Smithland, Kentucky*

**Sr. Rosemary:** Now that this Smithland mission's Christmas giving projects are finished, I have been thinking of how best to use my time these next months. There is, of course, my need to give some time to work in the archives at the Center. My present thoughts are to go up to Owensboro every two weeks and give a couple of days to that work. In going through files it re-awakens in me many memories of our community history which includes a mixture of joyful and sorrowful events along with the ordinary day to day life in what is required in relation to our way of life, our efforts to financially support our missions, and our services in each respective mission.

Now that I am back in Smithland I want to resume the kind of contact I had with people here in the past. I had gotten to know some families and individuals who were having a very hard time in different ways. With the volunteer assistance of others locally or from out of the county or state and our working together with the persons in need, there was substantial accomplishment in dealing with the problems. Along with our giving, we had the experience of receiving much in different ways from the people we initially wanted to help. It was a time spiritually rich, growth in mutual trust and friendship, and while different in faith traditions, there was a sense of relationship in being God's children. I have taken some initial steps to develop again the sense of community.

While I am limited in time and place, national and international news reminds me of the tragedies that are sometimes monumental. You, too, are faced with them and I join you in prayer for all our suffering human family. And as I write this, I think of you and the challenges, the pain, the joy that is part of your daily life and ask God to give you all the graces you need.



## Retired

**Sr. Bernadette:** This past couple of months has been quite a busy time for me as many know. I have worked not only on the special request of 50 new scarves for Sr. Rosemary's mission in Smithland, but also the baking of crescent cakes as our yearly Christmas gifts for all of our friends. Included in this time have been a few trips to my dentist to secure everything needed for my new "choppers" as my friend Cathy says.

Busy with my crochet needle, I very feverishly began making neck scarves for Sr. Rosemary to be able to give to those in need at Smithland. This winter season seems to be a little more harsh than usual and the need to keep warm is very critical. I don't believe in the short time of her need that I actually finished 50, but you can know, I was told there was smoke coming from my needle! Also, as a special need I crocheted a beautiful cherry red prayer shawl. The shawl was then blessed by Father John and given to a very special friend in need.

Crescent cakes and more crescent cakes! This year's total was almost 90, which is my biggest year to date, I do believe. I did have the pleasure of having a little help this year. My friends Cathy and Ernestine learned very quickly how to use a rolling pin and savor the sweet taste of meringue and enjoy the smell of cinnamon. I actually have been told this year's cakes were among some of the best ever made!

My trips to the dentist have not been the most pleasurable thing I have encountered, but quite necessary. It seems it is quite a process to have new dentures made. I have been very diligently doing as my dentist has instructed and very soon now will have new "pearly whites"! Oh, knowing the joy of having pizza and hamburgers again is very comforting.

Along with the joy of the cooking when most of my Sisters came in for Christmas and council, I actually had a little time to attend a few Christmas parties. One party in particular that was a lot of fun was with my motorcycle friends, the Ambassadors for Christ. We had a small get together with a wonderful pot-luck dinner then played a game called Dirty Santa. Dirty Santa involves passing gifts each of us brought around a table as a cute little story was read. Now the dirty

part comes in at the end. If someone liked a package they passed, because of the way it was wrapped or the weight of it or for any other reason, they could ask for it from whom ever was holding it at the end of the story. This had to be done before opening the gift. As it turned out, no one wanted to trade what they ended with. My gift was a very nice Santa pillow and a very cute pair of salt and pepper shakers that were a little man and woman on motorcycles. These now are used on our dinner table here with my Sisters.



**Sr. Catherine:** On November 8th at Mercy Franciscan Terrace, I was asked to quit taking used plastic cups to my room from the dining room because of germs. Instead, I was asked to join the Green Team. We have had one meeting so far.

Before Christmas I went to Owensboro and helped prepare for Christmas. The two Postulants, Pam and Justine, and I decorated the tree. Then we went to Caruthersville and helped Sr. Darlene wrap gifts for a family. The father is from Cuba and mother from Mexico. We took the gifts to their home. All were happy to have us there. They opened their gifts of clothing and tried them on to see if they fit, which they did. One little girl got a pink coat and she looked so pretty in it. We went to midnight Mass and 8:00 a.m. Mass on Christmas day. Pam and Justine left Caruthersville to go to Owensboro for the beginning of pre-novitiate.

In Owensboro I had the privilege of delivering Sr. Bernadette's coffee cakes to neighbors and Guild members. That was fun, too. I also joined the Sisters and coworkers for the Christmas Novena. Justine took me to Evansville on New Year's Eve. We arrived in time for me to visit old friends and attend the 11:00 Mass and then went to Chili's for lunch. Justine used her gift card for this. God bless her and whoever gave it to her.

Now I'm back in Cincinnati and into my usual routine, starting with daily Mass at 10:00 am. I play Bingo whenever they have it and cards with my friend on the fifth floor. Sometimes I play Kings in the Corner with Fr. Bob Rademacher and Charles Krouse. I continue to push people in their wheel chairs too. So I manage to keep busy and happy. I don't know what I would do without the computer. When I don't have anything else to do I play solitaire and put puzzles together on [jigzone.com](http://jigzone.com).



# *Glenmary Sisters*

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