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President’s Message
Sr. Sharon Miller

Celebrating 75 Years!
A celebration in photos

Owensboro Diocese Youth Conference
John Calhoun II

The Glenmary Sisters, founded by Fr. William Howard Bishop in 1941, are a religious community of women working to establish a Catholic presence in the home mission areas of rural and small town America. Glenmary is actually a nickname from our roots in Glendale, Ohio (near Cincinnati) and special devotion to the Blessed Mother. Our formal name is Home Mission Sisters of America. Working in cooperation with the Glenmary Priests and Brothers, the two communities remain financially independent of each other. KINSHIP is published by the Glenmary Sisters to inform their readers of the social and spiritual needs of people living in their missions.

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President’s Message

As hard as it is to believe, we are coming to the end of another year. One of the main highlights of this year for us as a community was that it marked our 75th Anniversary. On October 15, 1941, Sr. Dorothy Hendershot, a nurse from Alpine, Michigan, traveeled to Cincinnati, Ohio, to answer Fr. William Howard Bishop’s invitation to women asking them to join him in his vision of forming a community of religious women who would serve the mission areas of the South and Appalachia. Sr. Dorothy became the first of many women who would come to be a part of this dream. While some stayed and some left, Fr. Bishop’s “little gray army” continued to grow.

During the years that followed, the Sisters, filled with “amazing grace”, met the challenges of anti-Catholic attitudes with loving care and concern for the poor and forgotten in the areas that God had called them to serve. The hardest challenge for the community came in 1967, when a large number of the community wanted to be dispensed from their vows to begin a lay organization that would only serve the Appalachia area. There were major differences of opinions as the conflict grew. In the end, this community of over 100 women religious dwindled down to only 18. It was this small group of 18 remarkable faith-filled women and their commitment to God, the Church, and to Fr. Bishop’s vision that now, 75 years later, enabled us to gather to celebrate the glorious occasion of our 75th Anniversary on October 15, 2016.

That afternoon, we were privileged to have Bishop William F. Medley of the Diocese of Owensboro celebrate a special Mass for us. Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. of the Diocese of Lexington and Fr. Chet Artysiewicz, the President of the Glenmary Men’s Community, (founded 2 years earlier in 1939), joined him in the Sanctuary as the main con-celebrants. In addition there were 8 other Glenmary priests, a few diocesan priests, and a Jesuit priest friend of Sr. Rosemary, Fr John Padberg, who also con-celebrated. We were honored that 9 Glenmary brothers and 4 students also joined us to celebrate this joyous occasion. If that were not enough we had Guild members, co-workers, other religious, friends, and family members who also came along with several of you, our donors. For those of you who couldn’t be with us we want to share some of the special moments. In this issue of KINSHIP we have included the homily given by Fr. Chet as well as some photos of the Mass and the celebration.

Throughout these 75 years of mission ministry, our dependence on God has shown us one truth that remains constant. Although it is our hands and feet that go forth in Christ’s name, it is only through your prayerful generosity that we are able to do so. Please know of our heartfelt gratitude for all you do to help us serve God’s forgotten ones here in our country.

www.glenmarysisters.org  Winter 2016  KINSHIP
Well, it is a grand and glorious occasion. Exactly 75 years ago today an RN from Michigan arrived as the first entrant into the Glenmary Sisters, Dorothy Hendershot. A year later a teacher from Sunfish, Kentucky, Opal Simon, joined and the Community was off and running.

I am pleased to be celebrating this milestone with the Sisters. As a student in St. Louis I would often cut their grass (being richly rewarded with a nice meal, I might add!). They hosted my mother when she came to visit and as a thank you she introduced them to the option known as an electric frying pan. And of course, both Sr. Catherine and I speak of how I “saved her life.” Actually it only amounted to applying pressure to a cut but “life saving” sounds so much more dramatic! Later I would collaborate in ministry in Kentucky and Georgia.

In his Mid-Winter Letter of 1948 Fr. Bishop wrote: “Love the poor, the sick and helpless and attend to them. They are God’s influentials. They are His aristocrats. He loves them. If you are known in your community as the contact for all the poor and unfortunate of the place, you could not have a more honorable title on earth or one that would make you more welcome in the courts of Heaven. Besides this, you will be a marvelous drawing power for converts.” The Sisters have remained faithful to their Founder’s directive. A consistent theme in every mission the Sisters have served is their concern for the materially poor - who are neither nameless nor faceless to them: the Sisters know so many of them personally.

But poverty takes many forms: a broken home, addiction issues, disabilities, growing pains, mental illness. I can recall Sr. Teresa Marie Tretter joyfully volunteering to take responsibility in assisting a lady with severe mental issues in Morehead, Kentucky; or Sr. Teresita Pionke working with the handicapped in Waynesboro, Georgia. And do you know what these 2 Sisters are? Typical - typical of what the Glenmary Sisters have been doing for 75 years and continue today. Their quiet presence and spirit of service embraces “God’s aristocrats.”

Fr. William Howard Bishop wanted both men’s and women’s communities to address the Home Mission need. Truly, the respective roles were somewhat defined by the times, but on a deeper level, there is a stroke of pure genius or pure grace involved. For the Home Mission field would be served by both feminine and masculine faces, and hands, and hearts. With our respective and complementary gifts the open arms of the Church were more widely displayed. I recall one male minister being counseled by a Glenmary Sister. He need to hear a feminine perspective about his difficulties.

There are many versions of the Cross - the Jerusalem Cross, the Tau or Franciscan Cross, etc., the Celtic Cross or Anchor Cross, the Byzantine Cross. The Glenmary Sisters’ Cross is distinctive and points to their mission. It is a combination of the Cross with a Star. The Cross represents the love of Christ; the Star represents joy and hope rising in the midst of suffering. How appropriate as the Sisters accompany people in the midst of their sufferings, offering hope by the witness of their lives - those vows of poverty, chastity and obedience proclaiming there is something much more that awaits God’s people. For those who are willing to see, those vows which we in Catholic circles take for granted, provide a living, breathing witness to Gospel values, the Gospel message and the Kingdom of God.

There is a song; it is one long associated with these Sisters: TIS THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE. I hear it often but I never hear it without connecting it to the Glenmary Sisters. I think you could describe Glenmary as a “simple community” meaning it is honest, there is no pretense. There is a clarity about our ministry. The simple truth we believe is that each of God’s creatures has worth despite, as St. Teresa of Calcutta observed, they may be in hideous disguises.

The chorus of the song states “When true simplicity is gained, to bow and bend we shan’t be ashamed.” Simplicity recognizes our true relationship with God. One might substitute humility for simplicity; they surely seem akin. And humility teaches us there is no shame in being of service - of putting your convenience and preferences to the side as we minister. The song has a basic melody.
with a profound message. To me it truly fits this band of missionary Sisters.

In being God’s hands and feet and heart, the Sisters want to simply magnify the Lord as did our mother Mary. They want to let the light of God shine THROUGH them. Years ago Sr. Pat Leighton came up with this image for the children using the example of pumpkins. When the pumpkin is full of itself, no light can seep through. But when that is removed, the light shines through for all to see – strikingly displayed in jack-o-lantern Sr. Pat produced.

Some of the Temporary Regulations for the Women’s Missionary Society are no doubt long forgotten. I suspect conversation at dinner is no longer relegated to just Sundays, Thursdays, and Saturdays - AND first class feasts! I have a hunch you can engage in correspondence even during Lent and Advent now. Answering the door wearing an apron is likely permissible. And I’ll go out on a limb and the window shades these days may be drawn to either more or even a bit less than halfway during the day. And in terms of the bands on the veils being changed every Saturday night... I have no idea what that means!

But what hasn’t changed is the spirit that has drawn women to respond to Fr. Bishop’s call to respond to the home mission need. In the spirit of today’s Gospel, the Sisters are footwashers - something you have to “bow and bend” to do. In living the gift of “simplicity” they channel Micah’s words “to do justice, love goodness and walk humbly with your God.”

Sisters, the first half century of your existence took place from your headquarters in Cincinnati; the last quarter century took place in Owensboro. Wherever God’s Spirit leads you in the future, you have that wonderful symbol of your cross to guide you: the love of God with joy and hope firmly attached. We celebrate what has been and trust in God for what will be. Perhaps if we listen closely we can hear the Lord’s word today: “THANK YOU! And do not fear the future - for I am already there.” God bless you, Sisters.
Celebrating 75 Years!

Special thank you to all of our families and friends for joining us to celebrate 75 years of service.

Photos courtesy of: Cathy Devins, Janet Klueg, and Kathryn Newman
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Deadline for applications: January 30, 2017

Space is limited - up to 4 per mission house. Reserve your spot now.

glenmarysisters.org
Glenmary Sisters to celebrate 75 years

The Star of Bethlehem rests near the hearts of Glenmary Sisters.

It sits at the intersection of a cross, a silver charm on each one of their necklaces. As the points and rays of the star move outward in the corners of the intersection, so do the sisters, in the rural corners of the U.S. And after 75 years, they are excited to celebrate.

"It's about reaching out to all," Sister Sharon Miller, president of the Glenmary Sisters, said holding up her necklace. "When we go into our missions, we're not just doing it for Catholics, we're doing it for everyone."

The Glenmary Sisters will have a 75th anniversary Mass at 2 p.m. Oct. 15 at St. Stephen Cathedral, 610 Locust St., and a dinner at 5:30 that evening at the Boys and Girls Club, with live music by vintage rock 'n' rollers Roy Kyle and the Hot Rod Cruisers.

A signal of Jesus' birth, the star is a beloved and familiar quilt pattern in rural America, especially Appalachia. The Rev. William Howard Bishop, a priest who served in rural Maryland for more than two decades, founded the Glenmary Sisters in Cincinnati in 1941 with a focus on "forgotten people," whom he saw as the poor and neglected people who mostly populated rural areas.

"Father Bishop had a three-fold reason to bring us together," Sister Sharon said. "One was to nurture the Catholic faith, two was to help others understand who Catholics are and three was to promote ecumenical spirit and outreach."

He had founded the Glenmary order for men in 1939. His vision was that priests would do the Sacraments in mission communities, religious brothers would build churches, and women would be in the homes to nurture the children and handle the needs of the family. So, he added women, hence the Glenmarians' proper name, Home Mission Sisters of America.

Glenmary is a combination of Glendale, Ohio, where Bishop established the order, and Mary, the patroness of missions. They began in 1941 but weren't officially recognized by Rome until 1952.

While the Glenmary Sisters have missions in eastern and western Kentucky, southeast Georgia and southern Missouri, the central office moved from Cincinnati to Owensboro in 1991.

"Cincinnati had grown into an archdiocese so we were moved to the Diocese of Owensboro so novices could be in a mission setting," Sister Sharon said. High-poverty areas with little to no Catholic presence are considered mission areas. They also had a formation house in Livermore where novices would live and learn.

The proximity to Brescia University, where sisters could study theology, and the welcoming local community made the move a little easier, but it was difficult to leave a city they grew to know so well.

"That's the hardest part about mission work, but we have to move when God says move," Sister Sharon said. "Because we're so small, our key is to get local people involved in our projects from the beginning so they won't be dependent on us to keep it going. In about every mission, we've left some type of project we started that the local community has taken ownership of."

Such successes are Mother’s House for pregnant women in the order’s westernmost mission field, Caruthersville, Missouri; a thrift store, pastoral services and youth outreach in Millen, Georgia; a thrift store and lay prison ministry in Frenchburg (in the foothills of Kentucky’s Appalachian Mountains); and outreach to the Latino community of Ohio and Butler counties, including transportation to medical visits.

Sisters also helped start Pennyrile Allied Community Services in Hopkinsville, helped with the Housing Authority for...
equal housing in the segregated town of Guthrie, and worked with Helping Hands in Smithland to assist residents with heating bills, transportation and home improvement.

"What we do, essentially, is social work," said Sister Sharon. "Father Bishop didn’t want us to be tied to an institution; that’s why our vocations aren’t in teaching or hospitals. That allows us to be a mobile group, bringing the love of Christ to an area and bringing it out of the people there."

Sister Rosemary Esterkamp, 90, joined 69 years ago and has served in White Oak and Norton, Virginia, and served for 24 years in Smithland/Livingston County. Sister Catherine Schoenborn, 88, a Michigan native, joined the order in 1951 and has served in Caruthersville, Guthrie, Russellville and other towns, though a dementia diagnosis led her to retirement a few years ago. Those sisters and Sister Bernadette Hengestebeck, 94, live at the local Mother House for retired sisters.

The other sisters -- Sisters Aida Badillo, Mary Ellen Barrette, Pat Leighton, Kathleen Mulchrone and Darlene Presley -- remain in mission fields.

Since 1967, there have been 16 Glenmary Sisters. The decrease of women vowing the consecrated life means fewer minds, hearts and hands to work in mission areas.

"We’ve had hard years; people came and went, but we persevered," Sister Rosemary said. Some found that the consecrated life wasn’t their calling.

Sister Catherine almost took another route.

"Even when I joined, my brother said I wouldn’t last two weeks because I had had too many boyfriends," she said as the women laughed. "I was actually going to get married, but I’m glad I didn’t accept the proposal. This is a wonderful life."

With no salaries or income, the Glenmary Sisters are funded by donors and receive some home supplements from the diocese.

"We have support from donors as far away as Maryland and California; donations ensure we have what we need to minister," Sister Sharon said. "That strengthens our dependence on God and the understanding that he will provide. It’s a reminder that it’s not about us; it’s about God’s love, the people and showing them his mercy."

Living in the mission areas, seeing many dire needs, could be discouraging to many. But embracing such communities, making a difference in them and staying optimistic comes with understanding the heart of a missionary.

"The sisters are very connected to the Eucharist. Any time we struggle with what we’re dealing with, prayer time helps us find peace and remember that we’re God’s instrument, only God’s instrument," Sister Sharon said. "The hardest part is moving, and feeling like you’re leaving people behind. But we have to give them to God and we trust he will be there with them."

Though they’re down to nine, the Sisters said they’re celebrating the order’s 75th anniversary in the determined spirit of the first Glenmary Sister Dorothy Hendershot.

"(Oct. 15) is the day," Sister Rosemary said, "she was the first to say 'I’m here to stay.'"
Where Jesus walked...

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The Owensboro Diocese Youth Conference (ODYC) took place in Bowling Green, Kentucky, November 18 and 19, 2016. The event brings together nearly 500 young people from across western Kentucky for worship, praise, workshops, talks, reconciliation, and fellowship.

This year’s event featured speakers Paul Kim from California, Katie Prejean McGrady from Louisiana, and musicians PJ Anderson and his band from Nashville. And, as always, concluded with Mass with Bishop William F. Medley and many of the diocesan Priests, Brothers, Deacons, and seminarians.

The talks and breakout sessions dealt with a variety of topics such as teen peer pressure, living a Catholic life in today’s world, vocations, and much more… In fact, our Glenmary Sister Darlene Presley hosted one of the breakouts.

While the event was very rejuvenating for all involved, it was also a lot of fun. During several of the breaks between speakers, PJ’s band would play a 20-30 minute set of contemporary music. The speakers all had funny parts to their speeches. Several of the diocesan hosts of the event planned “ODYC After Dark”… A glow in the dark, crank up the music, dance party to end the first night of the event.

In all, some 500 lives were touched in one way or another. As I write this article, reflecting on the event, even I, as a 39-year-old, feel revived as a Catholic. I’m sure all the other adult volunteers and chaperones feel the same. I would sincerely invite all youth to participate in these sort of events when possible. Please encourage your youth ministers to look into going to NCYC, the National Catholic Youth Conference where around 25,000 young people from across the country participate.
Merry Christmas from the Glenmary Sisters.

We’ll be keeping you in prayer during our Christmas Novena December 16 – 24, 2016.

glenmarysisters.org