Visitation School

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See page 5 *for a special invitation to a celebration honoring the Visitation Sisters.*

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VISION

spring 2019



monastery update

by Sister Mary Frances Reis, VHM '55

The Sisters and I are so grateful for the prayerful and practical support of the entire Visitation Family —school, alums, our families and friends — during this time of major transition for our Mendota Heights Monastery. As Administrative Superior, I share the following report to give you an update on where we are in the process. St. Francis de Sales' wise counsel has guided us as we have moved forward over the past eight months: "Have patience to walk with short steps until you have wings to fly."

Three major goals were given to me by Archbishop Hebda on July 3, 2018: 1) To assist him in providing for appropriate living and care arrangements for each of the three remaining Sisters. 2.) To coordinate the process of closing the Monastery building, and 3.) To help facilitate the transition of canonical sponsorship of the School. I sent weekly reports to the Archbishop and his team, and I want to thank him for the exceptional pastoral care with which he has directed this process.



I'm happy to report that **Sisters Brigid Marie Keefe '60**, **Mary Paula McCarthy '47** and **Mary Denise Villaume '56** have moved and are settling into their new homes. Sister Brigid Marie selected an assisted living facility in Eagan. Sister Mary Denise chose an independent living arrangement in Cottage Grove and Sister Mary Paula is the newest member of the Visitation Monastery of Minneapolis. The Sisters will continue to be a gentle presence in our school as they return often for activities, meetings and social events.

We have worked out some guidelines for the Sisters living apart from the Monastic Community. While remaining affiliated with the Order, they will also meet regularly with the Visitation Sisters of Minneapolis. The first gathering took place on January 24, the Feast of St. Francis de Sales. It included Mass and dinner at the Minneapolis Monastery with Archbishop Hebda, neighbors, affiliates and local friends. Our next gathering in February was a delightful evening of prayer, dinner and robust laughter with ten of us around the table.

Regarding the closing of the Monastery building, the Sisters asked Helen Wilkie, a friend of our communities and school, to inventory and organize the Monastery for the school to start planning its future use. A small group of dedicated alums have assisted with this huge project. You can imagine what has been accumulated over fifty years of living in a 45,000 plus square-foot space plus housing archival items dating back to 1873! I want to assure you that the Archives will be organized and kept here as part of the Sisters' legacy.

The Administration has requested that some rooms remain as living exhibits of how the rooms where used when the original community of 48 sisters lived in the building. Many other rooms have been emptied and items are being shared according to the following priorities: other Monasteries, the school, local charities, neighboring parishes and retreat houses and local history organizations.

Regarding the transition of canonical sponsorship of the school, our dedicated HOPE Committee (Help Our Plans Evolve) continues to regularly meet and hammer out the civil and canonical details of a complicated package we will soon send to Rome for approval.

The school administration is regularly updated on our progress, and they are now beginning to imagine how the building and land may be utilized to meet the needs of future Visitation students.

As always, we give thanks to God for what has been accomplished. In the spirit of our Salesian tradition, we have moved forward with "short steps," and we see our school community ready to fly! I know I speak for the Sisters in expressing our gratitude to each and every one of you as you internalize and carry the Visitation spirit into the 21st century and beyond.