



# Response

## *Holy Union Sisters*

Called to be — at the heart of the world revealing God's love

FALL 2010 – VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2



*Celebrating 125 years  
of faithful presence in  
the United States*

## Dear Friends of Holy Union,

The planning has been going on for months. The time is almost here. Holy Union is celebrating! Yes, together with you, we are about to begin our year of celebration in thanksgiving for one hundred and twenty-five years of service and life here in the United States. How blessed we have been throughout our history to live and work among such generous, faithful and life-giving people – you, our friends!

Many wonderful events are planned in the different areas of the province and at different times throughout the year of celebration.

Please check the events calendar on page 3. We hope that you will be able to join with us for at least one of these events. Those sisters who ministered among you or who perhaps are still ministering in your area are looking forward to sharing time and memories with you at these gatherings. The year will go by quickly; but the memories will last much longer.



l-r: Srs. Mary Catherine Burns  
Paula Coelho  
and Maryellen Ryan,

We will be welcoming you at our Heritage House in Groton, MA, when we have the museum complete. We anticipate this to be before the year of celebration is over. You are all invited to come and see the memorabilia and artifacts that will be on display, some of which go back to our founder, Father Jean Baptist Debrabant.


How grateful we are to each one of you, our friends, for your loyalty and support!

This anniversary gives life to the words of scripture,

“That they all may be one”.

**Together, let us make one Holy Union. ?**

Sincerely,



*Sister Paula Coelho, SASC  
Sister Mary Catherine Burns, SASC  
Sister Maryellen Ryan, SASC*

## All Souls Prayer Remembrance

**“I am the Resurrection and the life.  
Those who believe in me, even if they die,  
will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”**

(John 11: 25-26)

Each year in the month of November, the Holy Union Sisters remember your deceased loved ones in a special way. Using our traditional purple sheets, we ask that you send us the names of your deceased relatives and friends. They will be remembered in the daily prayers of the sisters throughout the US Province and in two special prayer services held at Mary Immaculate Residence in Lawrence, MA and at The Landmark in Fall River, MA on or around November 2nd. Your intention papers remain for the month of November at the center of the sisters' prayer ministry and at the celebration of the Eucharist.



Sr. Anne Bugala  
August 19, 1916 – August 12, 2010

Since last year, Holy Union Sisters Pauline Louise Boivin, Claire Thibeault (Sr. Suzanne Marie), Sr. Florence Richard (Sr. Marie Florencia), Sr. Irene Rita Fontaine, and Associate Eleanor Nunes have entered into eternal life. As always, it is our privilege to recognize with you the presence of your relatives and friends in the communion of saints. It is also an honor to hold within the Holy Union family your deceased relatives and friends, whom you have asked us to remember in a special way.

## Dear Friends in Mission,

This letter comes to you as the Holy Union Sisters stand at the threshold of a year of Jubilee.



We celebrate Mother Marie Helena Daumerie and the first women who carried Holy Union to the United States in 1886. We celebrate the Holy Union Sisters who continued the Holy Union charism into the 20th century and the women who continue to carry this faith-vision in the 21st century. All of you live with the experience of Holy Union Sisters as teachers, family members, co-workers and friends. It is these Sisters present and past whom you revere in the support you show for the Holy Union mission today.

I wish that I could share all the wonderful memories that came to me through the many phone conversations of the last months. Here are a few: "How wonderful to celebrate a group of women who have done so much for so many people. How can I help?" "You know that I am who I am today because of the Holy Union Sisters, I am so glad that we are having a chance to celebrate them." "I am so grateful for who the Holy Union Sisters were in my early life. I will never forget their goodness to me." There are longer stories but space does not allow me to share them at this time. I am sure that they will be a part of the wonderful fabric of the coming year.

Once again, I thank you on behalf of the Holy Union Sisters for your financial support and also for responding to the pre-anniversary mailing and the registration form on the Holy Union website. You can still help by continuing to spread the word regarding this Jubilee Year and by directing relatives, classmates and friends to [www.holyunionsisters.org](http://www.holyunionsisters.org).

Sincerely,

*Patricia Butler, SNDdeN*

Patricia Butler, SNDdeN

## 125th Anniversary Bulletin Board

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS** mark your calendars

**Week of October 1st**  
Anniversary Launch Mailing

**Weekend of October 16-17**

- Anniversary Proclamation in present or former Holy Union Parishes
- Monthly Podcasts on the Holy Union Website beginning October, 2011

**OCTOBER 16-17** – Proclamation in US parishes, Opening Prayer across the Congregation

**DECEMBER** – Advent Prayer Experiences – Praying with the Holy Union Charism

**MARCH 20, 2011** – Baltimore, MD – 2:00 PM Mass of Thanksgiving, Basilica of the Assumption followed by a reception at the Catholic Center

**MARCH 26, 2011** - Holy Union Sisters Congregation Feast Day Celebration for Holy Union Sisters and Associates across the US Province 11:00 AM Mass Sacred Heart Church, North Attleboro, MA followed by Brunch.

**APRIL 3, 2011** – Massachusetts South Region Noon Brunch and Reception at Venus de Milo in Swansea, MA

**MAY 15, 2011**– Massachusetts North Region – 3:00 PM Mass of Thanksgiving, St Anthony's, Shirley, MA followed by reception in Parish Center

**MAY 21, 2011** – Mt. Ephraim, NJ – 11:00 AM Mass of Thanksgiving at Emmaus Community (formerly Sacred Heart Church) followed by reception in the Parish Hall

**JUNE 5, 2011** – Pawtucket, RI – 10:30 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Cecilia's Church, Pawtucket, RI – reception following Mass at Corinne's Restaurant, Pawtucket

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2011** – Astoria, NY – 11:00 AM Mass of Thanksgiving, Immaculate Conception Church Followed by reception in School Hall

**OCTOBER 16, 2011**  
Final Celebration – Mass of Thanksgiving – 3:00PM Sacred Heart Church, Fall River, MA, followed by reception at Whites of Westport

## *Sr. Mary Lou Sullivan, SUSC*

Sr. Mary Lou Sullivan, SUSC teaches in the Kindergarten 2 program at the Lower Mills Campus of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy in Dorchester, MA. Sr. Mary Lou brings to this ministry with young children her positive experience of Holy Union Sisters throughout her own elementary and secondary education. Experience, combined with a natural gift for creative expression, provides

fertile ground for an enriching educational experience for her students. What she believes is important in her ministry is to communicate God's unique love for each child; to let them know that there are people who understand and care for them; and that the gift of their love shared

with others is essential to our world.

Years of experience in teaching elementary school, primarily with children of immigrant families, and work with Haitian adults in the former H.A.L.T. ESOL program in Mattapan, have helped Sr. Mary Lou to be open to the richness of diverse cultures. Opportunities to share the lives of Holy Union sisters on different continents while she served in international leadership ministry, have deepened her appreciation of the gift of internationality within Holy Union and the importance of a prayerful, reflective stance toward all of life.

Sr. Mary Lou explains that for her, ministry is an invitation into relationship. The energy of presence that comes from relationship is God's love made manifest. As the relationships in ministry take flesh, love grows and transforms. Summing it up, Sr. Mary Lou shares that she believes in the mutuality of ministry and that her life as a Holy Union Sister calls her into the heart of the world not only to reveal, but to receive God's love.

***Sr. Mary Lou shares that she believes in the mutuality of ministry and that her life as a Holy Union Sister calls her into the heart of the world not only to reveal, but to receive God's love.***



## *Sr. Marie Germaine, SUSC*

Sr. Marie Germaine, SUSC lives at Mary Immaculate Residence in Lawrence. The eldest of fourteen children, Sr. Marie Germaine Sirois believes that coming from a large family was remote preparation for the skills she has used as a Holy Union Sister, teacher, librarian and treasurer. She learned the value of order, the need for a budget and creativity, a gift especially needed at holidays and birthdays. The gift of faith which her parents instilled in her, allowed her to say "yes" to a vocation to religious life and all that this call has asked and continues to ask of her.



Sr. Marie Germaine first retired to St. Mary's Villa in Lowell. Although not familiar with the tasks of treasurer/bursar she learned quickly because she had to budget from an early age. Learning her way around a Fax machine, which was a new invention at the time, became strategic for her to send her always-accurate accounts to the Province Office. She was invited to be a Eucharistic Minister at nearby Saints Memorial Hospital and was delighted to share the sacraments with others.

***Her ministry of prayer and presence is one of the greatest gifts that she brings to her retirement years. Being present to and praying for those who are sick or those who have lost loved ones is close to her heart and at the center of her ministry today.***

When the retirement community moved from St. Mary's Villa to Mary Immaculate Residence in Lawrence, Sr. Marie Germaine was called to form Holy Union community in a new place and among her sisters and other residents. Because she is a Lawrence native from such a large family she knows many people at Mary Immaculate Residence. Sr. Marie Germaine makes Christmas and birthday gifts for her twenty-one nieces, twenty-one nephews and friends. The call to ministry remains. She continues to use her organizational skills in the preparation of mailing envelopes for the Notre Dame Education Center in Lawrence. Her ministry of prayer and presence is one of the greatest gifts that she brings to her retirement years. Being present to and praying for those who are sick or those who have lost loved ones is close to her heart and at the center of her ministry today.

## *Sister Ruth Kindelan, SUSC*

Sr. Ruth Kindelan, SUSC (Sr. Stephen Helen) spent her early years teaching in elementary schools and giving piano lessons after school. In the late 1970's, Sr. Ruth left teaching and joined two other Holy Union Sisters at a House of Prayer at St. James Convent, Tiverton, RI.



She took courses in Clinical Pastoral Education, a program that prepared her to be a hospital chaplain. Sister Ruth became a chaplain at Albany Medical Center Hospital in New York in 1979 and remained there until 1997. Her background in music led her to join the Cathedral Choir. During her time as chaplain, Sr. Ruth lived in different communities with Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. When it came time to retire, she chose the retirement community at the provincial house in nearby Latham, New York, because she had lived with many of the sisters and knew the fine care their senior sisters received.

Another ministry awaited Sr. Ruth when she arrived in Latham. She visits the sisters in the dementia unit regularly. Sr. Ruth says she has learned many lessons while visiting the sisters. Although some cannot speak, she knows they are aware of what is going on around them. "It is evident in their eyes," she says. Because she visits regularly, she is able to offer security and comfort to the sisters.

*Sr. Ruth began a group of Holy Union Associates in Albany. Her initial contacts came through the Cathedral choir. There she met Jill McClellan Phelps and others who became interested in the Holy Union charism.*

Sr. Ruth began a group of Holy Union Associates in Albany. Her initial contacts came through her ministry as chaplain at Albany Medical Center where she met the first prospective associates. The present group of seven includes two from out of state – one in New Hampshire and one in Illinois. Those in the Albany area meet regularly and have deepened their knowledge and commitment to Holy Union thanks to Sr. Ruth. They attend the annual province assembly and serve on the Associates coordinating committee. This active Associate group is an example of the influence of one Holy Union Sister.

## *Sr. Gertrude Pare, SUSC*

"This is my third career" is how Sr. Gert Pare (Sr. Gertrude Marie) describes her new ministry. The former primary school teacher and principal responded to a request last year when the province mission team asked for suggestions on the use of the houses on the property of the Country Day School of the Holy Union in Groton. She prayed about this and then shared her long-time dream for a house of hospitality using the former provincial house. The mission team asked Sr. Gert to set up the house to welcome sisters and associates for

*Living singly has not stopped Sr. Gert from establishing community.*

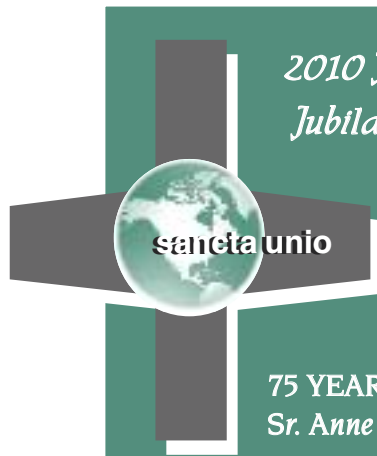
retreat, quiet time, or vacation. She provides meals for visitors and everything else is left up to the visitors. One drawback to the house is the long entrance stairway, so a handicapped accessible entrance has been built.

Since the house opened, Sr. Gert has welcomed between thirty-five and forty- sisters, some for a meal and visit, and others for overnight stays. The Mission Team has come for overnight stays to do long-range planning. When groups of sisters have come to Shunem House next door for weekend meetings, Sr. Gert has hosted the overflow.

Living singly has not stopped Sr. Gert from establishing community. She and Sr. Yvette, who also lives on the property, are in frequent touch as well as the Holy Union Sisters in Tewksbury, a short drive from Groton.

A "fourth career" awaits Sr. Gert. When the Heritage House opens in the building which was the original provincial house, she will act as curator of the artifacts that will be on display there.





*2010 Holy Union  
Jubilarians*



Sr. Anne Bugala

**75 YEARS**

*Sr. Anne Bugala (Sr. Stephen Therese)*



Sr. Laurette  
DeChamplain

**70 YEARS**

*Sr. Laurette DeChamplain (Sr. Albina Marie)  
Sr. Paula Marquis (Sr. Therese Edna)  
Sr. Eugenia Margaret Ready*



Sr. Claire LaRoche,  
Sr. Pauline Marie Dufour



Sr. Eugenia Margaret Ready



Sr. Paula Marquis

**65 YEARS**

*Sr. Pauline Marie Dufour (Sr. Joseph Paul)  
Sr. Claire LaRoche (Sr. Claire Regis)  
Sr. Antoinette Ouellette (Sr. Marie Irene)*



Sr. Antoinette Ouellette

**60 YEARS**

*Sr. Lorraine Boisvert (Sr. Robert Therese)  
Sr. Jean Carpinelli (Sr. Emma Frances)  
Sr. Roberta Desjardins (Sr. Paul Anna)  
Sr. Helen Poirier (Sr. Helen Marie)  
Sr. Alice Rees (Sr. John David)*



Sr. Lorraine Boisvert



Sr. Jean Carpinelli



Sr. Roberta Desjardins

**50 YEARS**

*Sr. Theresa Horvath (Sr. Kenneth Agnes)  
Sr. Yvette Ladurantaye (Sr. Marc Cecilia)  
Sr. Alice Michael (Sr. Virginia Emmanuel)*



Sr. Yvette Ladurantaye, Sr. Alice Michael, Sr. Theresa Horvath



Sr. Alice Rees



Sr. Helen Poirier

## Annual Assembly

Once again, Holy Union Sisters and Associates from locations in the Eastern US gathered for the annual assembly from July 29 to August 1, this year at a new location, Johnson and Wales Inn in Seekonk, MA. The participants were invited to "Fan into flame the gift you have received: Community."



The assembly was enriched this year by the presence of international Holy Union guests. Coming from Rome were Sisters Helen Meehan and golden jubilarian, Gisella Vandoorne. Sisters Maureen Gainey and Patricia Trussell represented the Anglo-Hibernian-Tanzanian Province. Sister Elizabeth Kunsah, a member of the Cameroon Region and now serving in Haiti, represented both of these geographic areas.

Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T. who has worked internationally as a speaker and consultant to religious communities was the keynote speaker on the topic of community. Blending humor and story telling with solid psychological expertise, Br. Loughlan reminded his audience that living in community is not an end in itself, but exists for mission. He asked the sisters and associates to reflect on how God has challenged them to model community.

At the close of the Assembly, Sr. Maureen on behalf of all the international visitors shared her impressions. During the Assembly, she said, "I forgot that I didn't belong." Throughout the four days, Sr. Maureen noted that the visitors were not observers, but were drawn into all the discussions and sharing at tables. A highlight was the Jubilee Liturgy and Dinner. Sisters and Associates left Seekonk on August 1, tired but energized to continue to fan into flame the mission of Holy Union in the year ahead.

A highlight of the Assembly was the Eucharistic liturgy, which honored 15 sisters who observed jubilees of 75, 70, 65, 60 and 50 years in Holy Union. Their combined years of service total 930! You can see their photographs on page 6 of this issue of Response.

## An Active Presence of God's Love

BY SR. FRAN CAVEY, SUSC

"Our call is to be at the heart of the world revealing God's love." This statement from Article 1 of the Holy Union Sisters' Constitutions identifies both our Holy Union mission and charism. It embodies not only what we do but who we are. "Revealing" is not just making something known, not just proclaiming God's love to those who might not know it. "Revealing" is about uncovering, discovering God's love already present just waiting to be recognized and celebrated. I felt this awareness more keenly after a 3-month visit to Cameroon at the end of some sabbatical time. It impelled me to say "yes" to an invitation to return to ministry in Massea, a small, remote village in the rainforest of the Congo River Basin.

Sisters Josephine Nko, Mathilda Lontum Nyanyoh and I were the first

Catholic sisters in this remote village in southeast Cameroon. Sisters Josephine and Mathilda worked in a small diocesan-established health clinic. My role was to be simply one of presence – to enable the "missioning" to happen. The villagers from two different tribes spoke their own dialect, and those fortunate enough to go to school spoke French. Foreign languages are not my "forte" – linguistically I was at a loss. But Article 9 of our Constitutions reminds us that



"By our charity we are an active presence of God's love". The phrase "active presence of God's love" became my mantra. Respect, care, concern – love – could be communicated by a smile, a handshake and some rough attempts at language. The simple acts of hauling water from the nearby stream, clean-

*God is here, everywhere, in everything – waiting to be "revealed" – uncovered, discovered, and celebrated.*

ing house, tending to our goats and chickens, as well as assisting in the dispensing of drugs, bandaging a patient and even helping to deliver a baby (most often in the early morning hours) – were all an “active presence of God’s love”. They were all acts of “revealing” (uncovering, discovering) God’s love – hopefully to the people of Massea, surely to me. For I was the one gifted with a deepening awareness of God’s great love.

Returning to Cameroon last September after a home visit, I was missioned to our resource/retreat center in Ndop in the Northwest, an English-speaking province of Cameroon. This year it is in welcoming our guests and seeing to their needs that I strive to show the “active presence of God’s love”. I give retreats, workshops, and spiritual direction not only to Holy Union Sisters but also to sisters, brothers and priests

### *Remembering Holy Union in Your Will*

As you provide for loved ones in your will, you can leave an additional amount for your charitable interests. You can name a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, or any remaining assets for the Holy Union Sisters. If you would like more specific information, please contact:

the Mission Advancement Office  
at 617-696-8765 ext 19 or  
patricia.butler@husmilton.org

### *I strive to show the “active presence of God’s love”*

from other congregations. Then there is the “busy work” of cataloguing our books and resources, scheduling retreats and the rental of our facilities, preparing brochures, and, oh yes, even being the community treasurer. It is a ministry that is full and rich, rewarding and challenging. Although more in my “area of expertise,” it is easier for me to become trapped in my own doing, to be less attentive to finding God in the most unexpected places. But the mantra and lesson of Massea, as well as my years in Holy Union, keep returning me to my center. God is here: in Ndop, in Massea, in the mundane, in the busyness, in the preparations, in the listening, in the sharing, in the confusion, in the cries, in the pain, in the joy - God is here, everywhere, in everything – waiting to be “revealed” - uncovered, discovered, and celebrated. And I - I am “an active presence of His love.”

### *Online Donations*

Please visit the Holy Union Sisters website ([www.holyunionsisters.org](http://www.holyunionsisters.org)), the Mission Advancement section, in order to learn about an Invitation to Partnership that outlines some specific Holy Union ministry needs, to make an on-line donation or to begin estate planning that would benefit the Holy Union Sisters, or learn about the Memorial Program.

Cover Photographs  
Clockwise:  
Sr. Claire LaRoche,  
Sr. Helen Poirier,  
Sr. Beverly Furtado,  
Sr. Marie Baldi,  
Sr. Hannah Collins,  
Sr. Mary Lou Sullivan

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**For the 125th Anniversary  
Celebration: Please use the  
above contact information.**



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Visit us on the web at  
**[www.holyunionsisters.org](http://www.holyunionsisters.org)**