

# Heartbeats

**Servants of the  
Holy Heart of Mary**

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## *A Word From Kathy Brady-Murfin*

Hi. My name is Kathy Brady-Murfin. I am both delighted and grateful that I have been asked to serve as Vocation Directress for the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary.

Although I was first introduced to the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary in 1998, our paths crossed several years before then when I found a book titled Light to the Gentiles in our parish library and fell in love with Francis Libermann. In 1997, our paths came together in a more meaningful way. I had undergone cancer treatment and, as often happens, God used that time to draw me closer. In an effort to find a community in which I

could explore and deepen my relationship with God, I filled out a card from A Guide to Religious Ministries. Sister Myra Lambert, never one to ignore a woman who is searching, received the card and took the time to call me. She invited me to come meet with her in Batavia. From the time that I first stepped foot on the grounds, I have felt like I found home.

My relationship with the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary has deepened over the years. What began as spiritual direction with Sr. Myra went on to become involvement as an Affiliate, a member of the Charism Committee and the One Heart One Soul advisory committee, and as a writer and presenter for both retreats and Charism Days. I also spent two years living part-time with Sisters Vicky,

Anne, Loretta, and Kathleen at St. Gall.

Working with and getting to know the Sisters has brought much joy to my life. I look forward to getting to know even more of you.



## *February is Black History Month*

### **MY STORY IN BLACK HISTORY**

Sr. Mary E. Clements, S.S.C.M.

I grew up on Fairmont Ave in Kankakee, a beautiful neighborhood in 1963. My family home was one block from St. Teresa Catholic Church, an all-white parish. I had great friends on the block. We did everything together and our parents helped raise all the children on the block. We were a tight knitted friend/family unit.

In 1970 everything changed. Why? Because one black family moved onto Fairmont Avenue. Quickly all my white neighborhood reacted to this new black neighbor by putting their homes on the market to sell. "After all, the value of our homes went down immediately". I, on the other hand, ran down the street to meet our new black neighbors, Mr. & Mrs.

James. They were very nice. I sat on their front porch many nights. They told wonderful stories. My parents never stopped me from going. Mom would say, "Just don't be a pest".

Within months all my best friends were gone from the neighborhood. I often cried at night because I missed my neighborhood friends. We had done everything together. Soon a new family moved into the big home next door. Mr. & Mrs. James Olds and their two senior parents. What a blessed moment! Mr. Olds had a big German Shepard /wolf mix named Butchy. Mr. Olds warned my dad to keep me away from Butchy because he was mean. Before I received this important message, I went right over and put my arms around the dog and we became great friends. As Mr. Olds and my dad watched this encounter, both men became pale.

New life started with these new neighbors. Another family moved out and

quickly I had two new black girls to play with on our block -- Jackie and Elizabeth. I was welcome in their home and they were welcome in our home. We played together every day. They also started going to St. Teresa Grade School. Our all white school suddenly became mixed. Oh my! I continued to enjoy my friends, school, and the neighborhood became an exciting place again. My mom would take me over to see my white friends who moved.

As a child I remember watching Lawrence Welk with that wonderful black tap dancer. He was amazing. Michael Jackson was a part of the Jackson 5 black music group. Michael was a cute little boy with an afro. Later in the 80's Michael broke off from his brothers and made his own album, "Thriller". He certainly did not look the same. It appeared that he was attempting to look like a white man. He certainly could dance. Who remembers the "moon

walk"? Grade school continued to be on-going work for me. My new friends spent many hours playing basketball in the back yard. Like normal grade schools experiencing integration, tension could be felt at times. Thankfully, Sr. Johanna Murphy, SSCM, was principal of the school and she had **no tolerance for racism** in the school. God bless Sr. Johanna!

Three of the original "white families " stayed on Fairmont Avenue until they could no longer stay due to age and illness. My mom remained in our home 2 years after my dad died. Just last year, one of our neighbors died. She lived in her home until her death. My friendship remains with my Fairmont Avenue family, both white and black. I believe that God was preparing me for my next adventure in life....

**Religious life and Sacred Heart Church in Hopkins Park Illinois.**

Before entering, I was matched up with Sr. Alma

Marquis, SSCM for my formal discernment process. I would meet Sr. Alma once a week at Sacred Heart Church. My mom had a fit. "Lock the car! Call me when you get there! Call me when you leave! Don't talk to anyone!" She would go on and on. (that's my dear mom). Sr. Alma and I would have great visits. Never once did anyone hurt me. In 2005 I was asked to go to Hopkins Park for my new ministry. Hopkins Park is a farming, rural area, 80% African American population. Wow! What a blessing! What a great ministry!



Sacred Heart Church will celebrate its 80th anniversary in 2019.

Some people may experience poverty; physical, emotional, and spiritual, yet spiritual wealth is strong here. Most people know God personally. "I'm too

blessed to be stressed"! I have great friends here. People are welcome in our home.

I could list many dear people out here, yet I would miss someone. Who have been my teachers?

Mae....Always be prepared to feed someone else.

Callie.....Pray! Pray! And never stop.

Alma..... The gift of gospel music. African American artists Mandesa, Whitney Houston, Dorothy Hayword.

Bertha..... Pray on! Be faithful to your family and teach them about God.

Annie Pearl..... How to make Crowder peas, black-eyed peas, green and poke salad



Mrs. Strong.... Nothing tastes as sweet as Jesus. Yum. Keep your legs covered so the boys have something to imagine.

Betty.... Coconut cream cake, peach cobbler, celebrate life in a spirit of thanksgiving.

Rosetta..... Oh my... Love God, trust, be gentle, how to handle heart break.

The list could go on.

Jesus is on the main line, tell him what you want.

It's me, It's me oh Lord standing in the need of prayer.

His eye is on the Sparrow.

I won't complain.

These are powerful songs that tell the story of black History.

We shall over come.

President Barack Obama..... The first African American President of the United States. We had a party here at the convent at his inauguration. My friends were struck with awe as he was sworn in as president. A 90 year old senior adult women walked out of the voting

place amazed that she, a woman could vote for a black man.

I now celebrate Black History month every year.

Scripture, dance, music, high spirited plays, stories of famous people that have made history. Rosa Parks, Peter Claver, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We also celebrate Kwanza.

Segregation, slavery, hatred, violence, riots.-- The behavior of intolerant white folks.

Forgiveness, tolerance, fight for equal rights, and trust in God. The true spirit of African- American people.



What a story! That's not the end.... Now I am blessed to share community life with

Sr. Dorothee Gabrielle Ndzie, SSCM, straight from Cameroon Africa. Speaking of Africa, I had to trip of a life time. I was invited to go to the 2010 celebration of our 150th anniversary as a congregation. Yes, I, little Marybeth, landed in Africa for 3 glorious weeks.

Cameroonians.....People that love God first and above all.

People that work. All ages. People that value education.

People that dance and make wonderful music.

People that celebrate and are grateful, joyful and prayerful.

Resourceful. Faithful.

Church going people.

People that care for each other.

I am grateful. I am joyful. I am blessed.