

# Heartbeats

Servants of the  
Holy Heart of Mary

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## *On a Mission During the Time of Covid19*

Sr. Mary Beth Clements, sscm

I've had many ministry moments in my lifetime, especially at Sacred Heart Church. This is quite a story. The whole world is on shut down due to the Corvid-19 pandemic. Everyone is nervous, scared, restricted, and staying home together. On Saturday, March 21, 2020, I had to accept a mission that

shipping unit. Everything that was collected had to be taken to Calumet City on Saturday or she would lose the space.

I woke up stressed from all the pressure and I truly wanted to call Albertine to tell her I could not go. I thought about the day and how I was feeling. After some reflection I said,

*Nothing happens by mistake.*

*Together we can make a difference*

was before me; one that would touch the lives of many.

My friend, Albertine Scray, is the president of a foundation that takes care of the needs of very impoverished children in Cameroon and the United States. Over the past 4 months, we have collected clothing, shoes, books, medical supplies, and many other items. Thanks to a generous man, Albertine was offered space in a

"Yes. We have a mission to do."

Albertine and her family arrived. We started unpacking the bus and re-taping the boxes. Together we worked and then created a plan. At the same time, we were on a second mission to create 10 food boxes for the homebound in Hopkins Park.

I drove to Calumet City with Gene, Albertine's husband, while Albertine worked on the



boxes. I had no idea where I was going. Thanks to good directions from the GPS, we found the warehouse for the items we had collected. Carefully I positioned the bus and 8 men unloaded 25 boxes of materials for Cameroon. All these items will make a huge difference for the children in Albertine's schools and orphanages. Finally, the bus was empty, and that portion of the mission was finished.

Round two. The authorities had placed a "Stay at home order" which was to start at 5:00 p.m. By the time we returned to Hopkins Park to help put together boxes, it was 5:15. p.m. My little-girl insecure voice was yelling, "We are going to get in trouble"! We are going to get sick!" I was reminded then,

that we were on a mission, a mission from God for God's people.

Earlier in the day we had stopped at the grocery store to get milk and bread. Albertine had to be very assertive with the store managers to get the food she needed. Our bus was getting full of items for the boxes. I remember thinking: Thank God for the bus! After two hours of working on the boxes, we finally loaded the bus and took off. We traveled on the dirt roads of Hopkins Park and watched a beautiful sunset color the sky. We never did find one home of a senior adult. The deliveries continued. We were all getting tired and hungry.

Sometimes God asks us to encounter people that are not real comfortable to be around. I asked God to heal my vulnerable heart as we approached the next home, that of a woman who has no transportation and helps raise her autistic teenage grandson. I really had to pray for this woman and for myself when we arrived because she was someone who had caused me a great deal of trouble. It was getting late, yet we were on a mission.

We traveled to another family back in the sandy roads of Hopkins Park. This family was delighted to see us. It was a Sacred Heart Family reunion. I drove down the street to turn the bus around. The driveway looked solid. I turned in and managed to get the bus stuck in the sand. "GREAT"!!! We got out and looked at the bus. Then I realized that a friend who is a truck driver lived right across the street from where the bus was currently stuck. Two gentlemen came out of the house into the cold night air. I was so grateful to see them. They had a truck and chains. They hooked up the bus and I started praying like crazy. Slowly the bus became free and all of us said aloud, "Thank you, God!"

Gene took over driving. As we were driving along, Gene told me something was wrong with the breaks. "Now what!!!" I know Gene was behind the steering wheel, yet I believe that God controlled all the traffic lights from Hopkins Park to Kankakee. It was now 9:30 p.m.

It was great to get home safely and into my cozy chair. I started to reflect on the day:

God was present at every moment.

God's energy got me out of the chair on that early Saturday morning.

Nothing happens by mistake.

Together we can make a difference.

I know all my Sisters were on this mission.

God gave me the grace to make good choices all day.

I was tired yet stronger.

Like the people that were touched by this action of love, I had to tell the story or explode.

Together we were on a mission. Nothing was going to stop us.



## MINISTRY FROM A DISTANCE

Sr. Loretta Finn

As a pastoral volunteer at St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee, IL., I have been privileged to be able to talk and pray with patients before or after their surgery. On entering the surgery/recovery room I have the joy of greeting the staff with a "Happy Monday" or whatever the day is. And what a warm response I get. There is such a caring, welcoming spirit there. After praying with patients, I go out to the Surgical Waiting Room to talk with family or friends who are waiting there. I tell them I pray each day for all who are having surgeries or procedures, the doctors, nurses and them. I have had some touching experiences doing this. Sometimes someone will take my hand and say, "I want to say a prayer for you". This happens, too, in the surgery room. What a blessing!

I continue my rounds by stopping to chat with those in the Volunteer Room, receptionists and baristas in the gift shop. Then, when time permits, I stop at the Volunteer office for a short

visit and end my round in the Administration office. Here I have the joy of connecting with the CEO and staff and get an update on how things are going. There are also numerous opportunities to greet doctors, employees, volunteers and visitors in hallways. It is such a joy to connect with those I pass by with a "hello", a smile or a hug. But now, with the Covid19 pandemic, that's not an option.

So, now that I am on "furlough" because of Covid19, I needed to find ways to stay connected with the St. Maty Hospital Family from a distance. My "present hospital ministry" now is prayer, emails, cards, and phone calls.

I began my ministry at a distance by calling a few units to let them know I was thinking and praying for them. Now, I continue this ministry with a phone call or sending an email with a spiritual thought to the CEO, administrative staff and others at least once a week. The other day I got the following response:

"It would be really nice for you to share a daily message

with all of us. Just because you can't be here with us physically doesn't mean that you can't share your smile, hugs and messages through emails. I really think that you need to continue to share your spirit, love and passion with us! I know that we could all use a little normalcy right now. Just knowing that your spirit and prayers are with us would be a blessing!"

Is this pandemic not a special time of grace bringing us closer together in love, concern, service and HOPE even though we are homebound or 6 feet apart!



## St. Anne Community in Rockford's Life During the Corona Virus Pandemic

Sr. Mary Kay Moran, SSCM

We are very fortunate and truly blessed as a community to be able to live-stream the liturgy from St. Bridget Church every day and because we have the Eucharist in our chapel, we are also able to receive Communion. A retired priest who says Mass in his room at Siena every day has supplied us with the Eucharist for our chapel. We were also fortunate in having blessed palm for Palm Sunday. Sister Marie-Ange got the palm and a dear friend made crosses out of the palm. Sister distributed the crosses to the residents at Saint Anne Center Nursing Home, to our affiliates and some of the other residents of Siena. We also each have one.



Three of us are continuing our ministries. Sister Anne

continues to drive into Chicago for a three day stay at Bethany working with refugee women between the ages of 18 and 22.

Sister Marie-Ange goes to Saint Anne Center Nursing Home every morning and distributes Communion to the residents – with gloves and mask. The residents are so happy to be able to receive Jesus during this time. She also facilitates their being able to get the Mass on their tv.

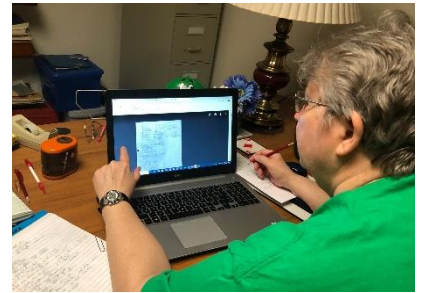


Sister June is unable to go to the nursing home so she continues to support the residents through prayer. She usually attends an exercise class in our Siena community and is continuing to do her exercises at home.



Sister June also made hearts for the windows of our duplex on the back and in the front to cheer up those who go out for

walks on our walking path. Sister Mary Kay is doing e-learning from home. She has four classes to “teach.”



She goes to school when no one is there to use the mimio screen and video tape her teaching. The assignments are uploaded to Google Classroom and the students complete the work, send it back to Sister, she corrects and records it and then returns it with explanations for the problems that are incorrect. A lot of e-learning for teacher as well as students. All of us are being mindful of family, friends, affiliates and others by keeping connected through emails and phone calls.

Sister Anne made a sign **All in Illinois** for the front of our duplex to show solidarity with our state.

We like completing jigsaw puzzles and usually have one going on the table. Sister Mary Kay's brother sent a puzzle of the map of our area – it's hard but we're solving it piece by piece, slowly!



We are doing well and staying happy with the Lord at our side. With everyone home it is a lot easier planning times for activities together!



### *Sr. Martha Harrington's Retirement Decision*

Sister Martha Harrington knew the time for her to retire was approaching when, "Keeping up with the certification process was getting to be too demanding!" Martha was the dedicated chaplain at Our Lady of Victory Nursing Home for 34 years.

The staff and residents are "like family to me," she says smilingly, "my own mother was there for 8 years!" What was the core of her witness and service? "I know the staff was happy to see me. I tried to

encourage the staff, especially those who were more hidden in their service like housekeepers and CNAs with a 'You're doing a good job'." Martha would pass the credit on to others when, because she is a Sister, she might be praised or lauded. To the residents she would exclaim, "Look what these employees do for you!"



Martha is concerned about the spiritual care of the people she leaves behind. There is always, she opines, a balance between the clinical and spiritual aspects of care. She also has great concern regarding the use of the chapel for activities that might take away from the respect the chapel area deserves as a place of worship.

At the residents' Christmas party, she was given a farewell blessing and saluted with a tasty cake to share. Her Maternity BVM parish friends celebrated her transition into

retirement at a cozy get together in December.



Currently, like all of us, Martha is riding out the Corona Virus shelter-in-place directive and catching up with her family and friends on phone. She is sorting and pitching superfluous things and is deconstructing her bedroom décor to plan for a new look. She and her spiritual director are discussing a book entitled Transitions.

Martha hopes to participate in the Retirement Sabbatical at CTU whenever it occurs, hopefully this summer. She truly appreciates the encouragement Sr. Vicky, who participated in it last year, gave her to apply. Right now, Martha enjoys the time for prayer and reflection this transition to retirement has given her. God bless you, Martha, with a full and happy retirement.