

Proclaiming Hope

Called to be a Healing Presence

Spring
2019

*Have Courage,
God
Is With You*

In This Issue:

Garden to Farm

Of Global Concern: Waters of Our World

My Journey as a Sister of the Redeemer



Sisters of the
Redeemer

Dear Friends,



I will close this message with a favorite scripture passage of Blessed Alphonse Maria from the Prophet Isaiah: "With joy, we will draw water from the springs of salvation." These words remind us that the springs of salvation are available for all to drink, without limit, overflowing, pouring abundantly upon the hearts of those who thirst for God. Herein lies our Easter Hope that we proclaim in this issue of our newsletter, and in every day of our lives. Alleluia!

Sr. Anne Marie Haas, CSR, Province Leader



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Sisters of the Redeemer



Blessed Alphonse Maria Eppinger

"Have courage, God is with you"



We are continuing our observance of the Year of Beatification, as we honor our Founder, Elisabeth Eppinger, and celebrate her beatification this past September as Blessed Alphonse Maria. We would like to take this opportunity to provide a brief snapshot of the life of Blessed Alphonse Maria to better acquaint you with her journey.



Elisabeth Eppinger was born September 9, 1814 in the village of Niederbrönn (which means small spring) in Alsace-Lorraine, France. She was the eldest child in a poor farming family that would eventually include eleven children. While often in poor health herself, the young but deeply religious Elisabeth was greatly concerned for the people in her small, isolated town that were made vulnerable by sickness and poverty. Driven by compassion and guided by faith, Elisabeth began a life of home-based service to her less fortunate neighbors, ministering with a zeal that earned her the reputation of being both radical and visionary. Her efforts were also noticed by her parish priest and, later, the Bishop of Strasbourg, who agreed that God had called Elisabeth to do important work. They supported

Elisabeth's goal of founding a religious congregation that would focus its mission on carrying out the works of mercy particularly to poor and sick persons.

On August 28, 1849, Elisabeth, then in her mid-thirties, founded the Congregation named in honor of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. On September 10 of that year, she took the name Mother Alphonse Maria. From then until her death in 1867, Mother Alphonse Maria continued her tireless efforts in the service of those most in need. Today, thousands of people across six continents are directly engaged in the mission begun by Elisabeth Eppinger over 170 years ago. Working to express the healing presence of Jesus in a suffering world, the Holy Redeemer family provides holistic health care and social services, animated by faith and prayer, to those in need.

On September 9, 2018 in Strasbourg, France, not far from her hometown, Elisabeth Eppinger, Mother Alphonse Maria, was formally beatified as Blessed Alphonse Maria, constituting the first step toward

her canonization as a saint. At the Mass of Beatification, Cardinal Angelo Becciu said, "Her ardent desire was to live and work for Christ, to imitate his gentleness, his humility, his love, seeking to please him alone."

Two priest friends, Msgr. Joseph Garvin and Fr. Timothy Judge had the honor of concelebrating the Mass. Several people from the American Province of the Sisters of the Redeemer who had the great fortune to be in attendance at the Beatification Mass, share their thoughts below:

Redeemer Associate, Loretta Troccoli, called the experience "overwhelming," and said that "The love that Blessed Alphonse Maria gave so freely to others was present that day in the cathedral."

Dr. Sandeep Dhand, a Holy Redeemer Health System Physician, and his wife, Dr. Mary Dhand, have been part of the Holy Redeemer family for over 40 years. They called the beatification a "holy and magnificent" experience that helped them understand the simplicity, the spirituality, and the dedication of Redeemer Sisters everywhere. The Dhands noted that what they witnessed "has given us much to ponder and to emulate."

Those who could not attend the ceremony gathered locally to watch a live-stream of the Mass, and were equally moved by the experience. Sr. Barbara Deitrich felt as though she was present in the cathedral where the Mass was

being celebrated, and was deeply moved by what she saw. "When the picture of Blessed Alphonse Maria was unveiled," she said, "I felt that she was smiling down on all of us who are a part of her heritage."

On Sunday, September 23, the American Province of the Sisters of the Redeemer, along with Redeemer Associates and friends, joyfully celebrated the beatification of Blessed Alphonse Maria Eppinger at St. Albert the Great Church, in Huntingdon Valley, PA. Homilist Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, concelebrated the Mass with several priests who have had a connection to the Sisters over the years. And, on Sunday, October 14, the Sisters of the Divine Redeemer in Elizabeth, PA had a Mass of Thanksgiving for Blessed Alphonse Maria, celebrated by Bishop Zubik of Pittsburgh.

As this year of beatification continues, we will honor Blessed Alphonse Maria with an open house, days of service and special events.



American members of the Redeemer family celebrate outside the Notre Dame Cathedral in Strasbourg, France.



"Our Jubilee theme: 'Remain in my love so that my joy may be in you.' (John 15:10-11) and these words of Blessed Alphonse Maria are strikingly similar for me: 'I am convinced that God has placed in you the strong desire to please him and to do everything in him and with him for his greater honor and glory. Therefore, have courage, God is with you'. It is with joy and a heart filled with gratitude that I recommit my life to God and our Congregation, the Sisters of the Redeemer."

-Sr. Ellen Marvel



"I found deep peace, joy, hope and gratitude realizing that I was celebrating my Golden Jubilee in the year of our Founder's beatification. She counseled us to find Christ in the sick and poor noting that 'The greatest gift that God can offer is to have a person follow in Jesus' footsteps.' I connected deeply with these words through my ministry of nursing and spiritual care over the past 50 plus years."

-Sr. Janet Wingert



"What a blessing that God is allowing me to work with his people through the Sisters of the Redeemer for over 60 years. It has been a great blessing and a privilege following in the footsteps of Blessed Alphonse Maria. My greatest love was working with the children at our Drueding Center in Philadelphia."

-Sr. Dorothy Rose Prahinski

Sr. Tadea Mpanda CSR



My Journey as a Sister of the Redeemer

I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Redeemer on December 9, 1986. As a child I experienced a call to prayer and service. In the Liputu Village in Ndanda, Tanzania where I lived, there were children without clothing and homes without food. I found great joy in sharing what little I had and asking God to alleviate the suffering of my neighbors.

The women in my family had great influence on me as I contemplated my calling. My grandmother, with whom I lived, insisted on my attendance at Church and kept me active in my faith. I wanted more. I wanted a life that was fully devoted to prayer and service. My aunt suggested religious life and entering a congregation. She told me it would be best to first finish primary school, and to then

complete a program for domestic skills. A friend followed a similar path to my own, but chose to study at a domestic school operated by the Sisters of the Redeemer. The name of this Congregation spoke to me. I felt that I was being guided to the Sisters of the Redeemer even before I had met any of them! Soon, I learned the wonderful news that the Sisters were preparing to accept Tanzanian women into a newly-developed formation program. My life as a Sister began. Trained by our German Redeemer Sisters, we learned the beautiful heritage and norms of the Congregation, and how they are expressed in teaching, healing, praying and in various ministries. I found that the charism and spirituality that illuminates the lives and the

work of the Sisters echoed strongly the lessons of prayer and service that I learned as a child. And, like all of the Tanzanian Sisters, I will be forever grateful to our German "mothers" who helped and guided me through that early part of my religious life.

Since becoming a Sister, I've spent some time teaching at the Teacher Training College in the town of Mtwara, and then became an elected leader for our Tanzania Region. Serving as a leader for twelve years, I have come to know myself better. I have also come to realize that true spiritual leadership relies on prayer and an outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

My participation as a member of the International Leadership Team has given me a strong bond between the leaders and all of the Sisters; one that reflects mutual respect and appreciation for our different cultures, and that draws us ever closer together as part of a shared mission. Today, our Sisters feel at home everywhere in the world that Sisters of the Redeemer live and work. We have followed different paths and have found our calling in different ways, but we are one!



In 1958, the first community of Sisters in Tanzania was established on the Makonde Plateau to follow the inspiration of Mother Alphonse Maria Eppinger. Today, there are eleven communities of Sisters serving in the education and formation of potential Sisters of the Redeemer, health centers, Montessori teaching schools, vocational training centers for women, parish work and farming.

Elaine Faulkner:

Bringing Sustainable Solutions To Issues That Impact Body, Mind and Spirit

Elaine Faulkner has been a generous supporter, benefactor and beloved friend of the Sisters of the Redeemer for over 30 years and her contributions to the American Province are beyond counting. But quite possibly, the greatest testament to Elaine's philanthropic work thousands of miles from the lush green fields of Huntingdon Valley, PA, is in a small village in East Africa. It is there that Elaine, working in concert with the Sisters of the Redeemer in America, the Sisters in the African Region and with a partner parish in Germany, established a well to serve the daily needs of a Tanzanian community that otherwise relies on a water source located a great distance from the villagers.

The lack of clean water in this village has consequences that transcend the body's need for hydration. Because they are usually tasked with undertaking the arduous, frequently dangerous journey to the clean water source, young women in the village have little opportunity to pursue an education. Having taught science and biology for many years, Elaine understands both the necessity of clean water to physical health, and the vital importance of education for human and social development. Deeply committed to causes related to women's health and education, Elaine gave generously of resources to help make clean water and education a reality for a small village half a world away.

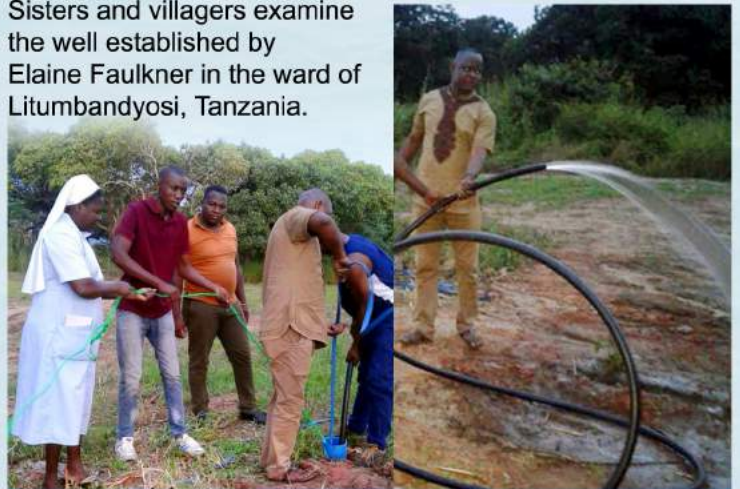
Elaine cares very deeply about the community, both locally and globally. Her family has maintained local roots in the automobile business for over 83 years, and has generously supported organizations like the Police Athletic League (PAL) and the YMCA. Now boasting 25 great grandchildren, Elaine remains a tireless and passionate advocate for education, claiming that her continued interaction with teenagers helps to keep her young. And her support of clean water is not limited to Tanzania. She has also funded the "Faulkner Faucet," a well that serves the needs of the Sisters' Redeemer Community Garden in Huntingdon Valley.



Above: The "Faulkner Faucet" serves the needs of the newly expanded garden of the Sisters in America.

Below:

Sisters and villagers examine the well established by Elaine Faulkner in the ward of Litumbandyosi, Tanzania.



We are deeply grateful to Elaine for her generosity of time and financial support. With her help, and that of all our benefactors, we are able to continue our mission around the world to find sustainable solutions to problems that negatively impact body, mind and spirit.



GARDEN TO FARM



For ten years, the Redeemer Valley Garden has flourished in Huntingdon Valley, PA, offering individual plots and large community supported space for gardeners of all skill levels. In that time, the garden has evolved from a grass roots, land-sharing initiative into a sustainable, working farm. This is not a new idea. The Sisters have farmed this land since establishing St. Joseph Manor in 1936. The land supported crops and animals to provide food for the Sisters and residents of the Manor. Back then Sr. Eustella Volk, fondly known as the Tractor Sister, oversaw the farm activities.

Under the leadership of Sr. Ana Dura, the first community gardeners planted without fences or easy access to water—only tilled soil measured into plots with stakes and string. Today, there are over 50 garden plots and as many gardeners. On the original site, the garden went through two major expansions and fence upgrades, before relocating this past year to another field on the property. The irrigation system progressed from lines of hose, to a solar powered pump running nearby creek water up to elevated tanks, and currently, thanks to the help of a generous benefactor, a dug well. This will be our first full year with a consistent source of water.

The increase in size and functionality has led to the corollary growth in the quantity and quality of our harvest of fresh produce, which we share with local food cupboards and sell at farmers markets. Our seed starting process has moved from a small, poorly lit greenhouse, to one attached to St. Joseph Manor, our skilled living ministry.

The goal of the garden has been to better connect with the land and to foster communal aspects of being present in our space in the world. With the arrival of Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, we have been encouraged in both our intuition and spirituality that care of the environment directly impacts the conditions of people's lives. Growing healthy produce without added pesticides and fertilizers has become a natural extension of this plan. Over the years we have been able to increase the health of the soil by incorporating organic materials and practices.

Besides the quality of the produce, we also believe that health has a direct correlation to the relationships we foster and maintain. A community garden brings individuals together through common interest and vision. Our garden has become a family affair, with gardeners ranging in age from infancy to the elderly—some looking to work the soil and some to just be present,



lending their spirit and soaking up the collective soul of the people around them.

In addition, an ever-growing array of farm animals has joined our flock. It all began with a dozen baby chicks, and now includes approximately 35 chickens, four ducks, four rabbits, seven goats, and three sheep. The chickens are a popular source of fresh eggs, and the dairy goats provide soap and cheese. Though these additions have increased the workload and staffing requirements, the move from garden to farm has also broadened our community reach, increased our educational opportunities and brought great joy to many.

We are amazed every year by the intricate interdependence of all life, and still love to witness the joy that happens when individuals connect with creation. It is human nature to desire to share the beauty of connection with the earth and the community that evolves around growth. With our garden's expansion into a working farm, we hope to develop further opportunities

for more individuals in the surrounding community to experience this connectivity with nature as a means to healing, wholeness, spiritual deepening, and joy, through retreats, workshops, service activities, creative projects, and more. We continue to seek new ways to provide healthy, wholesome local food to those in need, and are looking to participate in more farmers markets as well as beginning to offer goat and sheep milk products. This will move us into a new era for the community "garden" as we look to establish a small ministry that is both a business and vehicle of outreach. We are thrilled to have begun planning for a barn structure that will eventually tie all these pieces of the garden together, and provide a more accessible visitor and volunteer friendly environment. This is a big step forward in faith and hope!

For more information visit our website
www.redeemervalleygarden.com

We are planning for a barn for our growing number of animals with the hope of beginning a micro dairy. The barn will provide space for the packing and storing of fresh produce from our garden; a meeting area for events and making goat milk soap and wool items; and storage for equipment and animal feed. The barn will include a space to display and sell our home crafted and grown products. In our efforts towards sustainability we anticipate solar power and rain water collection features.

The barn will support our efforts to make a positive impact on the community in which we reside through healthy and sustainable living, community building, educational programming, spiritual enrichment and more. The anticipated completion of the barn is the end of 2019. If you are interested in financially supporting this exciting endeavor, we would be grateful.



Farm donations can be mailed to:

Redeemer Valley Farm
Attn: Sr. Ellen Marvel, CSR
1600 Huntingdon Pike
Meadowbrook, PA 19046

BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES

For over 35 years, Redeemer Ministry Corps has been blessed by the lives of the many passionate, dedicated and caring volunteers who have and who continue to respond to the call to service, faith and community. For one year, volunteers serve vulnerable populations by striving to be a caring, comforting and healing presence while exploring their own spirituality in an intentional and supportive setting, following the example of the Redeemer Sisters. RMCs often find that the focus on caring for others has led to a transformation leading them to an increase in empathy, self-awareness and spiritual growth. Jackie Hutchison, current RMC, shares what she has learned during her time in the ICU.

"As a Patient Care Assistant at Holy Redeemer Hospital, I walk into the Intensive Care Unit at 7 a.m. and it hardly feels like morning. The ICU has been active and alert all night. Monitors are beeping constantly, doctors are flying in and out, night nurses are giving detailed report to the day shift nurses and visitors are numerous. Before the 9 a.m. rounds with the doctors, there are a handful of tasks for me to complete – blood glucose testing, electrocardiograms, printing heart monitor strips, restocking linen carts, bathing patients and getting them set up for breakfast.

One morning in particular, a patient was rushed in from the ER in respiratory distress, intubated, and started on IV fluids and medication, with fear that he might not make it. Respiratory therapists, speech therapists, doctors and nurses were simultaneously running different tests, and



Jackie Hutchison assists a patient in the ICU at Holy Redeemer Hospital.

I performed an electrocardiogram test, monitored his blood sugar and bathed him each day for four days while he was unable to verbally communicate. However, over time I began to notice that he recognized me each time I greeted him as I entered the room and I quickly picked up on his facial cues for when he was uncomfortable, hungry, tired or bored. Once he was extubated, we began to have conversations about his grandkids, his career and his world travels. Eventually, he graduated to a solid food diet and began getting out of bed during visits with the physical therapist. Witnessing this patient's journey of having a near-death experience to walking around the ICU unit with "Discharge to Home" orders in place, I recognized how the embrace of care displayed by everyone working in the hospital can spark a sense of hope and new life for the patient. Without knowing, this patient made a lasting impact on my volunteer year and showed me how to display bravery in the face of challenges.

As I reflect on my time in the ICU, I appreciate how this experience has helped me grow in unexpected ways. Through interactions with patients, I've deepened my empathy for people who find themselves in a vulnerable state and I have become courageous enough to pursue similar connections with other patients in need. This experience has also given me clarity and insight into my future. I am certain that the medical field is where I want to pursue my career. Being a part of a team, focused on healing and honoring life is how I want to spend my time. These realizations come from only eight months of interactions with new people and new places through Redeemer Ministry Corps, an experience for which I am most grateful."



Of Global Concern

Waters of Our World

"Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights"
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, No. 30

One in nine people worldwide lacks access to clean water. In some developing nations, water must be retrieved from rivers and streams that are miles away, and then boiled in the hope of removing life-threatening impurities. Children are often the greatest victims of this particular privation. UNICEF has reported that, despite the availability of simple and effective treatment, diarrhea from unsafe drinking water accounts for 8% of deaths worldwide, for children under the age of five. In terms that better illustrate the human toll of this tragedy, 1,300 children die each day, and 480,000 children die each year, from drinking impure water.

Because its availability is almost an assumed part of life in developed countries, and especially in the United States, clean water is often taken for granted. By gaining a greater awareness of the many ways that water can be misused and wasted, and by adopting simple actions to make our use of water more responsible, we can contribute to a global effort to conserve this most precious of resources.



Consider the following:

- About 95 percent of the water entering our homes goes down the drain.
- Running the tap while brushing your teeth can waste 4 gallons of water.
- A garden hose or sprinkler can use almost as much water in 1 hour as an average family of four uses per day.
- Over a quarter of all the clean, drinkable water used in homes is used to flush the toilets.
- Many people in the world exist on 3 gallons of water per day or less. (We can use that amount in one flush.)

Simple Actions:

- When brushing your teeth do not keep water running down the drain.
- Rinse dishes in standing water. Don't let the tap run down the drain.
- Avoid running the dishwasher or washing machine unless they are full.
- Avoid lengthy showers – Depending on the shower head, 2- 10 gallons of water per shower are used.
- Repair leaking faucets. A steady drip can waste 20 gallons or more per day.
- Collect and use cold water when waiting for water to warm up. It is otherwise wasted.
- Enjoy drinking a cool glass of clean water mindful of the gift that it is.



Sisters of the Redeemer

1600 Huntingdon Pike
Meadowbrook, PA 19046
USA

*"God indeed is my salvation; I am confident and unafraid.
For the LORD is my strength and my might, and GOD has been my salvation.
With joy you will draw water from the fountains of salvation," Isaiah 12:2-3*

