

Sister creates music and poetry



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Sister Florian Reichert, SSJ, reads her poetry at Wesley-on-East in Rochester Aug. 21.

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — Tears well up in the eyes of Sister Florian Reichert, SSJ, as she reads from her poem "Passion Eve," in a visitor's room at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse.

"This is the eve of the great Passion/and the suffering ones lie prone in the garden/Blood is on the ground/And the ground is Lebanon, Poland, El Salvador .../And men sleep and poets dream/and I sing bits of little songs," reads Sister Reichert, SSJ, who is celebrating her 70th jubilee this year.

For a moment, the bright sun shining through the room window seems to be more of an untimely intrusion than a welcome illumination.

"So few to watch the agony!, she reads on, "the Man dying, the hungry crying, and the soldiers/missing the children miss-

ing them./And the children weep/while men sleep and poets dream their dreams/and I sing bits of little songs." (from *Good Morning Blue*, 1984.)

"Bits of little songs" have been pouring out of the pen of the 89-year-old religious almost all her life. Most have more to do with celebrating people and God's creation, rather than lamenting their destruction. All of them show her knack for combining her talents for writing and music — song informing her verse with rhythm, and her verses inspiring the composition of her songs.

Many of her poems make music of ordinary sights — a bird in a pet shop, a jogger in a park, a homeless woman in the city. When refracted through the prism of her poetry, the sights lose their commonplace characteristics. Each poem creates a spectrum of impressions, ranging from the light-hearted regard for a tiny

spider's web she refuses to sweep out "to free a corner in the name of clean," to the "melancholy sadness" she feels over an elderly woman rocking in her chair.

Unlike the old woman she pities in the one of the above-quoted poems from her 1988 book, *Eye of the Crocus*, Sister Reichert is not rocking her life away, and would be more suitable as the subject of a lilting hymn ending in a graceful cadence than as the object of concern in some sad song.

"My mother, when I was a child, would put a beautiful poem that she'd cut out on my door," she said, recalling how she started writing as a child and then as a teenager in Corning. Her parents' first meeting — they both belonged to the choir at St. Mary's — seemed to foreshadow their daughter's own vocation to compose and teach music for the church.

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Sisters of St. Joseph mark years of community service

Eighteen Sisters of St. Joseph are marking their jubilees this year. Seven sisters are celebrating their 60th anniversaries.

Celebrating 60 years

Sister Rosalma Hayes began teaching at Nazareth Academy in Rochester in 1931 and transferred to DeSales High School in Geneva in 1941. She returned to Rochester in 1950 to teach and work in administration for resident students at Nazareth College. In 1951, she moved to St. Agnes High School in Rochester where she taught until 1960.

Sister Hayes returned to Nazareth College in 1960, teaching there until 1964. She then traveled to the sisters' mission in Brazil for pastoral, teaching and administrative work. She served as regional coordinator of the sisters' overseas mission until 1975, and also worked in central administration at the motherhouse in Rochester from 1969-79.

Sister Hayes has served as the motherhouse's administrative assistant since 1981. She also worked in personnel services at St. Ann's Home/The Heritage from 1979-1981.

Tutorial or full-time teaching work marked the career of Sister Marie Joseph Helfrich for the past 59 years. Sister Helfrich was employed at schools in Rochester, Brockport, Spencerport, Elmira and Corning. She currently resides at Holy Rosary Convent.

Sister Mary Philip Capaldi also served many parishes around the diocese, teaching in the 1930s, '40s and '50s at St. Patrick's in Mount Morris, St. Agnes in Avon, St. Francis Xavier in Rochester, St. Francis DeSales in Geneva, St. John's in Greece, and St. John's in Spencerport.

She served as principal, teacher and convent superior at St. Michael's in Penn Yan from 1957-63; at Ss. Peter and Paul in Elmira from 1963-66; and St. Patrick's in

Mount Morris from 1966-68. She continued her teaching ministry at various Rochester schools including St. Stanislaus, Mother of Sorrows and St. Joseph's Villa until 1981 when she retired. She now lives at the motherhouse.

Sister Anna Berchmans De Vos worked in convent service at the motherhouse from 1929-66. She took up the same duties at Nazareth Academy from 1966-80, and has since worked in the spiritual apostolate at St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary.

Education was Sister Helen Holenstein's vocation, starting with a first- and second-grade teaching job at Holy Trinity in Webster in 1931. For the next five decades, she taught elementary students at various diocesan schools — Immaculate Conception in Ithaca, Corpus Christi, St. Francis Xavier and St. Pius the Tenth in Rochester, St. Francis DeSales in Geneva, St. Mary's in Elmira, and St. Alphonsus in Auburn.

As principal, Sister Holenstein oversaw St. Patrick's in Corning from 1948-54, and Immaculate Conception in Rochester from 1955-1961. She also worked in the learning center of Nazareth Hall from 1972-78, and has taught math and coordinated auxiliary services at Mother of Sorrows since 1978.

Sister Holenstein also noted she has been a summertime catechist for several years.

Every region of the diocese has been graced by the presence of Sister Helen Louis Kirby, who began teaching at St. Alphonsus in Auburn in 1931, where she stayed until 1939. Sister Kirby has also taught at Immaculate Conception in Ithaca and St. Aloysius in Auburn, where she became principal in 1947. She was also principal of St. Bridget's, Rochester, from 1956-57.

Sister Kirby became the local superior of the motherhouse in Rochester in 1957, a position she held until 1963 when she became associate administrator of St.

Ann's Home. She returned to teaching at Nazareth Hall for a year in 1964 and then took up duties in the business office in St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, until 1988. She currently resides at the motherhouse.

St. John the Evangelist in Greece welcomed a new teacher in 1931 named Sister Teresa Gerard Speckgoor. She taught there until 1936, when she moved to St. Mary's in Dansville for three years. She subsequently taught at St. Mary's, Elmira, and St. Agnes, Avon.

Sister Speckgoor became principal of St. Mary's in Canandaigua in 1953, and took up the same position at St. Agnes in Avon in 1955. She later taught at St. James in Waverly in 1961, and then became principal of the school in 1962. She also served as principal and teacher at St. Anne's in Palmyra from 1965-71.

Celebrating 50 years

This year culminates a half-century's service to the order for the following three sisters:

Sister Cecilia Wiseman has spent a long and varied teaching career in the diocese, starting at Corpus Christi from 1945-50. She then instructed pupils at St. Casimir's in Elmira, and after that at Holy Apostles in Rochester from 1952-57. She went back to Elmira in 1957 to teach at St. Anthony's

until 1961, when she returned to Rochester to teach at St. Lucy's, St. Theodore's, Holy Rosary, Holy Apostles, and Blessed Sacrament through the mid-70s.

She became a tutor and then a librarian at Sacred Heart in 1976 where she stayed until 1986. Currently she works in the spiritual apostolate at St. Joseph's Infirmary.

Like many of her peers, Sister Agatha Corgel's half-century of service to the diocese has brought her in contact with hundreds of diocesan children. Sister Corgel began teaching in 1942 at St. Francis Xavier in Rochester, and held a succession of instructional positions at the following schools until 1979:

Corpus Christi and Our Lady of Lourdes in Rochester, St. Mary's in Elmira, St. Patrick's in Corning, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Brockport, Sacred Heart in Auburn and in Rochester, St. Paul's in Oswego, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine's, all in Rochester.

Sister Corgel has been working on the staff of the treasurer general since 1979.

Sister Concetta Mitrano started her teaching career at St. Patrick's in Corning in January, 1943, moving the next fall to St. Michael's in Penn Yan, where she worked in the primary grades until 1951. She took up similar duties at Holy Trinity

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Religious celebrate their 50th anniversaries

Two other women religious are celebrating their 50th anniversaries as sisters.

A native of St. Louis, Mo., Sister Martina Laumann, r.c., made her religious profession to the Religious of the Cenacle in Lake Ronkonkoma, N.Y. She came to Rochester one month after the Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal on East Avenue opened for retreat work.

Sister Laumann remained in Rochester from 1948 to 1969, before leaving for Toronto to do retreat work and work in the Crusade of Prayer office until 1986.

She returned to Rochester in 1986, and currently works in the Crusade of Prayer office.

Sister Leontia, OSBM, is a native of Gilberton, Pa. She became a professed member of the Order of St. Basil the Great in Fox Chase, Pa.

Sister Leontia received a bachelor of science degree from Villanova University. She later taught religion and language arts at the kindergarten, primary and intermediate grade levels.

She taught at Ss. Peter and Paul School, Auburn, from 1966-69. She returned again in 1981 and currently teaches at the Catholic school in Auburn.

Sister Leontia has also taught in Syracuse, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago and Allentown, Pa.



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Mr. Paul Inwood, St. Thomas More Pastoral Centre, London, England

Paul Inwood is director of Music for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and is one of England's foremost liturgical composers. For 14 years he was on the staff of the St. Thomas More Pastoral Centre in London. An internationally-known clinician, he is also England's leading trainer of cantors. In the Keynote Address "With Heart and Voice and Instrument of Choice", Mr. Inwood will focus on the contemporary shape of liturgical music.

Music Ministry Workshops I - IV: will provide a background on current liturgical music practices and the necessary skills for pastoral implementation. Discussion will include the role of the music minister within the liturgy; musical techniques to assist the musician in enhancing their ministry within the liturgy; and, their relationship to other ministers.

Liturgy committees - Workshop V: will include discussion on liturgy committee membership; planning liturgies; the role of the music minister; as well as, other pastoral and liturgical concerns.

<p>Workshop I Cantor Presenter: Mr. Paul Inwood</p> <p>Workshop II Organist Presenter: Ms. Alison Luadecia-Ponder, Assoc. for Liturgical Music, Office of Liturgy</p> <p>Workshop III Choir Director Presenter: Ms. Jean Leicht, Music Director, Good Shepherd, Henrietta</p> <p>Workshop IV Guitarist Presenter: Mr. Brian Waldmiller, Music Minister, St. Helen, Rochester</p> <p>Workshop V Liturgy Committees Presenter: Ms. Virginia Miller, Director of Music, St. Louis, Pittsford</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, October 19th</p> <p>Wilmot Recital Hall, Nazareth College, Room A-3 7:30 P.M. Concert, 8:00 P.M. Social</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, October 20th</p> <p>Art Center, Nazareth College, Room A-183 9:00 A.M. Registration, 9:30 A.M. Morning Prayer, 10:00 A.M. Keynote Address With Heart and Voice and Instrument of Choice 10:45 A.M. Break, 11:00 A.M. Workshops, *12: Noon Lunch, 1:00 P.M. Workshops Continue, 3:00 P.M. Closing Prayer</p>
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