

“Hearts afire
with
compassion”



Blauvelt CONNECTIONS

The Official Newsletter of The Sisters of St. Dominic

Fall 2010

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HEARTS AFIRE

A Tale of Two Sisters

Growing up in the South Bronx, Sister Mechtilde Doherty and Sister Bernadette Marie Doherty came from a large Irish family of five girls and one boy. Both attended St. Pius Elementary and High School and in fact, Sister Mechtilde was in the first class to graduate from the four year high school program at St. Pius. While in high school, Sister Mechtilde worked for Bell Telephone Company, and just prior to entering the convent was offered a promotion. When she explained that she was going to be a nun, her supervisor told her that if she changed her mind, there would always be a job waiting for her. Fifty-five years later, the phone company is still waiting.



Sister Bernadette Marie in her classroom at St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

would be allowed home for the St. Patrick's Day Parade!

As Blauvelt Dominican Sisters, Sister Mechtilde and Sister Bernadette Marie have devoted themselves to Early Childhood Education. After leaving the novitiate, Sister Mechtilde taught first at St. Catharine's in Blauvelt and then at Our Savior's in the Bronx. For the last thirty-nine years, Sister Mechtilde has been back in the Bronx teaching second grade students at Sts. Philip and James. As for Sister Bernadette, she taught for five years at St. Luke's in the Bronx then went to St. Margaret's in Pearl River. For the last forty-two years, Sister Bernadette Marie has taught first grade students at St. Nicholas of Tolentine in the Bronx. Both Sisters are now teaching the children and grandchildren of their original students.

As a second grade teacher, Sister Mechtilde has been responsible for preparing children for both Holy Communion and

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Sister Bernadette Marie Doherty, O.P. and Sister Mechtilde Doherty, O.P.

Following in her sister's footsteps, Sister Bernadette entered the convent three years after Sister Mechtilde. Before entering, Sister Bernadette was a majorette in the County Down Fife and Drum Band, and although Mr. Doherty did not object to his younger daughter becoming a nun, he did ask if she

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Letter from the PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

There is almost nothing better than savory aromas wafting from a busy kitchen and conjuring up visions of a delicious meal with family and friends. While the meal provides nourishment for the body, the aromas and the congeniality of the family table provide nourishment for the spirit. How blessed are our memories of such times!

After twenty-five or fifty years of religious life, the Sisters celebrating Jubilees this year are looking back on memories while making plans for the future. Over the years, these Sisters have provided service and given hope through a variety of ministries. They have provided physical and spiritual nourishment in schools, parishes, hospitals, social service agencies and many other venues. In the years ahead, the Jubliarians will continue to nourish souls, create memories and change lives.



As the autumn days begin to slip into the holiday season, Blauvelt Dominican Sisters will be working to create good memories and change lives by providing nourishment for both body and spirit. In Food Pantries, Sister Ellen Hublitz and Sister Dorothy Hall help to provide the physical nourishment that is essential to human life. In schools, our Sisters provide the intellectual enrichment that nourishes the mind and opens doors to future opportunities. Hundreds of children have been nourished in this way by Sister Mechtilde Doherty and Sister Bernadette Marie Doherty. These Sisters have devoted more than forty years to Early Childhood Education, and in September they were both back in school for yet another year.

While the opening of school is an annual autumn ritual, our Fall Festival is another important annual event in the life of the Blauvelt Community. Many of you were on the grounds of the Motherhouse to enjoy the 2010 festival that brought together so many people for a day of fun, food, shopping and relaxation. The festival has been held for the last sixty years and helps to sustain and nourish the Blauvelt Dominican Community. It is always wonderful to see so many of our neighbors, family and friends having a wonderful time and enjoying the beautiful autumn weather.

Finally, it is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank you for contributing so generously to the Challenge Grant provided by SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious!). Your gifts exceeded the \$25,000 required to receive the SOAR! matching grant. Most importantly, funds raised by the Challenge Grant defrayed almost three-quarters of the cost of the fire alarm upgrade in the Motherhouse. To thank you, a Mass is being offered for all Challenge Grant donors on Saturday, November 27th in the Most Holy Rosary Chapel of the Motherhouse.

As our Sisters continue to provide nourishment for both body and soul, we also receive nourishment from you. Your prayers, your friendship and your financial support nourish and sustain our ministry and give strength to our future. During the holiday season, may you be nourished in body and soul, surrounded by loving family and friends, and kept safe in the warmth of God's love.

Wishing you many blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sister Mary Malone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sister Mary Malone, O.P.
President

*Our Charism,
to be conscious
of and present to
people who are
poor and
marginalized, is
rooted in the gospel
of Jesus Christ
and is expressed
in our
ministries through
compassion,
justice, hope,
and healing.*

FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN THE BRONX

There is a long history of Food Pantries being used to feed the hungry, but today there are people using this service who never thought they would every be standing on a line waiting to be given a carefully prepared bag of food. A number of Blauvelt Dominican Sisters are working hard to make sure that the hungry are being fed.



Sister Ellen Hublitz and volunteer Linda Allison packing food bags at the Catholic Churches of Wakefield

In the Bronx, Sister Margaret McDermott, O. P., is the Executive Director of Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center providing Food Pantry services to more than 100 families each week. Operating from the basement of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church, the Food Pantry is directed by Sister Irene Feeley, a Franciscan Sister, who operates the Pantry with the help of one staff

member and some volunteers. The Food Pantry is open one day a week, and it can be "a bit hectic," according to Sister Irene. The bags of food are balanced nutritionally and the amount of food is tailored to the size of the family.

Further south in St. Augustine's Parish, Sister Dorothy Hall, O.P., works as a parish coordinator. In this position, Sister Dorothy runs an active Food Pantry that feeds 400 families each week. Sister Dorothy began running the Pantry four years ago. "At that time, 150 families were using the Pantry on a weekly basis," remembers Sister Dorothy, "now we have 400 and the demand is growing." Sister Dorothy runs the Food Pantry at St. Augustine's with the help of twenty volunteers who help pack bags and organize supplies of food. There are four storage rooms and five freezers as well as a walk-in cooler. "This is a diverse parish of working people," explains Sister Dorothy. "Many are using the Food Pantry for the first time in their lives." At present, St. Augustine's is a parish without a church, the church being closed last year in anticipation of the building of a new church. In the meantime, parishioners worship in the basement of the school.

In the Wakefield section of the Bronx, Sister Ellen Hublitz, O.P., is a Pastoral Associate for the Catholic Churches of Wakefield. These include St. Anthony's, St. Francis of Assisi,



Sister Irene Feeley and staff member, Myra Garcia, at work in the Food Pantry at Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center.

and St. Frances of Rome. Sister Ellen describes this arrangement as "one parish of three worshipping communities." In her role as Pastoral Associate, Sister Ellen runs a Food Pantry from the basement of St. Frances of Rome. This Food Pantry provides food to more than 100 families a week and serves the North Bronx, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon. Although referrals to the Food Pantry are made by hospitals, mental health clinics and social service agencies, word-of-mouth is still the primary way in which people learn of the service provided. Like Sister Dorothy at St. Augustine's and Sister Irene at St. Nicholas of Tolentine, Sister Ellen has also seen an increase in working people using the services of the Food Pantry. "We also see more grandparents taking care of their grandchildren and in need of food," says Sister Ellen.

Food at all of the above Food Pantries comes from donations, government funding and Catholic Charities grants. Although the delay in the New York State budget had a negative impact on the ability to access food from state funded programs, the Pantries were able to maintain supplies by obtaining additional food from other sources. As the holiday season approaches, the need for food will be even more acute. All of the Sisters agree that the biggest message is, "People are hungry – including working people. Once the bills are paid, there's just not enough money left for food." These Blauvelt Dominican Sisters are working hard to keep the Food Pantries open and stocked to feed the hungry.



Sister Dorothy Hall with some of the food supplies at St. Augustine's in the Bronx.

Sisters Celebrate Silver and Golden Jubilees

Golden Jubilee

On Saturday, October 23rd, nine Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt celebrated their Golden Jubilees.

The Jubilarians were:

Sister Bernadette Burke, O.P.

Sister Cecilia Byrnes, O.P.

Sister Maureen Gibbons, O.P.

Sister Alice Kirk, O.P.

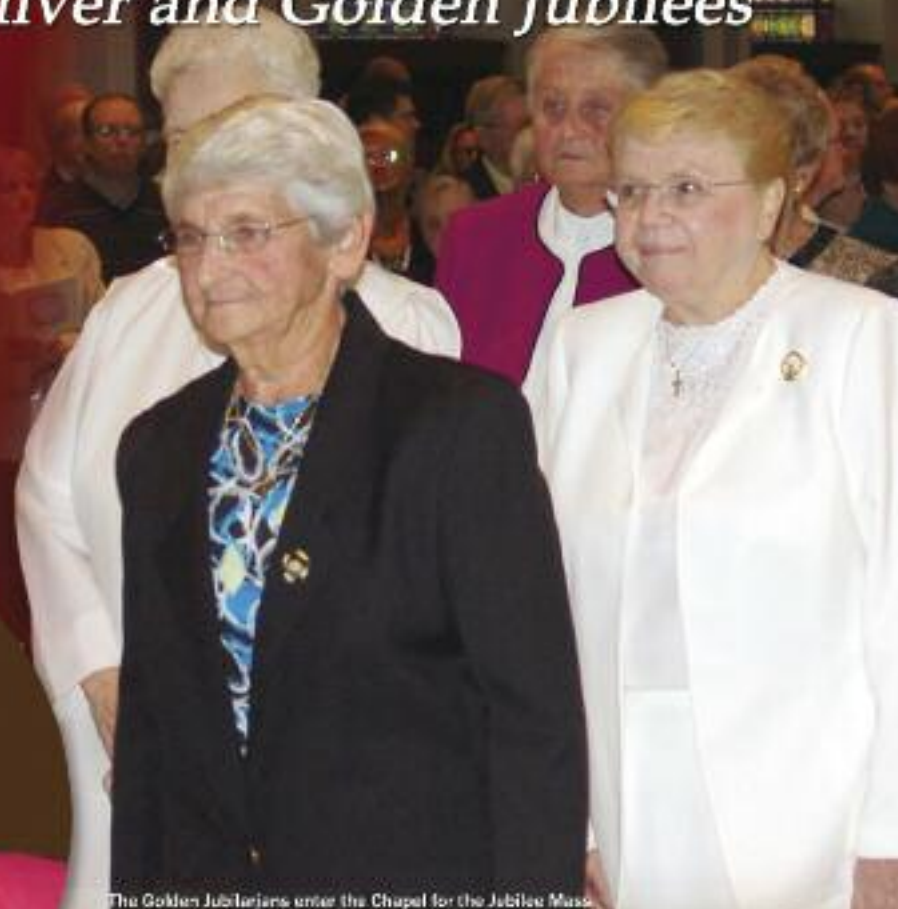
Sister Jane McDermott, O.P.

Sister Mary Malone, O.P.

Sister Marjorie Mullen, O.P.

Sister Joan Smith, O.P. and

Sister Bridget Mary Troy, O.P.



The Golden Jubilarians enter the Chapel for the Jubilee Mass.



Sister Bernadette Burke, O.P.

Sister Marjorie Mullen, O.P.



The Golden Jubilarians cut the Jubilee cake.
Front row left to right: Sister Marjorie Mullen, Sister Joan Smith, Sister Bernadette Burke, Sister Cecilia Byrnes.
Back row left to right: Sister Bridget Mary Troy, Sister Mary Malone, Sister Jane McDermott, Sister Alice Kirk, Sister Maureen Gibbons.



Sister Mary Malone, O.P.



Sister Alice Kirk O.P.



Sister Joan Smith, O.P.



Sister Cecelia Byrnes, O.P.



Sister Maureen Gibbons, O.P.



Sister Jane McDermott, O.P.



Sister Bridget Mary Troy, O.P.



Silver Jubilee

On Saturday, October 16,

Sister Kathleen McManus celebrated her Silver Jubilee as a Blauvelt Dominican Sister. Sister Kathleen currently works in Portland, Oregon as an Assistant Professor of Theology at the University of Portland.



Sister Mary Malone (right) hears the renewal of vows from Sister Kathleen McManus.



Sister Kathleen McManus (standing far left) celebrating with friends and family.

A Tale of Two Sisters (continued from page 1)

Reconciliation. This responsibility gives her great satisfaction and fulfillment. In addition, Sister Mechtilde is responsible for the Breakfast Program. The school at Sts. Philip and James opens at 6:15 in the morning. "This allows parents to drop their children off on the way to work. If the children attend the After School Program, they are in school for twelve hours. This is difficult for children," says Sister Mechtilde. In looking back over the last thirty-nine years, Sister Mechtilde notes the lack of family life in today's world. "There are so many single parents and so many pressures to contend with," she says, "and it is difficult to have formal meals and structured family time together."

At St. Nicholas of Tolentine, there is a similar story. For the last forty-two years, Sister Bernadette has taught the first grade here in the Fordham section of the Bronx. Sister Bernadette is well known for the pride she takes in decorating the first grade classroom, and she admits that the Christmas decorations take more than a week to put in place. This year there are 28 children in the first grade, and Sister Bernadette is still enjoying being a teacher. "I have never been happier! The children are wonderful. One student told me, 'Sister, today was the best!' What more could you want than that?" she asks.



Sister Mechtilde teaching second grade at Sts. Philip and James.

Both Sister Mechtilde and Sister Bernadette credit their parents for providing a strong example of faith to the Doherty children. Their father loved the nuns at St. Pius and used his skills as a mason to erect the statue of the Blessed Mother that was placed in the garden of the parish convent. In speaking of her mother, Sister Mechtilde says, "My mother was a perfect example of faith and trust in God." In turn, these sisters who are Sisters have shared the example given by their parents with generations of children who will always remember their very special teachers.



Sister Mary Flood points to the inscription commemorating the Blauvelt Dominican Community.

Ellis Island

The Women and Spirit Exhibit will be at Ellis Island from September 24, 2010 through January 22, 2011. This traveling exhibit, sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) in association with Cincinnati Museum Center, provides a history of Catholic Sisters since their arrival in America over 300 years ago. The names of participating congregations, including the Blauvelt Dominican Sisters, are engraved on a wall of the exhibit.

According to the description furnished by the Ellis Island website, Women and Spirit includes "artifacts, media presentations and photographs from more than 400 religious communities...", and gives visitors a first-hand look at the lives, the work and the legacy of women religious in America.

Sister Mary Flood and Sister Mary Malone were able to visit the exhibit prior to its formal opening.

FALL FESTIVAL 2010



Sister James Patrick sells some chances to Archbishop Timothy Dolan.

On September 25, 2010 the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York hosted the sixtieth annual Fall Festival. It was a beautiful, warm, autumn day and the grounds of the Motherhouse were filled with visitors. Everyone enjoyed the food, the prizes, the shopping and the company.

The sixty-first festival is already scheduled for September 24, 2011 – see you there!



Sister Patricia Lardner and Sister Grace Augustine had a successful day at the St. Luke's booth.



The Pony Ride was as popular as ever!



The inflatable slide attracted many adventurous children.



The crowd was enthusiastic about the bargains and the prizes.



Elmo took some time away from Sesame Street to visit with some of the Sisters.

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SAVE THE DATE IRISH CONCERT

March 7, 2011

HEARTS AFIRE GALA Sunday, April 3, 2009

BLAUVELT CONNECTIONS CONTRIBUTORS

Sister Mary Malone, O.P.
Sister Jane McDermott, O.P.
Sister Thomas Joseph Durkin, O.P.
Priscilla Ford
Jennifer Schaaf

Please remember the

SISTERS OF ST. DOMINIC OF BLAUVELT

in your will or consider other gift options
of matching gifts, stocks and/or
insurance policies.

Thank you

As reported in our last issue, Support Our Aging Religious! (SOAR!) issued a Challenge Grant to the Blauvelt Dominican Sisters in the amount of \$25,000. The terms of the Challenge Grant were simple. If the Sisters could raise \$25,000, SOAR! would match that amount. This would give the Congregation a total of \$50,000 to help

defray the cost (approximately \$83,000) of upgrading the fire alarm system in the Motherhouse. The upgrade was necessary in the kitchen, dining room, chapel and office areas.

After appealing to you, our dear friends and benefactors, we were able to raise over \$40,000 in addition to the grant from SOAR! We are very grateful to all of you for your help and friendship. On November 27th, a Mass will be offered in the Most Holy Rosary Chapel for the intentions of all those who gave so generously to the Challenge Grant.

God bless you all!

Students Provide Service at Dominican Ministries

This year the Eighth National "Preaching in Action Conference" was held at Dominican College in Blauvelt and facilitated by Sister Barbara McEneaney, O.P. and Sister Diane Forrest, O.P. Students from eleven different colleges and universities attended from as far away as Wisconsin. The purpose of the conference is not only to learn about Dominican Charism, but to bring that charism into actual practice. To accomplish this, the conference consisted of workshops and lectures as well as actual community outreach experience.



During the conference, participants worked at a variety of Dominican ministries, including House on the Hill in Goshen and St. Dominic's Home in Blauvelt. At House on the Hill, the students worked on the organic farm and provided service to children of migrant workers. At St. Dominic's Home, the students ministered to developmentally disabled adults. It was a memorable week of both learning and active ministry.

Good Search, Good Shopping

With Christmas just around the corner, many of you will be looking to the Internet to avoid those crowds at the mall. Please remember that you can make a donation to the Sisters while you shop! Just log on to www.goodsearch.com, click on shopping and enter "Sisters of St. Dominic, Blauvelt" in the space labeled "Charity". All the shopping you do will earn a donation to the Sisters. Some of the shopping websites you can access in this way are: iTunes, Amazon, Bloomingdale's, Best Buy, Ebay, Kohl's, Kodak Easy Share and many more. You pay no more and your shopping will generate a donation for the Sisters.

Ebay

If you have items you wish to donate for the Sisters to sell on Ebay, please contact Priscilla Ford, Director of Development at (845) 359-5767.

Visit our website www.opblauvelt.org