“As we prepared for the 2016 General Chapter, we looked forward to an adventure with the Spirit who invites us to leave the familiar, to forge new paths, and to risk moving forward with the destination uncertain. Trusting the Spirit during Chapter, we committed ourselves to participate in shaping the evolution of religious life for the future.” ~Sr. Mary Ellen Holohan

The 34th General Chapter of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, since the foundation of the Congregation, opened on July 7th in Cornwall, Ontario, Canada and closed on July 28th. In addition to the Chapter members, there were hospitality, technology and ritual/prayer committee members, translators, interpreters, and facilitators who arrived from Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario, United States, Peru, Brazil, Lesotho, and South Africa. Many Sisters, Associates and lay persons in the service groups, shared their particular gifts to help the Chapter accomplish its work.

In the months leading to the Chapter, committees were hard at work preparing the information and the agenda. The topics for discussion were gathered from the Sisters and Associates at local meetings throughout the Congregation, from Café Conversations via the Internet, and a variety of other gatherings. Justice issues, developing structures for a smaller, intercultural community, explaining charism in a simple, succinct manner, voices from the young Sisters, Associates, and finance legacy were a few issues that surfaced. Thought-provoking articles enhanced the discussions of each day.

In the third week, after the congregational directions were becoming clearer, the Chapter entered into a time of prayer and decision-making about the next Leadership Team to begin in January 2017.

Those gathered in Cornwall as well as those throughout the Congregation expressed gratitude to the Leadership Team who have served since 2011: Sisters Catherine Ferguson, Lise Gagnon, Florence Vinet, Kathleen Ross and Beth Liebert.

A treasured aspect of being an international congregation is the opportunity we have to share with Sisters from other parts of the world at these international meetings. It is so wonderful to find out how our Sisters minister throughout the world and how they spread our charism to so many people. Although language can be a bit of a challenge, we manage through translators and a lot of good will to learn from one another.

Over the next five years, SNJM Sisters, Associates, Lay Consecrated and others who collaborate with us in the mission of the Congregation will study, explore and develop strategies to move the words of the Chapter Acts into action as we move into the future as Sisters of the Holy Names.

Our 34th General Chapter has ended...but it has really just begun!
“General Chapter held many memorable moments for me, but one of the earliest came on the third day of Chapter, the day dedicated to interculturality. Among the video clips, interviews, conversations, and prayers was an interview with Sr. Crystal Clark from Portland Oregon, now a member of the Lesotho Province. In simple clear language straight from her heart, Crystal’s testimony spoke directly to me. She showed me, through her concrete and particular life experience, how deeply liberating and transforming it can be to move toward greater interculturality.”

~Sr. Beth Liebert

“One of my most memorable experiences was the productive and in-depth conversations at a table of six where three different languages needed to be translated.”

~Sr. Diane Enos

“At this General Chapter, we had the unique opportunity of gathering with three Peruvian Sisters, 15 Basotho Sisters and five U.S.-Ontario Sisters in the under-65 generation. It was a heartening, energizing experience to be in an SNJM setting where the under-65 comprised nearly one-third of the SNJMs present in a participant or staff role. It was a graced experience to meet these women, to hear their dreams and their concerns and to feel the depth of their commitment to pioneer our congregation into the future as they network with our Associates, our Lay Consecrated, our charism collaborators and those in other religious congregations to birth the new.”

~Sr. Mary Ellen Holohan

New Congregational Leadership Team: Srs. Kathleen Ross, Linda Haydock, Mary Ellen Holohan, and Lorna Cooney.

Table groups were mixed with members from various Provinces and Sector speaking Sesotho, French, Spanish and/or English.

Chapter members and service group personnel from the U.S.-Ontario Province.

Ice cream is delicious in every language!
Sisters and Associates came together on August 5 and 6, at Orchard City Banquet Hall, a venue close to our Marie Rose Center in Campbell. The “Summer Gathering” was filled with energy as participants engaged in social conversations, panel presentations, reflective discussions, prayer, liturgy, and fun.

The opening ritual, full of song, symbol, and spirit, set the tone for the gathering—We are here to do the Gospel—a phrase inspired by an article by Joan Chittister, OSB entitled “The Power and Potential of Religious Communities.” Chittister’s article was the focus of a panel presentation that led to a dynamic table discussion about the future of religious life.

Delegates and volunteer service providers who had recently returned from the General Chapter of the Congregation in Canada shared personal experiences of their three weeks with representatives of the Congregation from around the globe.

In response to the creative planning of the Interactive Entertainment team, sounds of laughter and music preceded the evening social and dinner as everyone enjoyed the SNJM versions of “Jeopardy,” “Name That Tune,” and hilarious video clips. On the second day, the fun continued as table groups engaged in a high-energy competitive activity working individually and collaboratively to be the first to solve a puzzle together.

An article by Nancy Shreck, OSF entitled “Articulating A Vision for the Future” served as an invitation to focus on three areas for reflection and discussion: The Gospel, Ministry, and Community. Divided into interest groups, participants explored these topics together, bringing the highlights of their conversation to the larger forum for further consideration. Receiving the articles and reflection questions in advance greatly enhanced the quality of the participants’ discussions and the depth of the insights that they shared.

Following a presentation and update on Province business from the Province Leadership Team members, Sister and Associates discussed their hopes and dreams for the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Names in California on May 8, 1868. Table groups contributed a wide variety of ideas for celebrating this milestone across the regions of California where the SNJMs have been in ministry.

A number of Sisters presently residing at Our Lady of Fatima Villa and Merrill Gardens joined the gathered assembly for the concluding liturgy and celebratory meal. The gifts of each person’s presence and participation were at the heart of these grace-filled and renewing days. Sisters and Associates were missioned to go forth and continue to do the Gospel in collaboration with those with whom they live, minister, and share hope for the future. Avanti!
Casual photos from California’s Summer Days.

Facing page: opening ceremony and presentation of the Chapter highlights.

Above and to the right: group discussions, panel presentations and puzzles! You may recognize Sisters and Associates from all across California and our guests: the Provincial Leaders.
Network of Schools’ Leadership Forum

Leaders representing the secondary schools sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary attended a forum this summer in Portland, Oregon. Below is a reflection of the gathering by Alessandra Robinson of Holy Names High School in Oakland, California.

After completing my 10th year teaching at Holy Names High School, I was honored with the opportunity to attend the SNJM Leadership Forum this summer in Portland, Oregon. I looked forward to this trip – it would be a chance to learn more about the institution I consider to be a second home. As a Holy Names High School alumna, I know about Mother Marie Rose, about Strawberry Day, and I still know our school song by heart. But, there were things about Holy Names High School and the Sisters of the Holy Names that I never fully understood.

When I came back to Holy Names High School after college as a teacher, I assimilated rather easily. The halls were familiar, some of the teachers were the same, and I already knew most of the traditions. I took for granted the fact that I already knew Holy Names and its history. It was not until years later that I learned about the word *charism* and the SNJM core values. As a Holy Names student, these values were already a part of my development (and I would like to think I have been living by them each and every day). Yet, there was something different about the way the Sisters lived these values and the way I went about my day. Being an alumna was not enough – I knew there was more for me to learn in order for me to teach these values to my students. As most educators know, one must be intentional when delivering knowledge and skills to a student, or else, they are not retained. I needed to fully understand how I could dedicate myself, as the Sisters have, to the “full development of the human person through education, social justice, contemplation and the arts.”

My experience in Portland was transformative. The conference gave me the opportunity to learn more about the history, the charism, and the values of the Sisters of the Holy Names – women who are fully committed to the teachings of Jesus, who live the gospel values, and who dedicate themselves to share their gifts from God for the good of all.

It began with the core value of hospitality. We were picked up from, and taken to, the airport by Sisters who gave us an enlightening tour and history lesson on each ride. Our accommodations were prepared with great care and thought – from the comfortable rooms to the healthy and delicious snacks in the fridge. Even though hospitality is just one of the core values of the Sisters, it is a distinguishing characteristic of the students at SNJM schools and certainly of the Sisters.

Service is another core value of the Sisters of the Holy Names, and our first reading helped me understand the meaning of *Servant Leadership*. Mother Marie Rose, our foundress, is a great illustration of this concept. She saw a need: education for children, especially girls, and addressed it head on. Through example, she led others to follow the teachings of the gospel and apply them to their everyday lives. A leader serves, creates timeless principles, and leaves behind a legacy. Mother Marie...
Rose did just that, she had a vision and defined our reality; she left behind a gift and taught us to serve. This reading on the value of servant leadership helped me better understand my role as an educator at an SNJM school.

Probably the greatest part of this conference was the opportunity to meet people who work at the other SNJM schools. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear what they were doing, how they applied the SNJM values, and their successes and struggles. Knowing we all share the same foundation and are teaching the same mission, allowed us to be open to giving advice and support to one another. Now that we know each other, we will feel comfortable to call upon each other, to visit our schools, and to pray intentionally for each other.

Lastly, this trip would have been taken in vain had I not developed a plan to share with my school community. What I hope to share with my colleagues and students is a sense of pride in being part of the SNJM community. I believe that in order for my students to have pride, they need to know who they are and from where they came. We, in the SNJM community, share the ideals of Mother Marie Rose and her leadership gives us purpose.

Our life journey might be different, and it might take us on divergent paths, but we are all part of the SNJM community, and we all live by the same values: seeing dignity in all people we meet, empowering women and children, and fighting for social justice. I now understand more deeply the core values of the Sisters and this forum has given me the tools to teach them, the vocabulary to describe them, and the resources to share them. In fact, I have already begun by sharing what I learned with the Associated Student Body officers and the Student Council members during their summer training. I want this school year to begin with an understanding of who we are so that we can better serve the school and our greater community with our gifts.

I would like to finish by thanking the Sisters of the Holy Names for sponsoring this trip, to Pat Barr for being the principal director of the SNJM Leadership Forum, and for all those who helped her along the way. The experience was invaluable and the memories will not be forgotten. Thank you for allowing me to grow and become a better (servant) leader in my school.

“Although I have worked in Catholic schools for 13 years, it was so special to focus on the charism of the Holy Names Sisters and the impact this has on our schools. As a new principal here, I found the time very rewarding, not only to get to know the leadership of others schools, but to spend time growing with my own Assistant Principal, Erin Krukar, who I’ve just begun to get to know. The seminar gave me a lot to think about in my own leadership styles and those of the people I work with.”

~Stephanie Nitchals, Principal, Academy of the Holy Names, Tampa, Florida

“"It was amazing to see everything all the schools had in common even though we were from all different parts of the country. Attending professional development is difficult sometimes because administrators and/or teachers do not understand what we stand for, but this was so enjoyable because we had SNJM in common and discussed issues and concerns we had knowing that we shared this common background. I can’t wait to either go again or hear from others that have gone.”

~Erin Krukar, Assistant Principal, Academy of the Holy Names, Tampa, Florida
Enthusiastic developing leaders from 21 local elementary schools learned to build their leadership skills at Ramona’s first Emerging Leaders Seminar this week made possible with a Charism Grant from the Sisters of the Holy Names Incorporated Province Ministries.

Under the guidance of five Ramona students and three faculty mentors, 40 seventh and eighth-grade young women identified their personal leadership styles, strengthened their speaking ability, developed their interpersonal skills and planned a service project to implement at their home school community.

Students also focused on four key personal qualities of a leader: honesty, forward-thinking, competence, and inspiration.

As student leader mentor Dora Bezonsky notes, “I remember attending Ramona the summer before my freshman year and now, four years later, I am glad I get to be a mentor to intelligent seventh and eighth graders who aspire to be influential young women in the near future. To be able to speak out about social justice, community service, and leadership not only refreshes my own memory of what I constantly learn at school, but further enhances the knowledge of the girls who might not have any experience with the topics.”

Reanna Salvador, another student leader mentor, added “I remember being that age, too afraid to share my ideas with older people because I did not think I had enough life experience for them to take me seriously. The seminar provided a welcoming environment that helped the girls on both an individual and collaborative level.”

Leadership is a core element of a Ramona education and an important way that the Sisters of the Holy Names’ empower each young woman to reach their full potential. Participants, who were nominated by their elementary schools, received seminar scholarships with the support of a grant from the Sisters of the Holy Names Incorporated Province Ministries.

“Some things I really liked are that we were all encouraged to work together and to just get out of our comfort zone. I also liked the activities we did to evaluate ourselves as to what kind of leader we are. And the food was really good!”

~ Arianna, San Gabriel Mission Elementary

“True Leaders Don’t Create Followers, They Create More Leaders.”

Tom Peters

“They pushed me to fight my fear of public speaking and taught me how to become a better leader. I really enjoyed this program and it helped me make new friends.”

~ January, Saint Thomas More

The student leader mentors from Ramona’s Emerging Leaders seminar
Since 2003 the Sisters of the Holy Names’ “A Call to Vietnam” ministry has annually sent Sisters to Vietnam. Sr. Kay Burton and Sr. Agnes Ly Thi Le have directed the ministry and shaped the programs in collaboration with the religious community, Lovers of the Holy Cross, in Hue. English language instruction for the Sisters in Hue has been an important component of this intercultural ministry. The other component is fundraising to assist the Hue Sisters with their ministries which provide critical services for Vietnam’s most marginalized individuals. This summer Sr. Mary Annette Dworshak and I were invited to be the English teachers. Sr. Mary Annette had been once before; it was my first time.

We visited Lovers of the Holy Cross ministries for orphans and handicapped children, a workshop for blind adults, and the pre-school located next to the convent in Hue. The Sisters work hard in their ministries and at home; many of life’s daily tasks remain very labor intensive. The donor-financed preschool building is welcoming and full of lively, interactive instruction. The English conversation classes which Sr. Mary Annette and I taught are designed to strengthen the English instructional component of their curriculum, contributing directly to the Sisters’ successful pre-school educational ministries.

Being in Hue and welcomed into the homes of the Lovers of the Holy Cross was a wonderful experience. The English conversation program provided daily opportunities to learn from, and contribute to, the life of the Sisters in this important intercultural Province ministry. The fifteen students I taught enjoyed enhancing their ability to participate in a conversation and improving their vocabulary and pronunciation skills while learning games and other teaching strategies they can use in pre-school settings. They worked diligently, particularly on practicing sounds that do not exist in the Vietnamese language. A Saturday field trip on a Dragon Boat taking us up the Perfume River offered a welcome break and chance to practice conversation in an informal setting.

The Sisters deeply appreciate our presence with them annually and the continued generosity of donors who contribute to scholarships for the orphans, medical care, food, and workshop supplies which are all important components of the collaborative ministries of our two communities.

“As long as we go along the same road together, let us extend a hand to one another.” ~Blessed Marie Rose

To read more reflections from Vietnam: http://www.snjmusontario.org/who-we-are/blog-holy-names-voices/2163-justice-two-stories-from-sisters-teaching-in-vietnam
Stories from Donors

Bill Zachary found this letter in his mother’s belongings after she passed away and sent it to us. We were touched to read how the prayers of the Sisters of the Holy Names helped his family in their time of need.

February 29, 1949

On November 12, 1947, my son, William Zachary, age 8 at the time, was rushed to Santa Monica Hospital here in the city of Santa Monica, California.

He had been ill for several days previous, but the Dr. had not diagnosed his illness as Appendicitis. Consequently, his appendix had ruptured, and peritonitis had set in. An emergency operation was performed immediately, with two surgeons in charge. When the operation was over, the Doctors told me he was in a very critical and dangerous condition and that I should prepare for the worst. I had said my rosary again and again while waiting for the operation to be finished. The second day passed and Billy became worse. The good Sisters and priests of St. Monica’s and Billy’s classmates from St. Monica’s School stormed the heavens with prayers for his recovery. They were a great consolation to me because I felt that prayer was all that could help Billy now.

And then the wonderful Sunday morning that Mother Superior visited Billy and pinned a relic of Mother Marie Rose on him!

Several hours later, I visited Billy. The nurse met me in the corridor and said “Oh, Mrs. Zachary, Billy is so much better—it seems like your prayers have been answered. He isn’t suffering and I have called the Dr. to come and see him,” because he had told them there wasn’t much hope for Billy. The Dr. came while I was there and said it was most remarkable. Billy was all smiles, and told of Mother Superior’s visit and that Mother Marie Rose was going to make him well soon. How right he was! From that time on, he steadily grew better and now today he is a very healthy boy, and I shall always be grateful to Mother Marie Rose, who I believe interceded for him to be spared to us, and I shall always pray to God that she will become one of his great Saints.

Mrs. Burr Zachary

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Taize prayers at Villa Maria del Mar

Taize is a monastic religious community that is both ecumenical and international. There are about 100 Brothers worldwide, coming from 25 different countries and different Christian Churches—Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed.

Our Taize Prayer Around the Cross begins in the Villa Maria del Mar Chapel with lights dimmed and the cross—a symbol of the crucifixion illuminated by dozens of votive candles. People quietly enter the darkened chapel. At 7:00 pm the Cantor and musicians begin. A sequence of chants and a short reading from Scripture are followed by time for quiet reflection.

The community is then invited to come and pray for a few moments at the Cross, bringing their concerns, anxieties and the burdens of the world to the cross of Jesus. The tradition at Taize is to kneel and place one’s forehead upon the Cross, as a gesture of surrender to Christ, all that is in one’s heart.

We invite you to join us.
Gift of Prayer

A Gift of Prayer is a thoughtful and special way to honor a friend or relative, give thanks for God’s many blessings, or celebrate a special occasion: birthday, wedding, anniversary; or remember the deceased.

A Gift of Prayer can be particularly consoling for a friend or loved one who is coping with a death or other life challenge. Prayers may be requested for special intentions, such as improved health, successful surgery, comfort, strength, peace or whatever is needed.

A card acknowledging your gift is sent to the person or family indicated and we’ll send you a thank-you card as well. Donation amounts are always kept confidential and we do not put the recipient on any solicitation list. Contributions help support the Sisters and their ministries.

To have the Sisters pray for you or someone you know, please fill out the form below and mail to us. Thank you.

**PRAYERS FOR ______________________________**
**NAME OF PERSON/PERSONS**

☐ IN MEMORIAM (RECENTLY DECEASED? ☐ Yes ☐ No)

☐ SPECIAL INTENTION _______________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

healing, strength, peace, gratitude, speedy recovery, safe trip, etc.

☐ TO HONOR/CELEBRATE ____________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________

birthday, baptism, anniversary, holiday, promotion, friendship, etc.

SEND CARD TO ______________________________

Address ___________________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________

SIGN CARD FROM ___________________________

personal note (optional) ______________________
_________________________________________

Your Name_________________________________

Address ___________________________________

City, State, Zip ______________________________

Enclosed is a donation of $______ check #_______

MAIL TO: Sisters of the Holy Names, P.O. Box 907, Los Gatos, CA 95031. A Gift of Prayer can always be made through our website, either fill out the form online or print and mail. www.snjmca.org

Housekeeping Notes

Please note: Mail is only received at P.O. Box 907, Los Gatos, CA 95031. Mail is no longer delivered to the old property at 200 Prospect and will be returned to you. Thank you.

Our next issue of Perspectives will be March 2017.

We’d like to send you a few email updates in between. If you would like to keep up-to-date with the Sisters, please send your email address to sseichrist@snjmuson.org

In Memoriam

To learn more about the life and ministry of this Sister, visit www.snjmca.org: select **Sisters Obituaries** under **News and Events**

Sister Guadalupe Maria Johnston
Jean Constance Johnston
December 6, 1934–July 23, 2016

“Quien a Dios tiene nada le falta.
Sólo Dios basta.”
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We are grateful for your gifts, and keep all our benefactors in our prayers.

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P.O. Box 907, Los Gatos, CA  95031-0907

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

~Pope Francis