



# St. Margaret's Quarterly

St. Margaret's Convent

17 Highland Park Street

Boston, Massachusetts

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## GENERAL CONVENTION COLUMBUS, 2006

By Sarah, SSM

Sr. Marie Margaret and I had the privilege of attending the General Convention in Columbus, Ohio, this June. Both of us were involved with the booth sponsored by the Conference on Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) and worked as Convention volunteers. Sr. Marie Margaret also worked with the Diocese of Haiti booth and with the Altar Guild, while I worked with the Young Adults.

As this was my first full-time attendance at Convention, I was fortunate to begin as a volunteer in public safety, a very quick way to learn places and regulations. Checking badges is also a great way to meet and greet people, I found out. While assigned to monitoring the daily Eucharist, I initially regretted having to watch the crowd instead of the action at the altar, but there was a moment when I realized, "This – this crowd – is the Body of Christ. I am still focused there, simply in a different way." It changed the experience entirely.

Immediately following that first five-hour shift, I headed to prepare for work with the Young Adult Festival, and promptly had the joy of running into a former student attending it. Following the Global Mission Dinner, another young adult, this one from the Seychelles, joined me in heading to the U2charist sponsored by Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation. The combination of Bishop Curry's powerful preaching with 750 people singing U2 service music made for a very lively evening.

The next day, Br. Eric Michael, SSF, and I presented a morning and an afternoon session at the Young Adult Festival. Alongside the General Convention, the YAF offers a series of programs for 18-30 year olds, both lay and ordained, visitors and deputies. Our sessions were "Hearing God Daily" and "Discerning Your Rule of Life." I thoroughly enjoyed the discussions we had.

The CAROA booth was particularly lively due in large part to Sr. Diana, CT, who had organized us to make, teach, and give away knotted Anglican rosaries. Sr. Diana and I had collaborated on a small booklet of prayers for

the church, available in Spanish as well as English, and she had other booklets as well as enormous quantities of twine. A large number of people stopped to learn and picked up the new DVD on the religious life while there. We enjoyed making new connections through

this and were happy to see people knotting prayerfully throughout the Convention Center. By the way, if your parish has not seen the DVD, it might make a good Sunday forum. Over and over people said, "I didn't know there were sisters in the Episcopal Church!" I also enjoyed getting to know religious from other communities.

When not working, I had time to sit in on committee and House meetings. I had taken a mini-course at EDS on the General Convention, and I needed to learn how it all worked. I was surprised at how interesting it all was, and not only because of the topics at hand. I also began to have a real appreciation for the hard work done by the deputies and bishops, who might be busy from 7:30 am to 10 pm.

The highlight for me came during a visit with my family. My parents and youngest sister had come from Michigan for a few days and my other sister drove in for a day from Indiana. As it was the first time she had attended a convention, I dragged them all into the House of Deputies first thing for her to see what it was like. We walked into what we quickly realized was the confirmation discussion for the new Presiding Bishop. To be there for such a historic vote was far above and beyond my hopes. I was stunned and thrilled. People were walking around the Exhibit Hall afterwards laughing and near tears and hugging complete strangers (especially women in collars). I must confess I had never considered such an election possible this year; what a joyful surprise I found it. And what a great first Convention visit for my sister, too! (continued next pg)

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I was also able to be present for the more difficult discussions around the Windsor Report resolutions, including an evening committee hearing held in a hall seating one thousand, with ticketed seating, standing room for those of us who stood in line, and a crowd in the outer lobby listening to it on speakers. It was painful on all sides, but I was impressed with the real wrestling taking place. The last day I found it very difficult to have to leave right in the middle of the discussion of B033, the resolution about the ordination of bishops, but I had a sense on my way out that the vast majority there, of all leanings on the matter, was willing to do the work and hard listening that we are all called to.

On my way home, unsure of the outcome, I recall thinking again that God does not always speak to us in the voices we find agreeable. Having been in quite a variety of places on the theological map over the years and having never met anyone I agreed with about absolutely everything, I have always been glad that there has been a place for me at each stage of my journey. I hope we can all learn to extend that welcome to each other as well, coming together at the Table, united in the Body of Christ. I am well aware that this does not abolish our painful differences, but it does mean that in some way we are all connected whether or not we are prepared to acknowledge it.

The variety in our Church struck me more than anything else during this Convention. In worship, I had never envisioned a Rite I jazz Eucharist, neither did I expect the great variety of languages in which we prayed and sang. I did not know that our Church was in so many corners of the globe – not just other members of the Anglican Communion, but parts of our own Episcopal Church. I also was delighted to meet visitors from Botswana and Li-

beria, missionaries from the Sudan and Myanmar, and old friends of my family from Indiana. What unexpected combinations. But isn't that precisely who we are? God willing, we will live into the richness of our Anglican heritage by continuing to work together, honoring Christ in the stranger and in our close neighbor. Pray that we might truly hear God's voice in the midst of our struggle and learn to live together in love as Christ intends.

## A CONFERENCE FOR ASSOCIATES

By Ann, SSM

On July 13, 2006, eighteen Associates from as far away as Georgia gathered at the convent for a time of prayer, study and fellowship. Years ago we offered times for the Associates to gather but, as often happens, those particular programs came to an end.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Valantasis, an Associate since 1981, was kind enough to give us some insight into different ways of thinking about God. Increasing our vocabulary by explaining words such as cataphatic and apophatic, he was able to show us how even the current problems in the Episcopal Church can be looked at differently. God can be found in what is really chaos, and chaos isn't bad (that was a new thought for me!). He also pointed out that perseverance is the structure or the tool that will help us through the difficult times that we all face.

There was also space for some Associates to begin the process of getting to know each other and for others to renew long-standing friendships.

Our time together culminated with a glorious celebration of the Feast of St. Margaret of Antioch, our Patronal Festival, on July 15, 2006. The consensus was that this was a wonderful experience and that we should certainly do it again!

## EVENTS 2006

### An Invitation to Explore Vocations Weekend, October 6-8, 2006

Are you between the ages of 21 and 45, and interested in learning more about the religious life? We welcome single women of faith, lay or ordained, who are searching for a life in community with prayer at its center. This vocations weekend is offered at no cost and includes room and board. Participants are responsible for transportation to and from the convent. Space is limited. Apply now. For more information and an application, please contact us or download an application from our website at [www.ssmbos.com](http://www.ssmbos.com).

**Advent Day of Prayer, December 9, from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm** Join the Sisters for a Day of Prayer as we anticipate the coming of Christ into the world. Luncheon is included. The suggested donation for the day is \$25 which should be mailed prior to the day itself ensuring your registration.

**Personal Prayer Weekend, December 15-17.** This is an opportunity to savor Advent's final days and to prepare for Christmas in the setting of a private retreat, supported by an atmosphere of prayerful silence, the Eucharist and the Daily Office.

**Welcoming the New Year, Dec. 31, 2006** - We welcome you to join us for this service, which begins at 7:30 pm. Reception and refreshments follow the service. Please let us know if you are coming so that we may make adequate preparations. Overnight accommodations are available. Contact the Reservations Desk to reserve a room. Early bookings are advisable.

**The Feast of the Holy Name, January 1, 2007** - Choral Eucharist at 11:30 am. Festive dinner will follow.

## A SISTER ON MISSION IN WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA

By Kristina Frances, SSM

I was privileged once again to work in Wilson, North Carolina, with The Reverend Philip Byrum, our priest associate, from June 16 – July 3. This was a trip where I could see new beginnings. The community building is almost completed and is stunning. It will be a multi-purpose building and has plenty of space for meetings and Bible school. It is a beautiful building with several arched windows and is painted creamy white inside and out.

As part of the preparations for Vacation Bible School and for the eventual move to the new building, we spent a lot of time cleaning out the current meeting space in the church building and found that we had a lot more space than we had realized. The church continues to play a major role in the lives of the community as a food bank once a month, a place for tutoring in reading, and as host for an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting several times a week.

The Vacation Bible School this year was again a huge success due to the wonderful volunteers and helpers. We had home-cooked Mexican food twice that week, which both the adult volunteers and the children loved. We met new friends and had the help of many people to make it such a success. As usual, Ray and Kathy did a spectacular job of buying supplies and coordinating food. Two women from the congregation, Blanca and Lupe, cooked for us and taught me how to make homemade tortillas. We were joined this year by Melba from St. Timothy's church, and she enabled us to keep the smaller children apart by giving them crafts and games to suit their ages and thus prevented them from becoming a distraction to the older children during story time.

This year we had a dual theme: we talked about baptism for two days (including wearing doves on our head), and then we concluded with three days discussing the Eucharist. This was a week of allowing the children to ask questions and to touch the things that they see used for ceremonies in the church and to try to help them fully understand why we do what we do.

Working in both Spanish and English is still a challenge for me, but the Spanish classes are paying off. Fr. Phil and I participated in services in Clay-

ton, St. Mark's, La Guadalupe, and St. Timothy's. We were able to share the gift of music with these congregations by singing some of the wonderful hymns found in *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, a collection of spirituals and gospel songs. Fr. Phil is an excellent keyboard player!

I had a chance to visit the women's shelter and see the work they do on behalf of women and children and found marvelous people there who take seriously the responsibility of protecting those who can not stand up for themselves.

This year Fr. Phil and I participated in a new program to assist the migrant workers who travel to Wilson to harvest crops. Health care is a major concern, as there are diseases and conditions which can result from contact with specific crops and pesticides as well as the regular illnesses and accidents that can happen to any of us. Getting health care for the workers has in years past necessitated a long bus ride and a missed day of work. The local clinic has finally come up with a solution. They have a special clinic house at night, from around 7 pm – 11 pm so that they can see the workers. The staff, doctors and volunteers are all joined together in affirming the dignity of these people and their right to health care. Dentist and preventative care are offered also. As volunteers, we worked with a team of interns to go out to the camps in a rental van and pick up workers and transport them to the clinic and back. Some nights we would visit several camps and other nights we would concentrate on a single location. It makes for a long night for everyone, but it is so necessary and a way to make a visible difference in the life of a brother or sister.

Every time I visit Wilson, I am struck by how much need there is in our world and how many people are responding. I look forward to next year!

## PLAN AHEAD

**Lenten Day of Prayer,  
March 3, 2007 from 9:30  
am - 3:00 pm**

Join the Sisters for a Day of Prayer during this time of preparation for Holy Week and Easter. Luncheon is included. The suggested donation for the day is \$25 which should be mailed prior to the day itself ensuring your registration.

**Weekend Retreat in Duxbury, June 8-10, 2007 - A weekend retreat at St. Margaret's, Duxbury, MA.**

This silent retreat offers time and space for prayer and contemplation in a beautiful seaside setting on Duxbury Bay. For details and further information contact the Boston Convent Reservations Desk. Cost: \$130. Half the amount is due when registering as a deposit.

**St. Margaret's Day - July  
21, 2007**

## ST. MARGARET'S DAY IN BOSTON

By Grace, SSM

On Saturday, July 15, 2006, the Sisters of St. Margaret gathered in the Chapel in Boston with roughly seventy-five friends and Associates to celebrate St. Margaret's Day. It was a gorgeous, sunny day with just enough cloud cover to keep it from being too hot. Sr. Adele Marie presided at the Eucharist, and Dr. Frederica Harris Thompsett, Mary Wolfe Professor of Historical Theology at The Episcopal Divinity School, preached a marvelous and entertaining sermon. In it, she spoke about parables as vehicles of humility. She ended by comparing the understanding of parables to the comprehension of the incarnate value of religious life today. With her permission, I reprint it here:

"So in closing let me offer a handful of new parables to express the joy and glory of this beloved Community.

\*The reign of God is "like" a religious community as small as a mustard seed that has grown in faith and humility for over one hundred fifty years.

\*The reign of God is "like" a treasured community mission deeply buried in the extreme poverty of Haiti.

\*The reign of God is "like" a transcendent pearl of great value expressed daily in a religious community's timeless liturgical rhythms.

\*The reign of God is "like" a community of hospitable companions responsibly seeking to guide others with spiritual encouragement and scribal wisdom.

In short, the reign of God is "like" the Society of St. Margaret, a beloved and valued Community striving for God's reign on earth.

Long may this Society – its Sisters, Associates and friends – continue to offer us glimpses of God's reign! Amen."

After the service, a beautiful and bountiful reception, prepared by Sr. Christine and our kitchen staff, was held in the Refectory. As is our custom, an ice cream bar followed, with vanilla and chocolate ice cream, vanilla frozen yogurt, and all the fixings. It was enjoyed by young and old alike, and was a delicious ending to a festive day.

## A JUBILANT JULY IN BOSTON!

By Grace, SSM



*Sr. Carolyn, Sr. Beatrice, and Sr. Adele Marie at Sr. Beatrice's Life Profession*

July was a jubilant month here at the Boston convent. One celebration seemed to follow another as the Sisters gathered time and again with friends, family and Associates for fun, for marking important events, and for worship together. It began with the annual Fourth of July celebration up on the roof deck of the convent. Anyone who has been up there knows what a glorious view we have of the Boston

skyline. What you may not have realized is that we are situated perfectly to see the fireworks display which is put on every year to coincide with the concert of the Boston Pops. We bring the TV set up to the roof and watch the concert, then enjoy the show! It was a great time for the sisters to enjoy each other's company and to celebrate the founding of this country.

On Tuesday, July 11, the community gathered in our Chapel with nearly twenty guest to mark the twenty fifth anniversary of Sr. Adele Marie's ordination to the priesthood. She was actually ordained on June 10, 1981, but we decided to postpone the celebration

until a more convenient time. Sr. Adele Marie celebrated the Eucharist, and the Right Reverend David B. Joslin preached. After the service, a lovely luncheon was served in the Refectory. It was a time for the community to gather to thank God for the gifts and talents of an extraordinary woman, one who, along with Sr. Catherine Louise and Sr. Mary Eleanor, has blazed the trail for all those who will be priests in the community in the future.

From Thursday, July 13 through Friday, July 14, we held a conference for our Associates. (See article on page 161), and then we celebrated St. Margaret's Day (see article this page).

Finally, on Sunday, July 23, Sr. Beatrice Bruno made her Life Profession as a Sister of St. Margaret. Forty friends and relatives, including the sisters who came from Haiti, joined the Boston sisters for the joyous event. All of the sisters rejoiced to share this special day with Sr. Beatrice, who then left for a time of holiday with her relatives in New York City. All in all, this July will go down as one very jubilant month here in Boston!

## NEWS FROM HAITI

By Marie Margaret, SSM

The two elections here have been successful, and May 14 was the presidential inauguration day. This increases hope in everyone, including us. We have a few repair works to be done inside the convent, especially the kitchen and refectory, including painting. So we hope to find enough help to get these repair works done before we go back to the convent.

I am taking this opportunity to thank those who sent us donations in memory of Sr. Joan. These gifts will go toward the fund to rebuild Kenscoff unless the donor mentions her/his wish to do otherwise. When they bought Kenscoff over forty years ago, it was not habitable. Sr. Joan was one of the four sisters in Haiti who made it habitable. We kept on mending it until today there is no way to mend. Now we need to pull down and start at zero. We would like to rebuild Kenscoff as a retreat and rest center to provide a place of peace for local people as well as volunteers. It would be used by missionaries working in Haiti, as well as being a means of support for the community. We would like to do this in memory of all the sisters who have lived and worked here.

The residents at Foyer Notre Dame are doing well. Besides colds and the malaise which comes with old age, they are in good health. We are still trying to find help to dig the well at the Foyer. Water is such a necessity for everyone but even more so in a home for the elderly. Older people have so many losses. Keeping them clean is the best we can do to keep the little bit they have left with some dignity.

The recipients of the scholarships are doing well, some better than others. Last year many of them took the government official exams at various levels, and they were all successful. Please pray for them. Thank you for helping

us help them prepare them for a better tomorrow for themselves, the country and the church.

If you have been trying to get in touch with us by phone or email, you must be very frustrated. I am sorry. Our communication system was down. Our email is working now, but the telephones are still down except the cell phones (011-509-443-3683 or 011-509-448-2609). Our email addresses are:

Sr. Marie Margaret -  
mariemargaretssm@yahoo.com

Sr. Marjorie Raphael -  
marjorieraphaelssm@yahoo.com

Kethia Jean-Simon -  
Kethiajeas@yahoo.fr.

Again, thank you for all your help and support. Please keep on praying for us, for Haiti and the world. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones.

## ASSOCIATES NEWS

By Ann, SSM

Associates Received:

Jane Pengelly Brigman	6/15/06
Roy Albert White	7/9/06

Associates Deceased:

Gordon Berg	6/06
Hazel Heckler	4/06
George Sanon	6/06

Please do notify us if you know of someone who was an Associate who has passed away.

## SAINT MARGARET'S DAY IN NYC

By Liz, SSM

With 45 friends, associates and neighbors we celebrated St. Margaret's Day at St. Margaret's House on July 22. The Rev. Dr. David McNeeley celebrated and shared with us his experience with the Sisters in Haiti, giving us thanks for helping him to see and know the power and the peace of the Holy Spirit. He charged us to continue living in that paradox and to support others in

their living in and re-creating here and now the kingdom of God. We shared fellowship, lunch and stories with one another, and celebrated our life together as church, the body of Christ.

## THE WORD & THE TABLE

By Mary Michael, SSM

I once heard a Lutheran pastor in Philadelphia tell a group of Episcopalian would-be Lay Eucharistic Ministers to study pages 400-401 in their *Book of Common Prayer*. They would find there an outline of the flowing action with a couple of peaks that the Eucharist is - our Lord's invitation to listen to His Word and His invitation to come to His Table. Note all the verbs in this action that we celebrate, he said, and each one of us at a Eucharist is a celebrant, not just the Priest.

We gather, we proclaim and respond to God's Word, we pray for the world and the Church, we exchange the peace, we prepare the table, we make Eucharist, we break the Bread, and we share the gifts of God. Then we go forth from the Eucharist after having been enlightened by hearing God's Word to us, fed and nourished by His gifts of life and light, hope and joy, and empowered by His Holy Spirit to carry Him to everyone whose path we cross.

I can't think of anything any one of us could ever do in our lifetime that would be richer, deeper, more wondrous than this action of celebrating the Eucharist. For two thousand years, Christians who have had the privilege of taking part in this action have been blessed - offering our needy, hungry, sinful selves to our Lord Christ and receiving from Him all the love and power we will ever need to become and to do all He asked of us. Each one of us has been given, at every Holy Communion, the greatest treasure on earth that we could ever be given - the comfort and joy of Christ's love and presence with us always. Alleluia!

## COMMUNITY NEWS

Sr. Carolyn preached at the Memorial Church at Harvard on July 30.

Sr. Claire Marie and the Haitian gift shop traveled to All Saint's Church in Peterborough, NH on Saturday, July 29.

Sr. Jane Mary attended a two-week intensive course on the New Testament at Boston College in June.



*St. Margaret's altar frontal*

Sr. Carolyn, Sr. Adele Marie, Sr. Claire Marie, Sr. Kristina Frances and Sr. Jane Mary hosted a group in Duxbury for a weekend retreat focusing on God in creation, June 9-11.

Sr. Kristina Frances attended the Hymn Society of America and Canada annual conference at De Pauw University in Indiana July 16-20.

## The Society of St. Margaret

### St. Margaret's House

47 Jordan Road  
New Hartford NY 13413-1211  
(315) 724 - 2324  
E-mail: SsmsistersCNY@aol.com  
Website: www.ssmcny.org

### St. Margaret's Convent

17 Highland Park Street  
Boston MA 02119-1436  
(617) 445 - 8961  
E-mail: ssmconvent@ssmbos.com

### St. Margaret's Convent

Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
Telephone: 011+509+222+2011  
E-mail:  
marieymargaretssm@yahoo.com

### Neale House

50 Fulton Street  
New York NY 10038-1800  
(212) 619 - 2672  
E-mail : Sisters@trinitywallstreet.org

### St. Margaret's, South Duxbury

71 Washington Street  
P. O. Box C  
Duxbury MA 02331-0605  
(781) 934 - 9477

### Mailing Address:

St. Margaret's Convent, P-au-P  
c/o Agape Flights  
7990 15th Street East  
Sarasota FL 34243

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