Discover!

Servants of Mary

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Volume 9 Issue 2
October 2014
Dear Friends,

In our last issue I asked for your prayers for the success of our 26th General Chapter. This international meeting was held in Paris. Participants were elected delegates from the UK, France, Belgium, Canada, Congo, Jamaica and the US. It was a time of celebration and process for the Congregation. We celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Aggregation to the Order of Servants of Mary. We also celebrated the fact that for the first time we had delegates from Congo be part of our sessions. The main thrust of the Chapter was that of the proposed new government structure and choosing the Sisters who would lead us in this endeavor.

After four years of preparation and consultation with all the Sisters in the Congregation, a new governance structure was proposed, voted upon and accepted by the General Chapter. The new International Leadership members were nominated and accepted by vote of the General Chapter. These Sisters are:

Sr. Marie Thérèse Connor, International Prioress
Sr. Chantal-Mari le Diraison, France/Belgium/Canada/Congo, International Councillor; FBCC Community Prioress
Sr. Michelle Reilly, UK International Councillor; UK Community Prioress
Sr. Mary Gehringer, US International Councillor; US Community Prioress

The new government structure is such that we will no longer be using the term “Province.” We will refer to the former Provinces as Communities. (UK, FBCC and US Communities) With this change you’ll note that the Sisters in leadership position for each Community are now referred to as “Prioress.” The groupings of Sisters and titles are minor structural changes that are necessary because of our numbers, but do not change the importance of our mission and ministry.

Here in the United States we had the installation of our new leadership team on September 14. Joining me on our US team are Sisters Jackie Ryan, Assistant Prioress, and Kerry Larkin, Councillor. I look forward to working with these Sisters for the next five years. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Srs. Mary Lefevre, Linda Hess and Carol Kowalski during our previous term. Thank you, too, to Sr. Lisa Sheridan who has served as our General Councillor for the past five years. All of these women generously shared their talents and gifts with the Community.

The official transitional meetings for the International Leadership members took place the week of October 5. These meetings took place the week after the International Servite School Network that was hosted at Marian September 30-October 3. Students and adults from Servite schools around the world were represented at the conference. It was a wonderful experience for the Marian community to host and participate in these sessions.

In September, I had the honor of presenting our 2014 Partnership award to Mrs. Sofia Kock, principal at Holy Name School here in Omaha. She was recognized because of her outstanding leadership as an administrator, her compassionate presence to the school community in North Omaha and for supporting and modeling the Servite charism. The Servants of Mary have worked in the school since it first opened in 1918.

Thank you for your prayerful support of our General Chapter and for the ministries in which we serve. Please know of our continued prayers for all of you.

Sr. Mary Gehringer, OSM
Prioress

Discover Corrections from Volume 9 Issue 1
Sr. Ann Marie Petrylka is originally from Detroit, Michigan.
Sr. Joyce Rupp is originally from Cherokee, Iowa.
Living (and dying) in the World of Social Media
By Maria Farrell, Director of GriefWork: A National Servite Ministry of Compassion

Every day we hear about the part social media plays in our lives. From daily posts on Facebook, sharing pictures on Instagram or Tweeting our thoughts to those that follow us, social media plays an important part in many of our lives. But how is it changing the way we look at grieving the loss of a loved one?

As technology has progressed, so has our willingness to share intimate details about our lives. Along with the mundane, we share information with the world that we normally wouldn’t. That may make some people uncomfortable. For others, sharing their story brings healing and comfort. Facebook is a prime example. I visited with a family that lost their teenage son seven years ago. They have never taken down his Facebook page. Over all of these years, friends and relatives continue to post words of love and share memories of this young man. It brings his parents such joy to know how many people loved their son and how many lives he touched. It’s a living memorial.

If you are not one to post on Facebook, and find writing or journaling to be helpful, visit AfterTalk.com. This site allows you to continue to express your thoughts and feelings to your deceased loved one. This can be private (for your eyes only), or you may choose to use the Family and Friends feature. This feature allows you to share your feelings collectively with those you choose.

ifidie.org (If I Die) is another intriguing website. This website provides a way for you to write and store letters to your family and friends. These letters are stored securely and encrypted with a special password. No one will have access to these letters before you die. Check out the website for further details.

And lastly, there are several websites that offer to put QR codes on your headstone! Qeepr is one such provider. This is a free website where friends and family create an online memorial. QR Code plaques are placed on the monument. When scanned with a smartphone, the code will direct the visitor to the memorial page you created. When visiting the individual’s page, you can leave messages, comments and “like” posts. You can even add pictures and videos!

So the question is this, are you willing to embrace social media and the role it plays in both life and death?

Peregrine Ponderings
By: Linda Hess, OSM St. Peregrine Program

The Church has designated St. Peregrine Laziosi as patron of those suffering from cancer and other life-threatening diseases. The Servants of Mary are privileged to pray for individuals and families seeking the intercession of St. Peregrine. The St. Peregrine Ministry was begun in 1997 in the United States Community of Servites. Since then, we have received over 12,000 enrollments into the Prayer Program. Enrollments have come from every state and around the world, such as Singapore, Canada, and Africa. St. Peregrine Ministry is promoted through mailings, social media and individuals and families that have enrolled loved ones into the Prayer Program.

Here are a few reasons for enrolling someone into the Peregrine Prayer Ministry:

• Enrollees are remembered in our daily prayer and at the Peregrine Mass held on the third Saturday of each month.
• Those enrolled will receive a medal of St. Peregrine and various prayer cards.
• Special Masses that include anointing of the sick are held in May and November.

Through the power of prayer enrollees and families experience the peace that comes from prayerful support and an openness to experience God’s loving grace.
On Tuesday, September 16, 2014, the Servants of Mary hosted their 9th Annual Partnership Celebration. The event was held in a grand ballroom at the DC Centre in Omaha, NE. The evening had a full schedule including a cocktail hour, sit down dinner, award presentation, silent auction and plenty of pictures and camaraderie.

This year, we were excited to honor Mrs. Sofia Kock, Principal of Holy Name School in Omaha, NE as the 2014 Partnership Award Recipient. Sofie lives our charism of "compassionate presence in the spirit of Mary" on a daily basis. Her daily encounters with her diverse students enable her to foster our shared values and beliefs with her students. Sofie has served as an educator in the Archdiocese of Omaha schools for over 40 years. She is currently in her 19th year as the principal of Holy Name School. She has been recognized as an Archdiocesan Inner City Educator of the Year, acknowledging her service to children and families within the northeast area of Omaha. Sofie serves on many boards around Omaha and holds membership in numerous professional organizations in Omaha.

Sofie believes that "every child has the right to an education in an environment which nurtures a personal faith in God along with the child's academic, social and emotional progress."

Helping us celebrate the evening were members of Sofie's family, members of her Holy Name administrative staff and teaching staff, Servants of Mary staff, many friends and of course many of the Sisters, and Associates.

We are so pleased to have honored Mrs. Sofia Kock as the Servants of Mary 2014 Partnership Award recipient.

Our event was blessed by many generous people and organizations that donated to underwrite the event or donated items for our silent auction. We would like to thank the following for their generosity:


Sofia Kock is surrounded by the 35 Servants of Mary gathered in her honor.

Sofia Kock's mother, Mary Grochala, receives a round of applause after Sofia mentions what a good influence her mother has been on her life.
Cemetery Update
By Tom Marasco, Director of Development

In previous issues of Discover!, we announced plans to renovate our cemetery. We have taken some steps to move forward with that plan, including planting trees on the south side of the cemetery to provide shade to visitors.

After many conversations with Sr. Mary and the staff, we have made the decision to really step up our plan for the cemetery. In June of 2014, we enlisted the services of Dave Ciaccio of Vireo to be involved and help us put a vision into place to make the cemetery a more welcoming and reverent area on our grounds. We feel that the Sisters who are at rest in the cemetery deserve a more beautiful resting place that offers the honor and respect that they earned throughout their lives dedicated to the Servants of Mary. In July, Dave gave us preliminary plans which were approved to the next stage. At the Celebrating Partnership event in September, we were very pleased to unveil the artist renderings of the updated cemetery.

Dave, who designed the Healing Garden on the east side of the Motherhouse, incorporated the look and feel of the Garden into the new plans for the cemetery and provided a plan that would tie the two spaces together. The focus of the plan is a lined walkway from the Garden to the cemetery. Some of the major items of the plan include installing crosses along with the headstones, a grand entrance gate, new parking stalls, benches for silent reflection, many plants and trees along the walkway to provide shade and overall beauty, and lighting the statue of Mary in the cemetery. We are very excited to move this plan into action.

From our initial appeal, we have raised close to $6,000 for the parts of the project that we envisioned last year. In addition to that, the money we raised during the OmahaGives campaign, $13,000, has all been designated for the cemetery improvement project. Since the announcement of the upgraded plan we have received $3,250 in standard donations and one major gift of $16,000. The average gift for the standard donations is a phenomenal $350! This brings our initial funds for the major renovation to $38,250. This means we have almost 20% of the funds necessary to move forward.

There will be several opportunities to make honorary and memorial donations to the cemetery renovation project. All of the benches, lights along the path, many of the trees and plants, and the gravesite crosses are some examples of items that can be an honorary or memorial donation.

For further information, please contact me at osmdev@osms.org or 402-951-3060
What Being an Associate Means to our Associates

In honor of the associate program’s 25th anniversary we asked our associates what it means to be an associate of the Servants of Mary. We had an overwhelming response and were unable to use remarks from every associate in our previous issue of the Discover.

“Not quite fifty years ago I met the Servants of Mary when I was a student at Marian High School. I had the good fortune just about 30 years ago to serve on a parish pastoral team with some of them: Sisters Suzanne Vandenheede, Joan Houtekier, Ann Marie Petrylka and Vicki Lane. The compassion and encouragement of these women as I began my career in ministry was a wonderful connection that continues to this day.”

“As a Servite Associate for over 20 years I have played, prayed, ministered and been mentored by these women. Our charism of compassionate presence not only called me to participate in the community through associate membership but has informed and continues to inform my ministry as a palliative care chaplain and spiritual director. The Sisters and Associates are one of the most vital signs of church in my life and in the world. As a woman in the church and ministry they have been my support, my model and a source of blessing.”

-Kathy Kasher

“At a retreat this last spring the Portland Associates were asked to reflect on the topic of associate membership. Specifically, we were instructed to consider why we became associates and what our membership means to us. During our discussion, Sr. Lisa reminded me that I was invited to membership years before I actually committed saying “let’s see how it works out for Cindy first.” Perhaps, not one of my proudest moments, my hesitation caused my discernment process to take a little longer than most associates. But I watched and I learned. I learned about the charism and the mission of the Servants of Mary but more importantly I observed that compassionate presence modeled by our community here in Portland. While I can only hope and pray that I may somehow be that same presence in the lives around me, I know that I have the example of the community to lead me.”

-Barbara Katz

“I have been privileged to be an Associate of the Servants of Mary since 1991. Servite Sisters influenced me from the age of twelve at Christ the King grade school, Marian high school, and throughout my young adult years as I entered my profession of nursing and became a wife and mother. As a struggling pre-teenager trying to emerge into a woman, I found a steadfast sense of belonging rooted in their practical, joyful, spirituality. The pioneering sisters of Christ the King grade school and Marian high school in Omaha paid attention to who I was as they encouraged me to go deeper, to “ponder in my heart” like Mary in order to discover and nourish my authentic spiritual self. I felt a strong sense of deep connection with them which was intangible, - yet, very REAL! This Servite spirituality continued to weave significant grounding through my divorce, parents’ deaths, empty nest as my sons established their careers, my second career as a hospital chaplain, and my serious health challenges.”

-Maureen Bausch
Financial Report 2013-14
By Tom Marasco, Director of Development

Thank you for your generous donations throughout our 2013 – 2014 fiscal year (September – August). Your support throughout the year allows us to continue to provide our services and ministries.

This year, our largest jump was in the Estate Gifts category. Our estate donations represented 13% last year and 54% this year. We truly appreciate those who felt such a strong connection with the Servants of Mary to add us into their will and leave the Sisters an estate gift. Planned giving and estate gifts are a great way to leave your legacy and make an impact on those who have impacted your lives. For information on planned giving, please contact Tom Marasco in our Development Office.

If we account for a “standard” estate gift donation percentage for this past fiscal year (12-13%), then that will align all other categories with previous years. For this fiscal year, that would again put the Greatest Need category as the largest gift category. Assuming a “standard” rate of estate gifts, Greatest Need would have accounted for 32% of the total. Your generous gifts for the greatest need, allow the Sisters to use the funds across all areas and ministries. Based on the same assumption, this would put donations to Retirement at 16% of total. These gifts go directly toward taking care of the Sisters after they have retired from the work force. As our Sisters move into the retirement stages of their lives, these gifts have a direct impact on their care and living requirements. We are very grateful for these gifts that allow us to ensure the Sisters have comfort and stability as they reach retirement age.

One area that is not specifically broken out in the chart that I would like to call your attention to is matching gifts. Matching gifts are a great way for your donation to make an extra impact. Many employers with matching gift programs will match at higher than 100% of your donation. This means that an employer may match your $100 donation with a donation of $200 or $300. Your generosity, combined with the generosity of an employer that you have devoted much of your life to, have a dramatic impact for the Sisters. If you have not looked into this option, please prayerfully consider the idea. If you have questions about matching gifts or would like to know if your employer participates in a matching gift program, you can contact your human resources department, or contact Tom Marasco in the Development Office.

We encourage you to continue with your donations in honor and in memory of your loved ones. These are a fantastic way to show a living person how much you respect and love them, and to show your love and dedication to the memory of a loved one that has been called home to God. We would also love to enroll your family member and/or friends into the St. Peregrine prayer program. Please let us know of those in your life that need extra prayer and support while battling cancer and other life threatening illness. The Sisters have many prayers to offer, and appreciate being able to offer prayers for those loved ones that need them the most. Prayer is a very powerful component of healing, and the St. Peregrine program focuses the prayers of the Sisters on those who have been enrolled by caring friends and family who understand this truth.

Servants of Mary Benefactors

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations received from May 1, 2014 through August 31, 2014

**Gold Level $1000 - $9,999.99**

Terry L. Battiato
Paul & Patricia Briardy
Gregory Heirman
Bonnie J. Hickey
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Mary Anne Anderson
Mary Eileen Andreasen
Elizabeth Ann Andrew
Helen A Andrews
Kathy Arens
Wayne & Virginia Arner
Floyd & Helen Arnott
Allan & Corrine Auty
The Servants of Mary new Leadership team.

(Left) Sr. Kerry Larkin, OSM, Sr. Mary Gehriser, OSM, and Sr. Jackie Ryan, OSM

Mary Beth Donovan
Charles & Sandra
Dougherty
Andrea Dover
Sharon Dowell
Cletus & Theresa Drone
Dan Dudley
Monica Dunbar
Stephen D. Dunne
David & Elaine
Duschang
Joan & Art Dwojakowski
Bernie Dyer
Elizabeth Easley

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Healy RSM
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Cynthia Luzzack
Thomas & Adrienne Lux
Sheila Lynch Sully
Gretchen Mack
James Mackey
Joslyn Maenner
Elaine Maes
Charlie & Mary Mahn
Sean & Christine Malloy
18 high school students from around the world came to Omaha for the International Servite Schools Network Conference.
In Memory Of

We gratefully acknowledge the following remembrances received from May 1, 2014 through August 31, 2014

John & Martha Abohasen
John Abohasen
Neal Akerlind
Eleanor Akerlind
Andrew Alcorta
Barbara Alcorta
Joe Allam
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Ivan & Gerri Sims
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Joan & Art Dwojakowski
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Mark & Ann Francis
Umberto Al Cappellano
Christine Harms
Margaret Rose Carlin
Thomas Carlin
Michael & Sherri Hanna
Bob Chruma
Rita Tones
Todd Colpaert
Joanne Tokatlian
JoAnn Coman
Bob & Sue Amorose
Jacqueline Palmer
Edward Commyn
Sr. Carol Kowalski, OSM
Benjamin Corncichione
Tony & Mary Ellen Young
Richard Delaney
Steven & Carol Kuzelka
Leola Rhode
Sr. Lucille Beaulieu
Sr. Carolyn Foley
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Sr. Lisa Sheridan
Sr. Suzanne Vandeneheede
Bernard Hegeman
John Edney
Margaret Ann Heirman
Gregory Heirman
Sr. M. Frances (Helen)
Hilbert, OSM
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Sr. Camilla Huber, OSM
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Grace Huber
Rev. Eugene Koch
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Sr. Carolyn Foley, OSM
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Sr. Pat Kowalski, OSM
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Sr. Imelda Kirkey, OSM
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Sr. Carol Kowalski, OSM
Tom Lawler
Joan & Art Dwojakowski
Pete & Phyllis Zimmerman
Sr. Celeste Lawler, OSM
Sr. Rita Mary Morrisette, OSM
Eugene Oakie
Kathy & LeRoy Schroder
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Clare Loprinzi
Northwest Catholic Counseling Center
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Brother Matthew Manning, OSM
Sr. Carolyn Foley, OSM
Mary Domenica Marchioni
Kathy Davy
N. Facca & C. Craig
William & Roselyn Kiefer
Cynthia Luzczak
Servants of Mary
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Andrea Dover
Chris Geffke
Laurie Kennedy
Thomas Kubacki

Representatives at UNIFAS international in Collevenza, Italy in August. UNIFAS is the International Union of the Servite Family. The purpose of the Union is to express, foster, and promote communion and cooperation within the Servite Family. US delegates Sr. Marianna DeSimone (3rd from the left) and Associate Rose Roeder (5th from the left) attended the event.

Mike DeLeo
Cori Tranisi
Durant, LaShank & Deruchia Families
Velma Deruchia
Sr. Ann Doyle, OSM
Judy Perfetto
Elenore Edney
John Edney
James J. Edney
Joseph Edney
John Edney
Margaret Edney
John Edney
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Elsie Scruggs
Norma Secours
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Warren Flearl
Peg Gehriger & Family
Sr. Mary Eleanor Galt, OSM
Thomas & Michele Smith
Deceased members of the Gerometta Family
Rose Marie LaMont
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Sr. Nancy Marsh, OSM
Linda M. Hakim
Vic Hakim
Paul & Violet Hamel
David & Jo Ann Kotwick
Mike Hanna
Mary Bukowski

The Union of Forced Confraternity
Italy in August. UNIFAS is the International Union of the Servite Family. The purpose of the Union is to express, foster, and promote communion and cooperation within the Servite Family. The purpose of the Union is to express, foster, and promote communion and cooperation within the Servite Family. The purpose of the Union is to express, foster, and promote communion and cooperation within the Servite Family.
We gratefully acknowledge the following honorariums received from May 1, 2014 through August 31, 2014

Philip Alexander
Ellen Alexander
Janet Barnes
Tim & Elizabeth Barnes
Danny Bergeron
Eugene, Hoslet
Sr. Barb Bouchard, OSM
Cynthia Claes Living Trust
Steven J. Demey
Bernie & Lori Martin & Family
Sr. Marianna De Simone, OSM
Angela Altamore
Sr. Mary Ellen Doyle, OSM
Rick & Carol Miller
Fern Walch
Sandra Fregoe,
Sr. Lucille Beaulieu, OSM
Katie & Pat Galloway
25th Anniversary
Nancy Nalty
Sr. Mary Alice Haley, OSM
Charles & Sandra Dougherty
Sr. Mary Alice Haley, OSM 70th Jubilee
Kenneth & Kathleen Buyle
Julia Clark
Greg & Mary Lynn Schwickert
Rita Bianchi
Sr. Mary Hogan, OSM
Tim & Karen Hogan
Jim & Maureen Waldron
Tony & Mary Ellen Young
Sr. Joan Houtekier, OSM 50th Jubilee
Angela Altamore
Rita Bianchi
Michael & Carol McGlade
Gerry Murphy
Greg & Mary Lynn Schwickert
Sr. Audrey Jauron, OSM
100th Birthday
Donald Bruno
Matthew & Mary Ann Schimmonitz
Carol Jirousek
May Sebastian
Rebecca & Michael Miniea
Sr. Margarita Simon, OSM
Angela Altamore
Kathy Arens
Sr. Lucille Beaulieu, OSM
Marian High School
Sr. Rita Mary Morissette, OSM
Ruthie Trede
Mary Claire Smith
Ray Tweedy
Wayne Smithberg
Sr. Mary Stephen Durant, OSM
Emil Sodoro
Sr. Nancy Marsh, OSM
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Elmer & Beanie Steier
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Paul Ross
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Peg Gehringer & Family
Sr. Charlotte Huetteham, OSM
Sr. Imelda Kirkey, OSM
Sr. Nancy Marsh, OSM
Sr. Lisa Sheridan
Servants of Mary
Provincial Council
Servants of Mary
St. James Convent
Sr. Caroline Turnovsky, OSM
Sr. Suzanne Vandenheede, OSM
Chuck Van Overbeke
Larry & Gert Van Overbeke
Sr. Violet Mae Walker, OSM
Kathleen Conry
Patti Fleming
John & Pat Gembow
Frank & Dorothy Insolera
Nancy Nalty
Richard & Jan Warren
Brother J. Francis Walsh
Sr. Carolyn Foley, OSM
Harold & Lillian Watson
Robert & Lillian Schilling
Sr. Adolorata Watson, OSM
Mick Messbarger
Robert & Lillian Schilling
Gloria Werner
Servants of Mary
Provincial Council
Glenn York
Sr. Mary Stephen Durant, OSM
In Honor Of
We Want Your “Likes” and “Shares”!

In September 2014, we signed on with Firespring of Lincoln, NE, to revamp our website www.osms.org. We are excited about the changes coming to our site. It will be more interactive and include many new concepts that we feel will be more appealing to our visitors such as: a scrolling marquee banner that will highlight upcoming Community and Servite Center of Compassion events, live Facebook and Twitter feeds, more videos and pictures, a page dedicated to the cemetery improvement project, volunteer opportunities, our gift store and of course donation pages.

Our social media sites have gained in popularity over the last three months. Our numbers are up on both Facebook and Twitter. We are pleased to announce that we have 449 followers on our Facebook page. Our next goal being 500 followers! Please help us spread the word by liking our pages and sharing our posts with your own social networks. With your help, the Sisters can connect with more friends and spread the word about our ministries.

Facebook – www.facebook.com/servites1
Twitter – www.twitter.com/servantsofmary1
Blog – www.servantsofmaryblog.wordpress.com
Pinterest – www.pinterest.com/servantsofmary
YouTube – www.youtube.com/theservantsofmary

We invite you to visit all of our sites and to follow, share, tweet, watch, pin and scan on your own social media sites in order to help spread the word about the Servants of Mary.