

# Voices

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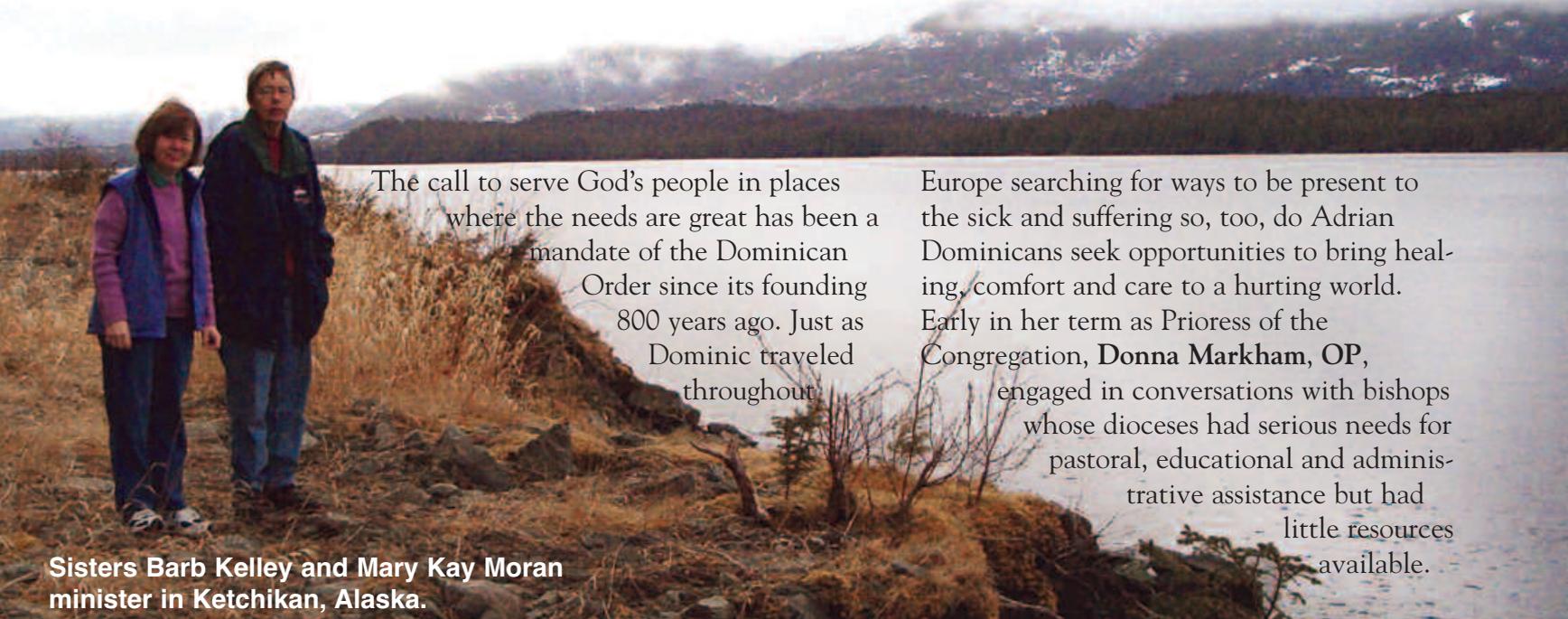
WINTER 2006

## Answering an Invitation to Mission Where the Needs Are Great

— by Lori Golaszewski

*(This is the first article in a three-part series on Adrian Dominicans ministering in the far north. Look for the second article about the ministries in Prince George, British Columbia, in the next Voices.)*

*“We go, we travel constantly, for our life is a journey and this world a place of pilgrimage ...”*



Sisters Barb Kelley and Mary Kay Moran minister in Ketchikan, Alaska.

Submitted photo

The call to serve God’s people in places where the needs are great has been a mandate of the Dominican Order since its founding 800 years ago. Just as Dominic traveled throughout

Europe searching for ways to be present to the sick and suffering so, too, do Adrian Dominicans seek opportunities to bring healing, comfort and care to a hurting world. Early in her term as Prioress of the Congregation, **Donna Markham, OP**, engaged in conversations with bishops whose dioceses had serious needs for pastoral, educational and administrative assistance but had little resources available.

*(See “Northern Ministries” on page 2)*

## Reaching New Heights, One Relationship at a Time

— by Lori Golaszewski

“Relationships are the most important thing in life.” When **Peg Albert, OP, PhD**, arrived in Adrian to begin her presidency at Siena Heights University, she found herself welcomed with open arms by faculty and staff eager to embrace their new leader. Sister Peg soon discovered the same warm welcome was extended to the students arriving on campus for the start of the academic year. It became apparent that meaningful relationships are just as important to the Siena community as they are to her.

“I am deeply edified by the commitment and dedication of the faculty

and staff, particularly the meaningful relationships they develop with students,” Sister Peg said. “They really do become the students’ mentors, not just while they’re here at Siena, but beyond. What that says to me is that our faculty and staff go beyond what’s expected and live the mission, even when the students graduate. I find it very encouraging as we move into the future, because that’s what will attract people to come here.

Relationships are the most important thing in life.”

Treasured relationships were exactly what Sister Peg celebrated on November 3, the day of her inaugu-



Sisters Peg Albert (left) and Donna Markham at Sister Peg’s inauguration.

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to respond to those needs. A “call to mission” was issued to the members of the Congregation and 12 brave Adrian Dominicans are setting out to begin new communities in mission in Alaska and northern Canada — two areas of the continent that have very few

women religious, priests or lay ministers available to address urgent pastoral needs. Each of these sisters felt a deep desire to respond to the Congregation’s call to offer her skills and talents for the good of the Church and its people. Two of their experiences are shared here.

## Ketchikan, Alaska —

Long before she became an Adrian Dominican, **Barbara Kelley, OP**, had a desire to minister in Alaska. The beauty of God’s creation in this remote region appealed to her, but never in her wildest dreams did she think she’d have an opportunity to serve there. God’s providence revealed otherwise.

Sister Barb, along with **Mary Kay Moran, OP**, arrived in Ketchikan nearly a year ago in January. Ketchikan, part of the Diocese of Juneau, is located in southeast Alaska, which is comprised of a string of islands accessible by ferry or airplane. Sisters Barb and Mary Kay live in community at the convent at Holy Name Parish, where on any given day they can look out their front window and see cruise ships gliding along the channel. “We’re surrounded by water, mountains and trees,” Sister Barb said. “It’s breathtaking, and really makes you conscious of God’s creation.”

Sister Barb is on the pastoral team at Holy Name while Sister Mary Kay teaches at the elementary school, the only Catholic school in the diocese. Sister Barb also serves as a pastoral associate at St. John by the Sea on Prince of Wales Island and at St. Rose de Lima in Wrangell — ministries that literally ferry her from one parish to another.

Whether it’s assisting at Masses and conducting communion services, preaching, helping with the religious education program, making hospital visits, or doing office work, Sister Barb offers her services



wherever they are needed.

And with good reason: There are only 12 priests and six sisters in the entire diocese. Sister Barb works closely with the priests at St. John and St. Rose, Fathers Jim and Perry, often filling in for them when they are gone. In addition, many parishioners have been trained as lay leaders, which has helped to ease the burden of the personnel shortage.

While Sister Barb admits that it can be hectic juggling the needs of three parishes on three different islands, her ministry is interesting and the people make it

**Sister Barb takes the ferry to each of the parishes where she ministers, which are on three separate islands.**

**Native art and culture flourish in Ketchikan due to the large population of native Alaskans. Ketchikan is home to the world’s largest collection of totem poles.**

worthwhile. “One thing that impresses me about this area is that it’s so ecumenical,” she said. “The people and the churches work well together because it’s so isolated here. There is good community spirit.”

Through her interactions with parishioners, Sister Barb has learned to live one day at a time and to take what life offers in stride. “I learn a lot from the parishioners, who make do with what they have,” Sister Barb said. “A lot of times when the weather is foggy or snowy, we don’t get newspapers or mail for a few days. The people go with the flow, because they know they can’t fly if the weather is bad. Life isn’t always convenient for them, but they’ve learned to take things in stride.”

For Sisters Barb and Mary Kay, having each other to share experiences and to provide support has made getting acclimated to Alaska less difficult. “Since Barb and I arrived here at the same time, it made it easier to adapt to the place and to one another,” Sister Mary Kay noted. “We’ve been in awe at the reaction of the people toward us. No matter where we go, people appreciate that we’re here and respect us for the ministry that we do.”

“If you want to work with the Church,” she continued, “this is the place to be. Bishop Warfel is accepting, the pastors are appreciative and the parishioners are welcoming. People are genuinely interested in what we do and are supportive.”

Sister Mary Kay began her first full year of teaching at Holy Name School in September, having completed the second semester of the last school year. She teaches math, religion and science to fifth- and sixth-graders and is the only sister at Holy Name.

When Sister Mary Kay first took over from the teacher who left last year, she was faced with some immediate challenges. “The kids had had many teachers, and were used to not doing anything,” she said. “They created a ruckus in the classroom and were behind in math and science. I had a choice of getting their math up, which I thought was important, or teaching science that was of interest to them. By the end of the school year, I had every student, except one, at or above level in the standardized tests.”

Teaching in a school that has a high turnover rate for students has also been challenging for Sister Mary Kay, especially since enrollment is around 80 students. Because there is a U.S. Coast Guard base located in Ketchikan, Sister Mary Kay noted that many students leave Holy Name midyear because their parents get transferred. Other children relocate because their parents are seeking to better their situations and accept new jobs elsewhere.

Despite these challenges, Sister Mary Kay uses every opportunity to impart knowledge and valuable



Sister Mary Kay

lessons to her students. One notable experience occurred while Sister Mary Kay was teaching Old and New Testament his-

tory. “One of the lessons that came across was that people presented their best when they celebrated the Eucharist,” she explained. “I thought, ‘This is a teaching moment.’ I told the kids that you look your best because you are meeting your Creator. The next time we had a liturgy, one boy showed up in a dress shirt, tie and sports jacket. The next week, there were two kids who had dressed up, and by the third week, all the students were dressed in their Sunday best to go to church. Everybody noticed them.”

When asked what is fulfilling about her ministry, Sister Mary Kay’s answer is succinct: everything. “I try to teach and present to the kids that they can achieve their dreams, be young men and women who can make decisions that are true and good for themselves and their world, and give them Christian values that they take to the next level,” she said. “This has been an incredible year.”

And for Sister Barb too. “It’s amazing how God works in our lives. I feel very privileged and excited to be able to do this ministry.”



# Consultation Weekend Gave Participants an Opportunity to Share

— by Lori Golaszewski

If there is one thing that's apparent from General Chapter 2004, it's how quickly and wholeheartedly the Congregation embraced the Vision. "Seek truth, make peace and reverence life" aren't merely words, they are the embodiment of how the Congregation lives and what it represents.

This fall, members of Mission Councils, Mission Groups, boards, commissions, and committees gathered at Weber Center to celebrate how they are living

the Vision in their everyday lives, and to share how they want to deepen their living of the Vision in years to come.



**Sisters Sarah Sharkey (above) and Mary Ellen Leciejewski (right), are the co-conveners of the Vision Integration Connecting Circle.**

"As a committee, we have been listening to people individually, but this was one of our first attempts at bringing people together so that we could have a fuller, broader discussion," said **Mary Ellen Leciejewski, OP**, co-convener of the Vision Integration Connecting Circle (VICC).

"One of our goals was to listen to one another and to consult with one another about how we are already living the Vision, and to explore other ways we could be listening to one another's stories so that we could live the Vision more fully."

"It was important that we bring in the representatives from the Mission Councils along with rep-

resentatives from offices, commissions and committees," added **Sarah Sharkey, OP**, VICC co-convener. "Using the government structure, for me, offered a broader base of voices who represent dimensions of the Congregation, so that for the sake of VICC, we're not planning in isolation from the real needs that we might be able to respond to in the Congregation."

More than 50 individuals attended the Vision Integration Consultation Weekend. In both small and large groups, participants had the opportunity to discuss questions related to their understanding of the Vision, including how their hearts connected with the Vision, what expressions of the Vision they and the groups they represented were focused on at that time, and

how they experienced the interconnectedness of the Vision's various expressions. In addition, a reenactment of the 1511 Montesino sermon given by Dominican friars in the Dominican



Republic prompted participants to identify comparisons between the injustices of 500 years ago and those of today.

While there were many highlights of the weekend, Sisters Mary Ellen and Sarah said what really stood out for them was being in the presence of so many women whose dedication to living the Vision was apparent, and who openly shared their opinions, reflections and fruits of their contemplation.

"It's a special gift to gather together and share expe-

riences, to learn from one another, to nourish one another and to get strengthened by one another," Sister Mary Ellen said. "I think it's important to *be* about the Vision and to talk about *how* we are being about the Vision every day."

"I was struck by the Vision integration that is going on in different parts of the Congregation," Sister Sarah noted. "We heard about Vision integration occurring as each group spoke about the Vision and its reality. I was amazed at the connections."

Sisters Mary Ellen and Sarah, along with other VICC members, gathered in mid-October to review feedback about the weekend. Participants said it was inspirational and valuable to hear from others across the Congregation on how they are living the Vision, and asked that these stories be told in a broader way, perhaps on the Congregation's web site or through other means. They also suggested that the Congregation live the Vision corporately by adopting more corporate stances on "hot-button" or controversial issues, and wondered if the global Dominican family could be included in the Congregation's Vision



# Insights on Living the Vision

integration efforts.

In addition, participants indicated that while they understood the phrase “living the Vision,” they didn’t necessarily understand “Vision Integration.” “One participant suggested the phrase ‘Vision Realization’— the sense that we are already living the Vision,” Sister Mary Ellen said. “This creates a different feeling in people.”

Sisters Mary Ellen and Sarah said the feedback has been helpful, and will assist VICC when it gathers again in December to determine how the Congregation can deepen and grow in its understanding of how to connect with one another in living the Vision.

“As a connecting circle our rallying point has been the September 22, 2004, letter from **Donna Markham, OP**,” Sister Sarah noted. “Sister Donna raised a number of questions: How can those who are passionate about working with the homeless connect with those who are passionate about peace-making, and how can those who are working with literacy connect with those focused on ecology? Instead of seeing ourselves in separate, almost competing ministries, we see the crossovers and connections. It’s the understanding that what I’m doing connects with what you’re doing, and that’s been the hope of VICC from the beginning.”

“One of the new insights in science is that we are a web of connection,” Sister Mary Ellen added. “Whatever we do is intimately and deeply connected to what everyone else is doing. However we continue raising that awareness, strategizing around our Vision, perhaps moving toward a corporate thrust, we do so in a spirit of affirming, honoring, and celebrating one another.” ☺

## Reflections on Living the Vision

**Carolyn Roeber, OP:** “I found the consultation weekend very energizing. Passion about the Vision was often palpable in conversations throughout the weekend — both planned and casual. When we gather like this for communal reflection, there is a synergy which I believe reflects the presence of the Spirit among us. I am a PhD student studying ethics (theological ethics, moral theology, human rights and theories of justice) and social theory (institutions, organizations and systems). Because this study incorporates attention to justice and systems, and thus the injustices of our day, it has touched on multiple elements of the Vision, and I have written on a number of them. The Graduate Theological Union, where I’m studying, has an international student body. These students from African, Asian, and to a lesser extent European, Eastern European, and South American countries, bring diverse perspectives on questions and issues related to justice, both globally and in their own local situations. I am faced with many opportunities to become involved in action to challenge injustices or seek justice, and have engaged in a variety of activities that could be connected to elements of the Vision.”



**Sister Carolyn Roeber**

**Jane Zimmerman, OP:** “I came away with a renewed conviction that we are living the Vision. I sensed a growing integration of the Vision among us who were there and by extension, the entire Congregation. I minister at the Institute for Spiritual Leadership (ISL) in Chicago where we offer programs in the art of spiritual direction. I am a spiritual director, triad supervisor, and administrative assistant. At ISL we believe that we can be present to another only to the extent that we are present to our interior selves. For me, the Vision resonates with that aspect of the ISL program. The Vision, after all, invites us to right relationship with God, self, others and Earth. For me, this means that I must live the Vision while firmly grounded in my interior. This is a Dominican call. If I don’t live that Vision without the nourishment and wisdom of that contemplative stance, all my efforts are empty.”



**Sister Jane Zimmerman**

**Participants in the consultation weekend had an opportunity to listen to and share with one another how they are living the Vision.**

## Internet Site Reveals That Family History Was Lost in Translation

How many of us have heard stories about our relatives and thought them to be true, only to discover later that some of the details got lost in translation? That's precisely the experience of **Magdalena Ezoë, OP**, who was pleasantly surprised to learn that information about her grandfather and his business wasn't truly as she had believed.

Submitted photos



**Sister Magdalena's grandfather (above), and father (right).**



Last spring, Sister Magdalena was contacted by her

nephew, who told her to check out a blog devoted to her grandfather, Ezoë Renzo. (A blog, short for "web log," is an online journal where a person can post entries on various subjects.) The blog was created by a Japanese journalist who was doing research on the women of Saga Prefecture near Nagasaki, the area in Japan where Sister Magdalena's family originates. The journalist learned that a woman named Ezoë Mito, the first wife of the prime minister who founded Waseda University in Tokyo, had a younger brother who traveled to the United States in 1876. Mito's brother was Ezoë Renzo, Sister Magdalena's grandfather.

The journalist thought it was unusual that a young man from the countryside had traveled to the U.S. at that time and, delving deeper into her research,

discovered that Renzo served as an interpreter for a Japanese porcelain company that was participating in the Philadelphia Expo. Renzo was well-equipped to be an interpreter, because years earlier, he attended the first English-speaking school in Japan. Two years after the expo, in 1878, Renzo again went to the U.S., this time to New York to study commerce. When he returned to Japan, he brought back cigarettes, which he used to start a cigarette and tobacco store in Tokyo.

Sister Magdalena had always assumed that when her grandfather died, her father began running the cigarette business, but because he wasn't as astute a businessman as her grandfather, his brothers-in-law took over the business by time she was born in 1931. The journalist, however, uncovered research that indicates Renzo had instead turned the business over to the Japanese government around 1905, which was in debt by \$17 billion yen as a result of the Russo-Japanese War. To this day, the government has a monopoly on selling cigarettes and tobacco. All of this was revealed in the journalist's 68-page blog, which she later shared with Sister Magdalena's brother and nephew. Sister Magdalena, in turn, shared the findings during Common Dialogue Day at Siena Heights University last spring.

Though she usually presents on

the topic of music, the focus of the Common Dialogue Day was community, and Sister Magdalena wanted to share the journalist's discovery with Siena Heights members. She also wanted to talk about her voyage from Japan to this country, because some 55 years after leaving her homeland, she still receives questions about what it was like to emigrate to the U.S. to study at Barry College and how her mother reacted when Sister Magdalena decided to stay.

"I always get asked, 'Wasn't it a great sacrifice for my family to send me here?' The answer is no, because my family was pro-American since the 1800s," Sister Magdalena said. "I still get asked this question, because I play at Jubilee Masses for sisters coming back to Adrian from all over the U.S., and they haven't seen me in 10, 20 or 30 years. My family was happy to have me here, and I was happy to come here."



**Sister Magdalena's grandfather studied English conversation in Nagasaki. His classmates included future prime ministers.**

While some of the details of her grandfather Renzo's business dealings got mixed up along the way, there is one thing that remains perfectly clear: Sister Magdalena saw opportunities in America and had the courage to pursue them, just like her beloved grandfather. ☺



**Sister Magdalena is an associate professor of music at Siena Heights University in Adrian.**

## Welcome New Associates



Submitted photo

On November 12, five women in Seattle, Washington, made their commitment as Adrian Dominican Associates: **Joan Boram, Joan Celix, Patricia Layden, Joan Lord, and Donna Walling.** The new Associates were mentored by **Patrice Eilers, OP, and Thomas Layden, Associate.** ☮

**Front row: Donna Walling, Joan Boram, Patricia Layden, Joan Celix, Joan Lord and Fuji.**  
**Back row: Sister Patrice Eilers, Pat Magee, Director of the Associate Program, Brenda Stratton, Representative to the Associate Program, Robyn Mossman, and Thomas Layden.**

(*“Albert,” continued from page 1*)  
ration. She said it was truly special to be in the presence of those she cares about and who care about her. “It was a day of celebration for the whole community,” Sister Peg said. “We celebrated the new beginnings of Siena Heights University, a new vision, and our new founders, because we’re all present-day founders of this institution — the faculty, staff, administration and myself.”

Sister Peg, who previously ministered at Barry University, is the first Adrian Dominican since 1969 to serve as president of Siena, and in her short time at the university, she has felt the Dominican spirit permeating the campus. She looks forward to implementing rituals and customs at Siena that embody the Dominican tradition, such as instituting a Founders Day to honor the school’s founders. One new ritual Sister Peg has already introduced occurred during convocation. All of the students were asked to sign a statement in which they pledged to live the mission of Siena Heights in their daily lives. The students placed their statements in a basket and were given a candle lit by a faculty or staff member that symbolized Dominican truth. In previous years, only athletes signed the Champions of Character statement. Sister Peg felt it was imperative, however, that this tradition be inclusive of all students, as each one is asked to uphold Dominican values.

As expected of any new president, Sister Peg has had to absorb a great deal in a short amount of time, and chief among her learning was identifying the university’s strengths and challenges. As major attributes, she cites Siena’s academic programs, the dedica-



**Sister Peg in a recent interview.**

tion of faculty and staff, the insights of students, and the willingness of alumni to give back to the community. “We have alumni who have successfully completed their studies here and gone out and done very well for themselves, but are willing to give back something,” Sister Peg said. “I believe very strongly that those of us who have been blessed with an education have to give something back to the community.” Another strength, Sister Peg identified, is Siena’s distinction as a Dominican institution, which provides opportunities for contemplation and reflection that distinguish it from other non-Dominican institutes of learning. When it comes to Siena’s challenges, Sister Peg doesn’t hesitate in describing the areas that need

attention: enrollment, fundraising and academic programs. “We need to increase our enrollment, and develop new programs that meet the needs in the community as well as afford our students good future professions. This will help growth at Siena,” she said. “We need to continually work on the infrastructure within the university to support the kinds of things we want to do. We also need to work on fundraising.”

Sister Peg has hit the ground running to ensure that these challenges are being addressed. She believes that a health care program would be a good fit for Siena, and has begun the process of collaborating with area health systems to realize this venture. In the near future, Siena will enter into a master planning process to determine the needs that can be supported by a capital campaign. As Sister Peg embarks on Siena’s new beginning, she remains grateful to the Congregation for its support. “I would like to thank our sisters for their support over many years,” she said. “Many of them have deeply influenced my life. Some of them may know it, and some of them may not. I have learned a lot from our sisters, and I’m most grateful to the mentors I’ve had in my life, people who have taken the time with me, those who believed in me. I’m humbled by the trust that has been placed in me to lead Siena Heights into its future.” ☮

## **Sister Evarista Marie Nanry 1897 - 1920**

– by Catherine Podvin, OP

In the early days of the Congregation, recordkeeping was not as important as it is today. When Sister Evarista Marie Nanry died in Chicago, nothing was known about her, not even her date of birth. She had entered the Congregation in summer 1919, and was immediately sent to teach at St. Columbanus School in Chicago. At her death in January 1920, she was 22 years old. There was confusion concerning the exact date of her death as well as the date of her burial in Mount Carmel Cemetery in Chicago.

In the 1940s, Mother Mary Gerald Barry began making inquiries of the sisters in the Congregation who had known Sister Evarista Marie. She discovered that Sister Evarista Marie had died during the flu epidemic in Chicago but she died of pneumonia, not the flu. Because of her sickness, she was unable to return to Adrian for reception of the habit; and, in danger of death, she was allowed to profess her vows.

Sister Evarista Marie had taught small children at St. Columbanus. Some of her former pupils, who became Adrian sisters, remembered her and the grief they felt at her death, but they knew nothing about her early life. One of the sisters had kept the death announcement that appeared in the St. Columbanus Parish bulletin. The date of Sister Evarista Marie's death was given as January 25, 1920. Further research gave the date of her burial as January 27.

In 1977, Sister Mary Philip Ryan, Congregation historian at that time, discovered more. She had visited Royal Oak and talked with some of the sisters about those who had died at early ages. One of the sisters who attended St. Columbanus School said, "I remember how we loved Sister Evarista Marie, our second-grade teacher. She was beautiful." Another sister mentioned that Sister Evarista Marie must be the sister of Mrs. Hoban, who had lived in Northville, Michigan, and was now living in Royal Oak.

In an interview with Mrs. Hoban, the sisters learned that Sister Evarista Marie was the daughter of Theresa (Smith) and Charles Nanry, and that she was born in Northfield, Michigan, on July 18, 1897. The Nanry children were educated in public schools, and attended catechism classes during the summer. Mrs. Hoban did not remember what congregation of sisters taught the classes. When Sister Evarista Marie decided to become a religious sister, she consulted a priest. He was a friend of the sisters in Adrian, took her there for a visit, and she soon entered the postulate.

One of the sisters who was assigned to St. Columbanus after Sister Evarista Marie's death recalled, "I heard her name again and again." She also recalled that the parents always stopped to see the sisters at St. Columbanus when they visited their daughter's grave in Mount Carmel Cemetery.

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