



# The Lange Letter

Oblate Sisters of Providence



August 2007

Mother Mary {Elizabeth} Lange Guild News

Issue No. 48

## Devotees Continue to Say, "Yes"

Committed to Mother Lange's Sainthood

By Sister Virginie Fish, OSP

The silent cry of conviction—"Make Mother Lange a Saint!" was almost palpable among Mother Lange devotees as they gathered for the Commissioning Service Saturday, June 2nd at Mt. Providence. Msgr. Damien Nalepa, pastor of St. Gregory-the-Great, presided at the Eucharistic liturgy. Concelebrating was Fr. John Bowen, SS, also serving as Deacon Seigfried Presberry.

Before accepting their voiced commitment, Msgr. Damien Nalepa spoke of the example of Mother Mary as worthy of emulation and the rightness of pursuing her cause for canonization.

Members of the Board, Chapters and Volunteers were asked if they desired to "renew the commitment made to work hand in hand with the National Board...to promote the cause for canonization of Mother Mary Lange?" Accepting the challenge, the response was a resounding affirmation. They chorused: "I am willing to continue the challenging course to have one of our own recognized by the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church and declared a Saint of God..."

As the liturgy concluded, a member of each chapter spoke briefly of their group's efforts to promote the cause. At the offertory, a monetary offering was given to assist the Board in the many related activities toward the canonization process. An agape followed the liturgy.

**Board Members present were:** Sr. Annette Beecham, OSP, Superior General who gave the occasion and welcome.

*Others present were Marie-Alberte Boursiquot, M.D.; Rev. John Bowen, SS; Florence Cowans; Sr. Veronica de los Santos, OSP; Carole Depestre; Toni Duggan, President; Therese Wilson Favors; Sr. Virginie Fish, OSP, Guild Director; Sr. Magdala Marie Gilbert, OSP; Janice Curtis Greene; Lenwood Johnson; Sr. Marina Kelly, OSP; Daniel Medinger; Sr. Babette Opferman, IHM; Deacon Seigfried Presberry; LaVerna Scruggs; Sr. Madeline Swaboski, IHM; and Christine Tolson.*

**Chapters represented were:**

*Gift of Providence (St. Veronica, Baltimore) represented by Deacon and Frances Presberry; HAU (Washington, Baltimore) co-chaired by Dr. Rose Marie Sylla St. Jean & Carole Depestre; St. Peter Claver (St. Inigoes, MD) chaired by Lorretta Ann Dove; Mother Lange Chapter (Santiago & Havana, Cuba) chaired by Daniel Ernesto Luaces (Represented by Sr. Elsa Maria Lopez, OSP).*

**Joining Oblate Sisters were Volunteers**

*Lillian Wainwright, Pat Stewart, Teresa Royale Catherine Thomas and St. Bernardine Choir.*

## Your Story "Rocks"

By Sr. Virginie Fish, OSP

Your story "Rocks."

This was the comment in

a thank you note from a first grader at St. Joseph's religious education class in Hanover, PA.

Visiting classes of religious instruction, five sisters descended on a group of youngsters whose familiarity with women religious has, for most, if not all their young lives, been minimal. The younger ones, wide eyed and open eared were attentive and awed. The more mature, grades 5 - 8, seemed a bit removed yet their rapt attention and reflective questions were indicative of active interest.

In a large multi-purpose hall, Sister Aracelly (OSP) fashioned the Mother Lange head dress--the "bonnet," and with Sr. Katharine (OSP) distributed hand-outs. Sisters Virginie (OSP) and Madeline (IHM) told the younger children of Mother Mary by means of a "big chart" presentation. Sister Reginald (OSP), with appropriate commentary, presented Mary Lange to the

(see: ROCKS page 4)

## A Little Child Will Lead Them

By Stacey R. White

My son, Garrett White, is six years old and is very "prayerful." He is always praying and seems to have Jesus on his mind all the time. This morning, as we were all getting ready for school and work (for me), my oldest son, Scott, let our two big golden retrievers outside to run around, as we do each morning. We ... let the dogs run, feed them and put them back inside...

This morning, I went to call the dogs to eat and they did not come. My oldest son and I were calling the dogs from each corner of the house, becoming increasingly worried. Garrett said, "Mom, don't worry. All you have to do is pray." I said, "Okay, Garrett." But I still couldn't stop myself from the worry of what I would do.

Then Garrett slowly put on his shoes, went outside and began calling our dog's names (Balto and Bailey). I heard him call them one time. Then, I heard him call them with excitement and elation and knew

(see: CHILD page 4)





## Out off the Mouth of Babes...

Art Linkletter expressed it thus: "Children ask the darnest things."

Charles Dickens simply called it "The Childrens' Hour"

Through the years the story of Mother Mary Lange has been offered to children in various settings: classroom instructional units, study groups, retreats, pilgrimages and classroom buzz sessions. The attentiveness and grasp of children of all ages to the faith and spirituality demonstrated in the Mother Lange story speaks of the relevance of grace then and now. Could it be an innate gift given by God that resonates in the simplicity of heart found only in children? No matter how you "cut it" children have something to say. And their faith and understanding belies their tender years.

Following a presentation on Mother Lange and the Oblate Sisters of Providence, questions were broached by students of a seventh grade social studies class at Cardinal Shehan Catholic School, Baltimore.

(Questions and responses are summarized for brevity.)

**Why did M. Lange come to Baltimore?** After running from war in Haiti, Jason, her family first went to Cuba, but left to find a better life in America. God led her to Baltimore. There was work God wanted her to begin here.

**Why didn't she get discouraged when people put her down?** She surely must have felt disappointed and upset; maybe even discouraged, Shanir, but she believed that God was keeping his promise to be with her always.

**Was it hard sacrificing one's whole life?** Yes, it was hard, Erica, but that's what Christians expect. They know that God will give them strength to do what he wants.

**Did she ever think that the sisterhood would one day fail?** She could not see the future, Allena, so she had to take one day at a time and try to do her very best.

Many more questions were forthcoming, but the bell ended the session. Attentiveness seemed the benchmark for the inner workings of the Spirit upon God's children.



**THANK YOU! Donors of the Annual M. Lange Guild Fund Raiser:**

**The "10th Annual Stay at Home Ball" - 2006**

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*"If any name was inadvertently  
 omitted from the list, please contact  
 the Guild Office. Thank you."*



Board Member Sr. Babette Opferman, IHM,  
 Director of Religious Education at Nativity School  
 in Washington, DC, conducted an exhibit during  
 a recent Black History event.



## THE NEXT CHAPTER...

By Sr. Madeline Swaboski, IHM

The chapters of a book mark a new section to the story. The Mother Lange Guild also has a story told by Guild Chapters. Six in all, Chapter names are significant to the founder/foundresses: Mother Mary Lange Gift of Providence (St. Veronica, Baltimore); Haitian Americans United for Mother Lange (Washington, DC/Baltimore); Oblate Sisters of Providence (Camaguey & Havana, Cuba); Mother Mary Lange at St. Benedict's (Philadelphia, PA); New York Mother Lange of St. Jerome; Mother Lange at St. Peter Claver (St. Inigoes, MD)

Chapters are small (or large) groups of people who regularly come together to pray, study Providence spirituality, and help support the cause of Mother Mary Lange by various activities. They work in connection with the Director of the cause and the Chapter Coordinator. Chapters exist anywhere the Spirit moves hearts to work together for Mother Lange. Chapters build on faith, love, and knowledge of Mother Lange and her Sisters today. Mother Lange is their inspiration to lives of spirit, healing, and good works. Chapters give

support to the larger group of the Guild by speaking about Mother Lange at the grassroots level, making her more known, and helping others come closer to God through the intercession of Mother Lange. The various projects that a Chapter sponsors also bring in needed monetary support for the cause of Mother Lange.

Perhaps you might be interested in gathering with interested others by belonging to, or founding, a Chapter. Call the Mother Lange Guild Office 410-242-6861, and inquire about this. If you live near one already operating, you will be put in touch with that Chapter. You will have a story to tell for the next Chapter.

LaVerna Scruggs (inset) is the appointed Chapter Coordinator representing the Mother Mary Lange Guild Board of Directors. She is eager to meet with Chapter heads and explore ways to assist Chapters become viable instruments in promoting the cause for canonization of Mary Lange.



### *Favors Asked Favors Received*

**Gratitude Expressed:** Thank you for your intercessory prayers for our intentions. T.A.; MD

*Accept the enclosed donation in expression of thanks for favors received.* M.D.; CO

I want to thank Mother Lange in advance for her intercession: She's such a nice person. And whatever happens or doesn't happen, it's for the best. Thank you, Mother. R.McM.; MD

*Thanks for all blessings received, prayers answered, continued grace and peace.* C.W.; MD

Please accept the enclosed (\$50) in thanksgiving for favors received. R.F.; MI

*Expressing thanks to Mother Mary Lange for favors received.* R.C.; MD

**Aids in Bus Breakdown:** Hello: I had the privilege of visiting the school (SFA) as part of a tour. Just prior to our return, our bus broke down. A mechanic [came]... but the bus still did not function... I remembered that I felt a "presence" in the room where Mary Lange passed on. I figured it could not hurt asking for her help, so I asked through her intercession. The next time the bus was started, it continued to run and we made it back without incident. We were there approx. 5 hours. I feel she was there for us and I will do what I can to support your efforts. Please add me to your mailing list and I will tell others. L.C.; PA

**Healings:** *The doctor said I'd had a stroke in the eye. In the beginning I could not see out of it. I told my sister that the doctor said he did not think I would see out of it*

*Favors Asked Favors Received*  
*again. She said, "He does not know the power of Mary Lange." We both agreed and continued to pray. Now I can see to read words.* Sr. C.M.H.; MD

Dear Lange Guild, in late 2004 or '05, I joined my sister in healing prayers over the telephone for several infirmities. I did not pray specifically with my sister for my carpal tunnel syndrome. It was my intention to ask Mother Lange specifically for healing of this ailment caused by work. I always think of Mother Lange as a very hard worker, patient, but hard worker who was blessed by God during very difficult times. So, I prayed specifically for the healing of carpal tunnel. I was diagnosed in 2004 with carpal tunnel in both hands. Later, in preparation for surgery, another physician did electro-conduction studies and found no carpal tunnel. My first reaction was frustration. I felt that one of the physicians had made a mistake. Receiving copies of tests results from my primary care physician, he did not have precise explanations, but suggested the carpal tunnel could have become sub-clinical and that I should see a rheumatologist. In a quiet moment, I remembered my prayer to Mother Lange. Thank you, Mother Lange for taking my prayer to Jesus for the healing of carpal tunnel. R.C.; MD

**Encouraged:** *Mother Mary [Elizabeth] Lange has, by her example encouraged me for several years. Today the Lange Letter and return envelope inspired the enclosures I'm sending. In Los Angeles and the surrounding areas, we want to bring people together in peace and friendship. God's spirit is needed in this city. Mother Lange's spirit is needed.* D.R.; CA



Membership says, "You BELONG!"  
The importance of *belonging*!

Some people are neither here nor there. Some people are neither "hot" nor "cold". We all know what Jesus said about being neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:15ff). It makes it very difficult to function when you don't know how many or who you can count on. Demands grow by leaps and bounds. For the more people who "hear" the story, there are even more who have never heard. It's up to the Mother Mary Lange Guild to **tell the world** of God's actions in a soul that continues to transform hearers from one generation after another. Through this means, not only is the cause of Mother Mary advanced, but the action of grace in the minds and hearts of hearers gives God praise and glory.

For this to happen it is necessary to know upon whom we can depend. We do this through **Guild membership**.

The *WORLD* hasn't heard the *NEWS* yet so we've still work to do. Knowing upon whom the Guild can depend is very important. Membership helps!

The Guild tells about Servant of God Mary Lange—how God used her to walk ahead of us on life's journey showing us the way to follow (education, service, love). **The Guild is an Association whose members are devoted to and advance the cause of canonization of Mother Mary Lange, OSP. Members are interested in providing spiritual and material means to further her cause. Members derive personal, spiritual benefits from belonging to the Association of the Guild. As you pray for the needs of one another, members of the Guild, especially the Oblate Sisters, pray for you.**

By embracing the spiritual means YOU will grow.

- Recite from time to time **the prayer** asking God's favors through the intercession of Mother Lange.
- If possible, **make a pilgrimage** to Mother Lange's grave site at New Cathedral Cemetery. Visit Chapelle Basse, Paca Street, and/or the Motherhouse of the Oblate Sisters of Providence (all in Baltimore). For further information, call the Guild Office 410 – 242 – 6861 or e-mail [srmmel@aol.com](mailto:srmmel@aol.com).
- **Tell others** of the life, times and contributions of God's servant Mary Lange.
- **Recommend memorial contributions to the Lange Guild** in lieu of flowers.

The material means of promoting the cause for canonization of Servant of God Mary Lange is to take membership in one of the membership categories listed below.

Annual Individual, \$15.00  
Annual Family, \$25  
Annual Student Group \$35

Perpetual Individual, \$100  
Perpetual Family, \$200  
Annual Organization \$50

Free will donations are always helpful. See various categories on the enclosed envelope.

**Speaker's Bureau / Pilgrimage**  
To engage a speaker or plan a pilgrimage  
for your group call or write:

Mother Lange Guild Office  
701 Gun Road  
Baltimore, MD 21227-3899



**MOVING?** Are you interested in receiving  
*The Lange Letter*? Please take time to  
send us your change of address.

Phone: (410) 242-6861 Fax: (410) 247-5172  
Email: [srmmel@aol.com](mailto:srmmel@aol.com) **N.B. Please use "M. Lange" in subject line**  
Website: [www.oblatesisters.com](http://www.oblatesisters.com) then choose "Ministries".

## Your Story "Rocks"

(ROCKS from page 1)

older ones through the video *Providence Will Provide*. The evening concluded with the upper grades presenting the sisters with hand crafted "Eye of God" mementos; the younger ones wrote colorful thank you cards, one of which, prompted this article.

The title and the interest of children of all ages suggests the timelessness of Mother Mary Lange's life. She responded to God's call to spend a lifetime educating the uneducated, caring for orphans (today's homeless), feeding the hungry and often bringing into the sisters' home women who wished to live out their last years with the sisters. Children immediately imbibed the essence of Mother Mary Lange's life of love and expressed it in today's parlance, "She rocks."

## A Little Child Will Lead Them

(CHILD from page 1)

the dogs had returned. We were so excited.

Garrett said, "Mommy, you remember that lady?" I said "What lady, Garrett?" He said "That Mother...that Lady." I said, "What mother. What lady?" "Garrett, what are you talking about?" He said, "Mommy, that lady that needs to become a saint. The Mother...I prayed and asked her to find our dogs for us and I knew she would help and she did!"

I had kept the big picture of Mother Mary Lange in my kitchen for awhile and talked about her each day.

*Editor's note:* Actually, Mother Lange and the sisters had a dog. His name was Solomon. Solomon's story will be told in the next issue of *The Lange Letter*. (Grace Sherwood, *Oblates' Hundred and One Years* p. 85ff.)