



The Lange Letter

Oblate Sisters of Providence



Spring 2008

Mother Mary {Elizabeth} Lange Guild News

Issue No. 50

Photo courtesy of the Catholic Review



Mother Mary Lange prayer book and crucifix – circa early 19th cent.
(On display at Mt. Providence Convent.)

Excerpts from an article published in
The Catholic Review authored by Toni in
commemoration of the day Lange died, states:

"Before the Emancipation Proclamation, God placed the desire for consecrated life within the heart of Mother Mary Lange. As with the Virgin Mother, he quieted her soul and she said "yes." That "yes" resounds in the lives of the Oblate Sisters of Providence today. "...Her call was to reveal the world of consecrated life to women of color as Paul revealed the life of Jesus to the Gentiles....Mother Mary laid down her life...and took up the cross with humility, perseverance and grace, trusting her life and the lives of her followers to the One who sent her...The Spirit of God was upon her. She chose to reveal to all people that...the God who dwelt among them dwelt within them. Mother Lange encountered many barriers in her quest for greater truth. God lined others in her path...Father Joubert, S.S. ...was her unfailing supporter. The transforming grace of God

A Day to Remember

Toni Moore Duggan, Mother Mary Lange Guild Board President, called the anniversary of the day Mother Lange died "A Day to Pause and Remember."

February 3, 2008, could not have dawned more beautiful. It was a day made for celebration. Cardinal William Keeler, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, was celebrant of a joyous Mass of thanksgiving for Servant of God Mary Lange's life of heroic sanctity. Deacon Paul Shelton delivered the homily. A record number of Mother Lange devotees from local parishes and even a bus load from nearby Washington, D.C. paused to remember the day God called Mother Mary to Himself and she was able to say her own "It is finished."



The faithful give evidence of their devotion in a strong outpouring of presence during the Mass of thanksgiving for the heroic life and virtues of Servant of God Mary Lange during the annual Mass commemorating her death Feb. 3, 1882.

reinforced by the goodness of others fueled her call and her courage. Mother Lange moved beyond herself into the world as a bearer of God and an extraordinary prophet of change through uncharted waters. The life of this extraordinary woman, with her trust in the divine providence of God, speaks to the hearts of many. Her footprints continue to transform lives.

Now, more than 180 years...the Oblate Sisters of Providence continue to live the charisms trusting in Divine Providence...They continue to educate and evangelize children and adults of all colors and cultures. Her cause [for canonization] has progressed to our postulator in Rome. We ask continued prayers that, please God, her cause for sainthood will soon be realized. Continue to bring...needs to God through her intercession."

The Catholic Review 1/24/'08

Photo courtesy of J. D. Howard



Cardinal William H. Keeler, Archbishop Emeritus of Baltimore, pauses to share a picture with members of the Oblate Sisters of Providence Feb. 3, 2008

Photo courtesy of J. D. Howard

Mother Mary Lange and the Haitian Connection

By Marlene Rigaud Apollon

Although the Oblate Sisters of Providence and St. Frances Academy were founded by women of Haitian (St. Domingue) heritage and, until 1845, the sisters' annals were written in French, revealing a continuing attachment to the French language and culture; and although, in a letter to Fr. Kohlman of Rome, dated March 10, 1833, Fr. Joubert expresses his wish to establish an Oblate mission in Haiti¹ and, in another one, dated October 30, 1833, refers to St. Domingue as "my country",² by the time Mother Lange died in 1882, the connection with Haiti was completely severed. It would take more than 100 years for it to be reestablished, when around 1997, Fr. Maurice Elder Hyppolite in Haiti, Mr. Max Auguste in New Jersey and Fr. Andre Pierre in Washington, D.C., found out about her almost simultaneously.

Fr. Maurice Elder visited the sisters in Baltimore and arranged for Fr. Bowen, Sr. Virginie and Sr. Claudina to visit Haiti. This on-site visit was the first official introduction of the Oblate Sisters to the country of Mother Lange's heritage. They remain involved in the promotion of her cause.

Max Auguste, a promoter of the cause of Venerable Pierre Toussaint, joined the Mother Lange Guild and opened the

Pierre Toussaint et Mere Marie Lange Centre d'Information et de Services.

In June, 2006, the Center sponsored a pilgrimage to sites connected to Mother Lange.

In March, 2000, Fr. Andre organized a "Pilgrimage to the Source" which took Haitian-Americans of the Baltimore and Washington Metropolitan areas "in the steps of Mother Lange" and inspired the formation in September, 2000, of



Carole Depestre, co-chair of HAU explains the significance of vocation during the annual Dec. 8th Haitian Pilgrimage held at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C.

Haitian-Americans United (HAU) for Mother Mary Lange.

Initially, HAU's mission was to promote the cause of Mother Lange., primarily among Haitians and people of Haitian origin and to translate literature and documents into French and Haitian Creole, as necessary. It later included "Returning Mother Lange to Haiti."

To fulfill its mission, HAU's members focused first on the Haitian-Americans in their immediate communities, distributing information at Haitian Masses, charismatic conventions and other religious



(Above photos from left)

Msgr. Andre Pierre, Secretary to the Bishop's Council, Haiti, West Indies,

Max Auguste, Director of the Pierre Toussaint & Mother Mary Lange Information and Services Center (Jersey City, NJ)

Father Maurice Elder Hyppolite, S.D.B., Historian & Theologian of College Dominique Savio, Petition-Ville, Haiti,

gatherings; publishing the book *Her Name was Elizabeth: The story of Mother Lange*, later translated in French, and an initiative of Fr. Andre Pierre, creating an annual "Mother Lange Writing Contest" for young people inviting them to participate as members of the Youth Choir in the

liturgies at Haitian pilgrimages.

We then reached out to the Haitian communities in other areas of the U. S., in Canada and in Haiti through publication of articles in French, Creole and English in Haitian newspapers, on Haitian mailing lists and websites and invitations to groups from other states to organize pilgrimages to Mother Lange sites of life and ministry. The latter initiative led to the formation in 2003 of the *New York Mother Lange Sainthood Cause Chapter*—which initiated the tradition, that HAU later adopted, of having a

commemorative Mass in February to honor Mother Lange—and, in turn, stronger relationship of HAU with the Brooklyn, NY based "National Center for the Haitian apostolate" (SNAA in Haitian Creole), founded and directed by Msgr. Guy Sansaricq, now an Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn.

Thanks to the strong support of Msgr. Sansaricq and the leadership of his Public Relations person, Buteau Espiegie, an affiliation made it possible to reach a much wider segment of the Haitian clergy and communities of Haitian origin both in Haiti and in other parts of the world. This was done through emails, lectures and

workshops at SNAA's conventions, mini-conventions and radio and newspaper interviews. As more and more people learn about Mother Lange, the possibility of returning her to Haiti appears more promising.

To reach that goal, efforts have been made to discern vocations among Haitian and Haitian-American women and invite them to consider joining the Oblate Sisters of Providence. Haitian and Haitian-American priests recommended a few possible

candidates, but for several reasons, including political upheavals in Haiti, language barrier and difficulty in obtaining a U. S. visa (or for the Sisters to travel to Haiti) so far, they have not been successful. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that, in His time,

(see Connection pg. 4)

Favors Asked; Favors Received; Favors Asked; Favors Received; Favors Asked

With faith no explanation is necessary; Without faith, no explanation is possible.

Family Reunited; (Translated from the Spanish) Sister: I am from Cuba, a former student of the Oblate's Madre Consuella Clifford Academy. I prayed to Mother Elizabeth Lange, OSP to obtain for me the opportunity to come to the U.S. to see my children whom I'd not seen in four years. Mother Lange obtained for me this favor. **J. O.; Cuba**

Job Up-Grade/ Service Recognized; Dear Sisters: "Somebody up there must be listening intently to Mother Lange. My manager offered me the opportunity to move up in responsibility, get more hours and a salary increase". Prayer works! Also I received congratulations and an award for volunteer service in which I am engaged. **F. M.; MD**

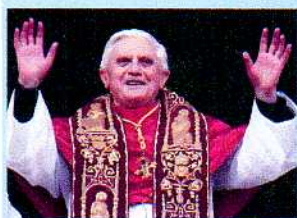
Health Improved; Sister: "We have awesome news! The last scan after a summer of chemotherapy and hospital admissions indicated no new tumors (Whoo-hoo!!!)". Yes, we are so excited! The tumors that had been on her [7th grader] spine and arm are gone... Please join us in a prayer of thanksgiving and keep her in prayer. **L. A.; (e-mail)**

Journey in Faith; Sister: The introduction [to the script I'm trying to get published] is in the hands of a Hollywood producer. A biography will be published [following] information about details of the cast and production. An editor [of a national newspaper] will work with me on its publication. [There is still a way to go, but we've come a long, long way.] Thanks to Mother Lange. Enclosed is a small check for our important work. **T.M.; MD**

Faith Moves Mountains; In July of 2007, a friend sustained a fracture. At the time of her evaluation, she was noted to be

"Contact With Saints Leads People to True Spiritual Resurrection"

Pope Benedict XVI



The enthusiasm of Guild Board member Dr. Marie Boursiquot, about the cause of Mother Lange keeps her on top of what the church is saying about such topics as saints and canonization. The above quote and subsequent article excerpt is from www.catholicnewsagency.com (1/3/08). It is timely and pertinent to present efforts as we seek to promote the cause of Mother Lange.

Pope Benedict spoke at Vatican City, Dec. 17th to members of the College of Postulators from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Through the years there are revisions as to procedures and emphasis. His message lauded their work and indicated the value of "witnesses who demonstrate how to lead a holy life in the world today and therefore [are] indispensable." The pope said, "The Church gives thanks to God for the gift of those of His children who have responded generously to divine grace, honoring them and invoking them as intercessors." He went on to say, "Saints, if correctly presented in their spiritual dynamism and historical reality, contribute to making the word of the Gospel and the mission of the Church more believable and attractive, Contact with them opens the way to true spiritual resurrection, lasting conversion and the flowering of new saints."

Father Wieslaw Spiewak, CR is the Postulator at Rome reviewing and preparing Mother Lange documents to present to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

neurovascularily intact to median, radial and ulnar nerve distributions. During surgery the radial nerve was severed; it was found that the distal end of the nerve was severely traumatized. The prognosis was guarded (poor). As a professor of piano, she was devastated by the prognosis. The Sisters were asked to pray for a complete recovery ONLY through the intercession of Mother Lange. Now, little by little, she is able to move her fingers. At Christmastime she played the organ and piano at the parish church. This means that between July – December, her useless arm began to have feeling and improved to the point of playing again. Although yet not completely cured, we have faith that in God's time, she will be restored to complete use of her arm and hand.

Submitted by Sr. M.A.C.; MD

Welcome Jade and LaVon; For nine months prayer was offered through the intercession of Mother Mary Lange for the safe delivery [and health of the mothers] of two family members expecting a blessed event. Jade, a beautiful little girl, came in a bit early but her development is awesome. LaVon is just a bouncing baby boy. He's going to be a big man; he came in weighing more than eight pounds. Both mothers are doing quite well. We give thanks that our good God kept mothers and babies in the palm of his hand.

Sr. M.V.F.; MD

Thanks to You We're Improving!

That means we can offer more services to assist you as you assist us...



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is now available for purchases and contributions.

(Connection from pg. 2)

Providentia Providebit! We continue the journey with the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the Mother Lange Guild, all the Mother Lange Chapters and the thousands of people all over the world who are engaged in this work of faith and love to obtain that the Church officially recognizes what we already know: Mother Lange is a saint.

1. Diane Batts Morrow: *Persons of Color and Religious at the Same Time* (p. 56); Amer. Antille Vol.4 f. 293 cited in
2. *Sur les Traces de Mere Lange* p. 320..



Undated photo of Marlene Apollon conducting a pilgrimage; the site shown is at the monument erected by Mayor Martin O'Malley and the Citizens of Baltimore February 13, 2000 commemorating the contribution of Mother Lange and the Oblate Sisters. (O'Malley is presently the Governor of Maryland.)

Lange Profiled in Scripture

By George R. Black, Esq.

The New Testament Book of Hebrews, Chapter 11, profiled faithful pilgrims from the Old Testament such as Noah, Abraham and Moses. Their heroism parallels the life of Mother Mary Lange. In faith Noah built an ark for a flood he could not see. Mother Lange faithfully built a school for students who were not free. Abraham and likewise Mother Lange followed God's call to a destination never before visited. Like Moses, Mother Lange clung to a belief in God despite mockery, affliction and derision. The link is formed from different ages but the same faith; different lands but the same belief; different paths but the same reward. Biblical heroism and the life of Mother Lange followed a pattern. As another saint said, "Faith is to believe what we cannot see and the fruits of faith are to have and to hold one day what we believe" (St. Augustine).

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 **Note: Please use "M. Lange" in subject line**
Website: www.oblatesisters.com then choose "Ministries".

LANGE LETTER – SPRING 2008

It's that time again!

Is your membership current? Memberships are from July 1st to June 30th of the following year. Be a member in good standing.



KEEP ON KEEPING ON

The WORLD hasn't heard the NEWS yet...

so KEEP ON trudging!

by Sister Madeline Swaboski, IHM

"What news?" you ask. The story of a noble, courageous, determined, faithful woman, a holy woman who changed the course of history in the United States! What a story! It's the story you have in your mind and heart.

**IT'S THE STORY YOU MAY BE KEEPING TO YOURSELF
WHEN SOMEONE ELSE NEEDS THAT GOOD NEWS!**

YES, THE STORY OF MARY E. LANGE!!!

Have you seen the newspaper or the daily television news? Did you read or hear about anything as inspiring as Mother Lange's endeavors? Well, to whom have YOU given this good news? We can't just wait around for someone else to tell her story! YOU give it out. **DECIDE TODAY** that the inspiration and help you've received from Mary Lange will assist someone else because YOU told the story, the good news. You would be surprised how many people never even heard of her, even after Oblate Sisters and helpers have labored since before 1991 to get the news out there. And even if people HAVE heard of her, we all need reminders: ask if they would PRAY for her canonization regularly. Yes, the world needs this woman as a role model: educators, women, immigrants, men, children. They need her to challenge them to live for others and not for selfish gain, to be faithful in all walks of life and especially to God, to keep on keeping on even when the way is frightful, seems to lead nowhere, is an endless toil. Mary Lange calls us to continue to be faithful to our promises to each other in God, to live life as being the people God asks us to be, to trust God's all powerful care. No more; no less. Today when so much in our society is throwaway, and only considered if it will give us pleasure, Mary Lange challenges us to keep going no matter what, if God wills it. Nothing is too unsurmountable or too hard if it is truly for God's glory. So, how about it? Will YOU tell her story one more time....even many more times? She's a saint and we know it. But the **WORLD** hasn't heard her good news yet, and this **SAINT** is needed soon. Give it a try...today! Proclaim the news to the **WHOLE WORLD** – together it can be done.