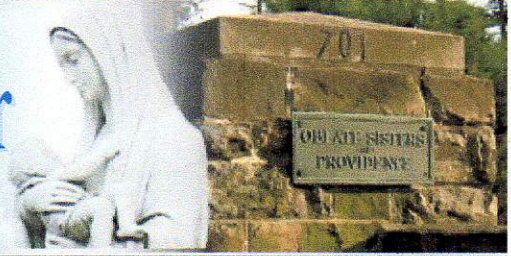




Oblate Sisters of Providence

# The Lange Letter



Summer/Fall 2008

Mother Mary {Elizabeth} Lange Guild News

Issue No. 51

## Archbishop Leads Service of Re-dedication

By Sister Virginie Fish, OSP

The day was overcast; in fact earlier there had been a downpour. Still they came--tentatively, confidently, singly and in groups--determined to give public witness of their continued commitment to hope and pray and work to see Mother Mary Lange proclaimed a saint.

Escorted through a Knights of Columbus honor guard to the hymn "We've come this Far by Faith," were the Oblate Sisters of Providence and members of the Ladies of St. Peter Claver. Following, were Guild and Oblate leadership, Deacon Seigfried Presberry, Vice Postulator Fr. John Bowen, S.S. and Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archbishop of Baltimore. Music for the occasion was provided by Catherine Thomas and St. Bernardine Choir Plus One.

Archbishop O'Brien's message was one of hope, encouragement and support. Members of the Board, Chapters and Volunteers took turns responding to the Archbishop's invitation to renew their commitment to promote the canonization of Mother Mary Lange. Each Chapter representative gave a brief account of their group's annual involvement in promoting the cause of Mother Lange. According to custom, each presented the Guild Board with a token of monetary assistance. Charter member Lenwood Johnson was the recipient of the Board's service award. Fellowship and refreshments were enjoyed by all following the chapel service.

## "What About the Children?"

By Marie P. Washington

Long before the words of this song were put to music, Mother Mary Lange heard and answered God's call; she cared for children. She cared for as many as she and her friend Marie Balas were able to provide.

Lord, we thank you for the gift that keeps on giving. The number of children to care for continues to grow. Thanks to the (spiritual) daughters of Mother Mary Lange, the Oblate Sisters of Providence--our Oblate Sisters, children continue to receive care.

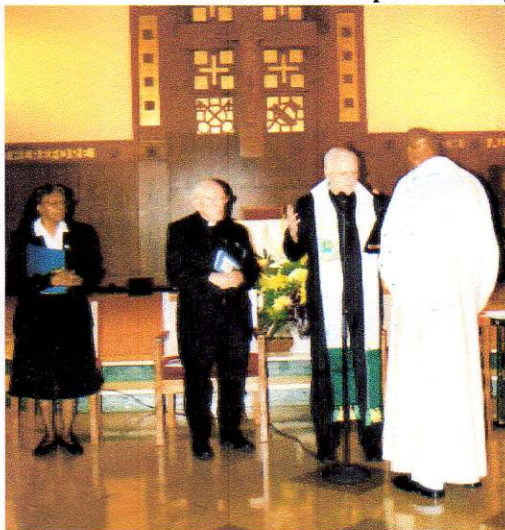
We, members of the Gift of Providence Mother Lange Chapter [St. Veronica's parish, Baltimore], an early Chapter--are honored to be affiliated with the cause.

We are committed to stand firm--stay strong--until we reach our goal--the canonization of Mother Mary Lange.

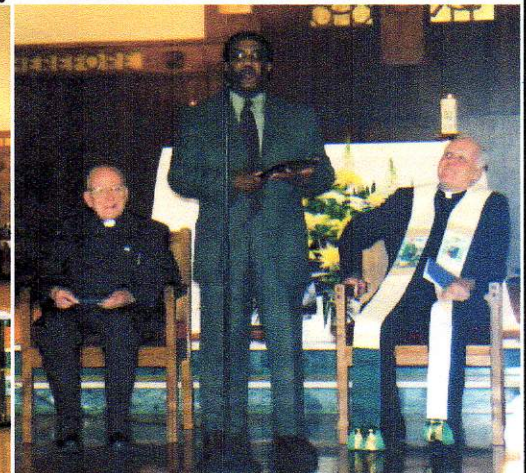
Editor's note: Oblate Sisters continue to minister primarily through education. Their ministry provides instruction to develop the whole child to become all that God intended. Oblates presently serve in the United States and Costa Rica, Central America. To assure continuance and continuity, pray for and pray about vocations. Contact Vocation Director, Sr. Stephen Beauford, OSP, 410 - 242 - 8500 or e-mail: [stephenosp@aol.com](mailto:stephenosp@aol.com)

Drawing by Joan Kriston

Both photos courtesy of Christine Tolson



Sister Annette Beecham, O.S.P. and Father John Bowen, S.S. join Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien as he presides over the Commissioning Service. He is assisted by Deacon Seigfried Presberry.



Lenwood Johnson, Charter Member since 1991 and recipient of the 2008 M. Lange Board Annual Service Award, expresses appreciation. l. to r. Fr. John Bowen, SS, Lenwood Johnson, Archbishop Edwin O'Brien,



***Favors Asked; Favors Received; Favors Asked; Favors Received; Favors Asked***  
**With faith no explanation is necessary; Without faith, no explanation is possible.**

**Successful Surgery** - Dear Lange Guild: In the middle of January I had very serious eye surgery--the removal of a pituitary tumor. It was not malignant. Through a long period of recovery I was supported by Mother Lange and prayers of the Oblate Sisters of Providence. I feel that God, through Mother Lange's intercession, heard my prayers.

**D. G.; PA**

**Prayers Answered** - *Lange Guild: Someone gave me a prayer [card]. I said it and received my favor.*

*Thanks to Mother Lange.*

**Sr. T. M.; PA**

**Vision Recovered** - Following cataract surgery, vision in the right eye was very poor (count fingers; worse than 20/400) due to a stroke of the optic nerve. The prognosis was no vision recovery. However, to my surprise, vision began to improve. It is now 20/30. Sister and I both think the miraculous recovery is due to her praying to Sr. Mary Lange. (Submitted at patient's request.)

**J. W., MD FACS, FAAO; MD**

**Loneliness Alleviated** - *Dear Oblate Sisters of Providence: My husband and I attended the memorial Mass for Mother Elizabeth Lange. I have admired her ever since I first heard about her years ago. Her great faith against such terrible odds has inspired me. I put in a petition [to her.] Now, I no longer feel alone. Thank you.*

**Vocation Assistance** - Dear Sisters: I am a priest of the Kalamazoo Diocese. Throughout my seminary days, I felt supported by the prayers of the Sisters and Mother Mary Lange in particular. I attribute my perseverance and gift of priestly vocation to the intercessory support of Mother Mary Lange.

**Employment Obtained** - *I prayed to Mother Lange to obtain a good job for my grandson; he began working for the federal government in June.*

**Reconciliation** - In thanksgiving for my husband and son making up after years of estrangement; also a daughter and her husband have reconciled.

**Anonymous**

**Rev. A. H. ; MI**

**\_\_\_; D.C.**

**J.G.; MD**

## **A Prayer to Mary Lange**

*My Lady of Hard Work*

By Sister Canisius Mary Hansberry, OSP

**You may not be a saint as of yet by the church,  
but you are an interceder for me.**

**You have traveled to many places.**

**You had great courage.**

**You have done what God wanted you to do.**

**You are a saint in my book.**

**I have asked for favors and I have received.**

**I am sure you are helping God in heaven.**

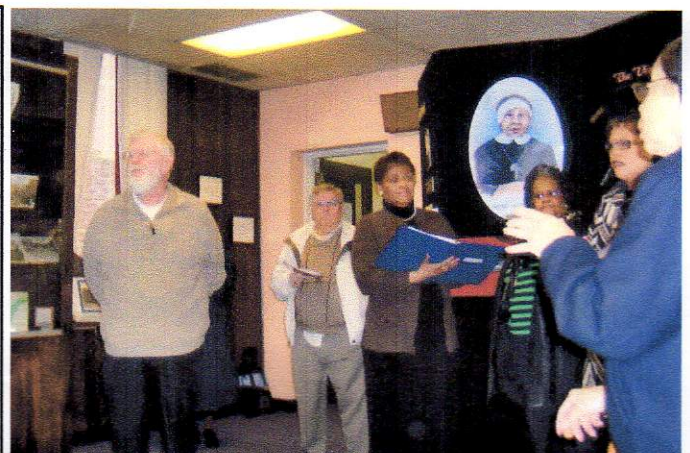
**Please continue to ask God to help us  
down here on earth.**

**May your name be praised to the highest forever.  
Amen.**

Ed. Note: Sr. Canisius Hansberry has often submitted testimonies of healings. Most recently she submitted her physician's observation in writing: "a prognosis of no vision recovery due to a stroke of the optic nerve following cataract surgery." He states: "Her recovery (of vision 20/30), I think is miraculous due to her praying to Sr. Mary Lange and is truly a miracle." While we rejoice, we submit, as always, to the final interpretation of the Church.



Members of the  
Mother Lange Guild  
Board visit the  
Mother Lange  
Memorial Room at  
St. Frances Academy  
l. to r.  
Mike Duggan,  
Daniel Medinger,  
Toni Moore Duggan,  
LaVerna Scruggs,  
Therese Wilson  
Favors and Sr.  
Virginie Fish, O.S.P





**THANK YOU! Donors of the Annual M. Lange Guild Fund Raiser:**  
**The "11th Annual Stay at Home Ball" - 2007 THANK YOU!**

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Apollon, Dr. & Mrs. Fritz	Carney, IHM, Sr. Ellen	Fernandez, OSP, Sr. Hortensia	Hodge, Tidi
Alvarez, Luis	Carroll, Dr. Constance	Ferrier, Caridad	Hollie, Rita Montgomery, Esq.
Anderson, Lucy	Carson, Regina	Fest, SSJ, Fr. Donald,	Holley, Most Rev. Martin D.
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<i>(St. Anthony Parish, Baltimore, MD)</i>	Case, Geraldine	Figgs, Dr. Keith C.	Hulbert, Inez N.
Arnold, Francis E.	Case, SSJ, Fr. Lowell D.,	Filippelli, SSJ, Rev. John	Jarvis, James R.
Associated Sulpicians of the U.S.	<i>Our. Mother of Mercy, Houston, TX.</i>	Fish, OSP, Sr. M. Virginie	Jeep, Edward & Elizabeth.
August, Emelda	Cerge, Joelle	Fleming, Charles	Jesuit Community,
Auguste, Max & Indiana	Chiffreller, SSJ, V. Rev. Edw.	Fletcher, Renita	<i>Wernersville, PA</i>
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Baker, IHM, Sr. Alice Eudora,	<i>Mt. Providence Child Dev. Ctr..</i>	<i>Diocese of St. Paul</i>	Johnson, Deacon & Mrs. William
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<i>Supporters of Epiphany Educ.</i>	Chineworth, OSP, Sr. Mary Alice	Forcia, Natalie	Jones, Helen
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<i>Richmond, VA</i>	Collins, Fr. William	Gaddy, Dr. & Mrs. Kirk & Family	Kelly, Rev. John L.
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 Woods, Ann M.  
 Yates, Lillian, L.  
 Yolande, Denis  
 Young, Mary Jane  
 Yorkshire, A. Cecilia  
 Zellers, Josephine Insley

## ***Vignette:***

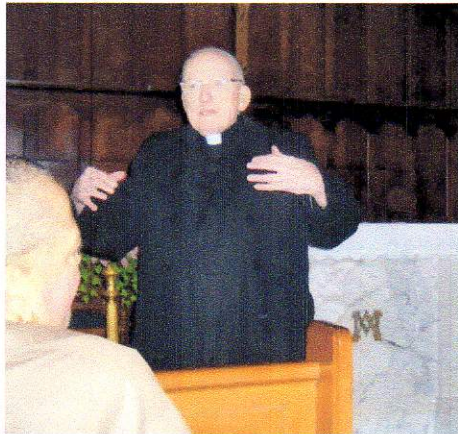
**Mother Mary Lange, OSP  
 (1784-1882): Haitian  
 immigrant educator, a free  
 woman of color in a slave state  
 who had courage, faith,  
 compassion, unwavering trust  
 in God's providence; founded  
 St. Frances Academy,  
 Baltimore, MD, 1828;  
 foundress of Oblate Sisters of  
 Providence the first religious  
 community for women of  
 color, 1829; candidate for  
 sainthood.**



# Congrats, Father Bowen

## Father Bowen Appointed Vice Postulator

By Sister Virginie Fish, O.S.P.



Father John Bowen, S.S. Vice Postulator, gives a commentary on the spiritual and historical significance of Chapelle Basse (Lower Chapel) of the former St. Mary's Seminary--now St. Mary's Spiritual Center.

It seemed like only yesterday. The Oblate Sisters of Providence had petitioned the Local Ordinary, Archbishop William Keeler to open the investigation into the life of heroic virtue and charitable deeds of Mother Mary

[Elizabeth] Lange. Sister Mary Alice was Superior General of the Congregation. Informed that the Diocesan Postulator is appointed by the "petitioner" with the approval of the Bishop, without hesitation she appointed Father John Bowen, S.S. It was February 16, 1990.

Fr. John Bowen, Sulpician Archivist had served as Oblate chaplain for more than two decades. It was considered the ideal appointment. Fr. Bowen, unassuming, deeply spiritual, faithful, knowledgeable and with the "patience of Job" accepted this responsibility with alacrity. He fulfilled this task to its conclusion at the Archdiocesan level when the documents were sent by Cardinal Keeler to Rome in 2004. Fr. Bowen's task was now complete; he was no

longer postulator for the cause for canonization of Mother Mary Lange. He could devote more time to fulfilling the great demands of his priestly ministry: celebrating liturgy, hearing confessions, ministering to the sick, dying and dead. Then, "the other shoe dropped."

The postulator at the Vatican, Fr. Wieslaw Spiewak, C.R., appointed Fr. Bowen to serve as assistant to him as Vice Postulator for the cause. Fr. Bowen, true to his nature, man of God, man of service, never one to refuse, bowed his head in acceptance and obedience to the will of God.

Congratulations, Fr. Bowen. With admiration and appreciation for your dedication and faithfulness, all involved in this effort pledge prayer support and cooperation. The cause for canonization of Servant of God Mary Lange will take wings because your humility and acquiescence is sure to win the favor of God.

## A Tribute to Mother Mary Lange

(Compared to the Samaritan woman at the well)

By Sister Suzanne Scattergood, IHM

Jesus called you to venture in pathways unknown  
For the little black children had felt so alone.  
You taught them to cook and to study and sew  
So that when they grew up they knew just where to go.  
Her bucket was heavy and the well ever so deep.  
But Jesus was with her His promises to keep.  
"You're speaking with me, Lord?" she questioned in surprise,  
But her vision changed completely,  
when she looked into His eyes.  
Rancor is heavy and prejudice is deep  
But Mother Mary Lange had promises to keep.  
Her Sisters looked to her for guidance from above,  
The Oblate Sisters of Providence were founded in love.  
The woman left her bucket and ran into the town,  
To tell all the people of the happiness she found,  
For Jesus read her heart and forgave her misdeeds,  
She became an apostle to other people's needs.  
Your Sisters followed you and admired your way  
As women of faith they exist 'til this day,  
So let us rejoice in God's providence and care  
May your sainthood be proclaimed  
and known everywhere.

Both photos courtesy of Christine Tolson



L. to R.: Florence Cowans, Pat Stewart and LaVerna Scruggs assist Sandy Weis in choosing Mother Lange memorabilia.



## So You Think Mother Lange Should Be Canonized...

By Sister Madeline Swaboski, I.H.M.

Evidently you do, for Signature forms have been regularly flowing into Mother Lange Office since the spring edition of *The Lange Letter*. We've received forms from Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, California, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Massachusetts, Illinois, Costa Rica and more! People are backing up their conviction with their name in support of her being recognized a saint in the Church. To date several thousand signatures have been received.

Somehow Mother Lange has touched these people who recognize saintly qualities of her life--faithfulness, devotion to God's will, courage, hope, determination, trust in God's all embracing providence and love. Mother Lange has prayerfully assisted many through her intercession (see *favors asked, favors received*).

**Blessings to all who sent in papers supporting the canonization of this woman of God.** It's not too late; send in the "official" form or just write a note of support. Take a stand; let your voice be heard; let your signature count for something that can make a change. See if the inspiring story of her life doesn't help others realize her sanctity, and then encourage them to lend their names to the cause. What's in a name? Power. The power to move a cause, the power to canonize a saint!

**Visit: [www.motherlange.org](http://www.motherlange.org)**

By Sister Madeline Swaboski, I.H.M.

For those who travel cyberspace, visit the wonderful world of Mary Lange, OSP. Use the above website and travel back 180 years to learn her story. Or, you might wish to search the present and hear from people whose lives have been touched by Mother Lange through the inspiration of her life or her intercessory response to prayer.

Many are involved in her canonization process. Many want to know where the process is at this time. Some want to actively engage in the process. Take a look at the website. Check out the various tabs and links. Start with the homepage and continue right through "history,"

**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



Email: [srmmel@aol.com](mailto:srmmel@aol.com) Note: Please use "M. Lange" in subject line  
Website: [www.oblatesisters.com](http://www.oblatesisters.com) then choose "Ministries".

## Coming Events!

### Mother Mary Lange Guild First Festival of Spiritual Music

By Janice [the Griot] Curtis Greene

If you like Good Gospel Music, Amazing Anthems and Traditional Hymns attendance at the Mother Mary Lange Guild's First Festival of Spiritual Music is a must. In the spring of 2009 the Mother Mary Lange Guild will be holding a fundraiser featuring guest choirs from churches throughout the Baltimore/Washington area. The music will cover a variety of spiritual music styles, but all designed to give God glory and lift your spirits. The event will be held at Our Lady of Mount Providence, 701 Gun Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21227. The date has not yet been confirmed; however, it will be scheduled for a Sunday afternoon between Easter and Mother's Day. Notification of the exact date will be forthcoming.

The Mother Mary Lange Guild stands firm in its dedication to the cause for the canonization of Mother Mary Lange, the foundress of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the first order of vowed religious women of color in the world. However, the canonization process is very precise, lengthy and expensive. Fundraisers are, therefore, a necessity and your support and generosity are essential. A free-will offering will be collected during the concert. Come early to view the stained glass windows in the convent's beautiful chapel which depict milestones in the life of this courageous and extraordinary woman known as Mother Mary Lange. Be a part of the historical experience of having Mother Mary Lange canonized a saint in the Roman Catholic Church.

"pilgrimage," "newsletter," "gift shop," "donate," "about us," and "voices."

On pilgrimages, many have followed the holy steps of Mother Lange around Baltimore. Now see some highlights of the holy places on the website video. For general information and the availability of memorabilia, the website is a visual treat--and a challenge decipher the message of Mary Lange, OSP, immigrant, black woman, and Catholic educator for today's world.

Kudos to Daniel Medinger, chair of the Guild's Communication Committee and his team who patiently pulled together the Mother Lange saga presented on the internet. The result is beautiful and inspiring and they're not finished yet. Meanwhile, don't wait. Boot up! Mother Lange is ready and waiting at the click of a link.

**MOVING?** Are you interested in receiving  
*The Lange Letter*? Please take time to  
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