On April 13, our Sisters gathered in Marlboro to hear a speaker, Sr. Mary Hughes, OP, Director of Transitions for LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious.) I had asked her to speak to us about the Spirituality of Transitions. Change is inevitable if we are alive. So all of us have life transitions, whether we belong to a religious congregation or are out there in the workplace and the family. Young people seem to welcome change and transitions more easily. They go off to college, change jobs more often, move away, make new friends and marry. But most people, especially as we age, do not like change. We resist change because it usually involves some discomfort until we adjust to it and even embrace it.

Some transitions are physical. We move from having lots of energy, living and working in overdrive, to being more subdued with aches and pains and some greying hair. This involves loss of energy, sometimes less mobility, less independence and leaving full time ministry or work. It might mean retirement from a job we loved and in which we had expertise. We can begin to experience frailty or illness and this perhaps for a long time. Some of us negotiate these transitions gracefully and others with great resistance.

Some transitions involve the loss of loved ones, children, spouse, friends and colleagues from our younger days, leaving a vacuum in our heart and lifestyle. Another transition could mean an empty nest, children moving away at great distances, perhaps selling our home and moving to an apartment or even to an assisted living facility. Even if necessity suggests these changes, the transition can be painful and disorienting. We feel stripped away, yet life goes on. These times of transition can be serious and life changing or just small changes that affect our mood day by day.

Perhaps we need to take a look at Scripture. In Isaiah we read “Behold, I am doing something new. Can you not perceive it?” In Romans 8, we read “All turns to the good of those who love God.” These are worth pondering in prayer and sharing with others. We can deal with life transitions with joy and hope or we can close our eyes and pretend they are not happening. That is denial.

Our speaker made five points that might even lead us to transformation.

**First** we must keep our eyes and heart wide open and not deny what is happening. We must believe that God is in these changes and never forget God’s blessings whether past or present. We need to remember that relationships are important. We are not experiencing these transitions alone.

**Second**, let us rethink our prayer, not just telling God what to do, but asking God to help us see what God is doing. Let us open ourselves to what is going on in the Church and in the world and bring all those issues to our prayer.

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TRANSITONS
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Third, we must activate our ability to let go. It is difficult. We like to be in control and we like to have our “things,” our comforts and that to which we have been accustomed. One way to cultivate this ability to let go is to voluntarily let go or give up a small thing every so often. The speaker told us how some religious congregations have even given up their congregation by merging with another. It is important to remember that we are all journeying towards another life and that we cannot take material things with us...

Fourth, it takes trust to move ahead when transitions and change seem to ambush us. There is mystery ahead of us, so trusting God to take care of us is key. God has something wonderful for us in the future. God has always been there for us and seen us through difficult times. Why would God not continue being there with us in the mystery of the future?

Fifth, she spoke to us of gratitude. It is an attitude to cultivate in an effort to have a grateful heart every day. We can recognize the blessings in our past, those before us today and be ready for the blessings to come. Blessings come in all sizes, big and small. It could be a beautiful sunrise, a beautiful flower, a phone call from a friend or relative, a new baby in the family, a visit from a loved one, the medical care we have as well as shelter and nourishment. Sometimes we tend to take all of these for granted. A grateful heart is a happy heart. Gratitude is the memory of the heart.

Blessings on all your transitions... as you ponder these five points!

Sr. Suzanne Beaudoin, SSCh.

On May 18 we celebrated God’s grace and fidelity to our Jubilarians. There were four Sisters of St. Chretienne, one Sister of the Assumption and one Good Shepherd Sister. The youngest, our dedicated Regional Treasurer, Sr. Ida Devoe, was celebrating her golden jubilee of religious profession. Sr. Agnes Therrien, SSCh, and Sr. Estelle Dube, SASV, were celebrating sixty years of consecration and service. Our oldest Sisters, Sr. Rachel Gonthier, SSCh, Sr. Bernadetta Haviland, rgs, and Sr. Estelle Plante (unable to be present) were celebrating all of seventy years of consecrated life. All of their lives have been an accomplishment worth celebrating. We thank them and our God for their fidelity to the Church and to God’s people.
At our community residence in Marlboro, a key member of the staff is our Administrator, Jacky, as she prefers to be called. She is in charge of our nursing personnel, hiring and training them, assuring that the Sisters’ health needs are well met, especially as they age.

Jacky was born in Framingham, but her family is from Puerto Rico. She is the second of eight children—three girls and five boys. From three to fourteen years of age, she and her siblings lived on the Island. Then the family moved to Rochester NY where her parents owned a convenience store. For Jacky’s last year in high school, they moved back to PR where they owned and operated a restaurant.

After graduating, Jacky returned to Framingham where she trained as a CNA at Bethany Health Care Center and worked with the Sisters of St. Joseph. She was chosen for a full scholarship offered by the Sisters and acquired her LPN license in 2006. In 2007, Jacky took a nursing position at St. Patrick’s Manor also in Framingham with the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm. More recently, she was the sub-acute nurse manager at Oak Knoll Health Care Center and director of admissions there.

Well, you may be thinking, where do the Sisters of St. Chretienne fit into this picture? Even with her comprehensive background, Jacky desired more of a ‘hands-on’ situation for nursing. Seeing a request from our facility for an administrator who would also be involved with direct care, and feeling that tug once again toward the ‘convent setting’, she came for an interview. Sr. Suzanne, our Regional Leader, was quite impressed with her resume and felt that Jacky would be just the person we needed.

Since she was hired in May of 2017, Jacky has expanded our staff, brought in many services such as a mobile X-ray service, and blood labs. She oversees transportation for doctor appointments, and on-site physical therapy when needed, and has generally improved the quality of our nursing care. Jacky is always on call, even after her work hours and is in close contact with our medical director, Dr. Dolly Geevarghese. She is personable, enthusiastic, has good relations with the staff, and is eager to be of service and to respond to Sisters’ needs as they evolve. In March, when we had an outbreak of the norovirus, Jacky’s quick action to impose a quarantine for our assisted living floor—with the great cooperation of our nurses and kitchen and housecleaning staff—kept the virus from spreading beyond nine cases. Those Sisters who were ill received excellent care. Going forward, Jacky is happy to assist our Sisters as they ‘age in place’. She will continue to do all she can to enable the Sisters to remain here as long as they can.

Jacky has two grown children. Diana is a Corrections Officer and a veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom. She has a 7 year old boy, Jariel, who is charming and very bright! We are delighted when he comes to check on his grandma here. Jacky’s son Richard is doing intensive studies toward his Master’s degree in physical therapy, and Jacky herself is studying for her RN license.

Jacky’s mother and many close family members remain in Puerto Rico. Last year when Hurricane Maria’s fury was unleashed upon the island, Jacky was very worried about her mom who lives alone. With no electricity, damaging winds and water, she moved in with her sister. The family lost their restaurant but they run a food truck to make ends meet. One of their streets has 17 empty houses as the owners have moved to mainland U.S.

Her strong faith in God is the anchor and moving force in Jacky’s life. She inspires us in our own journey of faith. We are grateful for God’s care through her devoted service as our Nursing Administrator.

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**FOOD SERVICE**

Norma was born in Gardner, MA, the youngest of a family of five children. Her parents came from New Brunswick, Canada, from a French Canadian background. Her dad had been a lumberjack there, but with a family to care for, her parents decided to move to the States to Gardner MA where her dad worked in one of the furniture factories in the Chair City.

Norma attended Monty Tech, a vocational school, and it was there that she found her passion for cooking. “And I haven’t left the food service industry since then!” She took a position as a cook at the Heywood Hospital in Gardner where she worked for fifteen years. Norma joined the Sodexo Company team in Rindge NH where she worked for three years at Franklin Pierce College. Later, coming to the Worcester area, Norma heard about a position at our residence in Marlboro. After serving in our kitchen for a year, she became our Chef Manager in 2011.

When she was asked what she likes about working for the Sisters, Norma spoke about the atmosphere as being wonderful and peaceful. “The Sisters are so appreciative and I like to make them happy!” One of her creative efforts, International Week, also reflects the diverse nature of her staff from different nationalities.

**Sisters’ International Week**

**MONDAY**
CARLA’S VENEZUELAN EMPANADAS AND AREPA

**TUESDAY**
PAM’S ITALIAN CHICKEN SALTIMBOCCA WITH BUTTERED PASTA SHELLS

**WEDNESDAY**
NORMA’S CANADIAN MEAT PIE (TOURIERIE) WITH ROAST BUTTERNUT SQUASH

**THURSDAY**
ANA’S DOMINICAN LOCRI CON POLLO QUISADO

**FRIDAY**
MIKE’S SCOTTISH HADDOCK FLORENTINE WITH RED ROASTED POTATOES AND MIXED VEGETABLES

Some of Norma’s other culinary achievements include catering our yearly feast of St. Chretienne and our Jubilee celebrating the Sisters’ profession anniversaries. Especially appreciated is the reception after a Sister’s funeral. A few years ago, we suddenly had a very large group of people for lunch. Norma and her staff were amazing in what they were able to serve at a moment’s notice. “I work well under pressure!” she says with a laugh.

Besides cooking, Norma oversees the housekeeping staff that cleans the rooms and common areas on the various floors. As the Sisters age our cleaning increased. We presently have three housekeepers.

We are grateful to have such a wonderful, caring and dedicated team. Norma has told us that she hopes to work here until she retires. That would be just fine with us too!

_Sr. Lisette Michaud, SSch._
Dream Come True

The girls’ dormitory at Nazareth Center in Ngarara, Tanzania, is now built. It is a dream come true so the Sisters can assist girls in need as well as they have for the boys for at least twelve years. Your generous donations and interest contributed to this venture along with other donors. There is still a need for the furniture for the eighteen rooms.

The Sisters sent me a list of the needed furnishings: beds and mattresses, chairs, shelves, armoires, small table for each room, sheets, and blankets. There is need of a large table and benches for the common room. One sister will also have a room in the dormitory to be with the girls. The total cost is $5,500.

If you desire to continue helping in this final endeavor for sheltering the girls, it would be greatly appreciated.

Staff at Nazareth Center
Sr. Jeanne, Sr. Elizabeth, Sr. Marie des Anges

The Girls’ Dormitory
Adaptations…

For the Sisters of St. Chretienne in the US, selling property and giving up beautiful homes have afforded us the opportunity to let go. In years past we have sold our academy in Salem, our house in Lynn and another on Grant Road in Salem. In the late nineties, we said good-bye to our beautiful property on the Cliff Walk in Newport, RI. All of these decisions had to do with our declining numbers, changing ministries and our aging.

Now, the same is true about the Wrentham property across the street from St. Mary’s Abbey. A necessary but painful transition, to be sure. The Wrentham property is still for sale. The Sisters have moved out. We have put the sale of this property in God’s hands and we are trusting that the right buyer will come along. We ask you to pray with us for a good outcome. We continue to remember with gratitude all the Sisters who ministered and lived in these various houses throughout the years as we count our blessings.

Please send all correspondence to this new address:

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