

MOM'S NEWS

Fall / Winter

2008



Mary Our Mother
Heart of the Home

A Look at the Past Three Years:

As we say goodbye to the outgoing Executive Board, we want to take this time to reflect on the events of the past three years. This ministry has been through a lot of changes! We have found ourselves in a position of growth in many areas! Two moms from Berks County have brought MOM-Heart of the Home to the Allentown Diocese! Also, moms from the Rock Island Vicariate in Illinois set up and executed their first two renewal days with the help of the board via long distance! This is a portion of the press release sent out to a paper in Illinois:

"Mothers spend so much time nurturing others that they rarely make time to be nurtured. That is one of the reasons that thirty-two women from local Catholic churches in Rock Island Vicariate have joined together to bring a retreat day exclusively for moms. After learning about the Pennsylvania ministry from her daughter, Loretta Ceurvorst of Moline was determined to bring MOM-Heart of the Home day of renewal to the Quad cities. 'It is a blessing to have an established and successful program to bring to our area,' said Loretta."

Many mothers expressed missing the Montgomery County Renewal Day last year as, well as the disappointment of combining Bucks and Montgomery Counties into Buxmont County. We are happy to announce that a committee is forming now to plan for Montgomery County MOM-Heart of the Home renewal day for April 18, 2009! We are back to being Bucks County and Montgomery County!!

Bucks County has had wonderful renewal days these past three years including the year that the ENTIRE renewal day preparations needed to be transported to another location due to a bomb scare at Archbishop Wood. What a team! You would have never guessed that there was a major readjustment to their day.

Delaware County continues to have its renewal days. They have worked out a mentoring program that is truly working for them as they pass the baton from coordinator to coordinator. They have also returned to Archbishop Prendergast this year. Their choir does a beautiful job singing for the day! Their Delaware Days are spirit-filled with much energy and enthusiasm!

Register NOW

Archdiocesan Day of Renewal



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Upcoming Mom-Heart of the Home Renewal Days!

- Archdiocesan Renewal Day
Berks and Bucks County
- Oct. 18, 2008
Chester County— March 21, 2009
- Delaware County— Spring 2009
- Montgomery County— April 18, 2009
Rock Island Vicariate— Spring 2009

Bucks County Update

On **October 18th, 2008**, we will be celebrating Mass with Cardinal Justin Rigali at the First MOM-Heart of the Home Archdiocesan Day of Renewal. This is a wonderful day for our ministry!

Bucks County MOM-HOH will be celebrating their renewal day at St Charles Seminary on October 18, along with all the other counties in the Archdiocese. Please plan on joining us!! We are planning to rent buses at an additional cost for those who prefer not to drive themselves.

Please consider helping out in your Parish by becoming a Parish Representative so that you can help us spread the word about our First Archdiocesan Day of Renewal!!

Contact Mary Alice Shane at mary_alice_shane@hotmail.com and Eleanor Farzetta elfarz@comcast.net to let us know if you can help in any way in our preparations for the day. We will look forward to seeing all of you there at St Charles Seminary on October 18, 2008! We will also look forward to seeing you next year at Archbishop Wood High School in November of 2009!

Montgomery County Update

Montgomery County has wonderful news, we're back! The Montgomery County MOM – Heart of the Home day of renewal will be held at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Norristown, on **Saturday, April 18, 2009**. Since Montgomery County has not had a renewal day for some time, we are in the planning process at this time. We are looking for “helping hands”, parish representatives and, as you know, the usual that is necessary to prepare for a MOM day. I am a new Coordinator and looking for any suggestions that you may be able to provide. For any one wishing to attend Montgomery County's day, please **MARK YOU CALENDAR!** Also, if you would want to help in any way please contact Cathy Hunt at cathy-hunt@yahoo.com.

Chester County Update

Chester County's Renewal Day was held on March 15th 2008 at Bishop Shanahan High School in Downingtown. It was a beautiful day! Together we prayed and worshiped and grieved and celebrated and contemplated and shared and inspired and supported and rejoiced in our sisterhood and our vocation. We welcomed over 350 mothers representing eight states and over 58 parishes.

Our theme was “A Motherhood of Forgiveness and Grace”. In the morning Sister Dolores Smith, CMS shared some thoughts with us about Mary as THE example of motherhood. Carol Jensen, Spiritual Advisor, mother and grandmother spoke to us about the role of forgiveness in our lives as mothers. Both women were available to meet with our mothers during our ‘Free Time’, in addition to the opportunity for the devotions of Adoration, Stations, the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet which were provided. Several priests were present to hear confessions, the Daughters of St. Paul staffed an excellent resource room and a delicious lunch was served. In the afternoon, our celebrant for the Feast of St. Joseph was Fr. Wm. Trader from St. Monica's in Berwyn. Our afternoon speakers were mother and theology student, Becky Matakas from St. Joseph's in Downingtown who spoke to us on Grace and our Lay Director, Peg Choinski. We closed the day with some time for personal sharing and by standing and together “renewing our vows” as mothers.

A highlight of our retreat this year was the magnificent music we enjoyed throughout the day. Our Mothers of Peace choir shared inspired selections, accompanied by wonderful musicians and really enhanced the day.

Our committee of extraordinary moms worked together to prepare for our day coordinating volunteers, preparing the building space, creating promotional materials for the day, securing supplies, assisting in the celebration of the sacraments, spreading the word about our ministry, caring for the mothers that attended our retreat and praying, praying, praying!

Chester County Continued:

Our 2009 retreat will be held on **March 21st**. If you have always wanted to come, make this year the year. If you have attended in the past and been inspired by what the day is about, I invite you to join us again. Importantly, I invite you to pray that Our Lady will help you to be vigilant, to reach out during the months ahead to all of the mothers that she is calling to spend the day with her Son.

Invite mothers you know well and mothers you would like to know better, mothers who are struggling and mothers who are celebrating, your own daughters and granddaughters and your own mothers and grandmothers—there is much good to be done in our lives and the lives our children when we set aside the day to celebrate our relationship with the God who has blessed us with the excellent vocation of motherhood.

I also invite any mother who wishes to join our ministry volunteers to contact me. It takes many different women and many different talents and many different time commitments to organize and host our Day of Renewal. Please share your gifts with us!

Please keep our committee in your prayers as we gather to begin praying and preparing for next year's retreat. We look forward to serving God and serving the mothers of Chester County in the best way we are called to. And we look forward to seeing you in March!

Lisa Bice

Chester County Coordinator

MOM- Heart of the Home Volunteers' Twilight Retreat

Our twilight retreat was lovely. Our Celebrant was Fr. Steven Delacy who has been such a source of encouragement and support to our Ministry. Carol Jensen gave a meditation called the Examen for us to learn to do on a daily basis. As we learn to spend a few minutes a day remembering the times we felt closest to God we learn to seek those moments more and more every day.

As always, when the women of our ministry gather, the time was filled with grace and laughter. For those who were not able to join us, please know that you and your intentions were in our prayers. You are encouraged to join us next year, present. For future volunteers this is a way to come to know this group of amaz-

ing women. Please plan on volunteering this year and also making this event next spring!! It is always a blessing to set aside the time in our busy lives to spend with a God who loves us and has called us to be mothers.

The Twilight Retreat is our way as a ministry to say thank you to those who have given of themselves in service to MOM-Heart of the Home Ministry. For future volunteers it is a way to come to know this amazing group of women you are choosing to work with!!

Hope to see many new faces in the spring of 2009!

Delaware County Update

Delaware County held its Day of Renewal on April, 20th at Archbishop Prendergast High School in Drexel Hill. Our theme this was "Through Mary to Jesus". We wanted our day to revolve around how lucky we all are to have Mary with us. Our first speaker was Theresa Passerini who spoke to us about prayer and the Eucharist. She really was able to connect with everyone through her personal experiences. We were so lucky to have Sr. Marie Michele Donnelly from Mercy Spiritual Ministries as our Spiritual Moderator. She took our theme and spoke to everyone about Mary and Prayer with such insight and humor. She is a favorite to many of our mothers and as usual she was great! Everyone enjoyed a great lunch as well as some free time options which included representatives from the Mothers Home, The Elizabeth Ministry and The Robert Francis shop. Barbra Koletty who is a mother of 6 and grandmother of 10 who has survived being a military wife, caring for a child with a chronic disease and coping with the death of one of her children. She shared with us how her faith has stayed strong through all of her heart-breaks as well as all of her joys. Rev.



Joseph Meehan celebrated our Liturgy, he has been part of every one of our Days of Renewals and we were so pleased to give him special thanks at the end of mass. It was a great day that would not have been possible without our great group of volunteers and our Musical Ministry headed by Debbie Lillard who did a beautiful job. Everyone seemed to leave feeling renewed and refreshed. Our next renewal day is planned for the spring of 2009!

Rock Island Vicariate, Illinois Update

The theme of our Renewal Day, A Mother's Journey with Prayer and Humor, was evident in the pictures with narratives of historic Marian apparitions as well as saints from different lands which adorned our walls. Map like plates complete with chocolate cars were part of the centerpieces.

This year's ice breaker and group discussions did much to produce a relaxed atmosphere and a sense of camaraderie between the mothers of all ages. Equipped with a wealth of experience having raised 13 children, 7 of whom were adopted with special needs, and as a grandmother of 15, Mary Ann Kuharski lead us on a Mother's Journey with Prayer and Humor.

With a refreshing sense of humor we were given a glimpse into the task of raising children to have solid spiritual foundation, without compromising Church teaching and moral values with Mary as our role model. No stranger to Scripture Mrs. Kuharski often quoted applicable texts. Her second talk, "Thank God for Roadmaps and Tour guides" told of the spiritual boosters at our disposal. Those included the Mass, Adoration, Scripture, Devotion to our Blessed Mother, sacraments, prayers and others. Our main goal or job, she reminded us, is to get our children to heaven.

As before, a special part of the day was our afternoon Mass. Karen Manning accompanied by her associates Becky and Mary, provided beautiful music for the Mass, as well as the day. Msgr. Wellman, the celebrant, unaware of the text of Mary Anne's message

repeated almost verbatim what she said about our most important job to get our children to heaven. No doubt the Holy Spirit was responsible for some prompting.

What a blessing our day was!! Refueled and recharged, we await next year's day of Renewal!

Berks County Update

Berks County MOM-Heart of the Home is looking forward to the special MOM gathering in Philadelphia in October. Instead of having a separate renewal day in November we hope that the Berks County moms will be able to join all the MOM-Heart of the Home counties in a group celebration with Cardinal Rigali at St. Charles Seminary.

As coordinator of Berks County, I would like to share some thoughts about taking advantage of this special MOM - Renewal day. I come to this perspective through another special opportunity I had this summer. I had the good fortune of being able to take a pilgrimage to Israel with my 20 year old son. There were 21 people in our group including a fantastic spiritual director - Monsignor Coyle from Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Bally who has been a tremendous support to Berks County MOM-Heart of the Home. As many of you will appreciate, sharing a spiritually rewarding experience with your child is truly a blessing to a mother. As Catholic mothers who participate in an organization like MOM - Heart of the Home we have a common ground. There is a unspoken language of love, understanding and spiritual intimacy that occurs between people who share a faith foundation and experience a soul moving journey together. On a pilgrimage, like a MOM Renewal day, you don't need to do anything to improve the experience-- you just need to go on the journey together.

We are looking for some Berks mothers to volunteer to be a Parish Representative, help with liturgy, hospitality, singing or whatever way the Spirit moves you! Come share the experience! You won't be disappointed. If you can help contact Margaret at 610-845-2600.

If you can't find someone who can come with you on this day, come anyway because someone is waiting to meet

Trading Places

"Thank God it's the last day!" "I'm so sad it's the last day!" We both spoke at the same time and I immediately regretted my words. This wonderful mother, who had so patiently and lovingly, week after week, cared for her toddler and her preschooler-corralling them, bribing them with snacks, reapplying the sunscreen while her two older children enjoyed playing soccer - She had had enough. And she still had to get them all back into their car seats.

I had spent those same weeks, blissfully lying on a blanket in the sunshine, enjoying pleasant conversation-occasionally a few pages of a novel. For me, it was my "baby" who was playing soccer. My three older children were in school all day now.

We stopped and took the time to reassure each other. She acknowledged that I had "put in my time" and earned the right to enjoy these afternoons. I appreciated how difficult it was for her to meet the needs of all of her children and complimented her on how well she had managed these afternoons. Tiny acts of forgiveness for our not-so-harmless words.

--A wise friend taught me: forgiveness requires trading places. We need to really take the time to put ourselves in the place of another to truly understand them. From there, forgiveness is effortless.

I wish we could remember to do this much more often. How often do we miss the opportunity to understand each other? To trade places with the "working mother" or the "stay at home mother", the mother-in-law or the daughter-in-law, the mother with "only" one child that prayed for more or the mother of a brood of children (that may have prayed for less!), the "new millennium mother" or "last century's mother", the "pushy" mother or the fearful mother, the single mother or the mother who must also work at being a wife, the mother that struggles to make ends meet or the mother that struggles to teach her children values despite their economic comfort, the mother that "does it all" or the mother that can't seem to do anything.

Mothers are the key to peace. Peace arrives after forgiveness. Forgiveness comes from understanding. Understanding occurs with effort. Effort lies in Grace. Grace arises from God. God is peace. And Motherhood involves endlessly modeling and teaching peace, forgiveness, understanding, effort, Grace, God.

God, please give us the Grace to be kind to each other, to constantly put ourselves in each other's places and to support each other's choices and circumstances. Let us bring peace to the world. Amen.

Lisa Bice

Blueberries and Blessings

It's that time of year again - the blueberries are ripe and we cannot pick them fast enough. The two bushes are old and tangled up and seem to grow 5 inches taller for every inch that I shrink. So here we are, daughter Katie and I, crawling and reaching and picking the blueberries, as we have done for the last 22 years. We fill the old silver bowl tonight in a few short and happy minutes and decide that the rest can wait till tomorrow.

We moved into this beautiful house when Katie was a toddler, and we were too late to pick the blueberries that year. But every year since, we've picked quart after quart of blueberries. We eat them, bake with them, and most important, we freeze them for the winter. We send bags of frozen blueberries to home with Leo and Joanna and Beth and Tom. We make blueberry muffins for Christmas morning from the bounty that we pick in July.

These generous blueberry bushes make me stop and think about the undeserved blessings in my life. I didn't plant these bushes. I do very little to keep them going. Once in a while, I do sprinkle some fertilizer around them, but I'm pretty sure that doesn't matter much to them. They are a gift, pure and simple, that my family enjoys.

My blueberry picking can be meditative, and I find myself thinking about God's gifts and blessings. The bushes have grown taller in these 20 some years, and my baby is now 25. God has answered so many of my prayers for each of my children, but He has also surprised me with a bushel of unasked for graces and gifts.

When the blueberries start to ripen, there are only a few ready to pick, sometimes just one or two. Then, all of a sudden it seems, they are ready all at once and we have to hurry up and pick them all. I think of the times when I almost couldn't wait for a prayer to be answered and then remember the times when prayers were answered all at once, and I am flooded with awe at God's goodness. Sometimes when I am picking the blueberries, my hands are so full that I can't hold anymore. I think of the times that God has flooded me with His grace and wonder at His goodness and His mercy.

It's that time of year again - the blueberries are ripe and as I reach up to pick the ones on the highest branches, I wave to God and say thank you, for the blueberries and the blessings in my life.

Mary Alice Shane

The Past Three Years Update

Well, for Chester County, two renewal days out of three years was not bad!! Cancelling their day due to a snowstorm, after all that work, was difficult to do in 2007! Many a prayer was said for good weather during the spring of 2008 and the Lord answered those prayers with a wonderful renewal day!

MOP (Mother of Peace) Choir continues to sing at the Chester County Renewal Days and does a beautiful job under the direction of Pat Lamb. We were blessed to have Cardinal Rigali come to say Mass at Chester County's Renewal Day a few years ago. He shared memories of his own mother and how important her friends were to her. He encouraged and supported the solidarity of our Catholic Mothers.

We began an annual Twilight Retreat for all **past, present and future volunteers**. This is our way of saying thank you for your service to this ministry. It is also an opportunity for you, our volunteer, to receive the blessing of time with the Lord and to be nurtured. After our Twilight Retreat this spring, one new volunteer shared how much she enjoyed the evening. She felt so good "laughing and praying with other Catholic mothers again!"

One volunteer mom summed up the major advantage to being on a committee in MOM-Heart of the Home. She mentioned that she had been new to her area and after working with her committee to bring a renewal day she now felt like she had "thirty new friends who all share her same goals and values!"

Along with the ministry growth is a strong commitment to remaining grounded in prayer and obedience to what God is asking of us. We are committed to the mission of the ministry. Every effort is made to keep the renewal days a place

where you can feel free to invite any and all mothers, regardless of their circumstance. Moms are free to spend time alone with God to talk to Him and then be able to listen. They are free to connect with other mothers in a very accepting atmosphere. .

On behalf of the entire MOM-Heart of the Home, we thank all the priests and sisters who have so generously given of themselves these past three years!! Your spiritual guidance has helped us to remain committed to the mission of this ministry! We especially thank Sr. Pat Moran, Msgr. Burke and Sr. Kathy Rooney. Sr. Kathy Rooney, a reunited birth mother herself, shared her story with us on renewal days and was our Spiritual Moderator until she moved to New Jersey. Each has committed to continue to be a prayer support and we are grateful for this.

We also would like to thank Cardinal Justin Rigali who has touched our ministry in such a personal way these past two years, through his presence and through his letters. We are looking forward to sharing our First Archdiocesan Day of Renewal with the Cardinal at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary on October 18, 2008!

MOM-Heart of the Home has been structured to change roles every few years, so we will say good bye to the former Executive Board and hello to the new one. Many thanks to the outgoing Executive Board members: Thanks to Peg Choinski (Lay Director); Eleanor Farzetta (Asst. Lay Director) Rosemary Christie (Secretary); Barbara Coffey (Treasurer) and Lidia Manieri (Liturgy). We are happy to announce the new Executive Board for the next three years: Rosemary Christie (Lay Director); Lidia Manieri (Asst. Lay Director); Eleanor Farzetta (Secretary); and Rita Veit (Treasurer).

The gifts and talents of all who serve have been a blessing and will

continue to be as we move into new roles of service within the ministry!

Let us all continue to pray for MOM-Heart of the Home. Let us ask Mother Mary to continue to "intercede for us as we work to bring peace to our families and our world"... Let us pray for the grace to continue to "rejuvenate, empower and elevate motherhood." What a gift this ministry is to our Catholic Church!!

Blessings!!
Peg Choinski



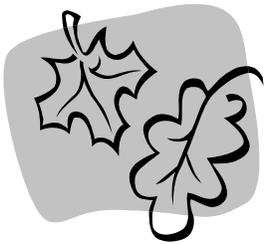
Volunteers Needed

A very important part of spreading the word for MOM-Heart of the Home Ministry is through our Parish Representatives!! Every county needs to have a group from each Parish. We ask that you make sure that the information gets into the Church Bulletin and that you make registration forms available. If you can be a contact person for your Parish, please contact Peg Choinski at ptyl@safeplace.net.



Archdiocesan Day of Renewal October 18, 2008

Cardinal Rigali will be coming to say Mass for all of us in MOM-Heart of the Home. In order to keep the cost of the day to our regular fee, the Cardinal has agreed to a change in the location and date! Please come and bring a friend! This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to come together to celebrate our vocation of motherhood and to honor our Mother Mary. We hope to see many moms who have attended renewal days in the past, along with many new moms! It has been such fun working together with all the counties to plan this Renewal Day! What a wealth of talent!! If anyone is interested in volunteering contact Peg at ptyl@safeplace.net.





MOM-Heart of the Home
Welcomes all mothers to
The Archdiocesan Day of Renewal
October 18, 2008 At St Charles Seminary
Main Celebrant: Cardinal Justin Rigali
Theme: The Light Of God Surrounds US

**Arise, shine; for your
 Light has come,
 and the glory of the Lord
 Has risen upon you..**
Isaiah 60:1



Our Mission:

M O M - Heart of the Home ministry is a movement for spiritual renewal in the Roman catholic church. It is dedicated to Mary our Mother.

Mary, a woman of peace, intercedes for us as we seek to bring peace to our families, and to our world.

Through days of renewal and other spiritual opportunities, this movement rejuvenates, elevates and empowers motherhood. Designed FOR, BY and ABOUT mothers, it builds community through newsletters and various projects.



MOM's NEWS



MOM-Heart of the Home
 Sts. Philip and James Rectory
 107 North Ship Road
 West Chester, PA 19341

Welcome Moms of all ages
 ...new mothers, grandmothers,
 moms to be, married, single,
 divorced and widowed mothers

