

**1633 — 1812**  
**Catholics Settle in Colonial America;**  
**Loretto Story Begins**

**1812 — 1830**  
**Loretto Foundation and Early Days;**  
**Moving Beyond Kentucky**

**1830 — 1900**  
**Education Mission Expands;**  
**Loretto Pushes Westward**

**1900 — 1960**  
**Education Efforts Diversify;**  
**First Loretto Infirmary Opens**  
**1923: Loretto in China**

**1960 — 1970**  
**Decade of Renewal;**  
**Loretto Studies Guidelines, Governance**  
**1960: Loretto in Latin America**

**1970 — 1990**  
**New Government Structure;**  
**Loretto Works for Justice/Peace**  
**1989: Loretto in Ghana**

**1990 — 2000**  
**Co-membership Continues to Flourish;**  
**Loretto and Ecological Awareness**

**2000 — 2012**  
**Loretto Leadership Expands;**  
**Sister Communities Embrace**  
**2009: Loretto in Pakistan**

**2012**  
**Loretto Celebrates 200th Jubilee!**



## On the road to Jubilee 2012

### From 2000 to 2012. . .

- Loretto creates Community Forum and Community Perspective Committee
- Members of wider community can now participate more fully

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### *Editor's Note:*

*From 2001 through 2006, Mary Catherine Rabbitt SL served the Loretto Community as President. She presided over important changes that would open the way for members of the wider community to join in Loretto life. They would actively address pressing issues, offer suggestions and solutions, and broaden the scope of discussion. Past-President Rabbitt responds to questions about this recent time.*

Q

***During your Loretto Presidency from 2001 through 2006, a major change to facilitate wider participation in the Loretto Community took place. Can you describe what happened?***

A

The 2000 General Assembly passed two resolutions that expanded the opportunities for wider participation by Loretto Community members — both vowed members and co-members — in the life of the community.

The first, called the Community Forum, was seen as a tool for wider participation by having three elected representatives from the wider community join with the President and Executive Committee in addressing and refining community-wide issues, making connections, and helping the larger community. The purpose was to make connections with other issues and ideas. The three original non-Executive Committee members of the Community Forum were co-members Martha Alderson and Jeannine Swift and non-finally vowed member (at the time) Mary Margaret Murphy.

The Community Forum met for the first time on April 21, 2001, at the Motherhouse in Kentucky. From the outset these were conceived as open meetings with information in advance regarding the agenda, question-and-answer sessions with outside participants, and with notes distributed after each meeting. The Community Forum is an advisory group, not a decision-making group. And it was intended to make recommendations to the president around issues affecting the entire Loretto Community. These issues included considerations for candidates for appointment to Loretto committees, planning community-wide discussions, and offering topical gatherings and community-group agenda items.

The Community Perspective Committee (CPC) was also formed as a result of the passage and adoption of a proposal at the 2000 General Assembly. The CPC met for the first time in August 2001 in Denver, and consisted of representatives selected from each community group and elected leadership. As I stated at that first CPC meeting, “Today we take another step forward in our understanding of the role and function of Community Groups by establishing a linkage among community groups, and as a means of learning from one another’s experience of being a Community Group.”

Q

***Why was this change needed, and why is it significant?***

The establishment of the Community Forum and the CPC were changes presented from the grassroots of the membership and were voted upon by the elected delegates to the 2000 General Assembly. It was up to the newly elected president and executive committee to implement these changes, which have evolved during the ensuing decade. The significance



*Small groups of Loretto Community members talk together at The Gathering, a community-wide meeting in October 2010 at the Denver Loretto Center. Foreground, from left: Jane German SL, Kathleen Corbett SL, Imelda Therese Marquez SL, Maureen McCormack SL.*

of both the Community Forum and the CPC is that they have proven to be “tools for wider participation by Loretto Community members” and for effective communication between elected leadership and the community as a whole. They have already evolved and will continue to evolve, as community needs change over time.

Q

***Several “sister communities” were established between Loretto and other religious communities during the early 2000s. When, where, and why did this happen?***

A

A “sister community” relationship with the Holy Family Sisters of Guatemala was established in 1993, at the urging of Loretto’s Latin American Caribbean Committee. Several committee members, including Mary Peter Bruce SL, had spent time with the Holy Family Sisters and sensed a connection between their history and Loretto’s. Sister Raquel Saravia gave a powerful talk about solidarity at our 1999 General Assembly. I can still remember her words. A formal committee structure was voted on at the 2000 Assembly and an ad hoc committee was begun in 2001, resulting in the formation of separate committees in Guatemala and the United States. I was privileged to serve on this initial committee and to travel to Guatemala in the summer of 2003 for a joint meeting with the Holy Family Sisters Committee and to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our sister-community relationship. And Natalie Wing SL is serving as a local community development worker with the Holy Family Sisters in Guatemala. We will soon be celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this relationship in 2013.

In Ghana, the Loretto Africa Project began in 1993 through the efforts of Marie Ego SL, who was joined by Pauline Albin



At left: Bishop Peter Sarpong, Archbishop Emeritus of Kumasi, Ghana, West Africa, honors Marie Ego SL for her work in that country at the 2009 opening ceremonies of the Blessed Trinity Leadership Academy in Akokoamong (right). The school was a result of active collaboration between the Sisters of Loretto and their sister community, The Daughters of the Most Blessed Trinity (FST) Sisters, who are the school's faculty, staff, and spiritual leaders.

SL in the early 1990s. Marie encouraged a number of Loretto Community members to travel to Ghana for short periods to offer assistance with local projects. I actually took a sabbatical from my job in Denver to go there in 1994 for about six weeks. In fact, every living past-president of Loretto has spent time in Ghana. The Daughters of the Most Blessed Trinity (FST) Sisters based in Kumasi, Ghana, were a natural connection for us. They were established by the local bishop, Peter Sarpong, in 1984, and consisted of several dozen young, energetic members.

Two FST sisters came to North America to study in the 1990s — Emily Owusu-Ansah and Eugenia Amporfu. Loretto became a home base for them during breaks from their studies. Emily became a Loretto co-member in 2004 and served as a Superior General of the FST sisters when she returned to Ghana.

A significant joint project, the building of the school in Akokoamong, was begun in 2005. Marian McAvoy SL and I were able to help secure an initial challenge grant from the Hilton Foundation for the school, which is now up and running.

In addition, the Loretto-sponsored schools in the U.S. were encouraged to help build and shape the Ghanaian school, and several Nerinx Hall and St. Mary's Academy students helped with the actual set up of the classrooms. In 2005 I spoke to the Loretto school administrators and issued a challenge to them to get involved on many different levels in connecting with the Akokoamong school. That was the genesis of their travels there to paint, decorate and furnish the classrooms, making them ready for the school children.

**Q** *What is the status of those sister communities today?*

**A** Both relationships are going strong. "Community is for mission," as we say in *I Am the Way*.

We are challenged by our sister communities in Ghana and Guatemala, and by our mission in Pakistan, to be even more of a "global Loretto."

**Q** *Loretto's mission/ministry to Pakistan started long before the actual mission in Faisalabad was dedicated in 2009. How did it get started, and what was the purpose and goal of the mission?*

**A** Our relationship with the sisters from Pakistan began at the General Assembly in 2000 in Kentucky. Sister Nasreen Daniel and another sister attended that Assembly. Nasreen had met co-member Marcia Kaldenhoven and her husband in Holland while studying at Nijmegen. Nasreen expressed a desire to transfer to Loretto and began the formal transfer process in August 2001. In 2003 she was joined by three young women who also expressed a desire to join a religious community. One was her natural sister Maria Daniel, along with Samina Iqbal and Iffat Peter. Nasreen made her final profession as a Sister of Loretto in August 2005 in St. Louis. Maria, Iffat and Samina were formally received into the Loretto vowed membership program during the same liturgy in St. Louis.

Mary Ann Coyle SL and Anna Koop SL traveled to Pakistan in 2003. In 2006, Bishop Joseph Coutts, the Bishop of Faisalabad, spoke at our Assembly in Denver and expressed a desire for Loretto to establish a mission in his diocese. Cathy Mueller SL (then president-elect) and I traveled to Pakistan in November 2006 and met with Bishop Coutts and four other bishops and the heads of religious orders of men and women at the Annual Conference of Bishops and Major Superiors just outside Lahore, Pakistan. We met with all the other bishops and got invitations to consider establishing missions in their dioceses, too. We were there about a month. While there we traveled throughout the Punjab region, meeting the families of the four women and

enjoying their hospitality. We also spent time with Bishop Coutts in Faisalabad and agreed to focus our efforts on future missions in that diocese, given the warm reception we received from Bishop Coutts.

Pakistan, but we believe that they take courage from those many Loretto women who proceeded them into new frontiers and new opportunities. As I said to them early on, "There is no road map for where you are going: we make the road by traveling."

**Q** *The Sisters of Loretto in Pakistan have had a rough time due to political unrest, illness, and natural disasters. How are they today, and what is your sense of the future Pakistan mission?*

**Q** *Given your experiences as President of Loretto during the first half of the last decade, what do you believe is the true significance of Loretto's upcoming 200<sup>th</sup> Jubilee in 2012?*

**A** At the time of their return to Pakistan we knew that Loretto's future there was uncertain, but we welcomed the opportunity to once again extend our boundaries, as we had in years past in the Southwestern United States, China, and Latin America.

**A** Loretto began the "Journey to Jubilee" at the General Assembly in 2006. As I stated at the outset of that Assembly, "What sustains us for the journey is faith and friendship. Now our journey is taking us to Pakistan, and invites us to continue to journey with our sister communities in Guatemala and Ghana." We

In 2002, as we celebrated 150 years in the Southwest, we gathered and sang, "Only one journey to everywhere; though the road is long, we must travel there. There is no turning back." This was a perfect way to celebrate both in Kansas City at the start of the Santa Fe Trail and at the journey's end in New Mexico. Loretto was built by those who have struck out into the unknown. It's in our DNA — though the journey is equally perilous today as it was in those days. Now, however, we have better means of communication and can stay in touch. We know that these women will face many challenges and difficulties in

have been on that journey since 1812 and have been inspired by the more than 3,000 vowed and co-members who have preceded us in that act of faith.

The three women who began that journey in 1812, on whose shoulders we stand, struck out into the unknown and the uncertain. We continue on that journey together facing new frontiers and new challenges . . . not certain of where the journey will lead us, but with the confidence that comes from knowing that we do not travel alone.



*Standing second from left: Samina Iqbal SL, Cathy Mueller SL, Maria Daniel SL, Mary Catherine Rabbitt SL with new friends in Pakistan, 2007.*