

# Madonna marks 45 years prepared for future challenges

Madonna University marked its 45th anniversary last week with liturgy, campus activities and the announcement that the school has completed a five-year \$10 million fund-raising campaign and met a Kresge Foundation Challenge grant deadline of Dec. 1.

Madonna is the largest Catholic Franciscan University in the United States.

"From its founding in 1947 by the Felician Sisters of Livonia, Madonna has remained committed to the spiritual, educational

and service-oriented mission of its Franciscan Catholic heritage," said Sister Mary Franceline, university president.

In the university's annual report for 1991-1992, Sister Franceline outlined the successes of the school. Quoting from one of her favorite scriptural passages (Exodus 14:15) "Tell the people to go forward," she urges supporters planning for the future: "Let us do it together."

An outgrowth of Presentation Junior College, Madonna has grown from a small women's col-

lege with 218 students to 4,419 men and women in 1992.

The liberal arts college started out in the Felician Sisters Motherhouse at Schoolcraft and Levan and offered only four programs - education, social work, medical technology and secretarial science. In 1959, Madonna was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The school became coeducational in 1972. The university prides itself on opening its doors to both older and younger adult

varying in age, economic, religious, social and cultural backgrounds. Sixteen percent of total enrollment is composed of minority students. As of 1991 one-quarter of the student were men.

In 1975, the school initiated interpreting programs for communication with deaf people and admitted the first deaf students. Since that time, more than 500 deaf and hearing-impaired people have enrolled at Madonna.

Madonna now offers more than 50 undergraduate programs along with master's degrees in business,

education and nursing.

In 1991, Madonna College became Madonna University. The school has had only five presidents - Sister Mary Paula (1947-1954), Sister Mary Assumpta (1954-1960), Sister Mary Raynelda (1960-1965), Sister Mary Dantha (1965-1976 and for the last 16 years Sister Mary Franceline.

In the 1960s the school's major buildings were constructed. Additional building followed - the Activities Center in 1971, a new \$4.5 million library and lecture hall in 1984, Educational Development Center in 1987 and the acquired Angelo DiPonio Building in 1991.

The announcement of the successful five-year fund-raising campaign and challenge grant, will mean more improvements at the Schoolcraft and Levan campus. The challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation is designed to aid students in the science-related fields.

"The Kresge Foundation approved a grant of \$300,000 toward Madonna's science renovation on a challenge basis to assist the university in raising the balance of the \$10 million campaign which was \$944,315," explained Sister Franceline.

Community leaders and friends of the university also have committed financial help over the years.

"Our future is predicated on

hope and shared vision. We are a living, breathing dynamic community of people," said Sister Franceline.

"We cannot do all that our mission challenges us to do without the support and involvement of many caring individuals who share the values, hopes and purposes of all humanity," she added.

Last Thursday, administrators, faculty, staff and student representatives attended a liturgy of thanksgiving. Recognition was given to many individual including those who have been with the university for 10 and 20 year periods.

Ann Marie Fowler, a junior music major, received the St. Catherine Undergraduate Achievement Medal. The award is presented each year through the Detroit Chapter of Kappa Gamma Pi to a student who has completed five semesters of college work at Madonna while maintaining a grade point average of 3.25 or better.

On Saturday, university benefactors participated in a special Eucharistic liturgy and banquet. Lifetime members of the President's Cabinet were presented with a medallion while those who have given sustained support for five and 10 years received plaques.

Donors, new to the President's Cabinet, received pins.

## Let's light 1 candle for peace and equality

### MORAL PERSPECTIVES



REV. KATE THORESEN

waiting at a street car stop. The African-American gentleman next to us started up a conversation. "Where are you from?" he politely asked.

"We're from Detroit."

"Dee-troit? Well, how do you like that? I was just there last August."

"Oh really? What brought you to Detroit?"

"I was there for the national meeting of the Progressive National Baptist Convention."

"Oh, over at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church?"

His eyes got big. "How do YOU know about Hartford?" he asked seemingly amazed.

My husband explained that I was on the faculty at the Hartford Institute for Biblical Studies. The staff of this dynamic 7,000-member congregation is intentionally creating significant interracial and interdenominational ties throughout the Detroit metropolitan area.

The man's eyes opened even wider in apparent astonishment at the idea of a white woman working with a prominent black congregation. He broke into wide grin. "Well, praise the Lord!" he marveled.

"You know, the Rev. Dr. Charles Adams is one of the greatest preachers in the entire United States! Now you be sure to tell Dr. Adams that the Rev. Edmund Walker of New Orleans sends his greetings to him and to that fine congregation!"

The incredible connection in this coincidental meeting transformed us from just seeing each other on the outside - an African-American man and two white tourists waiting for a street car. There was instead a warm recognition of an inner light, a light which connected us as beloved children of the Living God.

Rev. Walker lit a candle and drove away the darkness of the barriers often created by external appearances and quick assumptions that we have nothing in common. He reached out and lit the candle that can overcome the darkness of racism and segregation.

It was a simple gesture. Just starting a conversation with two strangers. In getting to know us as people rather than as invisible objects or faceless strangers of another color, he acknowledged our uniqueness rather than prejudged

us as representatives of a particular group. He gave us the gift of common ground.

He lit a candle that still glows - all the way up here in Michigan. He reminded us, in a powerful way, that there are certain lights in the human spirit - lights of hope, peace, love and amazed joy - that transcend artificial barriers.

These lights allow us to look beyond materialism and find intrinsic worth in every human being. We can look beyond status and find basic human dignity to be esteemed and respected. We can discover the most dazzling luminescent human spirit right before our eyes.

The challenge before us this season and in this Detroit metropolitan area is to find concrete ways that we can reach across the barriers of race and segregation. Through our actions and attitudes, we can light candles of hope, love, joy, peace, equality and true goodwill.

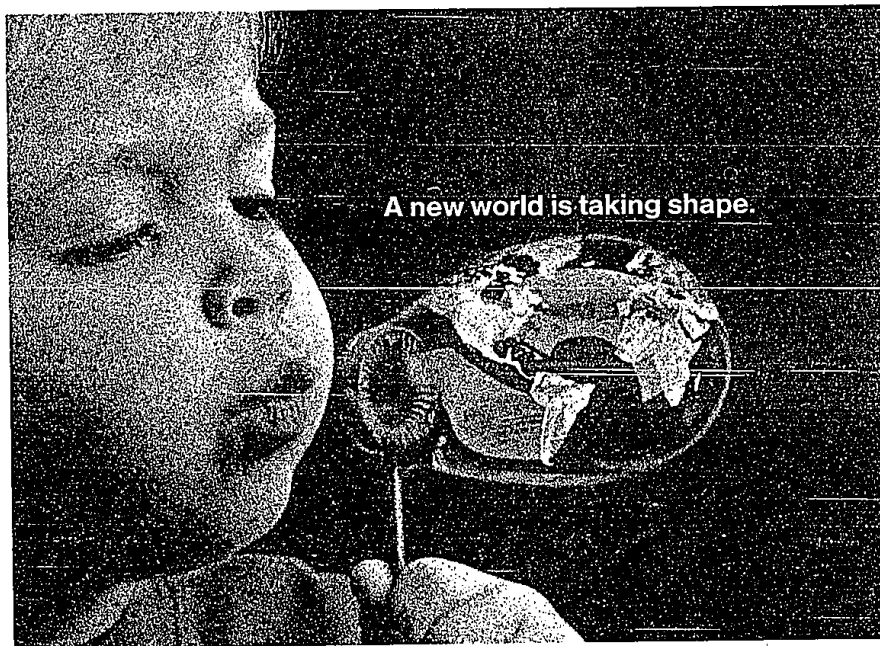
We can do that in intentional ways. We can build bridges between our urban and suburban settings by visiting places of worship in Detroit. We can work shoulder-to-shoulder on projects like "Paint the Town." We can enter into joint educational endeavors.

We can learn to listen to each other and perhaps become advo-

cates for one another. We can help sponsor economic redevelopment programs. We can engage in volunteer work together. We can refuse to condone racist, sexist or any kind of discriminatory language. We can point to the positive and invite others to experience the dynamic vitality that is present in the city.

As people keep lighting these candles, metropolitan Detroit will glow brightly, a dazzling beacon of hope. And light will overcome the darkness.

Rev. Kate Thoresen is director of Partnership Ministries at the First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham.



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