

Associates from Central Pacific, Atlantic-Midwest connect in Baltimore to share heritage

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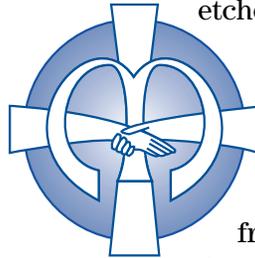
History was made on Oct. 23 at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore as associates from the Central Pacific and Atlantic-Midwest provinces met, prayed and nibbled snacks together.

S. Kathleen Feeley, of Baltimore, and **S. Joan Marie Van Beek**, of Coolville, Ohio, who had ministered in Ghana together, connected to bring this dream into reality. As each of the 20 associates and sisters shared a bit of their lives and ministries, the unity could be felt by all.

Associates **Tim Carmean**, **Anna Dawkins**, **Dianne Tribo** and **Mary Vesel** were accompanied by **S. Lauretta Rose**. The Central Pacific Province associates provided pictures of associates at various gatherings and shared pictures and stories of their Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Coolville. By the end of the evening, you could see another dream developing in the eyes of the Baltimore area associates as they indicated a desire to visit the retreat center.

Although this four-day adventure was called a “trip,” in reality it was a pilgrimage as the guests traveled to many “holy” sites, including the Institute of Notre Dame (IND) to celebrate Foundation Day, where they were joined for liturgy by the teachers and students of Caroline Center.

They extended their experience to include the Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton, national historic sites and fun stops. They stated that this was the fourth or fifth pilgrimage they had made. The associates left to return home with many memory-making moments etched on their hearts.



But what did they leave behind? They left a new sense of unity with the Baltimore area associates. The words “Central Pacific” no longer bring to mind an outline on a map, it now stirs the heart, and faces of new friends surface on the background of a map.

The pilgrims left a planted seed of desire to make a pilgrimage to Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Ohio.

Reflecting on the time shared in the library lounge at Villa Assumpta, the words of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, came to mind: *“Let us live together in peace and love as the holy family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph did, so that each of our houses will become like the holy house of Nazareth.”*

The lounge had indeed become a “holy house” as pilgrims and hosts united to share love, stories and hope for the future. Night prayer ended the time together with the words, *“We rejoiced when they said, ‘CP Associates are visiting, let us come to the Villa to celebrate their presence.’ Now together in unity, we are standing on holy ground.”* □