



March 1, 2022

Dear Friends,

“The 2022 Women’s History theme, “Providing Healing, Promoting Hope,” is both a tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing pandemic and also a recognition of the thousands of ways that women of all cultures have provided both healing and hope throughout history.”

The National Women’s History Alliance

The 2022 theme for Women’s History Month, as noted above, is “Providing Healing, Promoting Hope.” The first thought that comes to my mind is not necessarily the most famous women in history, but the women whom I have personally witnessed contributing to and changing history every day.

And yet, in light of the terrible events unfolding in Ukraine these present days, I cannot help but think that the theme of “Providing Healing, Promoting Hope” applies so well to the Ukrainian people, too. Tomorrow, you will receive a message about Ukraine contained within the context of an Ash Wednesday message on prayer and fasting. Pope Francis has called on Christians around the world to devote their Ash Wednesday prayers to Ukraine and toward the return of peace and justice to its people. Please take the message you receive tomorrow to prayer and ask our Lord where it might be leading you.

For now, when I hear the words, “Providing Healing,” I think immediately of our students and many alumni physicians and nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, counselors and many other women who have dedicated their lives to helping those they serve. They make history every day in the lives they touch and are wonderful role models to whom our current students can aspire.

When I hear “Promoting Hope” I think of our cause – our mission – to educate women and men in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition. In addition to our numerous alumni educators and faculty, staff and administrators, I think of one particular leader who has been instrumental in my life: Sr. Margaret Mary Fitzpatrick, S.C. Margaret Mary is from Boston, one of six children of an Irish-Catholic family, who somehow found the means to attend college. She was on the ground in El Salvador in the 1980’s when justice was a much-needed force and virtue. Later on, she assumed increasing responsibility at my alma mater, St. John’s University, working her way up to Senior Vice President before becoming President of St. Thomas Aquinas College in Rockland County, N.Y. Margaret Mary has served on the boards of Catholic University, DePaul

University, and St. John's, and now leads her congregation as Superior of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. In addition to all of that, Margaret Mary gave me my very first job in higher education, back in 1987, at a time when I was on my way to air traffic controller school for an entirely different career goal. In short, Sr. Margaret Mary Fitzpatrick changed my life and put me on a new trajectory, one that would eventually lead me to the Society of Jesus, and I will always be grateful for her.

Let us each take time this month to reflect on the women in our lives who make history each day through their work, their service and the healing and hope they inspire. We are truly grateful for their contributions. And let us strive to assure them the recognition they deserve from the world, from the Church and from all those they love and who love them. Please join me in recognizing Women's History Month at Scranton. Every moment of this month will be worth celebrating!

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Marina, S.J.
President