

● Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

# JOURNEYS



35th  
anniversary  
associates

SISTER  
BERNARDINE  
TURNS  
100!

return  
to  
ridgway

ssjerie.org

*Sister Ann Marie Cappello (left) and  
SSJ Associate Linda Gier (center) with  
Judy Fusco in Ridgway, PA*

# together, we are one.

## *Sisters and Associates celebrate 35 years of unity*

After Vatican II called for the renewal of religious life, Sisters of St. Joseph responded by researching the congregation's roots in France to ensure we were living in accordance with the original intent of our founder, Father Jean-Pierre Médaille. We learned that Father Médaille envisioned vowed and non-vowed women, or associées, working together to promote reconciliation, service, and unity. This became the cornerstone of present day SSJ associates. 



**1988 - 1992**  
82 associates  
welcomed

1992 — 10th anniversary  
of associates

1992 — Linda Fusco becomes  
first associate to enter the  
congregation

1993 — Associate  
Susan Szocki commits to live  
in community for one year

**1981**

The congregation  
approved a  
recommendation  
to offer **associate  
membership** to  
women and men.



### **Volunteer Opportunities**

SSJ Neighborhood Network  
St. Patrick's Haven  
St. James Haven  
Saint Mary's Home of Erie  
Erie Dawn  
Thanksgiving Day Dinner  
Prayer Shawl Ministry

**1993 - 1997**  
79 associates  
welcomed



1997 — 15th anniversary  
of associates

1997 - Meadville area  
associates begin St. James  
Haven shelter for homeless  
men, the first associate  
founded ministry

**1982 - 1987**  
53 associates  
welcomed



1982 — Elaine Clyburn, Pat Marshall,  
Ellen Mooney, and Lori Izbicki  
became the first four associates

1984 — Jim and Joanne Thompson  
became the first male and first married  
couple associates

1985 — John and Martha Brown became  
first non-Catholic associates

1987 — Audrey Lavery became the first  
associate to live in community

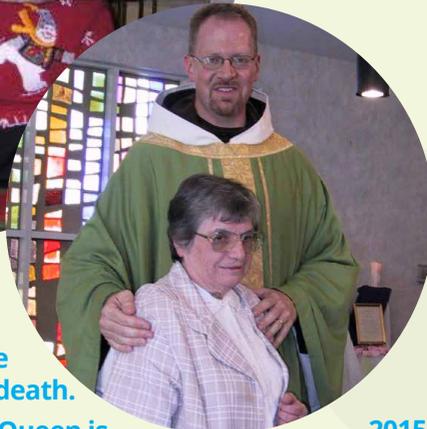


1998 -2002

61 associates  
welcomed

2001 — Annual “That’s a Wrap” event is initiated to collect, wrap and provide gifts for those in need.

2002 — In honor of the 20th anniversary of associates, a tree is planted on the grounds



2003 — Barb Prenatt makes her commitment as an associate in a special bedside service two days before her death.

2004 — Associate Harvey McQueen is first associate ordained a deacon

2004 — Associate Ray Selker is first associate ordained a priest

2004 — Associates begin a prayer shawl ministry to make and provide blessed shawls to comfort others.



2003 -2007

80 associates  
welcomed

2009 — Dedication of labyrinth on SSJ grounds in memory of associate Esther Armbruster, donated by her husband, associate Jay Armbruster.

2011 — First memorial service held to remember deceased associates.

2011 — Associates participate in service work throughout the community during Dear Neighbor Day

2012 — Associate Judy Lynch travels to India with Sister Margaret Ann Hardner to visit the school and hospital founded by the Shankar Foundation.

### Spiritual growth opportunities

- small prayer groups
- retreats
- liturgies
- prayer services

2015 — Associate Jeanne Marie Ryan joins Sisters Clare Marie Beichner and Rosemary O’Brien on a pilgrimage to Philadelphia during Pope Francis’ visit to the U.S.

2016 — Nine associates become agreees

2017 — 35th anniversary of associates



2008 -2012

73 associates  
welcomed



2013 -2017

51 associates  
welcomed

# ssj associates: in their own words



*Judy Lynch*  
*Associate since 1993*

I first knew of the Sisters of St. Joseph from my mother who showed me a picture of my great-aunt, Sister Austin, who worked with Mother Agnes Spencer at Saint Vincent Hospital. I attended CCD where the Sisters of St. Joseph grounded us in the Catholic religion. I was fortunate to be hired by Sister Mary Rita Kuhn to teach at Villa Maria Academy, a wonderful and spiritually deepening 13 years. I became an associate and then later supported Sister Margaret Ann Hardner's mission in India, continuing the sisters' mission of uniting neighbor with neighbor.



*Barb Noonan*  
*Associate since 2016*

While volunteering at the SSJ Neighborhood Network, I overheard a conversation about SSJ Associates. I asked what an associate was and, at that moment, I knew I wanted to become one and, as I learned more, I knew that I was called to the same mission in my life. I was blessed to be hired by the SSJNN (west) where I could continue to serve the children of Little Italy and live the mission on a daily basis. Since becoming an associate, I have tried to reach out to others in all situations, with a purposeful desire to intentionally live the charism. I am truly thankful to be a part of such an amazing group of Christians.



*Cecelia Shatem*  
*Associate since 2003*

I didn't think I could become an associate because I struggled with the language. But I wanted to be more like the sisters and associates - caring, helpful and kind. My friend encouraged me and Sister Mary Claire Kennedy became my mentor and helped me. Now, the sisters and associates are my family. When I fall, they hold my hand and help me. I can't thank them enough.

*Don and Ann Swift*  
*Associates since 1999*

Being associates has enhanced our spirituality by providing examples and opportunities for living service to the dear neighbor. As associates, we acquire information and observe things that assist in cobbling together a way to live as Christians and to confidently fill in some of the blanks. The examples of sisters and other associates have been very important to us.



*Brandon Vogt*  
*Associate since 2012*

Through music ministry, Sister Mary Rose Romeo introduced me to this wonderful community of religious women who were so open, loving and welcoming to me at such a very young age (I was 11). Each one of the sisters has played a formative role in my spiritual growth and I owe them a debt of gratitude. They are friends and companions on the journey. Nearly 20 years later, I now realize that the spirit of welcome and the support of love, prayer, and faith is their simple, yet beautifully profound, way of living the charism of loving the dear neighbor without distinction. I am proud to be an associate.



241  
ssj associates

An associate is a person without evangelical vows who shares the spirit and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph and who feels called to live the mission of the congregation by participating in its spiritual life, communal life and/or ministry.



29

MARRIED COUPLES



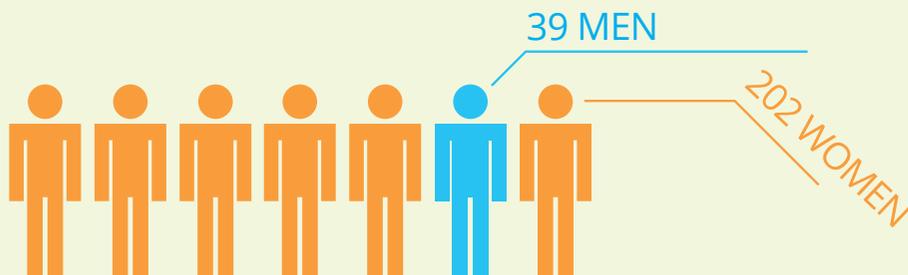
7

MOTHER/DAUGHTER ASSOCIATES

Erie County  
195  
Crawford County  
20  
Mercer County  
9  
Clearfield County  
3  
McKean County  
1  
Out of state  
13  
Farthest  
Beaverton, OR

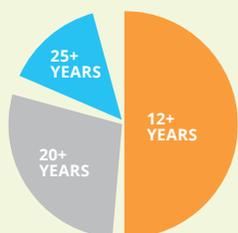
Youngest: 29 years old

Oldest: 100 years old



4

Four associates have walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain.



50% have been an associate 12 or more years  
27% have been an associate for 20 or more years  
15% have been an associate for 25 or more years

We are grateful to the many sisters and associates who have served the associate program throughout the past 35 years.

## associate directors

Sister Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ  
Sister Michelle Healy, SSJ  
Sister Christine Quirk, SSJ  
Sister Mary Regis Schroeck, SSJ  
Sister Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ

## co-directors

Linda Kuhn and Audrey McLaughlin  
Linda Kuhn and Peggy Rusnak  
Linda Kuhn and Nancy Donnelly  
Sister Ann Marie Cappello and Nancy Donnelly

## associate assistant directors

Toni Valone  
Arlene Chaney  
Pat Marshall  
Rose Jones  
Charlene Kellerman  
Jane Zawacki

# deep roots in ridgway

## 1893

At the request of Rev. Michael Meagher, four Sisters of St. Joseph moved to Ridgway to open a school in the old church on Zion Hill.

## 193

One hundred ninety-three Sisters have ministered in the Ridgway area, serving as superiors, principals, teachers, librarians, parish visitors, housekeepers, nurse aides, companions and more.

## 40

Forty young women from the Ridgway area answered God's call to become Sisters of St. Joseph.

# return to ridgway

They say "catching up with friends is like re-opening your favorite gift." And what a gift it was when 19 sisters and more than 50 guests reunited in Ridgway, PA. It was truly a homecoming for many of the sisters who were born and raised in the Ridgway/St. Marys/Johnsonburg area, and for others who ministered there. Former students, co-workers, old friends and family members came to reconnect, share memories and enjoy a spectacular lunch prepared by our friends at Aiello's Café. Our thanks to the Aiello family for many years of friendship and for hosting the reunion, and to all who joined us.

And to our friends in other areas of the Diocese – know that Ridgway was just the beginning. Plans are underway to host reunions in Meadville, Bradford, Sharon/Farrell and beyond. 



To view more photos from the reunion, visit the photo galleries at [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org)

# winter — a time for growth

story and photo by *Moira Sullivan, SSJ*

Entering into any phase of my life, particularly at this season of the year, presents the challenge for growth. Stimulating and challenging one's mind is also key to "staying young." A favorite mantra of mine is: "We are always becoming who we will be." Growth is always before us, even in a region where winter appears to be void of any growth. It can be on any level – physical, intellectual, spiritual. The challenges are many...how to take care of our bodies by exercising regularly and eating healthily are obvious.

How to stimulate our mind is another concern. Recognizing our spiritual side is one not often named or addressed. Obviously this includes our relationship with God. How many continue in life with little or no growth in this arena? I find myself thinking along the lines of what I learned in grade school and the Baltimore catechism. That thinking just doesn't satisfy today when we are often aware of moral questions or choices before us. The challenges of the Gospel, to love God fully and our sisters and brothers as ourselves, don't go away. Instead, they are obvious whether we are interacting with our

own friends or our "neighbors," including the immigrant or someone of another political party.

Often the questions before each of us individually are: "Who am I? What is my purpose? What do I value?" Questions such as these challenge each one of us as we grow as a person. The "becoming who we will be" doesn't go away. In fact, if we accept that we are invited to future growth in this aspect of our lives, these questions about our purpose and values are always relevant today.

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## "becoming the person who I will be"

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Entering and exploring a relationship with God is, without a doubt, essential to growth in "becoming the person who I will be." Winter can be a good time to explore this dimension. 



## fostering growth

Here are some suggestion to promote personal wellness and growth in our relationship with God:

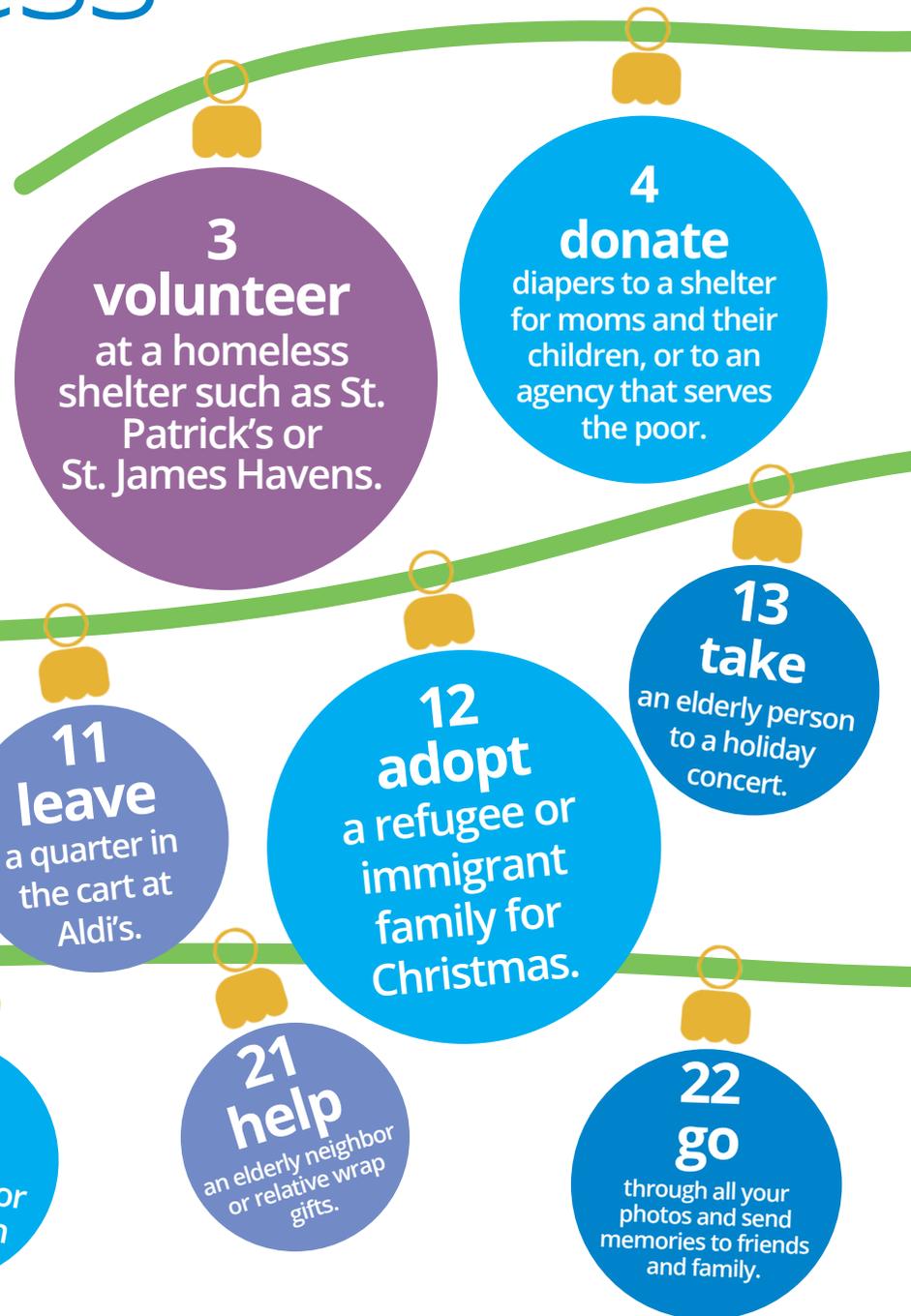
- Use **candles** in our homes to warm the environment
- **Take** advantage of a sunny and **go for a walk**
- **Read** stimulating articles or books upon which to reflect, maybe start or participate in a book club focused on spiritual topics.
- **Journaling** encourages us to explore questions or values before us and helps us to formulate our thoughts and beliefs. Choosing words forces us to name what our questions are.
- **Yoga** encourages reflection and silence within ourselves.
- **Meditation** can feed the mind, encourage prayer and provide the opportunity for growth in our relationship with God.
- **Deepening your relationships** can be a wonderful resource and a path to growth. Confide in a friend, a partner, a family member, a mentor, or a spiritual director.

*\* Visit [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) for a list of sisters and associates who offer spiritual direction.*

# decorate the season with kindness

We hope you will hang this calendar during Advent, which begins on **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3**, and that it will inspire you and your family to do small, random acts of kindness throughout the season. These ideas are just suggestions -- there are multitudes of kind acts we can do each day.

Let others know you appreciate their kindness by giving them a kindness card. We've included three on the last page to get you started.



**5**  
**leave**  
a dollar bill or  
two on a shelf  
at the  
dollar store.

**6**  
**make**  
homemade cards  
and deliver them  
to your neighbors  
with candy or  
cookies.

**7**  
**give**  
a gift card  
to a single  
mom or dad.

**8**  
**bring**  
a card or  
cookies  
to a shut-in.

**14**  
**have**  
dinner delivered to  
someone you know is  
having a busy  
day.

**15**  
**deliver**  
treats to people  
who work on  
Christmas Eve.

**16**  
**go**  
caroling!

**17**  
**invite**  
someone from  
another culture to  
share the holiday.

**18**  
**offer**  
to babysit  
for someone.

**23**  
**leave**  
quarters on a  
machine at the  
laundromat.

**24**  
**help**  
someone  
clean their  
house.

## Merry Christmas!

BE KIND car magnets make great gifts or stocking stuffers and they help spread the kindness message. They are available at [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org) for a \$5.00 donation to the SSJ Mission and Ministries Foundation.

# raise the jolly roger!

## Loyal Pittsburgh Pirates Fan Celebrates 100th Birthday

Life-long Pittsburgh Pirates baseball fan, Sister Bernardine Pais celebrated her 100th birthday on November 16, 2017. She was treated to a baseball-themed picnic lunch at the Sisters' Community Living Center to mark the occasion. Last year, Sister Bernardine was presented with a baseball signed by Pirates right fielder, Gregory Polanco, as she celebrated the 80th anniversary of her entrance

into the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Sister Bernardine was surprised to learn that she is the oldest member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Though her quick wit and spirited personality lead you to believe she is much younger, her faithful service through many years of ministry is inspiring.

Sister Bernardine taught throughout the



13-county Erie Diocese for more than 30 years. She also lived and ministered at Saint Mary's Home of Erie, even while teaching full-time. Each morning, she would assist residents on her floor before joining them for Mass.

Sister Bernardine downplays the significance of the fact that she didn't retire until just two years ago at age 98.

Happy Birthday, Sister Bernardine! 🕊️



## another century birthday!

SSJ Associate Mary Catherine Hosack celebrated her 100th birthday on August 25. Mary Catherine has been an associate since 1985. Happy Birthday Mary Catherine!

Sister Ann Marie Cappello (l) and Nancy Donnelly (r) with Mary Catherine Hosack.

## spreading kindness around the world

Last spring, we joined with other Catholic sisters to promote **KINDNESS** during National Catholic Sisters Week. We've continued with the effort since then which included producing **BE KIND** car magnets to help spread the message. We invited friends to send us pictures wherever magnets were spotted. They even made it as far as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand!

**BE KIND** car magnets are still available at [www.ssjer.org](http://www.ssjer.org) for a nominal \$5 donation to the SSJ Mission and Ministries Foundation. *They make great Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers!* 🕊️



# leadership message



Our focus on kindness continues. Such a simple word, such a simple concept, and yet, our world seems to have drifted away from simply being kind. Amidst our rushing and our busy-ness, in our staunchness to convince others of our viewpoint, opinion seems to matter more than courtesy, demanding schedules take precedent over politeness, and productivity seems to matter more than pausing to do a kind deed.

SSJ Agrégée Betsy Wiest shares a beautiful reflection, on the back cover, about the kindnesses that surrounded the birth of Jesus. She details many simple things that contributed to the miracle and, however small, their significance is still apparent today. And so this Christmas, focus on kindness. Seek to bring kindness to every situation and every exchange. Go out of your way to do something kind and unexpected for someone. Decorate the season with kindness – and then leave the decorations up all year.

With gratitude and blessings,  
Mary Herrmann, SSJ  
On behalf of SSJ Leadership

## news

### new home . . . new hope for st. patrick's haven

Ribbon cutting and blessing officially opened the new home of **St. Patrick's Haven**, a temporary shelter for men, in downtown

Erie. The 3,400 sq. ft. building features four guest rooms which can each accommodate 6 men, two private bedrooms for the on-site managers,



a kitchen, television lounge, sitting room, office, six full bathrooms and an additional accessible



shower. All the furnishings were either donated or purchased new and the building will be completely stocked with new sheets, towels, pillows and blankets. St. Patrick's Haven has provided for the needs of homeless men in the City of Erie since it was founded in 1984 as an outreach of St. Patrick Parish. In the mid-1990s, it became a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. The mission of St. Patrick's

*St. Patrick's Haven site supervisor Betsy Wiest (front, third from left) Sister Mary Fromknecht (center) and Sister Clare Marie Beichner (far right) with St. Patrick's Haven board members.*

Haven is to be a ministry of presence and to provide a place of welcome, nightly refuge, food, comfort and friendship for homeless men in the area. Last year, St. Patrick's Haven provided 6,837 nights of shelter to 165 men, including many veterans.

## jpic conference

Social Justice Coordinator and SSJ agrégée **Betsy Wiest**, attended the annual CSSJ Justice and Peace for Integrity of Creation (JPIC) conference in Los Angeles. Keynote speaker **Janet Dahlem, M.A.**, Associate Professor of Holistic Health Studies at St. Catherine's University in Minneapolis, presented "The Healing Power of Our Personal Stories." She also spoke about "Radical Self-Care for These Times" and demonstrated several ways to relieve stress. At a time when racism is a relevant, Professor Dahlem's keynote centered on the roots of racism and deconstructing whiteness.



*Betsy Wiest (left) and Janet Dahlem, M.A.*

## blue ribbon garden

The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network (SSJNN) Urban Farm, located in Little Italy, was selected from more than 350 entries to receive a blue ribbon in the 2017 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) Gardening and Greening contest. The garden was photographed and judged by PHS and later showcased and honored at a reception in Philadelphia, PA. A sign was presented

to be placed in the garden recognizing the accomplishment.

The Urban Farm Project began in 2014 by repurposing a vacant lot as part of the SSJNN's neighborhood revitalization efforts. SSJNN staff and garden coach volunteers



partner with neighborhood teens who are hired to work in the garden. As part of this social enterprise and entrepreneurship program, they sell their harvest at the Little Italy Farmers' Market and to Alkeme restaurant in downtown Erie. The teens also provide delivery service to senior citizens in the neighborhood. In 2016, the Urban Farm Project garden was certified by the USDA, enabling the teens to accept Senior FMNP and WIC produce vouchers.

## volunteer appreciation

The SSJ Neighborhood Network held its annual volunteer appreciation dinner in September to honor

*Heather May Caspar, SSJ Neighborhood Network Executive Director (center) with volunteers Anne Rahner (left) and Betty Ann DiMatteo.*



328 people who accounted for 8,019 hours of service this year. This year's presentation honored Sister **Carol Wilcox, SSJ**, co-founder of SSJ Neighborhood Network, and three volunteers all of whom passed away recently.

## human trafficking awareness day january 11, 2018

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. There are more slaves today than at any other point in history. Human traffickers use violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, blackmail and other manipulative tactics to force people to engage in commercial sex or provide labor against their. Traffickers generate billions of dollars in profit by trapping people into slavery. There are an estimated 40.3 million victims of modern slavery globally, including here in the U.S. We are working with the Crime Victim Center in Erie and the FBI to increase awareness of human trafficking locally. For more information on, please visit [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org) and please, take time to pray for victims of human trafficking.

## cycling with sisters— a successful 100 mile mission!

It was a sunny autumn day when our Communications Director, **Stephanie Hall**, joined two dozen other cyclists on a 100 mile trek from North East, PA to Niagara Falls, Ontario as part of a social media and pedaling pilgrimage to promote the social justice work of Catholic Sisters. At each of various stops along the way, the cyclists gathered to pray about a different issue: human trafficking, poverty, hate and racism, immigration and the environment. In addition to praying, they

highlighted some of the many initiatives undertaken by Catholic Sisters to address the issues. The group included **Sister Linda Romey, OSB** and other members of the Erie

Benedictine community; **Jennie Haggerty**, Executive Director of Mercy Center for Women; Erie County Executive **Kathy Dahlkemper**; and other Sisters and individuals affiliated with Catholic Sisters from outside of the Erie area. The entourage left in the pre-dawn hours following a blessing given by **Sister Mary Herrmann, SSJ**. SSJ associates **Jan Staszewski** and **Mary Lou Rathers** were two of the accompanying drivers who traveled with the cyclists, along with cycling support provided by Lake Country Bike, North East, PA. Niagara Falls, Ontario was the destination as some of the cyclists would be attending the Communicators for Women Religious annual conference being



*SSJ Communications Director Stephanie Hall at Niagara Falls after completing the 100-mile trek!*

held there that week. The Cycling with Sisters initiative received extensive media coverage, both social media and traditional media.

## special guests

During National Vocation Awareness Week in November, 10 girls (grades 4 -6) and 7 adults from Our Lady, Queen of the Americas parish in Conneaut Lake, PA attended the Sunday Liturgy on November 5 at the Community Living Center. They were given a tour and the opportunity to hear “vocation stories” from a number of sisters. Group organizer, **Amanda Darke** (teacher at Seton Catholic School in



*Sister Rosemary O'Brien (center) with young guests from Conneaut Lake, PA.*

Meadville, PA) summed up their experience: “We had a WONDERFUL visit with you on Sunday. The girls want to come back and bring their sisters!”

## saint mary's follies

**SSJ Associate Donna Geiger-Stark** was

one of this year's Ageless Remarkable Erieites who were honored at Saint Mary's Home of Erie's annual Saint Mary's Follies. Donna is a regular visitor at St. Patrick's Haven and vice president of its board. She is also a longtime volunteer at the Caring Place and St. Jude Parish. Through the generosity of 62 corporate and individual sponsors and all those



*Left to right: William Bloomstine, Mary Ann and James Toohey, and Donna Geiger.*

who purchased tickets or made a donation, this year's Follies raised a record-breaking total of \$91,960. All proceeds benefit the James E. Mantyla Benevolent Care Fund at Saint Mary's Home of Erie.

## saint mary's finalist in local awards

Saint Mary's was voted as a top 3 finalist for Erie's Choice Retirement Facility in the 2017 Erie's Choice Awards and for Nonprofit of the Year in the 2017 Commitment to Erie Awards! Thank you to everyone who supported these contests.

## 29th annual thanksgiving dinner

What does it take to serve 800 meals on Thanksgiving Day? It takes hundreds of donors, more than 100 volunteers and our great partners – Gannon University and Metz Culinary Management. And

we're sincerely grateful for each and every one of you who helped us serve Thanksgiving dinner for the 29th year in a row.

Donations to the Thanksgiving Fund are used to provide

dinner on Thanksgiving, and remaining dollars are distributed to area organizations that serve those in need throughout the year. Please mark your calendar and join us at 9 a.m. Sunday, January 14, 2018, when we celebrate our Liturgy of Thanksgiving, followed by continental breakfast and the distribution of funds.

## erie gives day

In just 12 hours during Erie Gives Day in August, donors gave \$4.4 million to 376 non-profit organizations in our area, including the Sisters of St. Joseph, the SSJ Neighborhood Network, Saint Mary's Home, St. Patrick's Haven and Erie DAWN. Collectively, the Congregation and its ministries received 560 donations for a



*Bill Hilbert Jr., Erie Community Foundation board member; Sister Clare Marie Beichner, Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership; and Mike Batchelor, Erie Community Foundation President.*

total of more than \$100,000 (including the prorated match). Heartfelt thanks to the many donors who supported us on Erie Gives Day.

## live. love. leave a legacy.

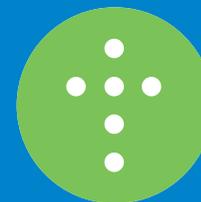
Legacies are built while we live. They're the kindnesses we share, the lives we touch. A legacy gift – left in a will or trust – spreads that kindness over generations.

If you're looking for a way to support the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph for years to come, please consider us in your estate plan. A bequest is one of the easiest gifts to make. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift to family, friends or the Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation. For additional information, call the SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation at **814-836-4202**.

**our error:** In the last issue, three associates' milestone anniversaries were omitted: Pat Marshall – 35 years; Diana Mikula – 30 years; Patty George – 25 years.

## 2018 save the dates

- January 14** Liturgy of Thanksgiving  
SSJ Chapel, Erie
- March 8-14** National Catholic Sisters Week
- March 19** St. Joseph Day
- April 28** Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network Gala
- September 13** Saint Mary's Follies
- September 15** Circle of Friends



we remember

### Deceased Sisters:

**Marie Celeste Bindseil, SSJ**

August 17, 2017

**Leonie Shanley, SSJ**

August 28, 2017

**Ann Amen, SSJ**

August 29, 2017

# anything of which a woman is capable

## **A book review by Joanne Gallagher, CSJ**

In her book, *Anything of Which a Woman Is Capable*, Mary McGlone, CSJ, acquaints us with spirit-filled, but very human, women who faced unimaginable challenges as they crisscrossed North America for the sole purpose of serving the “dear neighbor.” This first volume of the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States capsulizes significant moments, and facts [when available] into a remarkable journey marked by clarity and vision. The women who shaped our history come alive as their stories unfold. Where precise documentation is scanty, Mary makes plausible assumptions that entice the reader to connect past, present, and future into an evolving vision of what is to come.

Fascinating stories about independent foundations of Sisters of St. Joseph weaving their way across the United States and Canada hold the reader’s attention. The influence of “missionary” sisters from Moutiers, France, and the varied immigrant roots of new vocations shed light on the challenging diversity of our early years. The ease with which sisters moved from one founding congregation to another witnesses their strong mutual bonds at a time when high speed travel, electronic communication, and social media were non-existent.

It’s a complicated story, but it is our story, woven through the subtly nuanced language of congregations’ varied constitutions. It is our story, embedded in questions about the interplay of bishops’ priorities and desires of sisters as they sought to further our mission and spirit. It is our story, of dedication to the poor, of going where the needs were with creative responses to challenging situations, of being human instruments of God’s grace who are sometimes disappointed, but far from defeated.

*Anything of Which a Woman Is Capable*, is volume one of the story of multiple congregations of St. Joseph with one Spirit; of congregations founded in response to local needs, often by unconventional leaders or small groups who would never have guessed where the Spirit and circumstances would lead them.

We are with them on the stagecoach, on horseback, or on the train as they travel the country responding to needs of a growing nation inspired by a vision that could not be confined to limits of place or specific ministry.

The reader comes away with a keen awareness of how our dedication to the ‘dear neighbor’ has impelled us to do anything of which a woman is capable. 

*Joanne Gallagher, CSJ is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston where she serves as Communications Director for her congregation.*



*Sisters Mary Herrmann, Clare Marie Beichner and Mary Ann White, standing l-r, getting their books signed by author, Mary McGlone, CSJ.*

## HOW TO GET THE BOOK

You can order the book through **Bookbaby.com**. Use coupon code 1836.



SISTERS OF  
ST. JOSEPH  
OF NORTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA

Connecting with God  Connecting with You

5031 West Ridge Road  
Erie, Pennsylvania 16506-1249



[www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org)

# during the miraculous birth of Christ

by SSJ Agrégée Betsy Wiest

**It was the **KIND**ness of Elizabeth and Zachariah**

*who welcomed Mary and gave her a place to ponder the coming of the Christ.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of the donkey**

*that safely delivered Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of the innkeeper**

*who guided them to the stable.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of God**

*who provided a star that guided the shepherds and Wise Men to the stable.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of the shepherds**

*who listened to the angels and visited the Christ child.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of the Wise Men**

*who brought gifts that would provide for the Holy Family during their years in exile in Egypt.*

**It was the **KIND**ness of Joseph**

*who comforted and protected Mary and Jesus.*



May the  
**KIND**ness that  
surrounded  
the birth of  
Christ be a gift  
in your life.

Journeys Vol. 35 No. 2, Winter 2017/2018

© 2017 Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, Inc.  
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**Editor:** Stephanie Hall, Director of Communications and Public Relations

**Contributing Writers:** Contributing writers: Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ; Dotty Hanna; Moira Sullivan, SSJ; Betsy Wiest; Joanne Gallagher, CSJ. **Photography:** Stephanie Hall; Allan H. Johnson; stock photos, contributed photos and SSJ archives. **Printing:** Printed on recycled paper by Printing Concepts, Inc. **Graphic Design:** Allan H. Johnson, [allanhj.com](http://allanhj.com)