

interim

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Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Spiritual Direction

Do you ever wonder where God is in your life? I often ask myself, "Where is God when I seem to need God most?" I say things, like, "I pray and I ask for guidance but when I need it, it doesn't seem to be there." I shared that in a recent spiritual direction session I had. My director asked some pertinent questions based on past history and the present situations in my life. He suggested that I do a bit more journaling which goes in fits and starts for me. I realized he was right. Journaling would

unlock or unblock some things for me. I agreed I could make time for that. It wasn't until I was walking to my car to return to my ministry, that I could answer the question I posed earlier. God was/is very present in my life. Otherwise, why would I have made that phone call? Why did I write the letter saying thanks for a job well done? Where did I think the inspiration came from that motivated me to reach out to the one who came asking for help?

Spiritual direction may not be for

everyone. However, it is a way to have someone reflect back to you what is happening on your spiritual journey. Sometimes we need to have another encourage and support us as we move forward. I am always a bit surprised and uplifted when I leave a spiritual direction session. The answer to the question I posed is, "God is always near... sometimes we need someone else to help us discover God's loving presence."

Sr. Mary

Sister Mary Drexler

Spiritual Directors

For a list of sisters and associates who are certified spiritual directors along with their contact information, visit our website www.ssjerie.org or [click here](#).



*Caring for Earth
Caring for You*



CATHOLIC
SISTERS WEEK
March 8-14

More information coming soon!

MISSION: POSSIBLE

When I was the Neighbor in Need

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

Since I have been living with my sister, I have been parking my car in the visitor's space when more than a few inches of snow are expected. If my car is anywhere near the driveway, the snow will not be removed. When the weather predictions called for a snowstorm recently, I parked in the visitors' space. What a surprise! Tuesday morning, I found myself trying to get my car out of 21+ inches of snow!

I worked for some time but to no avail. I needed help. Eventually, my prayer was answered as the two trucks that clear the snow from the driveways and the streets in the development came along. I informed the drivers of my predicament, and they immediately began to dig the car

out but not before I fell into a pile of snow and could not get myself up! As I was struggling to get on my feet, one of the men came to my rescue and literally lifted me up from the pile. Eventually, both my car and I were out of the snow and in a safe space.

For several years I have been giving orientation sessions to new employees and talking about our charism and mission. We talk about "reaching out to the dear neighbor without distinction." As a Sister of St. Joseph, this is part of who I am - what I do. But recently during the snowstorm last week I became "the dear neighbor without distinction". I have been reflecting on this reversal of roles and what it feels like to



be the dear neighbor in need. I am ever so grateful to my neighbors who reached out to me in my need. My experience from last week has given me much to reflect on and what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible**.

Something Sacred is Coming

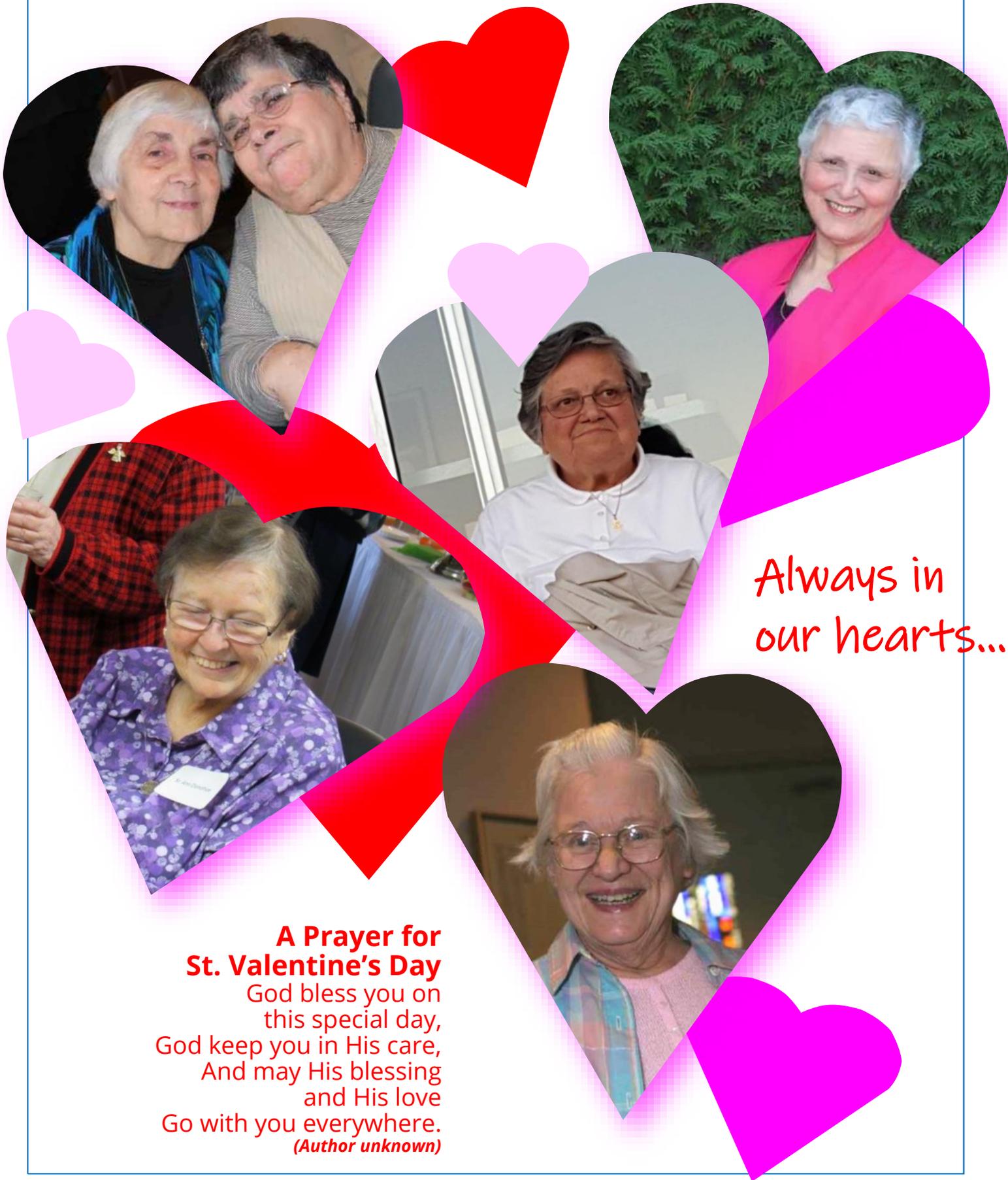
Something sacred is coming this way.
That is how my ancestors would have said it.
In the midst of all this turmoil and confusion,
when we cannot clearly see the path before us,
when we feel trapped in a situation we cannot control,
then I believe the wise elders of my holy heritage
would climb to the high place of the heart,
draw the circle of reason and faith around them,
and stand to sing their prayers
into the open sky of the history to come.
They would not shrink into a corner afraid,
but rise up to catch the first light
of what was coming into being all around them.
We are living in a time of emergence.
We are the witnesses to a great renewal.
The world is full of the fear of birth and change,
but that transformation will one day be our blessing.
Do not be afraid, but be believing.
Come to the place where the ancestors are already standing.
Come and see.

Something sacred is coming this way.

~ The Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw

Chapter 2022-23

Throughout the next two years, you will be receiving more information and details about our Chapter planning process. Be watching... *something sacred is coming*.



Always in
our hearts...

**A Prayer for
St. Valentine's Day**

God bless you on
this special day,
God keep you in His care,
And may His blessing
and His love
Go with you everywhere.
(Author unknown)

Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ
Associate Director



Prayers

Please remember in your prayers all of our sisters, agrégées and associates as well as their family members who are dealing with health problems, especially **A. Connie Pellerite, A. Evelyn Visnoski and A. Sandy Filippi**. Also remember in prayer the repose of the soul of **Sister Mary Rose Romeo** who died January 19th. We are forever grateful for her generosity of time and talent she shared with the Associates through the beautiful prayer services she prepared for our Welcoming Ceremonies, special liturgies, and prayer services, as well as the media presentations she put together over the years. (She was already thinking about the Associates' special 40th

anniversary liturgy which is scheduled for Oct. 15, 2022.)

ZOOM Get Togethers

Since we still cannot get together in large groups at the CLC due to the pandemic, we have scheduled three ZOOM meetings during the month of January and February. If you were unable to attend the Gathering, we held on Thursday January 27th, you still have a chance to join us for one of the next two sessions, or both, which are scheduled for Monday February 2nd (Ground Hog Day) at 11:00 a.m. and Wednesday February 14th (Valentine's Day) at 2:00 p.m.

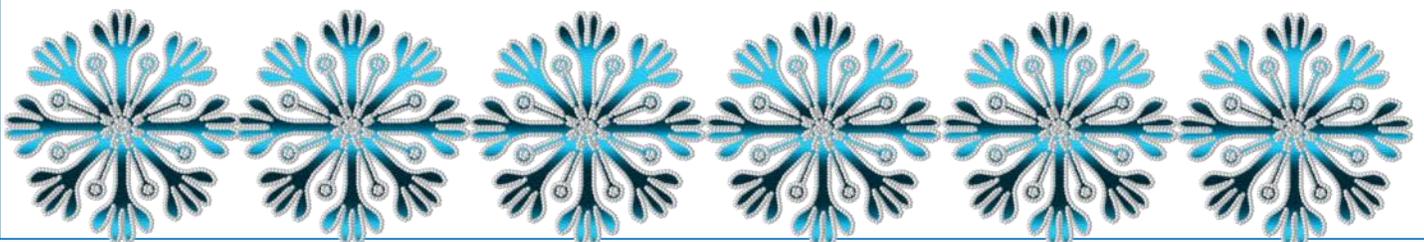


Drive Thru Events



Two Drive-thru Events have been scheduled for this spring. On Saturday April 23, 2022, we will be holding a Drive -thru for SSJNN and on Saturday May 21, 2022, for St. James Haven. Both will be held from 10:00 am -11:30 am. We will be publishing a list of items needed by both ministries in the next issue of Interim.

If you are able to volunteer to help at either one of these Drive-thrus we could use your help! Please call me at 814-823-1182.



Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition Force ERIE

Since 2005, the Sisters of St. Joseph have focused on the issue of human trafficking. Our first task was to educate ourselves about human trafficking. After being trained by the Cleveland Coalition, we began to do presentations in the community to various groups including the Rotary, church groups, schools, Kiwanis, and many more. Working closely with the Crime Victim Center, we talked about the need for an Erie Coalition. Brainstorming the people who should be a part of this group, we dreamed that it would be local law enforcement, healthcare workers, social agencies, FBI, Homeland Security, and many more. Because Erie has been identified as a pass-thru trafficking location and victims are moved in/out of our area, we quickly found our first task would be to convince people that human trafficking exists in our area.

In 2019, Deb Davies, an Intelligence Studies instructor at Mercyhurst University asked to meet and discuss what their involvement might be. The

Coalition had a home. Meetings began to take place monthly at Mercyhurst and the number of members quickly grew. The Coalition continues to meet monthly via Zoom which has allowed participation from professionals throughout PA.

Betsy Wiest and Deb Davies were leading the cause.

Presently, there are over 150 members. Support from law enforcement, the district attorney's office, our legislators' offices, social service agencies, church groups, Homeland Security, and the FBI has been phenomenal.

So why this update? In keeping with the wisdom of Maxim 85 which reads: *Advance good works until they are almost finished; and then, whenever possible, let them be*



completed by someone else who will receive the honor, we are stepping away from our leadership role in the Coalition. We have done all that we are able. It is exciting to see all the stakeholders at the table. Our dream has been realized. We will continue to attend meetings as time permits and of course, we will continue to support their efforts with our prayers.



Do you have a heart for justice? Join JPIC

If you have a heart for social justice please consider joining the JPIC Team. We welcome your help. Call Deb Seng at 814-836-4153.

February 9 Equitable Access to Healthcare



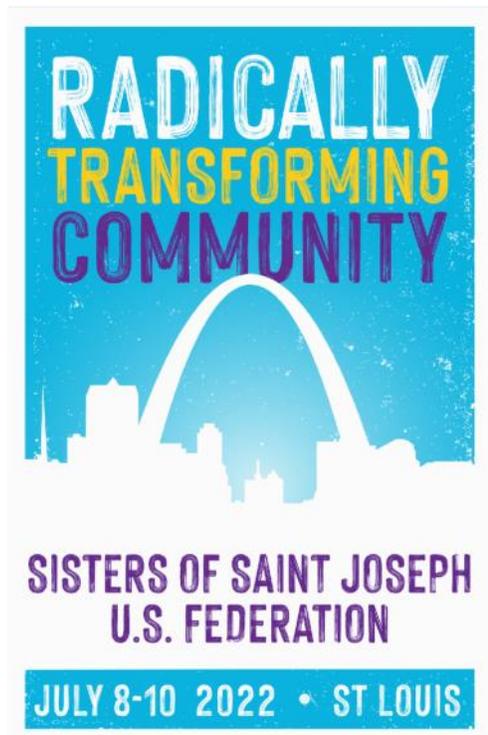
Join Catholic Sisters for a yearlong, monthly conversation series "Exploring Intersections: Catholic Sisters on Racism, Migration and Climate." Each month, panelists will explore a social issue and how it intersects with racism, migration and climate in a thought-provoking and engaging conversation.

Find out more at www.exploringintersections.org

LIVE Join Us!
via Zoom,
YouTube or podcast
exploringintersections.org



U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph National Event



Working Toward a Sustainable Lifestyle



Winter Smart ideas from Green Mountain Energy

Turn down your thermostat.

For every degree below 68°F, you can expect to save about 3% on your heating costs.

Set your ceiling fans for cooler weather.

Fans that rotate clockwise can recirculate heat that's risen in your home.

Remember the 4-by-4 rule.

If you're going to be away for more than four hours, set the thermostat 4° lower.

Planning for Event 2022 is in full swing. Earlier this month we announced the Event speakers: author **Olga Marina Segura** and **Sr. Lynn Levo** from the SSJ Carondelet-Albany congregation. In the coming weeks the list of panelists will be announced as well as other ways to get involved during the Event. This Event will be open to the entire Federation and those who share the Charism! Be sure to visit the [Federation website Event page](#) for more information and regular updates.

**VIRTUAL
OPTIONS!
EVERYONE
can
attend!**

Want to learn more about Event 2022?

Join us on **Tuesday, February 8 at 7:30 pm EST** for a **FREE** informational webinar. Hosts will answer any and all questions about the Event. This is open to anyone interested in attending Event 2022. We will explain the registration process which opens February 22, and virtual Event attendance options will be explained, as well. The webinar will be recorded and we will send it out to all who register for the webinar.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR.](#)



News from the Neighborhood Network

SSJNN is in need of cases of water or other individualized drinks for their weekly soup kitchen meals held at St. Paul's. Please call 814-454-7814 or Lora at 814-897-6901 to arrange for drop off. THANK YOU for continued prayers and support!

For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission

As you may be aware, Pope Francis has asked every diocese in the world to participate in preparations for the upcoming world Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in 2023. The theme of that synod will be **For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.**

Information is available to aid in your understanding of the SYNOD and to explain how the Erie Diocese will participate. [Click here.](#)



Welcome New SSJ Employees!



Jessica List
Food Service Tech



Mary Beth Passauer
Resident Care Coordinator

ssj community February Birthdays

- 2 S. Ann Stephanie Stano
- A. Tina Branton
- A. Sandy Greggs
- A. Chris Laythe
- 4 A. Ginny Hughes
- 6 A. Shirley Byers
- 8 S. Josette Gocella
- A. Cynthia Grucza
- 9 S. Moira Sullivan
- A. Penny Guelcher
- 17 A. Jane Zawacki
- 19 Agr. Cindy Polesnak
- A. Charlotte Sheldon
- 21 A. Carol Picheco
- 22 A. Geraldine Gallagher
- 23 S. Mary Drexler
- A. Ann Semler
- 26 A. Rhonda Sharie
- 28 A. Donna Maycock

Villa Alum? Join Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections

Please join our Facebook Group: Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections www.facebook.com/groups/villassjerie/ If you're not on Facebook, no worries. You can still be in the loop by going to our website and completing a short Villa Alum form. This will help us stay connected. Access the form at: <https://ssjerie.org/villa-connections/>

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

5031 West Ridge Road
Erie, PA 16506-1249

Phone: 814-836-4100

Fax: 814-836-4278

E-mail: publicrelations@ssjerie.org



WWW.
SSJERIE
.ORG

World Day of Prayer

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General has designated February 8 as a world day of prayer, reflection, and action against human trafficking. The theme for the 2022 World Day of Prayer is "The Power of Care - Women, Economics, Human Trafficking." You can find more information and a prayer service at this [website](https://www.ssjerie.org).

February 8 was selected because it is the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita. Affectionately known as Bakhita ("fortunate one"), St. Josephine was born in the southern Sudan region of Darfur. She was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery, eventually working in Italy as a nanny for a wealthy family.

It was during this time that she was introduced to formal religion and came to know the Daughters of Charity of

Canossa, or the Canossian Sisters. Bakhita was drawn to the Catholic Church. She was baptized in 1890 and given the name Josephine. Six years later, she entered the Canossian Sisters convent in Schio, Italy. At her canonization ceremony on October 1, 2000, Pope John Paul II said of St. Josephine: *"In today's world, countless women continue to be victimized, even in developed modern societies. In St. Josephine Bakhita we find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation. The history of her life inspires not passive acceptance but the firm resolve to work effectively to free girls*



by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

and women from oppression and violence, and to return them to their dignity in the full exercise of their rights."

Bakhita knew the reality of being a slave, an immigrant, and a spiritual seeker. Even while she was outwardly denied freedom and human dignity, her spirit was free. It was that freedom of spirit that allowed her to follow her heart and live her true vocation.

Spend some time reflecting on areas of your life where you are not free. What is it that enslaves you? How might God be calling you to greater freedom in this area?