

interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 41, Issue 10

October 2023

Remember the Giants

On September 22, I had the privilege of representing the SSJ at the inauguration of Dr. Walter Iwanenko as the eighth president of Gannon University. I was asked to speak on behalf of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the former Villa Maria College, its faculty and alumnae. I was delighted to represent both groups.

While my message was short, it spoke to the importance of the work we did to promote education and nursing, two programs that remain strong at Gannon University today. These programs live on because of the greatness of the people from Villa Maria College who were giants in their fields: **Sister Marie Rene Higgins, Sister Lucy Woods, Dr. Dorothy Novello and Sister**

Elise Ann Haener, to name a few.

May we always remember the giants who helped move us to the places where we stand today. Our spirit and charism live on through them because we stand on their shoulders. Take a moment to reflect and give praise and thanks for those wonderful people. Truly, we are blessed. Blessings,

Sr. Mary
Sister Mary



Charism/Mission Directional Statement

Conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence, we commit to live more fully the Gospel message; to further develop wholesome relationships among and beyond ourselves; to move beyond our comfort zones; to live the charism so that others may experience the love of God at this moment in our history.

Governance/Leadership Directional Statement

Conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence and believing that governance is an expression of our mission, we commit to exploring and creating a governance model which may include Sisters, Associates, and Agrégées. We commit to sharing responsibility, and communicating with trust, compassion, and acceptance.

Forever in our Hearts

**A time to remember
the Sisters and Associates
who died between
June 2021 and September 2023
Sunday, November 5, 2023 2:00 p.m.
Community Living Center**

Ann Donohue, SSJ
Rebecca Ann Costa, SSJ
Barb Schlosser
Linda Gier
Mary Kevin Palazzetti, SSJ
George DuFala
Mary Rose Romeo, SSJ
Dolores Miller
Mary Margaret Jones
Bob Haibach
Larry Lewis
Frank Gredler

Thelma Manendo
Mary Beth Smogorzewski
Martha Ann Rinderle, SSJ
Loeta Derby
Geraldine Olon, SSJ
Carol Bocan
James Francis Mulligan, SSJ
Patricia McLaughlin
Tom Lyons
Teresa Marie Bohren, SSJ
Paul Mercier



*A butterfly to remind me
even though we are apart,
your spirit is always
with me
forever in my heart...*

RSVP by October 30. [Click here](#), call 814-836-4204
or email catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org



**MISSION:
POSSIBLE!**

The SSJNN Makes the Mission Possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

Jenn Kennedy was the guest speaker at the recent SSJ Associates' Come Back event. Jenn, who used to work for the congregation as executive assistant, now works for the SSJ Neighborhood Network as its donor relations and volunteer coordinator. She provided an update on the SSJNN activities, and reminded us that the Neighborhood Network was established as our response to the needs of neighborhoods in crisis. The SSJNN began 23 years ago to serve the "Little Italy" area, but has since expanded to include all neighborhoods between 12th and 26th Streets

from Cranberry Street to East Avenue. The services provided include a soup kitchen, an emergency food and household pantry, family advocacy and referral, community gardening, and housing and revitalization. In addition, there are several activities for youth including art/enrichment, career awareness offerings, supported work experiences, homework assistance, tutoring, mentoring and bike programs.

It is evident that the SSJNN staff is carrying out its mission: *Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, and inspired by*

their mission of unity, the SSJ Neighborhood Network responds to the changing needs of the world by partnering with local residents and the broader community to provide growth and neighborhood revitalization.

Many thanks to the SSJ Neighborhood Network staff: Heather Caspar, Kyle Blackmer, Colleen Burbules, **Gretchen Durney**, Susannah Faulkner, Connor Herron, **Sister Phyllis Hilbert**, Jenn Kennedy, Cathy McGinnis, **Joanne Sprickman**, and Patrice Swick. We are grateful for all they do every day to make the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

Retreat Opportunities

- **Weekend Individually Directed Retreat Villa Maria Education & Spirituality Center** October 13 -15, 2023. Prayerful reflection, often with Sacred Scripture, in an environment of complete silence is the setting for this process. There is no preset pattern for a directed retreat. The director and the retreatant try to be sensitive and responsive to where the retreatant is in his or her journey with God. [Read more/register by clicking here.](#)
- **Awaken the Spirit** A new individual virtual retreat with Dan Schutte, composer of beloved hymns "Here I Am, Lord," "City of God" and "You Are Near." Make your retreat during September, October or November. *"Much of this retreat will resonate with our SSJ charism, mission and community. It is a great retreat experience you won't want to miss."* [Click here](#) to listen to conversation with Dan Schutte and SSJ Agrégée Charlene Kellerman. [More information/registration.](#)

Recordings of the Summer Conference Retreat, *God's Mercy and the Eucharist*, are available on [SSJ Erie YouTube Channel](#) (under playlists). There is also an extensive list of retreat opportunities on the SSJ Community login page of the [SSJ website](#).

The Chapter Process Continues

Even though the formal Chapter process is complete, the work has just begun. We are currently planning future steps concerning implementing our two Chapter Directional Statements. **Sisters Phyllis DiFuccia and Clare Marie Beichner** will lead the process, each working with a small

group: Sr. Phyllis with the Governance Statement and Sr. Clare Marie with the Charism/Mission Statement. They are conversing with a facilitator who will help with the process and lead our congregational gatherings. The two groups will meet with the facilitator on October 5th. We will keep you

informed as the process unfolds. In the meantime, please keep the directional statements prominent in your thoughts, prayers, and reflections.
The Chapter Committee



Erie Gives Day a Roaring Success



Thank you for your generosity to the Sisters of St. Joseph and their Mission & Ministries Foundation on Erie Gives Day!

We surpassed our donor goal of 40 new donors with a total of 112, increasing our 2023 donors by 61%. This increase moved us to the top of the donor leaderboard, ranking us

18th out of 493 nonprofits. The total raised, which includes the 5.8% gross prorated match, was \$39,688.98. Thanks to you, we surpassed last year's total by over \$13,000.

Your financial support on Erie Gives Day and throughout the year allows us to continue our mission to serve our neighbors through unity and love. Thank You!



Erie Gives Day Totals

SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation \$39,688.98
 Saint Mary's Home of Erie \$12,515*
 SSJ Neighborhood Network \$25,970*
 St. Patrick's Haven \$28,000*

*does not include pro-rated match

Sisters in the Sun Bench Campaign

Thanks to many generous donors, the Sisters of St. Joseph have 20 new, all-weather, outdoor benches on the grounds of the Community Living Center. The Sisters are grateful for the opportunity to meet with friends in comfort and safety, sit in their beautiful garden throughout the seasons, and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of their home.

A huge thank you to the SSJ maintenance staff for assembling and placing the benches and affixing the donor

plaques. Please enjoy reading the plaque messages which are included below.

**Please join us
 Sunday, October 22
 Liturgy at 9 a.m.
 followed by Bench Blessing
 and Continental Breakfast**

Any questions, contact Almi Clerkin almi.clerkin@ssjerie.org or 814-836-4202

Maps indicating the location of the benches will be available at the 10/22 event and at the CLC.



Pictured (l-r) Srs. Mary Arnold Tann and Mary Rita Kuhn enjoying one of the benches on the CLC grounds.

- ◆ *In Loving Memory of Maureen Barrett VMA '63*
Love, Mike & Paula Barrett
- ◆ *In memory of James F. Grisé*
Take time to enjoy nature's beauty
- ◆ *With grateful thanks for a fine education*
Captain Eileen F. MacKrell, USN
- ◆ *Blessed are the Caregivers ~*
In honor of Jeane Hauser, BSN RN,
Villa Maria College Class of 1978.
Donated by Matt, Kaetlyn, and Sarah Hauser
- ◆ *In loving memory of my parents,*
Alice and Bob Orr
Nellie Orr Cyr and David Cyr
- ◆ *Be the Sunshine - Matthew 5:16*
- ◆ *The Drexler Family*
- ◆ *In memory of Sisters Margaret Arcelia Proesl, SSJ, Mary Judith Gausman, SSJ, and Anita James Gausman, SSJ*
The Gausman Family
- ◆ *In Honor of Sr. Sally Villa, SSJ*
With love from her children
- ◆ *In honor of Mary Rita Kuhn, SSJ, and Mary Arnold Tann, SSJ*
Villa Maria Academy Class of 1970
- ◆ *In memory of Sister Marie Celeste Bindseil (1922-2017) A devoted Sister of St. Joseph for 75 years*
Lovingly, the Larry & Edwin Bindseil Families
- ◆ *There are two lasting things we can give our children...one is roots, the other - wings*
Donated by Midge Hilbert Klebes
- ◆ *In memory of Cynthia McLaughlin, VMA '69 and Michele McLaughlin Suprunowicz, VMA '74*
- ◆ *In memory of Chuck, Nancy, and Paul Campagne*
- ◆ *In memory of Thomas Lyons, from those who loved you...*
- ◆ *From: Joy Mainzer Greco*
In memory of Leonie Shanley, SSJ and Teresa Marie Bohren, SSJ
- ◆ *Class of 1954 - Villa Maria Academy (two benches)*
- ◆ *In honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph Peggy and Anthony Rusnak*
- ◆ *In memory of*
Mary Thomas Downing, SSJ
Arlene Chaney and Jeanne Marie Ryan

Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, *Associate Director*

Prayers

Please remember in prayer Associates **Peggy Ziegler, Ann Flick, Ron Visnoski, Evelyn Visnoski, Gratia Wittmann,** and all the Associates, Sisters and Agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health problems.

Consider Joining

•The Program Committee has been meeting to plan programs for the year. It is not too late to join the committee. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact **Margaret Chrymko** at chrymko@hotmail.com. More info to come. Watch the Interim for future programs.

•The Associate Outreach Committee needs Associates, Agrégées, and Sisters who are interested in giving a few minutes each month to connect with our dear neighbors – Associates, Sisters, and Agrégées – who are

homebound, in nursing homes or who find it difficult to get out and about. If you could spare a few minutes each month for a phone conversation or to write a short note to these dear neighbors, we would appreciate your help. The more volunteers we get, the more neighbors we will be able to reach. If you are interested in helping, please contact **Carol Dorr** at cdorr123@gmail.com or **Sister Ann Marie** at s.amcappello@ssjerie.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Many Thanks

Many thanks to **Margaret Chrymko, Sister Ricarda Vincent,** and the kitchen staff for all they did to make the Associate Come Back Event so enjoyable. Many thanks to all who donated items and money for the Neighborhood Network. Read the Mission Possible

article on page 2 about Jenn Kennedy's presentation on the SSJNN.

New Associate Candidates

Five new candidates are beginning their formation year in preparation to becoming SSJ Associates. On September 30 during their first formation session, **Sister Mary Fromknecht** will present "Theology of Call". Please keep these candidates and their mentors in your prayers.

Associates' Survey Results

A summary of the results of the Associates' survey which was presented at the Associate Get Togethers this summer is included in this issue of Interim. In addition, you can find a copy of the presentation and the SSJ Core Values Prayer on the SSJ Community login page of our website www.ssjerie.org.



Welcome!

Welcome to our newest associates: **Nancy Fetzner-Brown, Suzanne Newman, Kathy Higgins, and Cass Shimek** who made their commitments on Sunday, September 10, 2023. Many thanks to all those who helped make the day special!



Request for Prayers, Cards and Well-wishes

Prayers and well-wishes are requested for **Agrégée Cindy Brown** who is undergoing treatment for cancer. Cards can be sent to her at: **2543 West 8th Street, Apt. 108, Erie, PA 16505**. A Caring Bridge page has been set to keep friends up-to-date on Cindy's health journey. If you have not used Caring Bridge, you will need to register with an email and create a password.

[Click here for Cindy's Caring Bridge page.](#)



We are the People of God!

The Synod began two years ago with ordinary people like you and me and has become a “journeying together” to animate the synodal process in the ordinary life of the Church, and to identify which pathways the Spirit invites us to walk more decisively as one People of God.



Gathering fruits of the listening and consultations at the individual, parish, diocesan, and regional levels, was summarized into the seven continental reports that has brought the insights and tensions that resonated most strongly with the experience of Church on each continent and to identify from the

perspective from each continent, the priorities to be addressed in the first session of the Synodal Assembly scheduled to begin October 4, 2023. The purpose of the synodal process is not to produce documents but to open horizons for the fulfillment of the Church’s mission.



Synod
2021
2023
For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ



*Without Prayer,
there would be no Synod*

Adsumus Sancte Spiritus

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,
make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;
do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance
lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity
so that we may journey together
to eternal life

and not stray from the way of truth
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,
who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever.

Amen.

Don't
Miss This!



Check out the latest issue of Faith magazine which features a cover story, *Udder Devotion*, about **Sr. Clare Marie Beichner's** brothers, Bern and Mark. [Click here](#) or visit eriercd.org.



25% OFF SHOPPING PASS

Donate \$5 to St. Patrick's Haven and get a 25% off shopping pass that can be used almost anywhere in the store. You also get a chance to win a \$100 Boscov's shopping spree. Shopping day:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 2023 8 a.m.—11 p.m.

Contact Shelby Folga at 814-836-4153 to get your pass.

Spotlight on Sr. Ann Stephanie Stano, SSJ, Ph.D., Erie DAWN Board Member

"The most extraordinary thing I can do is to live the ordinary in an extraordinary kind of way, every day."

This quote is not only a line in a song she loves, but also describes the

mantra of **Ann Stephanie Stano, SSJ, Ph.D.**, a member of the Erie DAWN Board of Directors.

Recently in a conversation with Sister Ann Stephanie, she shared that the Sisters of St. Joseph have been part of Erie DAWN before its inception

in 1995. The three communities of religious women formed Erie DAWN to assist single working women who were facing challenges after completing their stay at homeless shelters.

[Read more.](#)



SPIRITUAL DIRECTION: *Who? What? Where? When? Why?*

The practice of spiritual direction is rooted in Ignatian spirituality and is part of our SSJ spirituality and tradition. The Retreat Team is offering an hour-long program about spiritual direction: *what it is, how it's done, and what the benefits are.*

This program is available to Sisters, Agrégées, Associates and partners in ministry and will be presented at three different times:

Tuesday, October 24
10:00-11:00 a.m.
and
1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

Wednesday, October 25
6:00-7:00 p.m.

All presentations will take place in the Gathering Space at the CLC. We hope you will join us as we explore together the ministry of Spiritual Direction.

"Within each of us lies the desire to find meaning beyond the moment ... to discover our true selves ... to grow closer to God and to one another. A spiritual director can help you satisfy that longing."

~Spiritual Directors International



Our SSJ Crop Walkers

Left-right: Sisters Rosemary O'Brien, Millicent Zimmer, Mary Helen Forney, and Phyllis Hilbert, along with Susannah Faulkner from the SSJ Neighborhood Network. Great job, ladies! Thank you for representing the SSJ community and ministries in this year's Crop Walk.



Haiti update

Our SSJ community, along with many others, joined together to help the Haiti schools that were devastated by flooding in June. Thanks to all your help, we reached our goal of \$35,000! Thank you to all who donated — every dollar counts.

Cleaning Gravestones at Soldiers & Sailors' Home by Betsy Wiest, Agrégée

At the recent St. Mary's Follies, Mary Jane Koenig was recognized for her contributions in the community. One of her many works is cleaning veteran's gravestones in our area.



Each Monday, I join Mary Jane in this task at the Pennsylvania Soldiers and Sailors Home. In this simple way, we honor and remember the sacrifices of those who served so that we can live free. As I clean each stone, I pray for

the soldier. It is incredibly satisfying to transform an unreadable stone into one that is not only legible, but now renews the memory of the buried soldier. As of September 20,

Mary Jane's team has cleaned more than 200 gravestones. There is much more work to be done as there are more than 1,500 gravestones in that cemetery alone.

We have finished cleaning for the season and we'll take a

break until April or May (weather depending). If you are interested in helping next spring, contact me and I'll let you know when we're ready to start again.

For more information or if you would like to help with this project, contact me at either 814-881-6088 or betsy.wiest@ssjerie.org.



Our Lady of Peace

WHITE MASS

For Healthcare Professionals and Caregivers

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2021

11:00 AM



Healthcare professionals have the great responsibility and privilege of serving the sick. May we join together in reviving and enriching our calling and unity with God.

Anointing of the Sick will be offered for all those suffering serious illness in body, mind, and spirit. Please register in back of church prior to Mass.

ssj community October Birthdays



- 2 A. Karen Grove
- 5 A. Nancy Imler
- 6 A. Mary Ann Weber
- 10 A. Patricia Fronzaglia
- 10 A. Richard Marshall
- 11 A. Joan Fels
- 12 A. Jennifer King
- 14 A. Kristina Huber
- 15 S. Mary Arnold Tann
- 15 A. Sheila Causgrove
- 16 A. Elaine Clyburn
- 16 A. Kay Hotchkiss
- 17 A. Dave Sharie
- 20 Agr. Judi Janke
- 29 A. Stephen Kuhn
- 29 A. Elaine Mozdy

SSJ Neighborhood Network News

Thank you to all Sisters, Agrégées and Associates who supported the Little Italy Farmers Market this season. We loved seeing everyone stop by and say hello, or the prayers or other ways you supported our urban farm teen crew and this

hub of healthy food and community!



•Our youth program is in need of tutors for the new school year. Interested in volunteering? Please call Connor at 814-454-7814 x209.

Please join the Gardens and Greenspace ministry of SSJNN for the following two events:

- ♦ A dedication of **Anthony's Garden**, the newest development at 17th and Sassafra, in memory of former teen worker Anthony Cortes. Sunday, October 1, 2 p.m. Light refreshments provided.
- ♦ Check out the photography exhibit, part of **Erie's Second Saturday Art Brunch!** The SSJNN Urban Farm Teen Crew has taken photos throughout the season and they'll be on display. The crew looks forward to selling pieces to raise funds for an end of season field trip. The event which takes place at The Shop at 19th & Chestnut Sts. features special treats from Give A Crepe, music by J.C. Nickels, and drinks by Cart/Horse Distilling.



notes

I would like to offer my thanks for all the prayers and support at the loss of my sister, Clare. She was an important influence in my life growing up and a good friend as an adult. The family and I are deeply grateful for all your caring!

S. Carol Morehouse

Sr. Maria Onuffer was treated to a 90th birthday lunch at Oliver's Rooftop restaurant by SSJ Associate **Sue Ann Wisniewski**, and her husband, Rich. According to Sue Ann, Sister Maria always wanted to go there. While volunteering at Saint Vincent, Sr. Maria had an office next to Rich's. They became friends and shared many jokes.

Happy 90th Birthday Sr. Maria Onuffer!



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Making the Cancer Fight a Top Priority from Erie to D.C.

by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

Last week, I had the honor of representing Pennsylvania on Capital Hill. Along with nearly 700 of my fellow American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network advocates from across the country, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to urge lawmakers to make cancer a national priority.

Together we called on Congress to support lifesaving policies that help people prevent and treat cancer. We asked legislators for their support in increasing federal funding for cancer research and prevention. In addition, we asked for support of the Multi-Cancer Early Detection Tests (MCED) bill. The MCED test screens for more than 50 cancers with a single blood draw. This legislation would

create a pathway for Medicare to cover this technology following FDA approval. Our third ask was for support of the Prostate-Specific Antigen Screening for High Risk Insured Men (PSA Screening for HIM). If the legislation is passed, men at high risk of developing prostate cancer would be able to get prostate cancer screenings with no out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles, copayments, or coinsurances.

With about 1,670 people dying from cancer daily, our lawmakers must take legislative action on these crucial issues. Congress should seize the opportunity to pass critical bipartisan legislation to help save lives and end cancer

as we know it, for everyone.

I have been traveling to both Washington and Harrisburg for many years to advocate for causes that are near and dear to my heart. One thing that has become clear is that it's not the statistics that get our lawmakers' attention, it is our stories. I have been told over and over that by telling my story it makes it real. I urge everyone, if you have a passion for a cause and there is legislation that could help, get involved with an organization and tell your story. Sometimes we feel helpless, but advocating for things that are important to you is one way to help. Let your voice be heard!