

# interim

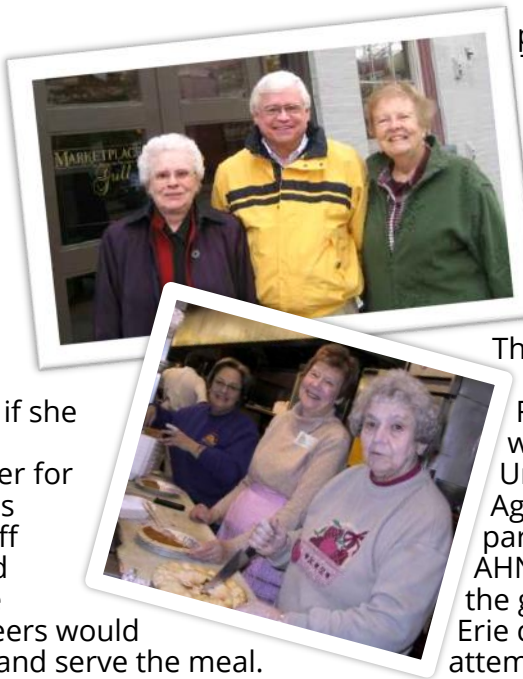
Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 41, Issue 11

November 2023

## 35th Annual SSJ Thanksgiving Dinner

This year, we celebrate the 35th anniversary of our Thanksgiving Dinner and Appeal. Thanks to the inspiration of Peter Lyons, then owner of Marketplace Grill, who called Sr. Teresa Marie Bohren and asked if she would like to offer Thanksgiving Dinner for those in need at his restaurant. His staff would prepare and cook the food. The sisters and volunteers would assist with details and serve the meal. What started as a small venture in 1988, has become a holiday ministry that serves meals to more than 1000



people on Thanksgiving Day. While we organize the event, there are many others who contribute to making it possible. It's a community effort.

The SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation, along with Gannon University, our Agrégées, Associates, partners in mission, AHN/Saint Vincent and the generosity of the Erie community will attempt to feed 1300 people this year. Volunteers come from near and far and we couldn't do

*(Continued on page 3)*

### 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.

## Sisters of St. Joseph Thanksgiving Appeal — the Gift that Keeps Giving



This tradition means so much to so many -- those we serve (more than 32,000 meals served), the volunteers (more than 4,000 have helped), and the organizations that receive funds (55 organizations have received gifts). And it means something to all the donors who have supported the effort over the years.

Want to make your Thanksgiving holiday more meaningful? Give to



the 35th Annual SSJ Thanksgiving Dinner Appeal. You'll help us serve more than 1,300 meals on Thanksgiving Day, AND you'll be helping numerous agencies and organizations in the community who serve their neighbor throughout the year.

If you'd like to give to this year's appeal, scan the QR code, or [click here](#). Thank you. God's blessings!

# MISSION: POSSIBLE!

## A Woman for Today

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

As I was preparing my presentation for the Associate candidate session last week, I reviewed the video, *Mother St. John Frontbonne: A Woman for Today*. In the video, Sister Donna Gunn, CSJ, portrays the role of Mother St. John. She tells "her story" of the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph. She begins by saying that many religious communities founded in the history of the church no longer exist. She believes the reason the Sisters of St. Joseph still exist more than 370 years since our founding is because God always sends us the right people at the right time, beginning with Father Medaille. "This is our history," she says. "To me, we would not

be CSJs without our connection to the laity. If not for Mother St. John's partnership with the Countess de la Rochjacquelen, a lay woman, we wouldn't have come to America. Mother St. John was willing to let go and allow six sisters to come to America."

As Sister Donna (as Mother St. John) spoke to the employees and staff at her motherhouse in Carondelet, she said, "You were called to be here. You are the right people now; you are the promise of hope that God so *wants* us to have. You are our moment now in history. You are our gift. Thank you."

As I listened, I was reminded

of all the wonderful people that God sent to us, the employees at the CLC, the SSJ administrative staff, the dedicated staff who continue the work at our sponsored ministries, our Agrégées and Associates. I too believe that these people were called to join us, including the four new Associate candidates who are discerning their call.

In the words of Mother St. John, "Thank you for the gift of your lives, for being the persons you are. You are the right people now. You are the promise of hope that God so wants us to have." You are what continues to make the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

## Retreat Opportunities

**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 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](#).

**Be Part of Our Today  
and Our Tomorrow**

**Community Day**  
Saturday, November 11, 2023  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
Community Living Center  
**Only Together**  
**Can We Plan Our Future**

While the original RSVP deadline was October 27th, if you haven't responded and would like to attend, PLEASE call **Cass Shimek at 814-834-4204 by Friday, November 3rd.**





**Sr. Mary's Message  
(Continued from page 1)**

it without them. All who have partnered with us are a part of the Thanksgiving blessing that goes out through a warm, turkey dinner with the trimmings. What a blessing this

is to so many who would otherwise be alone or without the blessings of a Thanksgiving dinner.

We are grateful that we can continue this tradition. This year, especially, we carry on in the spirit and memory of Sr. Teresa Marie who died on

May 18, 2023

"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good" . . . and so are God's people.

Thanksgiving blessings,

*Sr. Mary*

**Sisters in the Sun Bench Campaign**

A lovely fall morning greeted the Sisters of St. Joseph and generous donors, family, and friends who gathered for a liturgy and blessing of the benches that were donated during the Sisters in the Sun Bench Campaign. Following the liturgy, Fr. Jerry Simmons shared a faithful blessing in front of the SSJ Community

Living Center:

*O God, we ask for your healing presence on this bench and all the benches on this campus that the persons who use them in all seasons may relax and enjoy your creation and be moved inwardly to know your kind and loving spirit. Creator God, please bless the donors of these resting places for their generosity and*

*love of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the honor of many and in memory of their loved ones who rest in you.*



**Maps of the locations of the benches on the SSJ campus are available at the CLC front desk.**



Photo 1: Kathleen Gausman, Jane Zawacki, and Paul Gausmann — the Gausman family bench in memory of Sisters Margaret Arcelia Proesl, Mary Judith Gausman, and Anita James Gausman. Photo 2: Norma Hiller and Bridget Power Barber — VMA class of 1970 bench in honor of Sisters Mary Rita Kuhn and Mary Arnold Tann. Photo 3: Eileen McLaughlin dedicated a bench in memory of her daughters who attended VMA, Cynthia McLaughlin '69 and Michele McLaughlin Suprunowicz '74. Eileen's son, Mark, joined her for the blessing. Photo 4: Fr. Jerry Simmons blessing a bench. Photo 5: Agrégées Jeanne Marie Ryan and Arlene Chaney on the bench they dedicated in memory of Sister Mary Thomas Downing. Photo 6: Mike Drexler flanked by Mary Grace Lewis (l) and Ginny Hughes with Sister Mary Drexler and Sue Drexler (seated) on the Drexler family bench. Fall tree photo by SSJ IT Director, Vickie Pangratz.

## Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Associate Director

### Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the repose of the souls of Associate Geraldine Gallagher, mother of Associate Gretchen Durney, who died October 20, 2023, and Helen Selker, mother of Associate Reverend Raymond Selker, OFM who died October 18, 2023. May Eternal Light Shine Upon Them O Lord! Please remember Gretchen and Father Ray and their families as well

during this most difficult time. Please remember in prayer Associates Martha Connelly, Peg McCrary, Gratia Wittmann and Peggy Zeigler and all the Associates, Sisters, and Agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health problems.

### Committees

The members of the Program Committee and the Outreach Committee have been busy

planning events, and activities for the coming year. They are also planning ways that we can keep in touch with associates who live out of town and reach out to associates who are in nursing homes /or homebound. More information will be coming in future Interims. It is not too late to join one of these committees.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

## A Popular Favorite Returns — That's a Wrap!

Many have indicated a desire to see the return of That's a Wrap so we are pleased to announce, it's back! That's a Wrap is a fun event where we get together to wrap donated gifts that benefit one of our ministries.

**Join us!**  
**Sunday, December 10, 2023**  
**1- 4 p.m.**

### CLC Gathering Space

Bring **unwrapped** gifts with you and we'll wrap them together while we visit, socialize and enjoy refreshments. Wrapping paper, tape, ribbon, etc. will be provided, or you can bring your own.

If you can't make it but would like to donate a gift, you can drop unwrapped gifts at the CLC before December 10.

This year we are collecting gifts for the men at St. James Haven and St. Patrick's Haven.

Requested items include: Backpacks (heavy,

lasting, durable, solid colored, waterproof if possible), men's wallets, heavy socks, thermal underwear (sizes L - 5X), belts (sizes L - 5X), gift cards for meals (McDonalds, Wendy's, Burger King, Arby's, Taco Bell). All donated items should be new items.

**Christmas card contest:** Get crafting and make a card to bring and enter. We'll vote for the favorite homemade Christmas cards.



Please RSVP by November 25, 2023. [Click here](#) or call 814-836-4204 or email [catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org](mailto:catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org).

## Forever in our Hearts



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



**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**



To RSVP, call 814-836-4204 or email [catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org](mailto:catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org)



## Hope is in the Synod Process

There is a call for community, in which equality is at the heart for the synod process. "All are welcome" is the mantra of Pope Francis to those gathering in Rome for the synod. How that can be realized is the deeper question. Those in power must renounce clericalism and authoritarianism, chauvinism and sexism, believing that these are not justified in living as Christ manifested. Forget exclusion and avoid any semblance of that in every level of church and missionary discipleship. We know that women in the church are not seeking power or to relieve a feeling of inferiority, but they long to live in fidelity to God's mission in whatever form that call comes.

Our call as Sisters of

St. Joseph involves supporting and enabling laypersons to continue to spread our charism and the church's mission around the globe as partners in mission. St. Teresa of Ávila witnessed, "God has no body but ours, no hands to embrace or feet on the ground to walk but ours." Our legacy for our church is unique in how our Sisters modeled the synodal approach of inclusivity and welcome in their lives and ministry in response to God's great love to be missionary disciples. Their commitment to furthering the goal of the synod process exemplifies their response to God's love and missionary call to minister to all those in need—a call within the call.

All of us are in this synod

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ



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

process together praying with those gathered among the round tables, energized and animated by fruitful discussions, deep listening and honest exchanges.

The synod is taking place at the Vatican Oct. 2023 and October 2024. Of the assembly's 465 participants, about 80 are women and, for the first time, 54 of those women are among the 365 full members of the assembly, who will be able to vote on its expected final document. This gives us hope!

## TAKE BACK THE SITE

**Prayer vigil at the site  
of the August 12, 2023,  
vehicular homicide  
which killed  
June Jermaine Mathis, Jr.**

**Please join us in prayer  
Monday, November 6, 2023  
5:15 p.m.  
1921 Peach Street  
park on West 20th**

**Benedictine Sisters of Erie  
and Oblates  
Sisters of St. Joseph,  
Agréées, and Associates  
Sisters of Mercy  
and Associates**

## Sale at the CLC

Come to the Community Living Center November 10, 11, and 12 and see all kinds of one-of-a-kind, handmade gift items for sale, including:

- Hand made baskets by **Sister André Feulner**.
- Reflection booklets, and cards by **Sister Moira Sullivan**.
- Photographs by **Sister Nancy Sonnenfeld** available on note cards for all seasons and events. Also matted, framed and unframed photos.



## No Surprise Here!

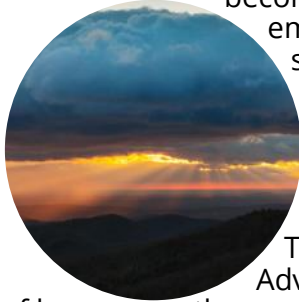
Look who we found in the garden recently — Sr. André, of course! She was busy doing some fall clean-up.



# Advent: Journey from Darkness to Light A Morning of Reflection on the Paschal Mystery in Our Lives

A presentation by Nancy Fischer, SSJ and Kathy Higgins, SSJ Associate

Advent is a time to reflect, not only on the birth of Jesus but on how our response to that birth calls us to be His disciples. Through prayer, presentation, reflection, and sharing, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how the efforts to live out the paschal mystery call us to



become disciples by embracing the darkness so that we can also be re-born into the newness of life. Personal, spiritual refreshment for the body, mind, and spirit. The beautiful season of Advent provides many themes for consideration: hope, peace, joy, and expectation.

**Saturday, December 2**  
**Community Living Center**  
**8:30-9:00 a.m.**  
**Gathering and Coffee**  
**9:00-noon**  
**Program**

[Click here to RSVP](#) or contact Cass at **814-836-4204** or [catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org](mailto:catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org)

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

The practice of spiritual direction is rooted in Ignatian spirituality and is part of our SSJ tradition.

Did you miss the recent presentations on spiritual direction that were offered at the CLC? Don't fret — the one hour educational program will be offered to Sisters, Agrégées, Associates

and Partners in Mission via ZOOM on **November 15, 2023** at **1:00 p.m. EST.**

You must register by [clicking here](#) to receive the ZOOM link. We hope you will join us as we explore the ministry of Spiritual Direction together.



[Click here](#) for a list of Sisters and Associates who are certified spiritual directors.



Vocation Awareness Week  
November 5-11, 2023



As Sisters of St. Joseph, we invite you to *share your heart* with us.

## Prayer for Vocations

Holy Spirit, stir within us the passion to promote vocations to the consecrated life. Inspire us daily to respond to Your call with boundless compassion, abundant generosity, and radical availability. Help us to remember our own baptismal call to rouse us to invite the next generation to hear and respond to Your call. Inspire parents, families, and lay ecclesial ministers to begin a conversation with young Catholics to consider how they will live lives of holiness and sacred service.

Nudge inquirers and motivate discerners to learn more about apostolic life. Ignite our Church with the confident humility that there is an urgent need for religious sisters, to live in solidarity with those who are poor, neglected, and marginalized.

May God bless those who have generously made God the dream of their lives, serving God in their sisters and brothers through a fidelity that is a powerful testimony and a source of lasting joy. May St. Joseph, protector of vocations, accompany us on our journey!



## SSJ Neighborhood Network News

Big thank you to all who came out to the first SSJNN Urban Farm Teen Photography Exhibit! The event was a great success and our young adults are grateful!

Our **youth program** is in need of math tutors. Able to help? Please call Connor at 814-454-7814 x209.

**Save the Date!** Small Business Saturday is November 25.

Come out and support our local businesses. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.



Interested in supporting our programs? We could use the following items:



- Small prizes for students
- Simple Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations for our youth program space
- Large bottles of juice or pop
- Diapers (size 4 or 5)
- 3-in-1 Body wash/shampoo
- Full-size blankets
- Towels/wash cloths
- Canned meat (tuna/ chicken)

THANK YOU for your unwavering support of our endeavors at the Neighborhood Network! - Grateful SSJNN staff

**The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL, Bishop of Erie** cordially invites you to join in prayer for deceased religious, clergy, and Serrans

**Celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy**  
**Mercy Motherhouse Chapel**  
**444 East Grandview Boulevard, Erie**  
**Saturday, November 4, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.**  
**A social gathering will follow the Liturgy in the Mercy Motherhouse Dining Room**



### notes

A sincere thank you to everyone for the thoughts, calls, prayers, and cards during my extended illness. The love supports me still as I continue the slow process of healing.  
 Arlene Chaney

We thank the Sisters, Agrégées, Associates, and friends for their support of this year's 48<sup>th</sup> annual CROP Walk. The total donation is \$1,265. The funding raised from this effort will be shared both globally and locally. SSJNN receives a grant each year for our food outreach. We are proud of our community's involvement. Gratefully, Sisters Millicent Zimmer and Phyllis Hilbert

## ssj community November Birthdays



- 1 A. Kathy Anysz
- 1 A. Sueann Wiest
- 2 A. Shirley Mack
- 2 A. Timothy Natale
- 3 A. Joy Shered
- 4 A. Patti Sullivan
- 4 A. Brenda Villa
- 7 A. Mary Lou Rathers
- 7 A. Marti Michael
- 8 A. Betsy Williams
- 9 A. Debbie Thompson
- 10 S. Catherine Manning
- 11 A. Linda Kuhn
- 11 A. Ted Wright
- 13 A. Frank Mariella Jr.
- 17 A. Frances Skobieranda
- 17 S. Carol Morehouse
- 18 A. Rev. Dennis Martin
- 19 A. Sandy Clark
- 21 A. Sue Ann Wisniewski
- 23 A. Patricia J. Marshall
- 24 S. Mary Claire Kennedy
- 24 A. Mitzi Banister
- 26 A. Edith Benson
- 28 A. Cynthia Berarducci
- 29 A. Eileen McLaughlin
- 29 A. Mary Stephany Theiss Lyons
- 30 A. Jeanne Brim
- 30 A. Rose Ronzitti

### Random Act of Kindness

Thank you to whoever the St. Jude's parishioner is who donated and delivered spaghetti dinners to 14 Sisters at the CLC during the St. Jude's parish spaghetti dinner.

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## LCWR Stands in Solidarity with the People of the Middle East

The members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), in solidarity with the global community of faith, stand in the shadow of the horrors initiated on October 7, 2023 in Israel and Gaza. As women of the Gospel, we grieve with those who grieve, seek release of those held captive, and recognize the root causes of violence as well as the urgent call for the use of all possible resources to stabilize the Middle East, secure refuge for those in humanitarian crisis, and negotiate peace that will last. United with the interfaith community, we take seriously our responsibility to protect the safety of all people of faith throughout the world. We stand united with leaders of other faiths, intolerant of any form of hate or violence towards places of worship, and ready to witness to the transformation of consciousness necessary for sustainable peace.

[Click here to read the full statement as it appears on the SSJ Erie website.](#)

## National Catholic organizations urge Biden to call for ceasefire, humanitarian aid

*"Continuing to send weapons increases dehumanization, destruction, and trauma."*  
Washington - More than two dozen national Catholic organizations sent a letter to President Biden, urging him to take the necessary steps to de-escalate the conflict in Israel-Palestine, including calling for a humanitarian ceasefire and for all parties to prioritize corridors for humanitarian aid for the people in Gaza; and to prioritize steps to secure the immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians. Alarmed that the [U.S. vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution](#) calling for a humanitarian pause in Israel's ongoing bombardment and siege of Gaza, and that President Biden's October 19 Oval Office address so heavily focused on sending more weapons to this conflict while ignoring its root causes, the Catholic leaders warned that this could "increase the dehumanization, destruction, and trauma of all communities involved." [Click here to read the full statement as it appears on the SSJ Erie website.](#)