

● Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

journeys

a
new
outlook

2015
donor
report



Welcome
the new SSJ
Agréées, page 6.

learning from the future

The up-and-coming generation has a lot to teach us and it's vital to the future of our mission.

by Stephanie Hall, SSJA and SSJ Agrégée Betsy Wiest

What can Catholic sisters learn from a group of university students? These digital natives living in a high-tech world have brought the fictional Tomorrowland of the Jetsons to life. And yet, Catholic sisters know the future of their mission depends on these young adults and they want to develop relationships with them. But how do you relate with individuals whose lives are in stark contrast to yours? You ask them.

Teaching Comes Full Circle

Years ago, many children grew up being taught by sisters who had a significant presence in Catholic schools. That has changed, and now sisters are learning from the students, as is the case with Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania and business students from Gannon University in Erie. When the congregation formed a committee to increase awareness of the sisters among this group, the realization came quickly that help was needed from the young people themselves.

“The research performed throughout this project serves as just the beginning chapter of an ongoing relationship...”

Approach it Like a Business Project

Approaching it like a business project made sense to SSJ Agrégée Betsy Wiest, co-chair of the committee. If the target audience is young people, go to them for answers. Betsy contacted the Dean of Gannon University's College of Engineering and Business to inquire about getting students' help. That led to discussions with Richard Hauser, Ph.D., and Dr. Duane R. Prokop, D.S.L., co-chairmen of the Dahlkemper School of Business, who felt this would be an ideal project for Jeffery Parnell's undergraduate Marketing Management class.



Graduate assistants Timothy Petro '16 and Ayush Enkhtaivan '16 were tasked with being project manager and assistant, respectively. They gathered background information, including the congregation's history; results of a recent communications audit, including data from focus groups and community surveys; and the committee's objectives. The congregation's needs were much bigger than just one project; it was determined this would be an ongoing initiative involving various departments and classes.

"The research performed throughout this project serves as just the beginning chapter of an ongoing relationship between the Gannon

University Dahlkemper School of Business and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania," explained Petro.

During the spring 2016 semester, the class surveyed student athletes, fraternity/sorority members and students in Sr. Michele Healy's Sacred Scripture classes. Recognizing student interest in volunteerism, they gathered data about how the sisters could increase volunteer involvement with this group. They sought to identify the students' knowledge of the sisters, and avenues that could lead to more involvement. During National Catholic Sisters Week, some of the students attended an open house at the sisters' Community Living Center and they staffed a display at Gannon to generate awareness of the sisters by distributing information and giveaway items. A means was also provided for students to submit prayer intentions. The project culminated with a presentation of the students' findings and recommendations to the SSJ committee and leadership.



sisters are
now learning
from the
students

Recommendations

The students recommended four areas of opportunity: finding better engagement opportunities; getting the word out about the mission of the congregation; increasing the number of young volunteers and personnel; and expanding resources and funding. Key to the recommendations was the need to increase the congregation's use of social media to extend awareness of the mission to this demographic.

A Valuable Experience for All


Throughout this first phase, enthusiasm to work with the sisters, and more important to help advance the congregation's mission, was apparent. "As project manager, I not only helped serve an amazing organization, but also sharpened my own skills," Petro shared. "This experience will help build my foundation as a young business professional."

"I was very surprised to learn about how many different ministries the Sisters of St. Joseph are involved in. They are so active in everything—from education to numerous neighborhood outreach programs and everything in between," said Kendall Ohr, graduate assistant in the Gannon University Dahlkemper School of Business. "I had no idea how much presence they actually have in the community and the large impact that they make."

"Key to the recommendations was the need to increase the congregation's use of social media to extend awareness of the mission to this demographic. "

Looking Ahead

Ohr will take over as project manager for the fall 2016 semester which will include more in-depth study by market research students on how Millennials, Generation X and Generation Z would be interested in volunteering with the sisters. Business policy students will create a model for volunteerism for the congregation. Additionally, the Sisters of St. Joseph have been approved as a Gannon community work study site. A student will be selected to work in the SSJ communications office to assist in awareness-building initiatives, including social media.

Ongoing work together will undoubtedly lead to shared learning—teacher-student, student-teacher. It all comes full circle over time ... and the circle continues. 



long relationship

The relationship between the Sisters of St. Joseph and Gannon University isn't new. In 1925, the sisters founded Villa Maria College for women. Eight years later, Cathedral College was founded and operated under Villa's charter as a downtown extension for men. In 1941, Cathedral College became Gannon School of Arts and Sciences, a junior college. In 1944, it became Gannon College and later, Gannon University. Villa Maria College merged with Gannon in 1989 which created the Villa Maria College of Nursing and the School of Education within the University. Today, the Sisters and Gannon continue their relationship in many ways. Sister Michele Healy serves on the Gannon faculty, the Sisters have representation on the Gannon board, Gannon physical therapy students do clinical rotations with the sisters and now, a new partnership with the Dahlkemper School of Business.



student research reveals significant findings

What would positively influence your relationship with Sisters of St. Joseph?

34%
volunteer
opportunities

24%
stories
about sisters
making a
difference

WHAT?? You don't have to be Catholic?

There is a significant misperception among
the students that you have to be Catholic to
get involved with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

More than half have
NEVER heard of the
Sisters of St. Joseph

WHO ?

communications audit

In 2015, we engaged in a communications audit funded by an advancing mission grant. Four overall goals were established:

- determine audience perceptions of the sisters
- document the effectiveness of our current communications
- define priority audiences
- recommend communication strategies to advance mission.

Methods included:

- interviews with SSJ leadership and key staff
- six focus groups
- four online surveys

A thorough review of our existing communications materials and those of similar organizations was also done. From start to finish, including interviewing and selecting a firm to the presentation of the final report, the audit took nearly six months to complete.

We learned a lot—about ourselves, those we have relationships with, and maybe more important, those we don't. We found great value in knowing what you want to see and hear from us and how you want us to communicate with you.

The recommendations led us to:

- develop three-year communications plan
- conduct a readership survey of our *journeys* audience
- redesign our website; include mobile design (launching soon!)
- increase use of social media

Fundamental to everything, we freshened up our look which you see reflected in this issue of *journeys*. We hope you like it!



agrégée insights



Cindy Brown (above), Betsy Wiest (far left) and Tammy Van Buren are among the first agrégées of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

by Moira Sullivan, SSJ, with special thanks to Agrégées Cindy Brown, Tammy Van Buren and Betsy Wiest.

In the mid-1600s, a group of women searching for a way to follow Christ more closely became the first Sisters of St. Joseph. Other women desired to bond with these sisters in prayer and good works. They became known as associées and agrégée. This early part of our history provided the basis for re-establishing the concept of agrégée.

The large numbers of women choosing religious life in the 1950s and 1960s are gone. Today, very few are choosing this lifestyle. Why? Opinions vary: Vatican II opened many different “windows”, resulting in more opportunities for women; women’s rights were discussed more; women increasingly chose advanced studies and women’s careers expanded.*

Today, a movement toward more, or deeper, spirituality is growing. This is a positive sign for all, even the younger set who demonstrate this in many ways including retreats, youth groups and a call to service and volunteerism. The desire for a deepening spirituality and the generosity of many people provide hopeful signs in our world.

Through SSJ agrégée and associates, in addition to vowed membership, there are varied ways of deepening one’s spirituality through

connection with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

In January 2016, we welcomed nine women as our first agrégées. This culminated a three-year program of spiritual development around the SSJ mission and charism. I recently spoke with three agrégées about their journey.

What does committing to furthering the charism of the congregation mean to you?

“...this means that I will live, on a daily basis, the ideal of the love of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God. I will look for Jesus in each individual with whom I interact.” *Betsy*

“...I witnessed that the sisters were ‘practicing what they preached’ and I wanted to help others.” *Tammy*

“I found that living out the charism is part of who I am; therefore it means everything to me. I exemplify this by working at trying to bring God’s love to all...” *Cindy*

You have taken a vow of fidelity. What does this mean and how can you live it?

"This vow means that I have recognized and responded to where God is calling me...I have committed myself to this congregation to become 'one with'. *Cindy*

"My vow is a vow between me and Christ that I will make my best efforts to follow Him every day, to see Him in all those I encounter and reach out to them, to open my heart to Him so my life can be guided by Him..." *Betsy*

"My vow means that I promise to be loyal to the word of God and to live the mission of 'neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God.'" *Tammy*

What does being an SSJ Agrégée mean to you?

"Being an agrégée means the congregation is a priority in my life. It is important for me to be there, participating and supporting the directions the members choose. I need to be present and visible in whatever way I am needed." *Tammy*

"...I have been open to answering God's call in my life."


"It means everything because I have been open to answering God's call in my life." *Cindy*

"Being an agrégée is a very personal and deeply spiritual experience for me. I am at home when I am with the sisters; I enjoy the community and relationships I have developed with so many of them. This reaffirms how important community is in our lives. I walk so much more closely on a daily basis with God. I hear His voice. I see him in my heart and desire to live

His message in my life, in my relationships, in my work." *Betsy*

Lastly, I asked them what others might like to know about this commitment.

"An agrégée is not better or more important than an associate nor are we 'wanna-be-nuns.' I am grateful for this journey and eager to see what lies ahead." *Tammy*

"I'd like others to know that this is a true calling ... being open to that call is worth waiting for and doesn't happen in my time but God's." *Cindy* 



Learn more about SSJ Agrégées at www.ssjerie.org or contact Susan Herzing, SSJ at 814-836-4066.

*Of interest, contrary to widespread assumptions, the crowded novitiates and overflowing convents of the mid-twentieth century represent an anomaly in the history of U.S. women's religious life rather than a standard to which sisters could or should return.

Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today, December 2015, FADICS (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities.)



First agrégées of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania pictured back row (l-r): Cindy Brown, Deb Seng, Betsy Wiest, Jeanne Marie Ryan, and Michelle Tortorelli. Front row (l-r): Tammy Van Buren, Arlene Chaney, Charlene Kellerman, Cindy Polesnak.

sharing advocacy dreams

By Ajla Glavasevic, Esq.

I was giddy — like a 10-year-old girl waiting to meet Ariel at Disney World. I was excited to meet a mentor, one developed through books and a common urgency to do better, to do more, for those insulated by society with the curse of labels and pre-destined expectations.

Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ's spirit was evident in the picturesque monastery. I sat waiting patiently, taking it all in. I am not a Christian and I had only ever been in a monastery or church once before. However, there I was, a 27-year-old female Muslim attorney, sitting in a pew, waiting to hear a Catholic sister paint pictures—difficult, hardening, emotionally grasping pictures—of her journey through death row and government-instituted executions. When she spoke, I was captivated.

While reading her books, I was deeply troubled by her words and experiences. I was in law school working with the Ohio Justice and Policy Center advocating for prisoners' rights. I spent several days each week in prisons meeting with young men and women whose lives would unfold within the confines of four small walls. Pain, regrets, and what-ifs

fill their days as they live out life sentences, most without possibility of parole. Their tiny cells confront them with their mistakes. They altered my life and inflamed a passion to peel away labels and societal fears and tell their stories (particularly in the courtroom) to convey their human-ness.

Sister Helen does what I passionately want to do—advocate locally and nationally for those who need their human-ness to prevail most. Not just for prisoners, but for all people who may be ill-equipped, institutionally failed or who simply lack the tools to fight battles against discrimination, mass incarceration, poverty, historically embedded lives of crime, gang cultures, violence, drugs,


and a lack of opportunity to change their seemingly predetermined paths. Sister Helen's work motivates me to a feeling of urgency, so much so, that I began corresponding with a death-row inmate. There is no feeling like that of speaking to a "lifer". There is a haunting realness to their tragedy,



Helen Prejean, CSJ (left) and Ajla Glavasevic.

“Everyone is worth more than the worst thing he or she has done.”

pain and suffering which is why listening to Sister Helen Prejean was so significant. I sat inspired as she talked about the worthiness of each individual. "Everyone is worth more than the worst thing he or she has done," she said. She reminded us that our mistakes do not define us. Those were words I had preached to people who questioned my desire to work with prisoners and advocate for "criminals." I was comforted knowing that others shared my belief.

Meeting Sister Helen will forever be an incredible moment in my life. Sharing conversation and advocacy dreams with her changed me in a humbling and motivating manner. I thank the Benedictines for Peace for inviting Sr. Helen to Erie and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania for co-sponsoring the event. I am grateful for the opportunity to have our passions and dreams inflamed once more and to be reminded of the human element of all people especially when an "us vs. them" mentality and segregation within civilization is all too prevalent. 

Ajla Glavasevic, Esq. is an Associate Attorney with Jones, Gregg, Creehan & Gerace, LLP, focused on developing the firm's immigration practice while also working in other areas of law. She earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of Cincinnati College of Law in 2014, primarily focused on juvenile rights, prisoners' rights, immigration, and social justice. Read more about Ajla and her passion for social justice on page 31.

Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ

**Death penalty abolitionist,
author of "Dead Man Walking"
and 2016 Erie Benedictines
for Peace Speaker**

Co-sponsored by the
Sisters of St. Joseph
of Northwestern Pennsylvania



Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, began her prison ministry in 1981. She became pen pals with death-row inmate Patrick Sonnier, the convicted killer of two teenagers and, at his request, she became his spiritual advisor. Through that relationship, she witnessed the Louisiana execution process. Sister Helen wrote *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* about her experience.

The book became an international best seller, translated into 10 languages. In 1996, it became an Academy Award winning film starring Susan Sarandon as Sister Helen and Sean Penn as a death-row inmate. Sister Helen has witnessed five executions; she lectures and writes about her experiences and the death penalty. She continues to counsel death-row inmates and families of murder victims, as well.

Her second book, *The Death of Innocents: An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions*, tells the story of accompanying two men she believes were innocent to their executions. She examines how the death penalty system leads to the executions of innocent people. She is working on her third book, *River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey*.

To learn more about Sr. Helen's ministry against the death penalty, visit www.sisterhelen.org.



Several sisters, *agrégées* and associates greeted Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ (front, center) when she arrived at Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie.

witness of mercy

by Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ
Mission Effectiveness
Coordinator



A recent headline in the Boston Globe was MAKE IT STOP. Three simple words accompanied by a photo of a handgun. This was referring, of course, to the pleas of so many in the aftermath of yet another mass shooting in our country. How many more can there be before we MAKE IT STOP? And yet, the discourse continues, the political debate goes on, and innocent people young and old become the sacrificial lambs whose blood stains our consciousness with the indelible sense of urgency to MAKE IT STOP. We are a broken people, hurting, and frustrated and wanting it to stop. But how? Perhaps a way to move toward the solution is to heed the words of Pope Francis calling us to be witnesses of mercy.

Pope Francis proclaimed 2016 as a Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Church. During this Holy Year, he encourages us to be witnesses of mercy. "It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy," he said.

What does it mean to be a witness of mercy? I read somewhere that when we are witness "to" something, we are a bystander who observed something happen. As a "witness of," we are involved in the event, witnessing

from inside. Mercy is defined as "the compassionate care of others whereby one takes on the burden of another as one's own. It is an active quality of the virtue of charity motivated by love."^{*} Each time we reach out to a neighbor in need by practicing one of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy, we are a "witness of mercy."

As I take to heart what Pope Francis is asking of all Christian people this year, the following questions came to mind:


How do I experience God's mercy in my life?

Do I graciously accept the mercy given to me by those whom God puts into my life each day?

Do I show loving care and compassion to the people around me?

What keeps me from showing mercy to others?

What spiritual and corporal works of mercy might Christ be calling me to practice?

As witnesses of mercy, we are called to be "merciful like the Father is merciful" and to reflect God's mercy in our daily actions toward others. Let us continue to rediscover the works of mercy and continue to extend mercy to those in need. As St. Ignatius said, "Love shows itself more in deeds than in words." 

^{*}*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*

works of mercy

corporal works of mercy

The Corporal Works of Mercy are these kind acts by which we help our neighbors with their material and physical needs.

*feed the hungry
give drink to the thirsty
clothe the naked
shelter the homeless
visit the sick
visit the imprisoned
bury the dead*

spiritual works of mercy

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are acts of compassion by which we help our neighbors with their emotional and spiritual needs.

*counsel the doubtful
instruct the ignorant
admonish sinners
comfort the afflicted
forgive offenses
bear wrongs patiently
pray for the living and the dead*

Source: www.loyolapress.com

leadership message

“Behold I make all things new” (Isaiah 43:19; Rev. 21:5) comes to mind with this issue of *journeys*. It has a new look, a fresh new color theme, a new format and exciting new content. All that is new is built on a foundation of what has been done before and awareness of what needs to change. This new *journeys* reflects what you, our readers, told us we need to change as we move forward. Through our recent readers’ survey and communications audit, we learned more about you and what you’d like to see from us. We hope you find this issue as exciting as we do and, as always, we welcome your feedback.

With gratitude and blessings,
Sr. Mary Herrmann,
on behalf SSJ Leadership



news

Nuns on the Bus Tour Stops in Erie

NETWORK’s Nuns on the Bus hit the road again and made a stop in Erie on July 19! Nuns on the Bus set out to call on elected officials and candidates to “Mend the Gaps” in income and wealth inequality in our nation. They stopped at both the Republican and Democratic conventions where they educated people on the gaps in our society and NETWORK’s proactive policy strategy that can bridge those divides. NETWORK’s 44-year-

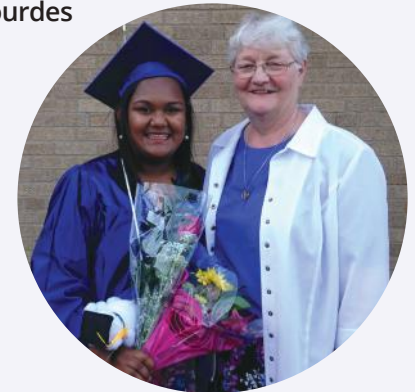
old, faith-filled political message is an alternative to the anger, fear, and polarization of this election cycle. Nuns on the Bus travels the country to listen to the life experiences of people in their communities and to hold elected officials accountable to the promises they make to legislate for the common good. www.networklobby.org.



Erie sisters, agrégées and associates greet the Nuns on the Bus.

Unity Awards

Unity Awards are given annually to the Villa Maria Academy and Villa Maria Elementary school students who most exemplify the SSJ mission of unity in their everyday lives. This year’s Unity Award recipients are: **Jacklyn Kitts** and **Breanna Slater** from VMA and **Agnes Lourdes** from VME.



Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ, with VMB Unity Award recipient, Agnes Lourdes.



Bernardine Pais, SSJ

80 years

Sister Bernardine Pais, SSJ, was born on November 16, 1917, in Nanty-Glo, PA. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Lewis Run, PA, on September 8, 1936, and professed her final vows on August 15, 1942. She graduated from St. Bernard High School, Bradford, PA, in 1935 and earned a BS degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College, Erie in 1945. Sister Bernardine ministered in education for more than 30 years including teaching at St. John the Baptist School in Erie for 20 years. She also served as principal at Sacred Heart School, Erie. She is known by many former students as their “small but mighty” teacher. She later ministered for more than 40 years as resident floor supervisor at Saint Mary’s Home of Erie where she cared for the residents’ personal, social, and religious needs. She retired in 2015. She considers Psalm 27 as her mantra: “One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek, to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”



Susan Herzing, SSJ

50 years

Susan Herzing, SSJ, is known for her healing hands as a massage therapist. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Mary’s parish in St. Marys, PA on September 8, 1966, and professed her final vows on September 15, 1974. She graduated from Elk County Christian High School, St. Marys, PA, in 1963, and earned a BS degree in elementary education from Villa Maria College, Erie, in 1972. She also earned an MA in pastoral studies from Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT, in 1982 and graduated from Pittsburgh School of Massage Therapy in 1996. Sister Susan taught at St. Patrick School and Villa Maria Academy, both in Erie. She also served as vocation director for the congregation. She worked with Separated and Divorced Catholics, a program of the Diocese of Erie and served as pastoral minister at St. Joseph Church in Erie. In 2012, she was named agrégée director for the Sisters of St. Joseph. “As in any relationship, communication is key—that is what prayer is for me,” she says. “I continue to pray for openness to whatever I am called, and to trust that God will always be faithful to his promise of presence, strength and support.”



Phyllis DiFuccia, SSJ

50 years

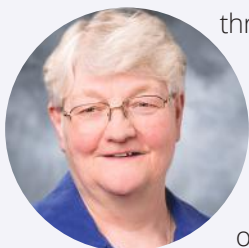
Phyllis DiFuccia, SSJ, entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Peter Cathedral in Erie, on September 8, 1966, and professed her final vows on September 8, 1974. She graduated from Villa Maria Academy, Erie, in 1965, and earned a BA degree in French from Villa Maria College, Erie, in 1969; an MA in French from Middlebury College, Middlebury VT, in 1973; and an MSOD in organization development from Loyola University, Chicago, IL, in 1996. She taught French at Villa Maria Academy and served as principal and later administrator. She also taught French at Villa Maria College, Erie, and served as Dean of Adult Learning. She was the director of mission effectiveness at Saint Vincent Health System. Sister Phyllis was a member of the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph research teams responsible for translating the Sisters of St. Joseph primitive documents from French to English. She spent 18 years in Chicago, IL, as an independent consultant specializing in participative processes and systems for various organizations. She served as a member of the first SSJ Leadership Team from 1999-2003. Since 2012, she has ministered as the vice president of mission at St. Joseph Academy, Cleveland, OH.

Serra Club, Sister of the Year

Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ, was recognized as the Serra Club of Erie's Woman Religious of the Year. This award is given annually to a sister who represents spirituality and service to others while fulfilling her call in consecrated life. The Erie Serra Club is an organization of Catholic men and women committed to growing in holiness and fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership Council

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ, was elected to a three-year term on the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership Council. The Federation is a union of all the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States who claim a common origin in the foundation at LePuy, France, in 1650. The Federation is comprised of 4,465 sisters, 2,919 associates, and 26 agrégées of 16 Congregations throughout the United States.



Women Making History

Mary Drexler, SSJ, was honored as one of Erie's dynamic dozen at the annual Women Making History event hosted by the Mercy

Center for Women. The program honors 12 women who serve in their neighborhoods, workplaces and/or communities; have strong moral values; and a strong commitment to women's issues.

Mary Drexler, SSJ, one of Erie's dynamic dozen Women Making History

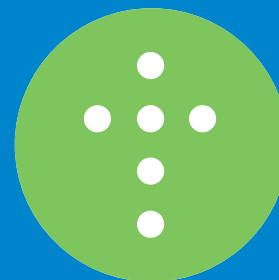


Living the Mission

SSJ employees **Rebecca Hower** and **Ferisa Alihodzic** received the Living the Mission Distinguished Employee Award for 2016. The award is given annually to an employee(s) of the Sisters of St. Joseph who exemplifies the characteristics of the SSJ employee mission statement. Employees are nominated by their peers and a selection committee determines the honoree(s).

What Chemistry!

Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ was recognized for 50 years of membership in the American Chemical Society. Sr. Mary Claire earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA then taught at Villa Maria College, Erie, before moving to Germany to teach at the University of Konstanz. She was also a professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Her academic work in chemistry has been published in more than 60 scholarly articles.



we
remember

Deceased Sisters:

Sister Margaret Joseph Mokes

February 16, 2016

Sister Mary Irene Lunger

February 16, 2016

Sister Antonia Domeracki

May 6, 2016

Sister Ann Louis Grandinetti

June 15, 2016

Deceased Associates:

Johnie Atkinson

February 24, 2016

Joseph Laythe

March 12, 2016

Deacon Harvey McQueen

March 26, 2016

Judy Dufala

March 31, 2016

Eleanor Fuhrman

July 16, 2016

Robert George

July 27, 2016

our emerging story of being one

U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Event 2016

Nearly 700 sisters, associates, agrégées and partners in mission, including 11 from Erie, gathered at the Caribe Royale Hotel and Conference Center in Orlando, FL, for the

U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Event 2016 and the 50th anniversary of the Federation.

Sr. Patty Johnson, CSJ, Executive Director of the Federation, acknowledged the group's presence in a city filled with sadness and fear following the tragedy at the Pulse nightclub. "It is not by chance," said Sr. Jane Stecker, SSJ, "that this event is scheduled almost one month to the day after the tragedy in Orlando. The CSSJs bring a deeper presence of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit to this "holy city." We bring our hands, our feet and our hearts to all our dear neighbors of Orlando as they welcome our charism that all may be one."

Keynote speakers included Mary Johnson, SNDdeN, a professor of sociology and religious studies at Trinity University in Washington, D.C., and co-author of *A New Generation of Catholic Sisters: The Challenge of Diversity*, a sociological study of religious life in the United States; and

"We bring our hands, our feet and our hearts to all our dear neighbors of Orlando as they welcome our charism that all may be one."



Patty Johnson, CSJ, Executive Director of the CSSJ Federation (above) welcomes Event 2016 attendees. Far left, the music of Sara Thomsen was a unifying element throughout the Event at large gatherings and at an impromptu, smaller vigil that took place at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando.

Take Action

Help fight sex trafficking with TraffickCam by uploading photos of hotel rooms you stay in when traveling. Photos taken of victims in hotel rooms are evidence that can be used to find the perpetrators if it can be determined where the photos were taken. TraffickCam creates a database investigators can search to determine location. TraffickCam was developed by the Exchange Initiative which was created by Nix Conference & Meeting Management to help end sex trafficking. Nix Conference & Meeting Management is one of only 13 U.S. companies and 43 worldwide honored as a 2014 Top Member by the internationally recognized Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct (TheCode.org) for its exceptional work to integrate child protection practices into its business. The U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph works exclusively with Nix in planning its national events.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a worker-based human rights organization recognized for social responsibility and combating human trafficking and gender-based violence at work. Companies can voluntarily agree to join CIW's Fair Food Program and commit to using products that are grown and harvested fairly. Prior to the program, many farmworkers had limited rights and suffered retaliation, harassment, abuse, and low wages. Wendy's restaurants refuses to join the Fair Food Program though other major food chains such as McDonald's, Taco Bell, Subway and Burger King have.

How can you help?


- Purchase produce with the Fair Food label
- Urge Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program by going to the CSSJ Federation website cssjfed.org for sample letters to send to the Board of Directors of Wendy's and to Wendy's CEO.



Pat Bergen, CSJ, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph, who is an educator, spiritual director and retreat facilitator. Through her work, she brings the Christian tradition and the charism and spirituality of various congregations into dialogue with the new cosmology. Singer/songwriter Sara Thomsen wove music and prayer and her song, *By Breath*, became a mantra throughout the event. Thomsen joined some attendees outside the Pulse nightclub for a prayer vigil punctuated with loud claps of thunder. Despite no rainfall, a rainbow appeared as the vigil concluded.



The Erie contingent in attendance at Federation Event 2016 included (left to right) Sisters Claudia Dombrowski, Rosemary O'Brien, Nancy Prenatt; Associate Stephanie Hall; Sisters Mary Ann White, Nancy Fischer, Margaret Frank, Clare Marie Beichner; Associate Linda Kuhn; Sister Carol Morehouse and Associate Nancy Donnelly.

The Federation's anti-human trafficking efforts continued with a focus on labor trafficking and the exploitation of farm workers. A presentation by Terry Coonan, a practicing human rights and immigration attorney, was followed by a panel discussion about the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of social responsibility, human trafficking, and gender-based violence at work. The Caribe Royale Hotel, agreed to sign the code of conduct developed by Nix Conference and Meeting Management to aid in the fight against human trafficking and to serve only Fair Trade coffee and tea as well as fairly sourced tomatoes and cucumbers. A call to action was issued to urge Wendy's restaurants to join the Fair Food Program; Wendy's is the only major fast-food chain that has not signed on to the program. 

forever sisters in spirit

*A happy reunion
with our former sisters*



We hosted a reunion with former Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. The celebration included a Friday evening social followed by liturgy and a luncheon on Saturday. The weekend was filled with laughter, hugs, happy memories, joyful reunions and was blessed with God's graces. These former *sisters in community* will forever be our *sisters in spirit*.



Pictured, clockwise from top: Sr. Ann Stephanie Stano, SSJ with Sue Ann Cawn Daron (former Sr. Anne Martha). Bottom right: (l-r) Sr. Marjorie Adams, SSJ; Sr. André Feulner, SSJ; and Janet Price (former Sr. Marie Joseph). Bottom: Sandra Fickenworth MacHutta (former Sr. Gretchen) with her back to the camera, hugging Marilyn Reiser (former Sr. Margretta). Carol Ann McLaughlin, OSB, (former Sr. Canice) with Sr. Marie Stephen Kebort, SSJ.

with gratitude

Our thanks to the many generous donors who supported the Sisters and the SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation in 2015.

ANNUAL APPEAL

Anonymous

in memory of the deceased members of the Scicchitano and Orso families

in memory and in honor of the Sisters of St. Joseph who taught at St. Bernard High School in Bradford PA

Ms. Dolores Y. Adams

in memory of Sr. Mary Margaret Meldon

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Ms. Mary E. Adams

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in memory of deceased members of the McCarthy and Albaugh families

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in memory of Sr. Mary Karen Crawford

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in memory of James W. Cullen Sr.

Mr. David Cyr and Dr. Nellie M. Cyr

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel J. Dahlkemper

Ms. Mary Ellen Dahlkemper and Mr. Edward A. Lesser

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Dankesreiter

Ms. Florence Daub

Ms. Mary J. Daugherty

*deceased

freely
given
over
maxim 39

*Be nothing to yourself
and be utterly given
to God and to the
neighbor.*

*Maxims of the Little Institute
of the Sisters of St. Joseph*



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Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Schmitt
*in memory of Sr. Irminda, principal of
St. Joe's in Erie and fondly nicknamed
"Big Chief"*
Mr. Arthur Schodt
Dr. and Mrs. Calvin W. Schroeck
Ms. Elaine M. Schwab
*in honor and memory of the living and
deceased members of the VMA Class of
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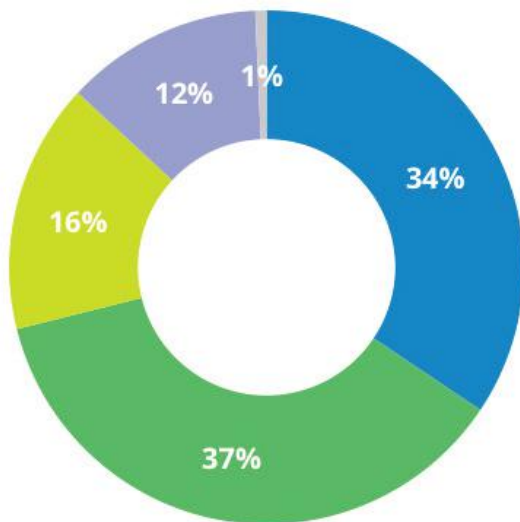
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Gifts to the SSJ Thanksgiving Fund are used, first, for the dinner; then remaining funds are distributed to assist agencies that serve our dear neighbors throughout the year. Thirty-three organizations throughout the Erie Diocese received support this year.

more than a meal

The Sisters of St. Joseph 27th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner was so much more than a meal. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers and donors, we served nearly 800 Thanksgiving meals – more than 340 onsite at Gannon and 450 to homebound neighbors throughout the Erie area.

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in memory of Joanne Vieira Urban

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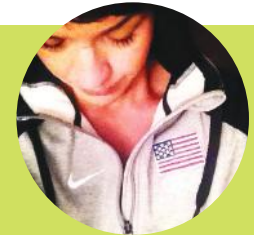
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initiative for immigration



Ajla Glavasevic's motivation to run 26.2 miles in the Erie marathon on September 11 is to help immigrants by raising \$10,000 for the Sisters of St. Joseph, specifically a legal assistance fund for immigrants. Ajla immigrated with her family to the U.S. in 1995 following the genocide, war and dissolution of Yugoslavia. Now, as an attorney with a Pittsburgh-based firm, Ajla is developing an immigration practice to serve western Pennsylvania. Erie is the fifth largest resettlement city in the United States yet has no immigration law attorneys. Ajla is also an accomplished athlete and former member of the U.S. National Women's Bobsled Team.

Working with the Sisters of St. Joseph, Ajla hopes to connect immigrants in need of legal counsel with appropriate services and to offset costs with this fund.

Read Ajla's story and donate to her effort by visiting www.crowdrise.com, type AJLA into the search box.

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on the earth

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circle of friends celebration
4 p.m. saturday, august 20

sisters of st. joseph
of northwestern pennsylvania

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