

# interim

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March 2022

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

## The Special Month of March

**Gentleness,  
Peace, and Joy**

**Agrégées  
and Associates**

**Please join us  
St. Joseph Day  
Livestream Liturgy  
Saturday, March 19  
10:00 a.m.**

Though we are once again unable to gather as a full community on this special day, please plan to join us via livestream, for our St. Joseph Day Liturgy.

**Watch on [Facebook](#)  
Or [YouTube](#)**

Just around the corner is the month of March celebrating three big events that touch all of our lives to some degree: the beginning of Lent, Catholic Sisters Week, and St. Joseph's Day. Each year, during Lent, we are invited in whatever way works best for us, to focus on the life, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Take some time now to think about how you want to spend these forty days. What will draw you closer to Jesus? Will it be quiet time or an added effort at prayer? Will

you find time for service to those most in need? What will your giving look like?

Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14, in our region is focusing on ***Caring for earth, Caring for you.*** We invite you to join us wherever you are in promoting this theme, not only during this week but throughout the year. We chose this theme in response to Pope Francis' call to care for the earth.

As women religious, we take this call seriously. Please collaborate with us in whatever way is possible for you.

On March 19, we honor our patron St. Joseph. Is there an aspect of Joseph's life that most captures you— his hiddenness, his loving care of Jesus and Mary, his response to dreams, his work as a carpenter, his life of simplicity, or something else? Spend some time giving thanks for Joseph's gifts to us and God's people.

We are indeed blessed to have so wonderful a patron as Joseph.

Happy March,

*Sr. Mary*  
Sister Mary Drexler



*Caring for Earth  
Caring for You*

Catholic Sisters Week  March 8-14

# MISSION: POSSIBLE

## Spring is upon us—a time of renewal.

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

### **Renewal of vows and commitments**

The month of March is upon us bringing spring and new life. March is significant for Catholic Sisters everywhere as we celebrate Catholic Sisters Week March 8-14. And the month of March is even more meaningful for the sisters, agrégées, and associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Each year on March 19 we celebrate the feast of our patron, St. Joseph.

We would typically gather as

a community for a special liturgy and festive St. Joseph Day celebration. This year, unfortunately, continuing COVID concerns make it impossible to hold our usual celebration.

However, the most important part of the day will not be overlooked. It is on St. Joseph Day each year that the sisters and agrégées renew their vows and associates renew their commitments. Prior to the day, we discern our desire to live

the SSJ charism and mission to the best of our ability. It is those ongoing renewals and commitments that make the **SSJ Mission Possible**.

**\*ASSOCIATES**, please be sure to complete your re-commitment form by March 19. [Click here](#) to access the form or login to the SSJ Community Page at [www.ssjerie.org](http://www.ssjerie.org).



## Chapter 2022-23

O Most Holy One,  
Holding in our hearts the myriad memories of your life-giving care and trusting in hope for what is to come, we humbly ask you to nurture the seeds you faithfully plant in us:

***Seeds of life, passion, relevance, and discipleship.***

We will not talk of what is “written on the wall” because in faith we know you as a God of surprises, both in our global history as Sisters of St. Joseph and our personal history in this place and century.  
*(Take a moment to recall one member of our community who is now with God, whose life inspired you, and ask her to guide us through this time of emergence.)*

Continue to increase our belief that you lead us and gift us with all that is needed to serve the Dear Neighbor. Hold us in your embrace if we lose heart or falter in our intent.

O Holy One, may your wisdom inspire and counsel us. May we live each day assured of your affirmation and love. In the name of the Christ who walked among us and invited us to follow him. Amen.



## Lenten Retreat Opportunities

### NEW: Virtual Retreat

*You Can't Fail Lent: Learning to See These 40 Days as a Journey, Not a Test*

Presented by  
**Author Mary DeTurris Poust**  
**Saturday, March 19**  
**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Lent is one of those seasons that begins with the best of intentions. We plan to pray more, eat less and find ways to make the season more sacred. But too often we treat Lent as though it is one more goal to accomplish, a resolution 2.0 that puts the focus on us rather than on God. During this virtual morning retreat, we'll look at our Lenten practices through the prism of compassion, humor, and, of course, prayer. Click [here](#) to learn more.

### Lenten Experience with Matthew Kelly

**A Free Daily Lenten Experience with Matthew Kelly**

*Don't Be a Consumer.  
 Be a Disciple.*  
[Click here.](#)

### A Virtual Lenten Retreat with Dan Schutte

**Join Dan Schutte on a self-directed virtual Lenten retreat and make the journey from ashes to glory.**

Includes:

- Twenty-one video presentations by Dan, including three new ones
  - Accessible from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday
  - Downloadable updated retreat workbook-journal
  - Each presentation includes both the reflection and an inspiring song
  - Retreat concludes with optional live Zoom conversation with Dan
- Ability to give the retreat as a gift to a friend

[Click here for more information.](#)

*If you are interested in participating in this Virtual Lenten Retreat with Dan Schutte, please contact Sr. Rosemary. We may be able to qualify for a special group rate.*

### Celebrate Lent with Padre Pio!

St. Pio of Pietrelcina, or Padre Pio as he's widely known, personified the season of Lent perhaps better than any other saint. In 1918, he had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet, and side. Yet this holy and humble Capuchin Franciscan understood that earthly pain is temporary; Christ's death meant his salvation—and ours.

Join us this Lent with meditations, prayers, and words of comfort from Padre Pio himself, delivered right to your inbox!

Our journey begins  
 Ash Wednesday, March 2.  
[Click here.](#)



## SAVE THE DATES! SSJ SUMMER CONFERENCE RETREAT

July 11 -15, 2022  
 at the SSJ Community Living Center

We look forward to welcoming our retreat facilitator, Sr. Mary Rowell of the Canadian province of the Sisters of St. Joseph (see page 5),

More details will follow.  
 Contact [Sr. Rosemary O'Brien](#) if you have questions.

## Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ  
Associate Director



### Prayers

Please keep in your prayers all the sisters, agrégées and associates and their family members who are dealing with health problems, especially associates Larry Lewis, Mary Grace Lewis, and Peggy Rusnak. Please also remember in prayer the repose of the soul of Associate George Dufala who died January 19, 2022. May eternal light shine upon him, O Lord! Also remember his family in your prayers.

### Drive Thru Event

On **Saturday, April 23, 2022**, we will be holding a Drive Thru to benefit the **SSJNN**. Gretchen Durney from the SSJ Neighborhood network sent the following list of items that are needed: Gatorade; juice boxes; cases of bottled water; toilet paper; diapers (sizes 4 and 5); baby wipes; laundry soap or pods; body wash; gift cards to neighborhood stores such as Larry's Central Market, Serafin's Market, Dollar General or Country Fair.



### We LOVE hearing from you!

It was a pleasant surprise to hear from **Associate Peggy Rusnak** who now lives in sunny California close to her daughter, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. It was also great to hear from **Associate Shirley Byers** of Meadville. Shirley called to thank us for the birthday cards she received this month.

### ZOOM Get Togethers

Although we were few in numbers, those of us who attended the ZOOM Get Togethers enjoyed visiting with each other. Thanks to all who participated!



## Associate Recommitment

Dear Associates,

On Welcoming Day when you became an SSJ Associate, you made the following commitment: *I desire to deepen my spiritual life by actively living the mission of unity of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God without distinction as an associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph.* Your commitment as an associate expresses your desire to live the SSJ charism and mission the best that you are able wherever you are. This can take many forms and reflects your support of the SSJ Congregation through personal and communal prayer; volunteering in your parish, local community, or SSJ ministries; and caring for family and the dear neighbor—whatever you are able to do. Please be sure to reaffirm your commitment by completing the Associate Recommitment form by [clicking here](#). (For those who don't have computer access, a paper copy of the form is included with your copy of Interim.) Please complete and return by March 19, 2022.

Blessings and Prayers,  
Sister Ann Marie Cappello



## Tell Congress to Strengthen Funding for Food to Food Banks

Write to your lawmakers today and tell them to strengthen emergency food assistance so food banks can keep helping families facing hunger. More people than ever are still turning to the Food Bank for help this winter because of high gas and grocery prices, as well as the new challenges the pandemic brings every day.

Those rising prices, supply chain disruptions, uncertainty with COVID-19, and fewer food donations also mean that food banks are struggling to stay stocked. We are asking Congress to provide additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) food purchases, such as fresh vegetables, milk, meat, and other staples. Use the action alert below to send an email to your Representative and



### Feeding the Community

Senators. Tell them that Congress must act to support our neighbors who continue to struggle with hunger and food insecurity. [Click here](#) to send a message to Congress and the FDA.

## SSJ Summer Conference Retreat facilitator, Sr. Mary Rowell

Sister Mary Rowell is originally from Cambridge in England. She has been a Sister of St. Joseph since 2004. At Villa St. Joseph, Sister Mary is engaged in retreat facilitation, spiritual accompaniment and she is deeply engaged in the ecology ministry at the Center. She teaches theology at Regis and St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. Sister Mary is also the Vocation and First Formation Director for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada.



Before entering the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada, Sister Mary worked as a nurse and nurse educator in England and later in ophthalmological and blindness prevention programs in Southeast Asia, China and the Indian sub-continent. She is also a clinical bioethicist. Sister Mary has a bachelor's degree in philosophy, a Master's in Medical Law and Ethics and a doctorate in Theology.

## March 9 Navigating the Road Ahead



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.

**LIVE**

Join Us!

via Zoom,  
YouTube or podcast

[exploringintersections.org](http://exploringintersections.org)



## 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.

Find out more at [www.exploringintersections.org](http://www.exploringintersections.org)



## Want to learn more about Event 2022?

[Click here](#) to watch this informational video.

Be sure to visit the [Federation website Event page](#) for more information and regular updates.



**VIRTUAL  
OPTIONS!  
EVERYONE  
can  
attend!**

## Working Toward a Sustainable Lifestyle



## Your Guide to an Eco-friendly Shower

Green Mountain Energy offers a guide to taking an Eco-Friendly Shower.

- Swap plastic soap and shampoo bottles for sustainable packaging.
- Swap plastic shower liner for cloth liner.
- Swap your plastic razor for a stainless steel razor.
- Swap faux loofahs for natural loofahs.
- Swap regular towels for ethically sourced towels.







## News from the Neighborhood Network



## SSJNN Guess That Tune Gala

Save the date for the **15<sup>th</sup> Annual SSJNN Guess That Tune Gala**, which will be held May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at the Bayfront Convention Center. Portions of the event will also be available virtually for those unable to attend. A few more volunteers are needed for this high-energy, in-person event. Please contact Lora at 814-897-6901 if interested. Volunteers must be vaccinated.

### Villa Alum? Join Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections

Please join our Facebook Group: Villa Alum/SSJ Erie Connections [www.facebook.com/groups/villassjerie/](https://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/>

## 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.](#)



SAINT GREGORY  
PARISH SCHOOL

The students at St. Gregory Parish School in North East, PA have been faithful partners of St. Patrick's Haven for the past four years. Their teachers talk with them about caring for others and the students have accepted the challenge to create activities to help those in need. They recently collected funds which they sent to St. Patrick's Haven. Thank you to the students, faculty and staff at St. Gregory's. You will always be Haven Angels!



## ssj community March Birthdays

- 3 A. Mary Yochim
- 4 A. Pat Moyer  
A. Jeannette Barczynski
- 7 A. Martha (Marty) Connelly
- 9 A. Rebecca Hower  
A. Lorna Waddell
- 11 A. John Mang
- 13 A. Mary Hickin  
A. Barb Noonan
- 14 A. Marybeth Smogorzewski
- 15 A. Mark McNerney  
A. Jan Staszewski  
A. Patricia George
- 16 A. Nancy Donnelly
- 17 A. Patricia McLaughlin
- 20 A. Stephanie Domitrovich  
A. Cindy Ferber
- 21 S. Margaret O'Brien
- 24 A. Dan Partin
- 25 A. Ron Visnoski
- 26 S. Mary Helen Forney
- 29 A. Toni Stebell
- 30 A. Linda McQueen  
A. Donna Nicholas  
A. Lewis Nordin
- 31 A. Robert Haibach  
A. Anna Turco

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WWW.  
SSJERIE  
.ORG

## Mission Haiti

It was a phone call from the Sisters of St. Joseph Federation U.N. representative after the 2010 devastating earthquake in Haiti that initiated our relationship with Mission Haiti Inc., the Sisters of the Companions of Jesus, and ten girl-students in Haiti.

This past year, Haiti experienced another earthquake, a hurricane, the murder of their president, gang violence, and COVID-19. They are facing some of these hardships in already difficult levels of poverty.

The U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph has committed to another year of education for these girls, some of whom we have followed since grade one. We are blessed for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of these girls and their families.

Each Lent we re-commit to the girls and to Haiti. We invite

you to once again help with prayerful support and to consider a Lenten donation to support Mission Haiti.

The [2022 Haiti Lenten Calendar](#) incorporates the writings of Pope Francis in Laudato Si which focuses on current social and economic challenges and allows us to reach out to others.

[Click here](#) to make a donation online (check Haiti Project in the Use My Gift dropdown menu) or send a check payable to the Sisters of St. Joseph, 5031 West Ridge Road, Erie, PA 16506. Write Mission Haiti in the memo. (For the sisters living at the CLC, a large vase will be available in the lobby to collect your donations.)

Together we can make a difference in the lives of these girls. As Pope Francis said, "Let us dream then, as a single human family, as fellow

*by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator*

travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth, which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs, and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all."

Blessings on your Lenten journey.

