

interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 41, Issue 8

August 2023

Villa Maria Project Balcony

On Saturday, July 22, I spoke at the blessing of the Villa Maria Project Balcony at Cathedral Prep. About 50 or more faculty, staff, students, and alums gathered for the blessing of this recently completed space. This Project Balcony is designed to be used by students in an innovative and creative way, much like the Project Commons on the third floor was used during this past school year to learn more collaboratively outside the walls of a traditional classroom. It also recalls a favorite spot at Villa Maria Academy, the patio, a space used for many activities outside the classroom where people gathered for fun, food, and festivities. Like the VMA patio, this new space can be used for a variety of projects that will gather neighbor with neighbor.

What especially captured my attention is the possibility of alums, parent groups, or student clubs and

activities using it for varied functions. Because it is a new space in the building, it will take some time to discover the many ways it can be used. If you are driving by on 10th Street, stop, pull over, and look up at the signage for the new **Villa Maria Project Balcony**. Our legacy lives on, as does the blue and white. May the blessings of our patroness Mary shine on all who enter the building.



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.

Mother Agnes Spencer, SSJ Legacy Society

The Mother Agnes Spencer, SSJ, Legacy Society is comprised of forward-thinking individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to advancing the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph with a planned gift.

The Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation invites you to join us
Mother Agnes Spencer, SSJ
Legacy Society Mass and Brunch
Sunday, August 20, 2023
9:00 a.m. Liturgy

followed by brunch and a brief presentation
Community Living Center

RSVP by August 7
Call 814-836-4198 or email carol.hermann@ssjerie.org



Celebrating the life and legacy of our foundress, Mother Agnes Spencer, SSJ, a woman of strong personality, great tact, and ability.

MISSION: POSSIBLE!

Walk on Water With Me

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

At our recent summer events, Sisters Ricarda and Linda led us in an opening prayer using our 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."*

We reflected on these words and shared what touched us and what we believe the statement is calling us to.

The part of the statement that says: *to move beyond our comfort zones*, is sometimes difficult for me. I am not a risk taker. I hesitate to do something new or different unless I feel safe and secure. I am afraid to take chances and

go beyond my comfort zone so at times it is not easy for me to reach out to the dear neighbor. I am reminded of the poem, ***Get Out of the boat. Walk on water with me*** by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB.

I need to have courage, take the chance, and accept the invitation to *Walk on the water with Him*, to reach out and go beyond my comfort level. This is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

Walk on Water With Me

Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB.

*Come, walk on the water with me!
I'm in the mood for impossible things!
Take out your heart of courage,
A lamp amid your fears and walk on the water with me...*

*Let's look at everything that could be
Believe it will be
If we dare to walk on water scared and hopeful*

*Come; walk on the water with me!
Hold high your lamp of courage
Put all your doubts away
Let's take a chance on staying up.*

*Come, walk on the water with me!
I'm in the mood for impossible things.
I feel scared because it's impossible
I feel hopeful because it's not impossible.
So, scared, and hopeful we will walk.*

Come! Walk on water with me!

Spirits on Fire

On July 10, three of our lay staff members, Deb Seng, Director of Sister Services and Wellness, Cass Shimek, Executive Assistant, and Mary Beth Passauer, Resident Care Coordinator, traveled to the Carmelite Retreat Center near Chicago to attend *Spirits on Fire*, a CSSJ lay leaders' formation experience. The program is for lay leaders in CSSJ-sponsored and affiliated ministries and key internal congregational staff members. The objective of *Spirits on Fire* is to infuse participants with the CSSJ mission and values so they may carry them forward into the future.

by Phyllis DiFuccia, SSJ and Betsy Wiest, Agrégée

Spirits on Fire is a transformative process of growing into and leading from the CSSJ mission. It was developed in 2013 by Sisters and lay leaders. The program continues to be organized and facilitated by sisters and lay leaders. Currently, we are both members of the *Spirits on Fire* team. Congregational leadership invites individuals to attend the program. To date, 14 individuals from Erie have participated.

Spirits on Fire consists of two in-person immersion experiences approximately a year apart. Participants engage

in six online modules for small group reflection and sharing throughout the year. They reflect on their call and their response; they assume responsibility for their organization's mission and realize that formation is an ongoing process that never ends.

By the program's end, participants can recognize the charism in themselves; articulate it; act out of it, lead out of it; recognize and name its presence and absence; and see it and call it forth in others. Being part of the *Spirits on Fire*

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Erie Gives Day 2023

August 8 is a big day for hundreds of nonprofit organizations in Erie, including the Sisters of St. Joseph and their many ministries.

"The generosity in our community is overwhelming," says Erie Community Foundation president and CEO, Karen Bilowith. The SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation agrees!

"We see that generosity every day in the Sisters, those to whom they minister, and the people who support them," said Almi Clerkin, Executive Director. "The actions and spirit of the Sisters inspire giving for their work. Erie Gives Day is a perfect opportunity to show our thanks for their 160 years of ministry."



Here's How It Works!

Time and Date: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, August 8

Gift Amount: The minimum gift is \$25. There is no limit to the amount of money you may give.

Checks: Erie Gives will accept donations by check. Checks should be payable to The Erie Community Foundation and dropped off at 459 West 6th Street, Erie, PA by August 7. Checks must be accompanied by a "check donation form" (available on the Erie Community Foundation website www.eriegives.org).

Credit Cards: As always, Visa, MasterCard and Discover will be accepted.

Prorated Match: The Erie Community Foundation will enhance each donor's gift by providing a prorated match.

Your Receipt: You will receive an email receipt of your gift; please retain it for tax purposes. Unless you choose to remain anonymous, your donor information will be sent to the appropriate organizations.

When the nonprofits receive your donation: The organizations will receive your donation plus The Erie Community Foundation's prorated match later in August. For more information or to make an online gift on Erie Gives Day, visit www.eriegives.org.

Spirits on Fire

(Continued from page 2)

community reveals ways to embody the mission and offers creative ideas on how to lead others in the mission of unity effectively. Spirits on Fire continues to kindle that flame of God's love in the hearts of CSSJ lay leaders allowing them to better serve the dear neighbor.

"Spirits on Fire allowed me to immerse myself in the charism of the SSJs with 38 similarly focused, unique individuals and an awesome staff who led us through the process. I am so thankful for the opportunity and look forward to continuing the journey over the next twelve months and beyond." Cass Shimek

"I was so impressed by the faith and passion among all the participants—especially the younger folks. It gives me hope that the mission will continue to thrive long into the future."

Mary Beth Passauer

"The Spirit was truly present all week long. It was revitalizing to be with so many people who are like-minded and open to the movement of the Spirit. The mission and charism is alive and well in the people that I shared the week with."

Deb Seng



Pictured (l-r): Mary Beth Passauer, Sr. Phyllis DiFuccia, Deb Seng, Cass Shimek and Betsy Wiest.

ONE TABLE Picnic at Presque Isle

Thursday, August 3, 2023 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Meal at 6:00 p.m.
Presque Isle State Park Erie Runners Club Pavilion - Beach 1 Parking Lot
Bring a dish to share. Please label with ingredients. No pork please.

Questions? Call Gary Larson 716-307-5815 or send an email to gslarson1@yahoo.com

ONE TABLE is an organization that brings people of many cultures and faiths together to build bridges of understanding. Everyone is welcome!



Associates' News and Happenings

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

Prayers

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Jerome Maras, father of **Associate Jan Staszewski**, who died on July 15. May Eternal Light Shine Upon Him, O Lord. Pray for Jan and the family at this difficult time. Also remember the Associates, Sisters, Agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health problems, especially **Associates Peg McCreary, Connie Pellerite, Mark Mc Nerney, Mary Ann Weber, Patty Fronzaglia.**

Congratulations!

Associates Mary and John Fuhrman recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary!

Summer Event

The last summer event will be on August 14 from 2-3:30 p.m. in the Admin. Building. Join us in person or via ZOOM. Many thanks to all who attended the first two events. [Click here to RSVP](#) to attend in person or via ZOOM, or call **Sr. Ann Marie** at 814-823-1182. All are welcome!

SSJNN Needs Your Help

The Neighborhood Network is in need of sweet treats. Would you consider donating a dessert for the Monday night suppers at St. Paul's Church? Dessert donations are needed every second Monday of the month. Cookies, cakes, cupcakes,

brownies, etc. are all appreciated. You may drop them off between 3 - 4 p.m. at the church social hall. **Please note: No supper will be served on August 14.** Any questions call **Nancy Donnelly** at 814-455-5154. Thanks for your generosity!

Prayer Groups

A. Nancy Donnelly has been helping me get prayer groups formed. Those who wish to join a morning group will meet Monday August 7, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.; those looking for an afternoon group will meet Monday August 7, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. and those interested in an evening group will meet on Monday August 7, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Places to meet, days, times and coordinators for the groups will be decided at these meetings. **All organizational meetings will be held in the Gathering Room at the CLC. If you wish to join a ZOOM group call Nancy Donnelly at 814-455-5154.**

Committees Forming

Two Associate committees are forming: the **Program/Events/Activities Committee** and the **Outreach Committee**. The Program Committee will meet for an organizational meeting on August 10 at 2:00 p.m. in the Admin. Building. If you're interested, come to the

meeting. The Outreach Committee met on Thursday July 27, 2023. We will be giving you an update in the next Interim. If you wish to join this group, you can still do so.

What's Happening in Your Corner of the World?

I had a pleasant phone visit with **A. Mary Ann Weber**. She has moved back to the area from Florida and is eager for associate activities. Welcome Back! It was great to chat with **A. Ginny Hughes** who is now living at Mercy Terrace. She downsized and is now in an apartment and adjusting well. She is especially grateful that she can go to morning mass right in her building. I also had a phone visit with **A. Patty Fronzaglia**. It was great to catch up with her. I had a short visit with **Associates Ron Visnoski, Evelyn Visnoski and Rose Jones** while Rose was visiting from Florida. It was great being with all three of them.

Associate Information Session

An information session will be held on August 17, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Gathering Space at the CLC for prospective candidates. If you know anyone who is interested in becoming an Associate, please invite them, or send me their contact info. and I will invite them.

Summer Events—Let's Get Together!

The gathering will take place at the SSJ Admin. Bldg. and will begin with prayer and spirituality presented by **Sisters Ricarda Vincent and Linda Fusco**, followed by a short presentation of the Associate survey results. Then it's social time to relax and visit.

Final Session: Monday, August 14, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Please note: If you are unable to attend in person, **you are invited to attend via ZOOM.**

[Click here to RSVP](#) (for in person or ZOOM) or call 814-823-1182 or email s.amcappello@ssjerie.org



Welcome!

Associates Welcoming Ceremony

Sunday, September 10, 2023

9:00 a.m. Liturgy

Followed by a reception and Continental breakfast.

Candidates to be welcomed are:

Nancy Fetzner-Brown

Kathy Higgins

Cass Shimek

RSVP by August 25

[Click here](#), or call 814-836-4202 or email Catherine.shimek@ssjerie.org



Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

I will have the next synod update the last week of September. Until then, we are asked to pray for the synod process to become more of an integral part of all we do in every level of our ministries and Church. Listen, reflect, dialogue and allow the Holy Spirit to emerge what is needed to be heard and acted upon.

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ



Help the Homeless Beat the Heat

Summer is upon us and all the good things that come with it. And when things heat up, there's lots of ways to cool off -- go to the beach or pool, get inside where there's A/C.

But what if you're homeless?

We often hear about the challenges the homeless face in the winter, but the summer brings a whole new set of challenges. **You can help.**



Summer Care Kits for Homeless

You can put together summer care kits and donate them to St. Patrick's Haven or St. James Haven.



Here's how:

Fill a gallon-size plastic zipper bag with some/all of the items below.

Travel/Trial Size Toiletries*

sunscreen
blister size bandages
deodorant
lip balm
bar of soap
shampoo
razor
toothbrush/toothpaste
socks
body wipes
dental floss
lotions

A Water Bottle

Wrapped Snacks:

protein or granola bars
gum, mints, or candy
peanut butter or cheese crackers

**No medicines, pills, liquid hand sanitizers or mouthwash.*

To drop off Summer Care Kits, contact:
Shelby Folga, St. Patrick's Haven 814-836-4153 or
Samantha Stump, St. James Haven 814-282-7798



St. Patrick's Haven Homeless Shelter Announces Reopening!

St. Patrick's Haven reopened on July 19 following last September's fire. The Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania provided alternative accommodations for the men during the rebuilding and reconstruction. "It has been a long road back," said Shelby Folga, St. Patrick's Haven Executive Director. "I am amazed and inspired by how quickly the community responded to provide shelter and appropriate services for the men." St. Patrick's Haven continues to rely on community support. Donations are always appreciated. Visit www.stpatrickshaven.org.

URGENT NEED

St. Patrick's Haven is in urgent need of coffee, cream and sugar: regular ground coffee (not decaf), plain powdered creamer and sugar (not packets). Donations are greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at the SSJ Admin. Bldg. during regular hours or call Shelby at 814-836-4153.



25% OFF SHOPPING PASS

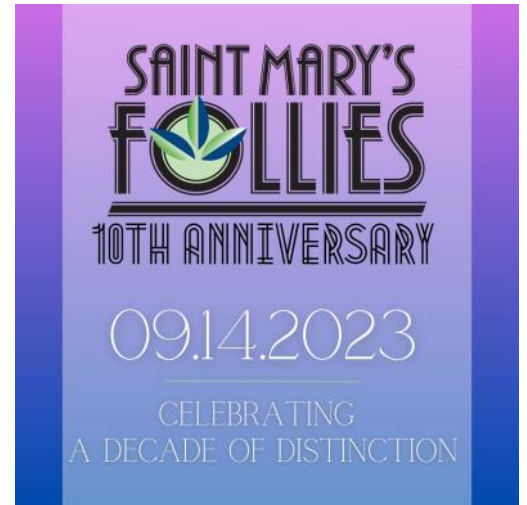
Donate \$5 to St. Patrick's Haven and get a 25% off shopping pass that can be used almost anywhere in the store. You also get a chance to win a \$100 Boscov's shopping spree.

Shopping day:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH, 2023 8 a.m.—11 p.m.
Contact Shelby Folga at 814-836-4153 to get your pass.

Saint Mary's Follies

The 10th annual Saint Mary's Follies will be held on Sept. 14 at the Bayfront Convention Center. Join Saint Mary's Home of Erie and chair couple Drs. Chris & Caitlin Clark as we celebrate a Decade of Distinction and honor **Mary Jane Koenig, Richard and Diane Quen**, and the late **William DeWitt** as the 2023 Ageless Remarkable Erieites. Cocktails at 5 p.m. followed by dinner, musical entertainment, and an inspiring award ceremony. All proceeds benefit the mission of Saint Mary's Home of Erie. Tickets are \$110 per person or \$800 for a table of 8. Call (814) 836-4394 or visit stmaryshome.org for more information.



Love Giving Local

The Sisters of St. Joseph were selected by Joe Askins, President of Auto Express in Erie, as a recipient of \$250 in conjunction with the "Love Giving Local" promotion that he does in collaboration with WJET-TV. Each Wednesday, a local non-profit is featured and receives a \$250 donation.

Pictured are St. Mary Drexler and Almi Clerkin with Joe Askins.

LITTLE ITALY FARMERS MARKET

331 West 18th Street

**EVERY MONDAY
3:00 - 6:00 PM
JUNE 26 - SEPT 25**

Featuring produce from several local farms, including the SSJNN Urban Farm Project. Special event days last Mon. of each month!

Little Italy Farmers Market doubles SNAP, WIC and FMNP Senior Vouchers!

**For more info call: 814-454-7814
Online: www.SSJNN.org
Facebook or Twitter: @SSJNN**



Retreat Opportunities

- Enter the Chaos: Engage the Differences to Make a Difference: a reflective four-day process grounded in the transformative power of contemplation with Vernice Solimar, PhD and Nancy Sylvester, IHM. September 21, 2023 to September 24, 2023. [Click here to read more and register.](#)
- 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. [Click here for details and to register.](#)

**Card Sale
CLC Gift Shop
\$2.00 and \$3.00 cards
Sunday, August 13th
10:00 to 11:30
Board Room
and
Monday, August 14th
12:30 - 3:00
Florida Room**



notes

To all of you who offered support in any way at my brother's death, thank you! I and my family are most grateful. As many of you know, losing siblings is difficult.

Sr. Moira Sullivan

ssj community August Birthdays



- 1 S. Ann Marie Joint
- 4 A. Gail Smith
- 4 A. Rosemary Oehmler
- 5 S. Angela Marie Servidea
- 6 A. Sandy Filippi
- 8 Agr. Cindy Brown
- 9 S. Mary Rita Kuhn
- 9 A. Harold Sheldon
- 11 S. Ann Marie Cappello
- 11 A. Anne Freitas
- 13 S. Phyllis DiFuccia
- 15 A. Sheila Martin
- 18 A. Diana Mikula
- 20 A. Sue McCreary
- 23 A. Margaret Alloway
- 23 A. Carol Hoffman
- 24 S. Mary Rachael McGuire
- 24 S. Maria Assumpta Ruza
- 25 A. Margaret Chrymko
- 25 A. Julie Whan
- 26 A. Gretchen Gallagher Durney
- 28 S. Mary Fromknecht
- 29 S. Mary DePaul Sabella
- 29 A. Marilyn Mead
- 29 Agr. Teresa Cieslikowski
- 30 S. Rose Marie Chisholm
- 30 A. Maggie Shaughnessy
- 31 A. Judy Pratt

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Sisters Rising Worldwide and the Haiti Crisis Alert

In early June, Haiti experienced multiple days of torrential rains which caused severe flooding. This disaster is particularly heart breaking for the C/SSJ Federation, since the most severe damage was in the town of Leogane.

In 2022, the Federation marked the completion of a ten-year funding project for the education of ten girls. The Federation provided a good education at no cost to their families. The project contributed to improved quality of the education at both Annunciation School (grades 1-6) and College Coeur de Marie (grades 7-13). Both of these schools are in Leogane and many of the families lost everything. We continued our support during Lent this year and it was much appreciated.

We need your help in responding to the emergency needs of the students and their families with financial assistance to help provide food, basic needs, and school supplies. Mission Haiti, Inc. collaborates with [Sisters Rising Worldwide](#) which is accepting donations for this cause. [Click here to donate](#). All donations will be forwarded to Mission Haiti, Inc. Cash donations can be made at the Community Living Center as you enter the lobby. Checks should be payable to *Sisters Rising Worldwide*, with the notation "Haiti Crisis Alert" on the memo line. Send checks to:

Sisters Rising Worldwide
Attn: Sr. Irene O'Neill, CSJ
1884 Randolph Ave
St. Paul MN 55105

*by Deb Seng,
SSJ Social Justice Coordinator*

The people of Haiti are in great need of our prayer and financial support. Haiti is constantly bombarded by major natural disasters, and is also suffering from the domination of a multi-year grip of violent gang control.

Thank you for helping our Haitian sisters and brothers in need. To learn more about the work of Sisters Rising Worldwide, watch [The Power of Nun](#). In this recent TED Talk, Kelly Mallon Young, volunteer COO of Sisters Rising Worldwide, presents an excellent overview of the work of this organization.

