

interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 42, Issue 1

January 2024

Happy New Year!



As 2024 ushers into our lives, we may find ourselves reflecting on 2023 and its blessings

and challenges. We found a prayer Sister Mary Rose had written to begin a new year and are sharing some of the questions she posed for our reflection.

- ◆ *What moments of the past year brought me the most joy?*
- ◆ *What moments were most challenging?*
- ◆ *What from the past year do I need to let go? What do I need to carry forward?*

At the same time, we look ahead to the new that is beginning.

- ◆ *What makes me hope-filled as I stand before the New Year?*

- ◆ *What makes me fear-full?*
- ◆ *What will be my personal prayer as I enter into the New Year?*

And so, we offer this prayer from Philipians:

Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

May this be so for each of us.

Happy New Year,

Sr. Mary Sister Carol O'Flynn

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.

"Sharing the Pie" Annual Thanksgiving Liturgy and Check Presentations

Sunday, January 28, 2024
Liturgy 9 a.m.
followed by brunch
and presentations

SSJ Community
Living Center
5031 West Ridge Road

More
information
on page 3.



SSJ Community Day "Living the Charism Now"



January 20, 2024
9:00 a.m.—12 noon
SSJ Community Living Center

Please RSVP by Jan. 12
to 814-836-4040
or

Catherine.Shimek@ssjerie.org

Please include your name
and whether you will be
staying for lunch.

MISSION: POSSIBLE!

The Work of Christmas Begins

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

By now, Christmas 2023 is but a memory and we are beginning the 2024 new year. When I visited the Community Living Center on Christmas Day, the banner displaying our Charism and Mission Directional Statement was prominently displayed in the Sisters' dining room for all to see.

“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.”

As I read the statement once again, and being in the spirit of the season, one of my favorite Christmas poems came to mind. It is a variation on Howard

Thurman’s poem, *When the Song of Angels is Stilled*. I have shared this poem many times before, but it really resonates with me and reminds me of our Directional Statement.

As I pondered the words of the poem, they became more meaningful and gave me much food for thought. When I move beyond my comfort zone and reach out to welcome the refugees, to heal brokenness, to feed those who are hungry, to build bridges—not walls, to share my gifts and talents, and to work for justice and peace for all, then I will truly be living our charism. I will be reaching out to the “dear neighbor” without distinction so that he or she may experience the love of God at this moment in our history. That’s what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

The Work of Christmas Begins

*When the carols have been stilled,
When the star-topped tree is taken down,
When the family and friends are gone home,
When we are back to our schedules,*

*The work of Christmas begins:
To welcome the refugee,
To feed the hungry,
To build bridges of trust not walls of fear,
To share our gifts,
To seek justice and peace for all people,
To bring Christ’s light to the world.*

by Michael Dougherty

Charism/Mission Directional Statement

To continue the work of our Chapter meetings and to deepen our understanding of and commitment to living out our Charism/

Mission statement, we ask that you spend time praying with the statement (included above and on the cover). To assist you, we are sharing weekly reflection questions in the e-News. Please spend time

prayerfully reflecting on each question in light of the Charism/Mission statement and, if possible, share with others.

Each month in Interim we will include the previous month’s questions, as well.

- ◆ *In what ways have I been conscious of the Holy Spirit’s presence in my life?*
- ◆ *How might the Holy Spirit be calling me at this time?*
- ◆ *What do I need to let go of in order to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit?*
- ◆ *What commitment am I willing to make to continue listening and responding to the Holy Spirit?*



35th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Liturgy and Check Presentation

The Sisters of St. Joseph and the SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation (SSJMMF) will kick off 2024 as we welcome 35th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner supporters and local nonprofit organizations to share in a liturgy celebration, brunch, and check presentation on Sunday, January 28, at the SSJ Community Living Center.

"This annual event brings together the Sisters, Thanksgiving Day sponsors, donors, volunteers, and representatives from nonprofits who serve our neighbors throughout the year.

It's a great opportunity to thank everyone for their foresight, support, time, and dedication to our community," shared Almitra Clerkin, Executive Director of the SSJMMF.



Deb Seng, Sister Services and SSJ Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation Director, will serve as emcee and others will share their gratitude and the importance of this significant, city-wide outreach event.

We look forward to sharing photos and more in the February Interim.



Annual Thanksgiving Liturgy and Check Presentations

Sunday, January 28, 2024
Liturgy 9 a.m.
followed by brunch and presentations

SSJ Community Living Center
5031 West Ridge Road

Pictured (l-r) Thanksgiving volunteers: SSJ Agrégée Tammy Van Buren and Sr. Jean Baptiste DiLuzio

Annual Homeless Memorial Service

Agrégée Betsy Wiest, was on the planning team for the annual Homeless Memorial Service which was held on December 21, in Perry Square. Approximately 50 people attended, including government representatives, service providers, concerned citizens and those with lived experiences.

For the past 20 years, the Homeless Memorial Service has been held to remember those

experiencing homelessness in Erie County and who died during the previous year. For 2023, ten individuals were remembered. As

each person's name was read, John Groh (St. Patrick's Haven board member) rang a bell as Betsy shared a remembrance about that person. A flower was also placed in a vase in memory of each person.



At the end of the service, the attendees processed with the flowers and personalized wreaths for each person. Both were placed in the park.



Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Associate Director

Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the repose of the souls of Eric Sharie (age 44) and Dave Sharie, Jr, (age 47) sons of **Associate Dave Sharie** and stepsons of **Associate Rhonda Sharie**. The brothers died a week apart from each other—Eric died on December 20 and Dave, Jr. died on December 26, 2023. May Eternal Light Shine Upon Them O Lord! May they rest in Peace! Both Eric and Dave, Jr. died after lengthy battles with Huntington's Disease. Friends may gather at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel R. C. Church, 1531 East Grandview Blvd. on Saturday January 6, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the memorial mass at 11:30 a.m. Please keep Dave and Rhonda and their family in your prayers at this most difficult time. Condolences may be sent to: dusckasfuneralhome.com.

Dave, Sr. is also recovering from lung surgery on December 11, 2023. Please remember in prayer all the Associates, Sisters and Agrégées and their family

members who are dealing with health issues.

Many Thanks!

Many thanks to **Charlene Kellerman, Jane Zawacki, Margaret Chrymko, Carol Dorr, Shelby Folga, Stephanie Hall, Cass Shimek, Deb Seng and the Maintenance Dept.** for all their hard work to make the comeback of "That's A Wrap" a successful event. Many thanks to all who attended and helped wrap bags of candy for the children at SSJNN and gifts for the men at St. Patrick's Haven and St. James Haven. Many thanks to all those who could not attend but dropped off items for the event. We are grateful for everyone's generosity and spirit of giving. Congratulations to **Sister Moira Sullivan** and **Associate Kathy Anysz** who won the Christmas card contest. Many thanks to **Associate Kris Huber**, her daughters **Emily Huber** and **Madeline Huber** and **Lena Walz** who volunteered to help the Associate Outreach Committee by sending Christmas greetings to Associates who are

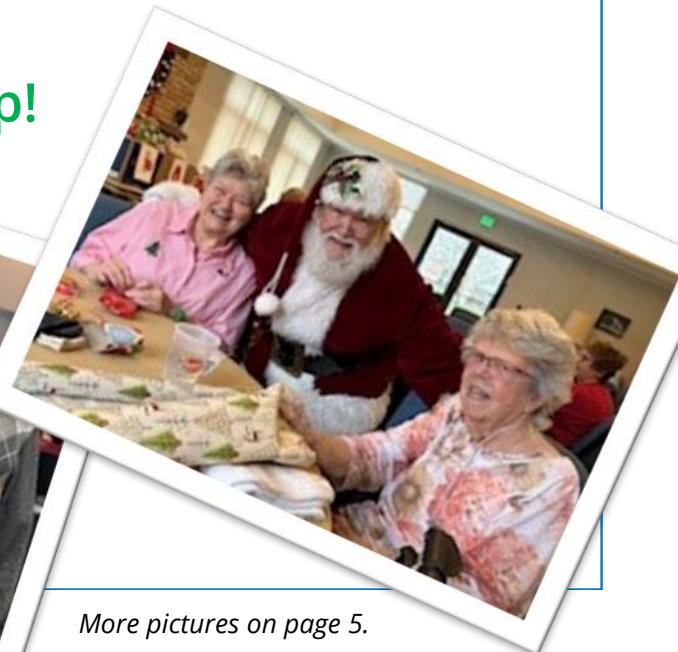
not able to get out much and Associates who live out of town. Your thoughtfulness and kindness are greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Event

The Associate program committee is still in the planning stages for our Holy Collage Event. **Charlene Kellerman** shares the following information in anticipation of the session. "Holy Collage will be a time to explore your creativity, imagination and intuition through pictures and images that speak to you, often for reasons initially unknown. Artistic ability is not a factor. This will be a fun and reflective time. **More details to come**, but if it sparks your interest, please start saving pictures or images that grab your attention from catalogs, magazines, photos, etc. Set them aside to bring to the session with you. You may be surprised at what they reveal to you later."

Happy 2024!
Wishing you a Happy and blessed New Year!

That's a Wrap!



More pictures on page 5.

Continuing the Journey

The whole process of the Synod 2021-2024 constitutes the importance of continuing the journey which served as its inspiration. Many of us have participated in the initial phase, and seek even more to live the synod messages that have emerged. Out of the October 2023 Synod General Assembly came a letter addressed to the "People of God." Mindful of the synod process of prayer, reflection, deep listening, then discussion and discernment, the clerical and lay delegates surfaced the *pressing call to pastoral and missionary conversion*.

The purpose of the preparation for October 2024 is to build on what has already emerged, and involve people and groups that express a variety of experiences, skills,

charisms, and ministries within the people of God. If invited to participate in any level of input or reflection for this next phase, prayerfully consider your co-responsibility to continue the journey. The Letter to the People of God can be found on the Diocese of Erie website under the Synod section, or by [clicking here](#).

The Synthesis Report from the October 2023 session highlights ways for the ongoing journey of the People of God between the two sessions. The process will intertwine three levels – the local church, groupings of Churches and that of the Church as a whole. A key guiding question that will lead to deeper reflection is: "How can we be a synodal Church in mission?" This reflection will lead to *identifying the paths and*

Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ

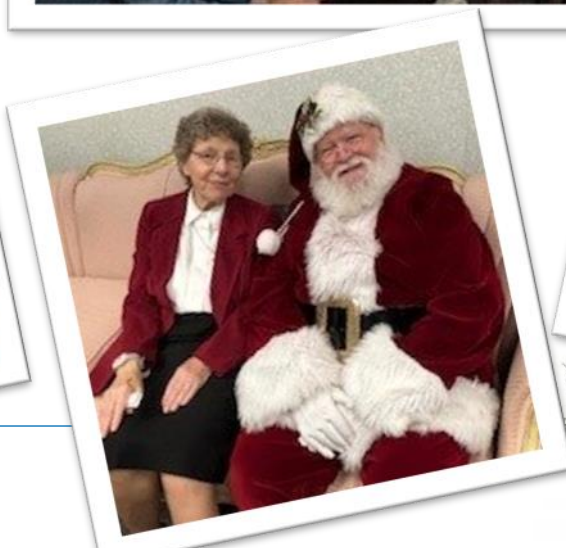


Synod
2021
2023

For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission

the tools we might adopt in our different contexts and circumstances in order to enhance the unique contribution of each baptized person and of each Church in the one mission of proclaiming God in our world today.

Over the next few months, I will highlight the main parts of the Synthesis Report, its points of convergences, matters for consideration and proposals that emerged from the dialogue. Stay tuned for more!



Reflections by Sr. Ardath Blake, HM

Sr. Ardath, a sister of Humility of Mary from Villa Maria, PA, offers regular inspirational talks throughout the year at the CLC and she is available for spiritual



direction. This year she is sharing her reflections on the book, *Between Heaven and Earth* by Gerhard Lohfink: New Explorations of Great Biblical Texts. All Sisters, Associates and

Agréées are invited to attend her presentation in the Gathering Room from 3:30-4:00 p.m. on **February 21**

Come and be spiritually nourished!

Retreat Opportunities

As a reminder, there is an extensive compilation of retreat opportunities available to peruse on the SSJ website. [Click here.](#)



Holiday Fun at the CLC



SSJ Ministry News

An Exciting Year Ahead for St. Patrick's Haven



The Erie community has been incredibly generous and supportive of St. Patrick's Haven and our guests. Since 1984, we have dedicated our time, skills, and hearts to serving men seeking shelter by providing them with a safe, warm place to sleep.

In 2024, we will begin a new journey by celebrating our 40th Anniversary. We are planning special events to commemorate this significant milestone in our history and to recognize those who have faithfully supported our mission. Initiatives are being planned to educate the community, invest in our operation, and, above all else, honor our guests.

Throughout the year-long celebration, there will be many exciting things happening. To stay up-to-date with St. Patrick's

Haven and our year-long celebration, check Interim for more updates and sign up to receive our soon-to-be-launched newsletter by providing your contact information. [Click here](#) or scan the QR code below to provide your info. Remember to add your email to receive the newsletter!



notes

Following is a message that was received via Facebook in response to a post that included a photo of St. Joseph's Home for Children.

Hello,

My father was raised at St. Joseph's Home for Children from 1930-1948ish. He speaks so fondly of the Sisters and holds their memory in such high esteem. He has Alzheimer's disease, but he recalls so much about his St. Joseph family. He talks about

ssj community January Birthdays



- 4 A. Dotty Hanna
- 4 A. Kathy Davis
- 6 Agr. Michelle Tortorelli
- 7 A. Mary Ann Zarnick
- 8 A. Pat Montifiori
- 9 S. Perpetua Dickant
- 11 S. Colette Palmer
- 13 S. Frances Therese Matia
- 14 S. Marjorie Adams
- 14 S. Nancy Fischer
- 16 A. Maria Ines Patino Giraldo
- 22 S. Rosemary O'Brien
- 23 A. Carol Dorr
- 23 A. Joann Rupp
- 24 S. Phyllis Hilbert
- 25 Agr. Tammy Van Buren
- 29 A. Debbie Brasili

Sr. Celine and Sr. Rita quite frequently.

Every time we talk about "St. Joe's" and "Sr. Celine," he lights up with joy! Thank you so much for your vocation! Thank you, Mary Davis Daughter of Donald Husted Maxwell

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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Pope Francis' message to the participants at COP28 in Dubai

by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

In the last issue of Interim, I wrote that Pope Francis was planning on attending the event — the first Pope ever to do so. Unfortunately, his recent health issues did not permit him to attend. The Pope then asked the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, to deliver a statement on his behalf.

This shows the determination of Pope Francis, as he encourages us to act with urgency and purpose, because

“time is short.” The Pope’s main question for those attending the summit was “Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death?” In his statement, the Pope reminds us that “the destruction of the environment is an offense against God, a sin that endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable.”

Pope Francis urges us to embrace a culture of life for our common home by working

towards “energy efficiency; renewable sources; the elimination of fossil fuels; and education in lifestyles.”

As a community willing to embrace a culture of life, in 2024 we will concentrate on energy efficiency, especially education in lifestyles. Look for something every month in Interim that will help us modify our lifestyle to be more energy efficient.

[Click here to read the Pope's complete message.](#)