

# interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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## Transforming Grace

"Transforming Grace" are words that are frequently being heard among Sisters, Associates, and Agrégées lately. The Sisters at the CLC use the *Transforming Grace* prayer each week, as does the administrative staff. Many of our prayer groups are using them, as well. If you are puzzled by what this is, just refer to what is published in *Interim* or e-News and you will find additional information.

*Transforming Grace* asks us to reflect around the question, "What is ours to do now?" We are being invited to learn the skills and practices that will lead us to decision-making and action so that we are in right relationship with the Earth and all human persons.

If you are not familiar with *Transforming Grace*, I suggest you check it out. It is a movement centered around the need for a

transformation of consciousness in our world. It includes a weekly prayer/reflection guide that is easily downloaded.\* I guarantee you will find it personally and professionally enriching. Many of the weekly prayers can be used for private reflection for several days. Why not give it a try?

Blessings,

*Sr. Mary*  
Sister Mary

\*for more info and to download reflections, [click here](#), or visit [lcvr.org](http://lcvr.org) Note: There will be no new reflections during the month of August due to other Transforming Grace initiatives (see p. 3). They will resume in Sept. Past reflections are available at [lcvr.org](http://lcvr.org) and are still relevant to use.



### 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.

The Associate Outreach Committee



## Fellowship Sunday

Sisters • Agrégées • Associates

A friendly gathering for the SSJ Family

**August 25, 2024**

**9:00 a.m. Mass**

**Followed by fellowship**

An opportunity to celebrate mass together followed by socializing and light refreshments.  
Theme: The Farmer's Market: Harvest Time  
Questions: Call Carol Dorr 814-434-6858.

# MISSION: POSSIBLE

The Mission Possible column will return in September. In the meantime, here's a glimpse of some summer fun at the CLC.

On vacation!  
↗



## Wisdom Circles: Living the Charism—Theme 3

Be observant and respond to the needs of the “dear neighbor.”

Seek out and reach out to the dear neighbor beyond our comfort zones and despite differences. Share your time and abundance.

### Reach out to everybody:

### Share what you can:



## God answers prayers

Pray to lift those struggling or in need of acceptance.  
Pray for peace, love, unity and harmony.  
Pray with gratitude for blessings received.

## "Who Then Shall We Be? A Contemplative Prayer for the World"

"Who Then Shall We Be? A Contemplative Prayer for the World" will take place during the LCWR assembly. Participants will engage in a contemplative experience in solidarity with the fragility of the world while reflecting on our call to respond as bearers of the gospel message. The prayer experience is based on the belief that lament and grief over the pain of the global community must take place before we can embrace new realities and receive them as gift.

The session will take place at the LCWR assembly on **Friday, August 16, from 2-3 p.m. EST**

Through the use of the arts, readings, and reflective questions, participants will engage in a process of lamenting the suffering of the world, particularly the realities of climate change, racism, migration, and polarization and their intersection. There will be

LCWR

time for silent reflection to ponder the transformation that is being asked of us as we consider the state of the world and how our

presence may be a source of healing and restoration.

This contemplative experience will be live-streamed and open to all who would like to experience it with the hope that

as many as possible will participate, thus increasing the power of our collective prayer, presence, and response.

Join us on Friday, August 16 at the CLC.

[Click here to RSVP](#) by Tuesday, August 13, or call or call 814-836-4040.

### LCWR Assembly Events

In addition to the Contemplative Prayer, we will also livestream some of the LCWR presentations at the CLC. Feel free to join us.

**Wed., August 14  
9:25 - 10:10 AM**

Presidential Address:  
Maureen Geary, OP

**2:05 - 2:50 PM**

Keynote: Bryan N. Massingale

**Thurs., August 15  
9:20 - 10:05 AM**

Keynote:  
Maricarmen  
Bracamontes, OSB

**11:20 - 11:50 AM**

Reflectors:  
Who Do We Need  
You to Be for the  
World?

**2:30 - 3:45 PM**

Discerning the  
Emerging Future:  
What's Emerging?

### Join Us

We will gather in solidarity with our Sisters at the assembly and throughout the U.S. to participate in this contemplative prayer.

**Friday, August 16  
2-3 p.m. EST  
CLC Gathering Space**

## Transforming Grace: Virtual Prayer Space

*Together in Silent Solidarity & Prayer for Discernment, Peace & Transformation*

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious invites you to 24 hours of contemplative prayer throughout the days of the United States Republican\* and Democratic National Conventions and the days of the National Election. These days of prayer are open to all, bridging the divide between culture, religion and politics through the witness and commitment women religious make to the power of collective contemplation. There will be no presentations or comments during the

### Virtual Prayer Space Democratic Convention AUGUST 19-22

Mon. 12:00 a.m. EST—

Thurs. 11:59 p.m. EST

*\*The Republican Convention dates have already passed and are not listed here.*

### During the National Election NOVEMBER 4-6

Mon. 12:00 a.m. EST—

Wed. 11:59 p.m. EST

virtual gathering. To participate, log in, review the orientation to our gathering in the waiting room, and join women religious from around the world as they pray in silence.

To join the Virtual Prayer Space, [click here](#) or scan the QR code below.



## Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Associate Director

### Prayers

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **David Schmidt**, husband of **A. Mary Schmidt**, who passed away on July 9. May Eternal Light shine upon him O Lord! May he rest in peace. Please remember Mary and the family. Also remember **A. Mitzi Bannister**, **A. Linda Dougherty**, **A. Tom Hoffman**, **Associate Candidate Mike Short**, and **Charles Ziegler**, husband of **A. Peggy Ziegler** and all the Sisters, Associates and Agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health issues.

### Please Note!

The State of the Heart Presentation scheduled for September 14 is postponed until a later date TBD.

### Meet our celebrity athlete!

Congratulations to **A. Lucille Sitzler** who at age 88 completed a one mile run at Presque Isle State Park on July 5. Lucille joined relatives who came from near and far for a family reunion at the park. The highlight of the day was a one mile run to honor Lucille and her love for running. She was thrilled that her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren could all join her. Currently she still belongs to a group, "The SAMR'S" (the Saturday a.m. Runners), who have been meeting every week since 1982. Some group members were there cheering her on. The group no longer runs, but they do walk. After her mile run she said, "you never know — you might see me out there running again!" Lucille has been involved in sports since the 1940s when women didn't have as many opportunities to

participate in organized sports. Her Italian mother encouraged her. Lucille's family run was featured on Erie News Now.

### What's Happening?

It was great to have phone conversations with several associates

recently. **Alice Fuhrman** who recently moved, **Anne Swift** and **Sue McCreary** who are celebrating milestone anniversaries as associates (25 and 15 years, respectively), **Lucille Sitzler** our celebrity athlete, **Rose Jones** who is enjoying the hot, Florida weather and **Renee Clark**, **Audrey McLaughlin**, and **Mary Schmidt** just catching up with what's happening in their corner of the world.

### See you at the Market!

Many thanks to Associate candidates, **Mike and Bonnie Short**, **Joe Sette** and **Rose Strazisar** for volunteering at the SSJNN Little Italy Farmer's



Associate candidates (l-r) Mike Short, Bonnie Short, and Joe Sette.

Market. If you go on the fourth Monday of the month, you'll find them at the raffle table near the entrance welcoming visitors and giving out **free** tickets for the door prize.

### Associate Information Session

An information session will be held for prospective Associate candidates for 2024-2025. If you know someone who is interested in becoming an Associate, contact me or invite them to contact me at 814-823-1182 or [s.amcappello@ssjerie.org](mailto:s.amcappello@ssjerie.org) by August 15, 2024.

### Associate Welcoming

See invitation on p. 5



Lucille Sitzler (center) surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sisters, Associates,  
Agrégées and guests

**Associates Welcoming  
Sunday September 8, 2024  
9:00 a.m. Liturgy at the CLC**  
Followed by a reception  
and continental breakfast

Please join us as we welcome  
our newest SSJ Associates:

**Bonnie Short  
Michael Short  
Joseph Sette  
Rose Strazisar**

Please [click here to RSVP](#) by August 26  
or call 814-836-4040



We've added a Transforming Grace video playlist to our YouTube channel. The playlist includes all the videos used in the prayer/reflection guides. The videos are worth watching either as part of the prayer/reflections or just on their own.

[Click here to access the playlist.](#)

## LITTLE ITALY FARMERS MARKET

331 West 18th Street

**EVERY MONDAY  
3:00 - 6:00 PM  
JUNE 24 - SEPT 23**

Featuring produce from several local farms,  
including the SSJNN Urban Farm Project.

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

For more info call: 814-454-7814  
Online: [www.SSJNN.org](http://www.SSJNN.org)  
Facebook or Twitter: @SSJNN



## Upcoming Events

**August 25, 2024**  
Fellowship Sunday

**September 5, 2024**  
The Artist and the  
Theologian:  
Contemplating Creation

**September 8, 2024**  
Associate Welcoming

## get to know the Agrégées

**Marion  
"Arlene"  
Chaney**



**1988 - Associate  
Companion:  
Sr. Rosemary O'Brien  
2016 - Agrégée  
Mentor: Sr. Moira Sullivan**

Arlene's acquaintance with the Sisters included religious instruction, St Patrick's Haven, & Word of Life Center. Over the last 36 years, she was the second Associate co-director, companioned sisters to 5031, took seven sisters to Israel, served on committees, worked in ministries, scrubbed floors, entertained infirmed Sisters, assisted with retreats, and served in a variety of parish ministries. She was a founding member of the Bread of Life Community and gave numerous "Sacrificial Giving Talks" throughout the diocese. Arlene's service broadened with mission trips to Mexico and China. She has sponsored seminarians, priests, families, students, elderly, and the Hekima Place in Africa. She has opened her home as a "haven" with guests including family, students, nuns, women in transition from prison, the homeless and a Bishop. A veteran of the Air Force and Army, Arlene retired from civil service in 1997. She enjoys time with her granddaughters, cards and travel. As an Agrégée, Arlene continues to be active in community and awaits how the Lord will have her live the charism next.

## Living Laudate Deum Eat Fruits and Vegetables in Season

How are fruits and vegetables grown out of season? Often in soil-less cultivation or heated green houses. They use large amounts of water, energy, and raw materials or they come from far away where the climate is more favorable. If it comes from far away, it uses a considerable amount of energy, increases pollution, and contributes to climate change.

A meal from a conventional grocery store uses 4 to 17 times more oil for transportation than the same meal using local ingredients. Fruits and vegetables in season are better quality and healthier and their cultivation has a minimum impact on the environment when consumed



at the right time of year. Just a reminder that you can get your local fruits and vegetables at the SSJ Neighborhood Network Farmers Market every Monday from 3 to 6pm at 331 West 18<sup>th</sup> St. Support our local farmers and enjoy fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables.

## The Artist and the Theologian: Contemplating Creation

The SSJ Agrégées invite you to join them and other congregations from throughout the country for this special presentation and to hear from these notable speakers.

This is a collaborative offering from the Sisters of St. Dominic, Amityville, and Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood to celebrate the Season of Creation. This program combining a feast of images, music, and readings will draw participants into contemplation, compassion, and wonder at the glory, diversity, and suffering of the living world. Participants will be inspired and motivated in this interactive conversation with artist/iconographer Angela Manno and theologian Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ.

**Thursday, September 5, 2024  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

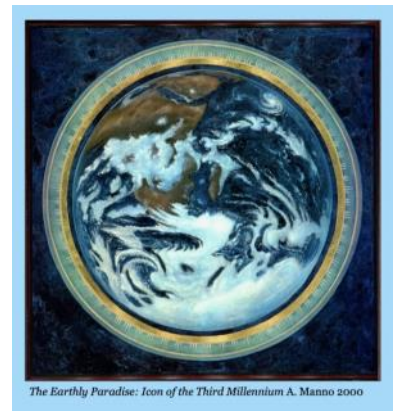
**Presenters:**

Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ & Angela Manno

**Location:** Virtual Via Zoom  
CLC Gathering Space

Refreshments will be served beginning at 6:00 p.m. followed by the presentation.

[Click here to RSVP](#) by 9/1  
or call 814-836-4040



The Earthly Paradise: Icon of the Third Millennium A. Manno 2000

(Photo Credit: The Earthly Paradise, Icon of the Third Millennium, by Angela Manno]

## Cosmos, Christ, and Commitment: Seeking God Anew

**SSJ Conference  
Retreat at the CLC  
October 6-11  
Presenter:  
Sr. Mary Rowell**

In our seeking, we find God at the heart of the Universe seeking us. This retreat draws us ever deeper into an experience of this great mystery. In turn, the mystery invites us to encounter Christ anew in the Cosmos, in the



Photo: Unsplash.com

context of the Gospels, and in our personal lives. Through daily experiences of silence,

personal and communal prayer, presentations, and sharing we will encounter Divine Mystery in the world, in the Word and in our hearts.

Sister Mary Rowell, of the Canadian province of the Sisters of St. Joseph, will facilitate the conference/guided retreat. You may remember her retreat with us in July 2022, "Hospitality of the Heart."

More details coming in the September Interim.

## Harvesting Hope: Sowing Seeds of Change



Devastating vandalism; malicious intent. Doesn't sound very hopeful, right? The damage to our only USDA-approved urban farm in June was a gut-wrenching blow. Our Youth Work Experience teens, dedicated volunteers, and staff had been working for 2 months to prepare for the Little Italy Farmers Market when vandals came and destroyed 85% of the produce.

That Friday was a dark day. BUT, when word spread, the community outpouring of support rendered us speechless. On Monday evening, just three days later, the entire garden was rebuilt and there were plants leftover!

People we knew and people we didn't know came to help us rebuild. You brought plants; you brought soil; you brought tools and knee pads; your donations enabled us to install security cameras; you brought food and drinks; you brought helping hands to do the

digging. Most importantly – you brought hope with you. You restored us and our garden.

Erie Gives Day is fast approaching – the day when our community financially unites around causes close to the heart. Will you help us reach our goal of \$35,000? Your gift is matched by bonus bucks from the Erie Community Foundation and every donation matters.



**Thank you for showing your love and support to SSJ Neighborhood Network for the past 24 years. We couldn't do it without YOU!**

## SSJ community August Birthdays

- 1 S. Ann Marie Joint
- 4 A. Rosemary Oehmler
- 5 S. Angela Marie Servidea
- 6 A. Sandy Filippi
- 9 S. Mary Rita Kuhn
- 9 A. Harold Sheldon
- 11 A. Anne Freitas
- 11 S. Ann Marie Cappello
- 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. Maria Assumpta Ruza
- 25 A. Margaret Chrymko
- 25 A. Julie Whan
- 26 A. Gretchen Gallagher Durney
- 28 S. Mary Fromknecht
- 29 Agr. Teresa Cieslikowski
- 29 A. Marilyn Mead
- 29 S. Mary DePaul Sabella
- 30 A. Maggie Shaughnessy
- 30 S. Rose Marie Chisholm
- 31 A. Judy Pratt

you support St. Patrick's Haven through Erie Gives, a percentage of your gift is matched, and your donation helps us provide shelter for homeless men.

*Donations by check must include form downloaded from [eriegives.org](http://eriegives.org) and dropped off through Aug. 9th at Erie Community Foundation, 459 West 6th Street.*



**experience homelessness challenge**

**ERIE GIVES DAY**  
**August 13, 2024**  
**12 midnight - 12 midnight**  
**[eriegives.org](http://eriegives.org)**

There's no better way to understand the needs of the homeless than to experience a night "sleeping on the street."

St. Patrick's Haven challenges you to help them raise \$40,000 during this year's Erie Gives Day. If the goal is met, Shelby Folga, executive director, Terry Holmes, Esq., board president, and Matthew



Carneval, board treasurer, will "sleep on the street" to closely replicate the homeless experience. While one night can never fully convey the realities of being homeless, the experience can be eye-opening.

**Why \$40,000?** This year marks the 40th anniversary of St. Patrick's Haven. When

## Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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## Hope is Welcome in a Troubled Land

It's good to be able to share news of joy and hope coming from Haiti. We are accustomed to hearing about the insurmountable gang violence that has overcome a nation whose people are all too acquainted with poverty and lack of opportunity. Thanks to the Companions of Jesus, a Haitian congregation of women religious, there is a story of hope to share.

Against all odds, the Companions of Jesus are fiercely determined to provide Haiti's youth with the various levels of education they need to build a future full of hope. Sr. Alta Emile has become an educational leader and a



Graduates with a design and sewing major model their creations. With your Lent donations, we gave \$1,773.36 to the trade school.

strong advocate for the Haiti Trade School. This is one of many educational institutions that are in the care of this religious congregation. This school provides vocational training to 40 students each year. Students learn the skills of commercial and private practice clothing and dressmaking, or they can focus on the hospitality industry where they learn a variety of cooking and baking skills while developing

managerial expertise. Compared to a four-year university education, a trade school education takes only one year of post-secondary

*by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator*

education and is less costly to the student. In a land overwhelmed by gang violence, the Haiti Trade School helps young men and women become less vulnerable to the pressure to succumb to gang membership and to be lured into sex trafficking.

As a team of Federation members who desire to follow up on the 10-year collaboration project (2012-2022) between the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph and Mission Haiti, Inc., we appreciate what it is to embark on a new relationship with Sisters Rising Worldwide. We have already benefitted from significant financial aid for two crisis alerts that addressed some emergency needs in Haiti.

*Karen Burke, CSJ, Brentwood  
Karen Cavanagh, CSJ, Brentwood  
MaryEllen O'Connell, CSJ, Boston  
Deb Seng, Erie  
Sue Torgersen, CSJ, Congregation*