

interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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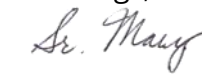
'Tis the Season

By the time you read this message, we will have celebrated Thanksgiving, and our SSJ Mission and Ministries Foundation will have orchestrated the process of feeding Thanksgiving dinner to nearly 1700 families. We are indeed grateful for all who have played a part in this.

As we come to the last month of the year, we prepare again for the Festival of the Trees, an AHN Saint Vincent Hospital sponsored event. The theme of our tree this year, *The Thread of Hope*, centers around lace and lacemaking which brings to a close our yearlong celebration of the 375/165 years of the Sisters of

St. Joseph worldwide and in the Diocese of Erie. What a wonderful way to end our celebration of who we are and what we have brought to fruition. As we begin the season of Advent, may we turn our focus to the coming of Christ in our hearts, our community and our world. A Blessed Advent to all!

Blessings,



Sister Mary

Come Together Around the Charism

The Charism Committee has planned three opportunities to come together around the charism. Join us for Sunday mass at 9:00 a.m. followed by a fireside chat on the following themes:



**Sunday,
December 14**
Allow the Light

**Sunday,
January 11**
Relationships

**Sunday,
February 8**
Inclusive Love

Read more
on page 3.

Virtual Book Discussion: *The Gift of Years*

See Page 2

Thread of Hope



The six women who were the first Sisters of St. Joseph were:
Francoise Eyraud Anna Chaleyzer
Claudia Chastel Anna Vey
Marguerite Bardier Ann Brian
The Jesuit priest's name was:
Jean Pierre Medaille, SJ
Can you find them on the tree?



**MISSION:
POSSIBLE!**

Feeling Stuffed . . .With Gratitude

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

Last week, as I celebrated Thanksgiving Day, I took time to reflect on all that I have been blessed with in my life and I thought about all that I was grateful for this past year. I began recalling all the blessings I have received and all the people who have been part of my life. Once again I was reminded of how truly blessed I am to be part of the SSJ family.

I am grateful for all the kindness and concern extended to me by the Sisters, Associates, Agrégées, and employees, especially since I have become the caregiver for my sister, Rita.

I am also grateful for the welcoming and caring spirit extended to her by everyone.

*Enjoying God's
Blessings with*
GRATITUDE

I am especially thankful to Associates Valerie Carlson and Nancy Fetzner Brown, Rita's neighbors, for their care and concern and their many acts of kindness. I am also grateful for the administrative staff who make Rita feel so welcome every time she accompanies me to work; the Sisters and employees at the CLC who make her feel so welcome each time she visits; and to all the

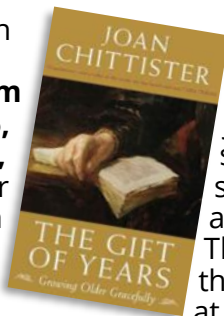
Associates and Agrégées who have reached out to show their care and concern, especially most recently as Rita is dealing with some health issues. The prayers and thoughts are most appreciated.

As I thought about these many blessings in my life this year, I was reminded of the SSJ charism and mission -reaching out to the dear neighbor without distinction. This year, Rita and I have been the "dear neighbor" who our SSJ family has been reaching out to, and I am truly blessed to be a member of this great family.

This spirit is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

Virtual Book Discussion: *The Gift of Years*

Join us via ZOOM on **January 14, 2026, and February 11, 2026 from 6-8 PM, or January 16, 2026 and February 13, 2026 from 1-3 p.m.** for an engaging discussion of Joan Chittester's acclaimed book, *The Gift of Years: Growing*



Older Gracefully.

We will discuss the first half of the book at the January sessions and the second half at the February sessions. You may join for any or all of the sessions. The book is available through major retailers and at some libraries.

Register here for the sessions. You **MUST** register by the **Sunday** before the meeting to receive the ZOOM link.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

SSJ Online Store — NOW OPEN!



If you are interested in purchasing any SSJ or St. Patrick's Haven branded apparel items, please use the following link to view the items that are available. You can place your order and pay online. If you do not want shipping charges, your items can be picked up at SSJ when they arrive in early January. NOTE: These orders will NOT be in before Christmas.

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER STORE](#)

We Are In This Together

At our November Community Day, the prayer began *"God as you bring us together to consider your direction and plan, provide us with insight to recognize your will in our working together, to realize your guidance in all our steps, and to follow your example in all our efforts. . . . May we bring to this effort our gifts you have bestowed upon each one of us, may we affirm the gifts of those gathered with us You have called us to be collaborators with you and one another in creating a world of compassion and justice."*

The Charism Committee has been asked to organize charism-based opportunities that tend the spirit life, fostering community life based on charism rather than canonical status.

We chose to focus on the core values that surfaced from the Wisdom Circles – unity, relationships, inclusive love with Spirit-animated

gatherings and opportunities to build growth, bonding and integrate our SSJ charism.

We will share our monthly focus in the Interim with an invitation to come together for a fireside chat in the Gathering Space on a Sunday morning after 9:00 a.m. Mass. Coffee/ hot water and a snack will be provided. Join us on **Sunday, December 14** around the Advent theme of *"Allow the Light"* to permeate our reflection and sharing with the question - *How will you "Allow the Light" to foster unity?"* Unity may be in your home, our local community, our world, our Church.

Mark your calendars also for **Sunday, January 11** with the theme "Relationships" and **Sunday, February 8** with the theme "Inclusive love."

Insights the Holy Spirit is urging us to remember are, first, our motto will be "We are

in this together" allowing God to unfold the mystery within each of us and as a Joseph family; and second, the Charism Committee is only beginning to birth the thoughts coming forth so stay tuned for more opportunities. Third, our desire is to go beyond ourselves as well. Whatever is planned is being done in a collaborative manner with the Life-Long Formation and Program Committees and other existing groups. We know more is not better, so our aim is quality not quantity.

Come and join us **Sunday, December 14 for 9:00 am mass and the Fireside Chat**. Invite others to join you.

*The Charism Committee:
Sr. Ricarda Vincent, Sr. Marianne Stuckert, Sue Ann Wisniewski, Teresa Cieslikowski, Pat Marshall, and Sr. Clare Marie Beichner.*



ALLOW THE LIGHT

Allow the light
is all
the call implores.
Allow the light
to flood
The heart,
to flow the vein,
to fill the space
that craves.
Allow the light
is all.
The light is all.
The light is.

*by Mary Wickham,
RSM (Australia)*

decorate the season with kindness

Hang this calendar during Advent , beginning Sunday, November 30, and it will inspire your family to do small, random acts of kindness throughout the season. These ideas are just suggestions -- there are multitudes of kind acts we can do each day.

30
volunteer
at a homeless shelter such as St. Patrick's or St. James Havens.

1
donate
diapers to a shelter for moms and their children, or to an agency that serves the poor.

6
buy
a cup of coffee for a homeless person.

7
visit
a different culture's place of worship; ask about their holiday traditions.

8
leave
a quarter in the cart at Aldi's.

9
adopt
a refugee or immigrant family for Christmas.

10
take
an elderly person to a holiday concert.

16
take
cookies to your local fire or police station.

17
buy
a gift card for someone in line.

18
help
an elderly neighbor or relative wrap gifts.

19
go
through all your photos and send memories to friends and family.

**Sisters of St. Joseph Maxim 64
Original Version**

Strive to be kind always to everyone and unkind to no one.



**Sisters of St. Joseph Maxim 64
Contemporary Version**

Make a practice of being kind all the time.



Living Laudato Deum

*by Deb Seng,
SSJ Social
Justice Coordinator*



Each year, Americans throw away twenty-five percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

This year, instead of purchasing an item of dubious quality that may have been manufactured under unfair working conditions and transported thousands of miles to the store at the cost of burning fuel, concentrate on giving people

experiences. Here are just a few examples of gifts that won't get sent directly to the landfill along with a heap of wrapping paper:

- ◆ Tickets to music, theater, or sporting events.
- ◆ Gift cards for meals at restaurants that support local resources.
- ◆ Lessons to help discover new hobbies or further existing ones.

Is there room?



More than two thousand years ago, a young man and woman wandered through the streets of Bethlehem, weary and anxious, searching for a place to stay. Door after door was closed to them. There was no room.

Every night, men in our community find themselves in that same desperate search — weary, anxious, and looking for room.

At St. Patrick's Haven, we believe every person deserves to find room, just like Mary and Joseph. Each evening, we open our doors to men who have nowhere to turn. We not only offer room, but a warm bed and compassion. We help to restore dignity.

This year, we welcomed more than 200 men as our guests, each carrying his own struggle—and strength, yet



united by one simple desire—for someone to say, *"There's room for you here."*

As we celebrate the birth of Christ who Himself entered this world without shelter, consider what room you have in your heart. Is there room for kindness, mercy, and for those seeking shelter? When we make room for men experiencing homelessness, we make room for Christ in our hearts.

Because of you, there is room. Our Christmas wish is that all of our hearts, and St. Patrick's Haven, *always* have room.

[Click here](#) if you'd like to make a gift to Saint Patrick's Haven this holiday season

SSJ community December Birthdays

- 1 A. Jack Martin
- 1 A. Paul Wilkosz
- 7 S. Nancy Prenatt
- 9 A. Connie Pellerite
- 10 A. Deborah Maciak
- 10 A. Mary Ann Cox
- 11 A. Lucille Sitzler
- 11 S. Barbara Ann Vavreck
- 14 A. Mary Alice Haibach
- 15 A. Brandon Vogt
- 15 A. Mary Schmidt
- 20 A. Janet Demjanenko
- 20 A. Jean Heintzel
- 21 S. Veronica Mittal
- 22 A. Frank Mozdy
- 24 A. JoAnn Elwell
- 25 A. Judy Lynch
- 29 S. Marianne Stuckert
- 29 S. Ricarda Vincent
- 30 A. Ellen McNerney

SSJ Community Directory Now Available online on the SSJ Community (login) page. www.ssjerie.org

Printed copies will be available for pick up at the CLC front desk beginning Saturday, December 6.



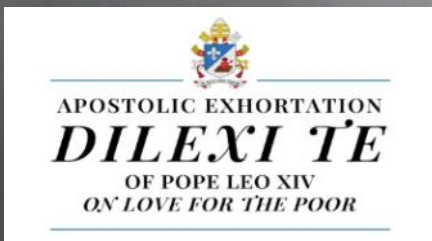


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"I have loved you"



by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

As a continuation of Pope Francis' work, Pope Leo's first apostolic exhortation "Dilexi Te" focuses on the link between Christian faith and the poor. In it he tells us that love for the poor is not optional. The Pope asserts that serving the poor is a direct encounter with Jesus: "Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor... contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way

of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us." (paragraph 5)

Poverty is multifaceted, it can be material, social, moral and spiritual, cultural, personal/ social weakness and lack of rights. The pope warns against a culture that "discards others without even realizing it." (paragraph 11) Dilexi Te challenges us to confront the

"structure of sin" that perpetuates poverty, inequality, and a throwaway culture. We must address the root causes of poverty.

As we move into the holiday season and the new year, let us commit to doing what we can for our dear neighbor. Maxim 49 tells us to treat everyone with the same care as if you were meeting God. Words to live by!