

# interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 42, Issue 3

March 2024

## In Need of Protection

As we begin March, the end of the first quarter of the new year, I find myself reflecting on the coming spring, and on the feasts of two great protectors: St. Joseph who protected Jesus and Mary, and St. Patrick, who protected Ireland.

It seems we live in a world in need of protection. Whether from climate change, oppressive regimes, unjust systems, or the simpler, but no less

harmful, bias in our own hearts.

We, the family of Joseph, are called to bridge these divides and stand with those who are marginalized. As we journey through Lent, may we look deeply into our own hearts and find the ways we could be protectors for our time.

*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.



CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK  
March 8-14

Celebrating Traditions,  
Changing the World

### Friday, March 8

- ◆ Bishop Persico will hold a press conference to kick-off Catholic Sisters Week in The Erie Diocese
- ◆ Sisters of St. Joseph and SSJ employees and staff will kick off Catholic Sisters Week with a Root Beer Float Social.

### Saturday, March 9, 2:30 p.m. Tinseltown

Sisters, Associates and Agrégées will go to the movies to see *Cabrini*, a new film from the studios that produce *The Chosen*. *Cabrini* is the inspiring true story of Francesca Xavier Cabrini, the first American saint. It portrays the events of her life, her mission, and her service among the Italian immigrants of New York City. **Complimentary tickets to the first 25 who sign up.** Otherwise, the cost is \$7.25. If you are interested, [click here to sign up](#). *Note: the movie is 2 hrs. 25 minutes in length.*

### Sunday, March 10 9:00 a.m. Liturgy CLC

Join us for Sunday liturgy. We will offer a special prayer for peace in support of the local Catholic Sisters Week theme, **Peace Must Begin With Me.**



## St. Joseph Day Celebration

Sunday, March 17, 2024

Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Followed by dinner

Please RSVP by March 5

[Click here](#), or call 814-836-4040 or [Event-RSVP@ssjerie.org](mailto:Event-RSVP@ssjerie.org)



# MISSION: POSSIBLE!

## A St. Joseph Day Legend

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

The theme for our St. Joseph Day celebration this year is **Joseph, for these times. Joseph, for all times.** I am reminded of a story of St. Joseph Day that dates to the Middle Ages. According to legend, a terrible draught fell upon Sicily and the citizens prayed to St. Joseph asking for rain. When the rain came and famine was averted, the people held a great feast to honor and thank St. Joseph for answering their prayers. All were invited to share in the festivities and to eat as much as they desired. Since then, St. Joseph Day celebrations have become a tradition throughout Italy and in many places around the world. On March 19, it is customary to give food to others, as was done at the original celebration in Sicily.

That ancient tradition lived on through my grandmother and her 'lady friends.' Each year on the feast of St. Joseph, they

gathered at one of their homes and shared food around the 'St. Joseph table.' Growing up, St. Joseph Day was always a special day in our home.

Many years later, Joseph's influence continues. As a Sister of St. Joseph, the feast of St. Joseph has even more significance for me. Like my grandmother and her friends gathered to celebrate the occasion and share food, the Sisters, Associates and Agrégées gather in celebration. It is during this gathering that we renew our vows and commitment to live the SSJ mission and charism.

Since our last Chapter meeting, we have gathered as a community to reflect and share with each other how we can live the charism and mission directional statement we committed to – *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 we prepare to renew our vows and make our re-commitments, let us continue to spend time reflecting on our directional statement.

How, at this time, following the example of St. Joseph, am I meeting my commitment to live more fully the Gospel message? How am I moving beyond my comfort zone? How am I living the charism so that others may experience the love of God at this moment in our history? Being faithful to living this commitment is what makes the **SSJ Mission Possible!**

**Please spend time praying with the charism/mission directional statement (on the cover) and the weekly reflection questions.**

***To move beyond our comfort zone challenges us to change.***

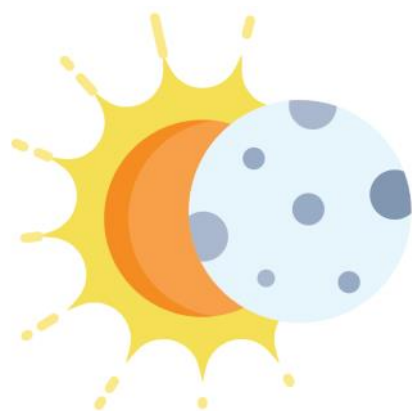
- ◆ ***How difficult or easy is it for you to deal with change in your life?***
- ◆ ***Describe a challenging situation where you were faced with a decision to change (to move out of your comfort zone.) What did you learn from it?***
- ◆ ***Recall a time when you decided against changing. Was there a loss for you in not changing? Would you make the same decision now?***
- ◆ ***What do you believe are the risks to "moving out of your comfort zone"? What would motivate you take those risks?***



**More post-Chapter information on page 3.**



NEW website and Facebook page  
Keep informed about the ongoing work of the  
Sisters of St. Joseph Mission & Ministries Foundation  
Visit our website: [www.ssjmmf.org](http://www.ssjmmf.org)  
LIKE our Facebook page  
[SSJ Mission & Ministries Foundation](#)



## Sisters in the Shade

and Agrégées and Associates, too!

Make plans to join us on the grounds of the CLC  
to catch the solar eclipse  
on April 8, 2024

Details coming soon!

## Directional Statement Committee Updates

### *From the Charism Mission Directional Statement Planning Group*



At the Feb. 17 Community Day, Sisters, Associates, and Agréegés were invited to sign up for groups to discuss community needs, governance and charism/mission topics.

Each of the 10-12 groups will include up to 10 members. Initially the governance and charism/mission committees will present topics and questions for

discussion. Groups are encouraged to be mixed and may include Sisters, Associates and Agrégées. You may wish to be included as a prayer partner for a group.

Those who were not present are welcome to be part of a group. Or, if you were present and did not sign up, you are still welcome to do so.

E-mail [Cass Shimek](mailto:Cass.Shimek@ssjmmf.org) or call 814-836-4040 by March 8. You will be added to one of the groups being formed. These are discussion groups rather than prayer groups with a group facilitator. Once groups are finalized, more information will be forthcoming.

### *From the Governance/Leadership Directional Statement Planning Group*

Sr. Mary Ann White has resigned from the Governance/Leadership planning group for personal reasons. We are grateful for her contributions.

Welcome and thank you, Sr. Marie Stephen Kebort for joining the others on the planning group: Sisters Phyllis DiFuccia, Chair; Sr. Nancy

Fischer, Sr. Rosemary O'Brien, and Nancy Donnelly, Associate and Charlene Kellerman, Agrégée.

## Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Associate Director

### Prayers

Please remember in your prayers the repose of the soul of **Agrégée Cindy Brown** (former Associate) who died on February 21, 2024. May Eternal Light Shine Upon Her, O Lord and may she rest in peace. Remember Cindy's family and friends in your prayers at this most difficult time. Also remember in prayer all the Associates, Agrégées and Sisters and their family members who are dealing with health issues, especially Associate **Peggy Ziegler**.

### Volunteer Opportunity

Many Associates and Agrégées expressed interest in spending more time with the Sisters at the CLC. The Program Committee along with Norma Hiller, Activities Director for the Sisters, developed a volunteer survey to be completed by anyone who is interested in volunteering to assist with various activities. [Click here](#) to complete the survey if you are

interested. If you receive Interim in the mail, the survey is included. Please complete and return it by March 18, 2024, to Norma Hiller at the CLC.

### Mark Your Calendar

**Associates, Agrégées and Sisters** are invited to attend the following functions:

**March 19**

St. Joseph Day Celebration

**April 14**

Fellowship Sunday

**May 4**

"Holy Collage" Workshop

**June TBA**

Summer Picnic

**September 14**

"State of the Heart" Prayer – Presentation

**October 5**

Community Day

**October 6-12**

SSJ Conference Retreat

### Congratulations!

Congratulations to Associate **Lewis Nordin** who recently received the newly established

Nicholas M. Sivillo, Jr. Memorial Award from the Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council, for his outstanding commitment, dedication, and service to the Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council. The award was established in memory of Nick Sivillo. Lew is the first recipient of this special award. In addition, Lew also served the Knights of Columbus in many positions at the district, chapter and Central West Region levels.

### What's Happening in Your Corner of the World

It was great to visit with Associate **Debbie Hamilton** from Meadville, PA. Debbie stopped by the office this month as she was in Erie for an appointment. It has been quite a while since we last saw each other. We had an enjoyable visit and caught up with each other. We hope to get together with the Associates in the Meadville area sometime in the spring.

## Collaborating with Youth

The SSJ Associate Outreach Committee has been collaborating with Cathedral Prep's Outreach Club since December. Each month students send a note and pray for the person that will receive the card. SSJ Associates that live out of town or may be homebound or in a care facility, are sent a message to let them know they are thought of and remembered. This "link" is one of the ways we hope to create a bridge with a new generation and make new connections. Students are given a list of names, they write notes, and the mailing is sent from the Sisters of St. Joseph Associates.

If you have any ideas or questions about the program, please contact Associate **Carol Dorr** at 814-434-6858.



*A Friendly Gathering of  
the SSJ Family*

**April 14, 2024  
SSJ CLC Chapel  
and Gathering Space  
9:00 a.m. Mass  
followed by  
fellowship**



*Fellowship Sunday*  
Sisters • Agrégées • Associates

A friendly gathering for the SSJ Family

The Associate Outreach Committee is excited to announce Fellowship Sunday. In an effort to provide more opportunities for informal gatherings of Sisters, Agrégées, and Associates, the committee will host quarterly Fellowship Sundays. This provides an opportunity to celebrate mass together followed by socializing and light refreshments. This first gathering will also include an Earth Day message presented by Agrégée Deb Seng.

## The Face of the Synodal Church *Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ*

The Erie Diocese and the Vatican are inviting us to share our thoughts in this participatory phase of the October 2024 synod meeting.

The major themes that surfaced in our diocese are: welcome and inclusivity, communication, leadership, and mission/outreach. These are very similar to the themes that came forth from our 2023 SSJ Chapter.

The questions that will be discussed at the March 2 listening session to be held from **1:00-2:30 p.m. at the CLC** are: *How do the themes resonate with you?*

*Since then, what successes and distresses have you experienced around these themes?*

*How does the Church walk alongside you in the major concerns or needs in your life?*

All Sisters, Associates and Agrégées are asked to share their voice. If you would like to

submit your thoughts or reactions in writing, please put them in my mailbox at the CLC or send via email [s.cmbeichner@ssjerie.org](mailto:cmbeichner@ssjerie.org) by March 2.

Part two of the Synod Synthesis Report focuses on "All Disciples, All Missionaries." This part emphasizes the crucial role of women and laity in the life and mission of the Church, the role of consecrated life, priests and deacons in the life of the Church, along with the role of Bishops in the local Church and the Bishop of Rome.

Let us pause and think about the significance of the role of laity and women in living our SSJ charism in our ministries and the Church over the course of centuries. The laity are the lifeblood of our ministries and are vital to their survival. The role of laity,



Synod  
2021  
2023

For a synodal Church  
communion | participation | mission

especially that of women, is vital in all efforts of our Church, our parishes, and within the ministries that provide social, spiritual, emotional, educational, and physical support to people of all ages and needs.

When you reflect on the future of our Church and parishes, we are called to live the Gospel message by being active disciples and missionaries who share, energize, and meet the needs of those in our circle of influence. As a Church and community, we can do more together than we can do alone. Pray earnestly! Our Church needs you and your voice today!

## All are invited to take part in the interim phase of the Synod on Synodality

Many participated in parish-level listening sessions of the Synod. After the international gathering in Rome, organizers asked dioceses to cultivate dialogue before its October 2024 session. The Diocese of Erie is hosting dialogue sessions, open to all, to deepen their prayerful reflection. These ZOOM sessions will be held on **Wed., Feb. 28 at 8 pm, Thurs., Feb. 29 at 10 am, and Tues., March 5 at 12 pm.** [Click here to register.](#) More information about the synodal process can be found [here.](#)

## HOLY COLLAGE

The Associate Program Committee is pleased to offer the opportunity for an introspective and reflective morning, with a bit of fun thrown in for good measure. Through the use of pictures and images, you will create 5x7 collages that speak to your inner self. Artistic ability is not required, but an open spirit and enthusiasm is!

**Saturday, May 4, 2024**

**9:00 a.m.—12 noon  
CLC Gathering Space.**

Fee for the event is \$10 to cover the cost of materials. If you wish to attend, secure your reservation online by [clicking here](#) and pay the \$10 fee the day of the event, or make a reservation by mailing a check (payable to SSJ Associates) to Sr. Ann Marie Capello, 5031 West Ridge Rd, Erie, PA 16506.

Reservations must be received by

April 12th. If you plan on attending, please begin to compile pictures or images that capture your attention. Don't try to figure out why... we will do that together once your collage is complete. We also ask that you bring your own scissors.



[CLICK HERE to RSVP](#)

## Retreat Opportunities

The 2024 Conference Retreat at the our SSJ Community Living Center is scheduled for **October 6-12**. Sister Mary Rowell, of the Canadian province of the Sisters of St. Joseph, will facilitate the conference/guided retreat. Many may remember her retreat with us in July 2022, "Hospitality of the Heart."

**Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center**, a sponsored ministry of Sr. Ardath's community, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, offers many experiences for weekend and weeklong retreats and programs.

- ◆ Conference Retreat: *Teilhard's Cosmic Images of God*. Sun., June 9-Thurs., June 13, 2024. Presenter: Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, PhD.
- ◆ Weeklong Individually Directed Retreats: Sun., June 16 – Sun., June 23, 2024 and Sun., Sept. 8 – Sun. Sept. 15, 2024.

- ◆ Weekend Individually Directed Retreats. Fri., April 19 to Sun., April 21, 2024. Fri., Oct. 4 to Sun., Oct. 6, 2024. For further information, visit the website at [vmesc.org](http://vmesc.org) or call 724-964-8886.

### Notre Dame Retreat House Retreats. Canandaigua, NY

- ◆ "Courage, Wisdom, and Compassion: Lessons from Visionary Lives." Presenter: Gilliam Ahlgren. June 23-28, 2024.
- ◆ "Praying with Pope Francis". Presenter: Fr. Chuck Frederico, SJ.

Phone: 585-394-5700  
[nlynch@notredameretreat.org](mailto:nlynch@notredameretreat.org)  
[www.notredameretreat.org](http://www.notredameretreat.org)

## Lenten Services at the CLC



**Communal Reconciliation Service**  
**Wednesday, March 13**  
**3:15 p.m.**

**HOLY WEEK LITURGY SCHEDULE at the CLC:**  
**Sunday, March 24**

**Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion**  
**9:00 a.m.**

*(No Mass on Monday, March 25 or  
 Wednesday, March 27)*

**Tuesday of Holy Week, March 26**  
**Daily Mass**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**Holy Thursday, March 28**  
**Liturgy of the Lord's Supper \*\***  
**4:00 p.m.**

*\*\*If you are planning to stay for dinner after  
 the Holy Thursday Service, please RSVP  
 to 814-836-4040 or*

[Event-RSVP@ssjerie.org](mailto:Event-RSVP@ssjerie.org)

**Good Friday, March 29**  
**Liturgy of the Lord's Passion**  
**2:00 p.m.**

**Easter Sunday, March 31**  
**Liturgy of the Lord's Resurrection**  
**9:00 a.m.**

## Living Laudate Deum

*The Pope's Apostolic Exhortation*

### Cell Phone Disposal—Let's Do Our Part

This month's suggestion for helping the planet is to recycle your old cell phone. Before you do, remember to reset it to the factory settings so all your personal information is deleted. On average in the United States, cell phones are replaced every twelve months. Here are several ways to recycle your phone.



Many charities accept phones to be refurbished and given to people who need them.

If you just want to safely recycle your phone, places like Lowe's, Staples and Best Buy will take them. Check with your local municipality for special electronics recycling days.

Finally, if you want to make a few dollars for your effort, find an eco atm. They are more than 5,000 such kiosks nationwide. Locally, they are available at the food court at the Mall, at Walmart, and at many Dollar General stores. Eco ATMs are easy to use.

When cell phones end up in landfills, toxic chemicals can leach into the soil and water. Let's all do our part.

## SSJ Ministry News

**SAVE THE DATE!**

### 17th Annual SSJNN "Guess That Tune Gala"

May 11, 2024

Bayfront Convention Center

Hosts: Mayor Joe & Rhonda Schember



Join us for a fun and friendly competition of guessing songs and giving support to the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network. This will be a Flower-Power themed evening filled with music, dining, theme baskets, and a silent auction you won't want to miss! Save the date and invite friends. Tickets go on sale the first week of March!

A few volunteers are needed: if you are tech savvy and/or able to help us throughout the evening (including set-up/tear-down),

please contact Jenn Kennedy at 814-454-7814 x206.

Interested in donating money or gift cards for Guess That Tune Gala theme baskets? Drop off donations to the CLC front desk or 425 W. 18th St. no later than April 12th. Baskets will be valued at \$200-\$250. If you are unable to attend the gala but want to buy chances, the baskets will be on display at the CLC on May 8 & 9.

For more info, visit [www.ssjnn.org/GALA](http://www.ssjnn.org/GALA) or call 814-454-7814. Thank you for your support of SSJNN.



## Students' Fund for St. Patrick's Haven

Students of Cathedral Prep school are raising funds for St. Patrick's Haven during its 40th anniversary year to support its mission of providing a ministry of presence and a place of welcome, nightly refuge, food, comfort, and friendship.



Please join us in supporting this vital mission and helping these students in their effort to be of service to the community. Thank you for your willingness to help and for making a difference in our community.

[Click here of you would like to contribute to their Go Fund Me campaign.](#)

## Don't Put Old Medications in the Trash or Toilet

In the spirit of being environmentally conscious, Here are some sites that offer year-round collection of medications. You no longer have to wait for certain collection dates. If you want to search other areas in the U.S., [click here](#).

**TOPS PHARMACY**  
712 W 38TH STREET  
1702 EAST 38TH STREET

**GIANT EAGLE PHARMACY**  
2501 W 12TH ST  
4265 BUFFALO ROAD

**CVS PHARMACY**  
410 EAST 12TH STREET  
3800 PINE AVE



**PHARM SV - AHN Saint Vincent**  
232 W 25TH ST

**THE LANE DRUG COMPANY**  
163 WEST 26TH STREET

**WAL-MART PHARMACY**  
1825 DOWNS DRIVE  
2711 ELM STREET

## ssj community March Birthdays



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

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## Lenten Support of Mission Haiti, Inc.

For more than 10 years the entire community of the Sisters of St. Joseph have been supporting the work of Mission Haiti, Inc. Each Lent we have collected your Lenten Alms and sent a check to help. I was on a call recently with Sr. Alta in Haiti who runs the schools that we support. Sr. Alta and her community, The Companions of Jesus, run the elementary school, the secondary school, and now a trade school to educate the young people of Haiti. She shared with us that without an education many girls are taken for sex trafficking and the young men are stolen for the

gangs. Their newest endeavor is the Delmas Trade School. Presently the student population is 80% women and 20% men. The students are taught sewing, restaurant cooking, baking, welding, and plumbing. The students at the trade school earn a diploma in one to two years, depending on their program. Sr. Alta is hoping to expand the trade school, both in size and programs. There is a university in Haiti but very few students have the money to attend, and it takes much longer to earn a degree.

This trade school is an opportunity for more students

*by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator*

to be employable. In the last two years, 100% of the students have passed their proficiency tests and earned their diplomas. The average tuition for a student at the trade school is 200 American dollars.

Again this year, I ask you to continue to support Mission Haiti, Inc. There is a vase in the lobby of the Community Living Center to collect donations any time during Lent.

I am sure we can help several students earn a diploma and give them a better life.