

# interim

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Volume 42, Issue 10

October 2024

## Thank the Angels

By the time you receive this edition of *Interim*, the month of October will be just about here. What I like about October is that we have a variety of things to celebrate—Founder's Day, the Feast of the Guardian Angels, Halloween, and autumn, to name a few.

I'd like to focus my reflection on the angels. There is a song by Kathy Sherman, CSJ, titled "*Have you ever thanked the angels in your life?*" It's a song about the angels who are assisting you each day. Who are your angels? Your neighbor? A family relative? A friend who is a phone call away?



This year on October 2, the Feast of the Guardian Angels, why not acknowledge the angels in your life, those who have been there for you and your family when there has been a need? Let those angels know in some way

that the gift of kindness, generosity, support has been greatly appreciated by sending a note, giving a call, or coming up with your own creative expression of gratitude.

Blessings,

Sr. 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.



*The seasons may change,  
though the memories remain ...*

A time to remember our Sisters, Agregées, and Associates who died between October 1, 2023 and September 30, 2024

Elizabeth Ruza, SSJ  
Agregée Cindy Brown  
Jean Baptiste Diluzio, SSJ  
Associate Gail Smith  
Associate Uta Smith

Associate Patricia DeVore  
Mary Rachael McGuire, SSJ  
Joseph Marie Fitzgerald, SSJ  
Associate Donna Nicholas  
Associate Mary DeSanti

**Sunday, November 3, 2024  
2:00 p.m.  
Community Living Center**

RSVP by October 21. [Click here](#), call 814-836-4040  
or email [event\\_rsvp@ssjerie.org](mailto:event_rsvp@ssjerie.org)

# MISSION: POSSIBLE!

## Meadville Associates Make the Mission Possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

Recently, while having lunch with the Meadville Associates, I had a most enjoyable conversation with **Associate JoAnn Elwell**. JoAnn has been an associate for 29 years and has many interesting stories to share of her journey. Her association with the Sisters of St. Joseph goes back to her early years in Pittsburgh where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden. She reconnected with the Sisters of St. Joseph when she moved to the Meadville area. She shared fond memories of the Sisters in Meadville – especially **Sisters Mary Regis, Mary Ellen, and Margaret**

**Joseph**. She also shared some of her experiences with the Sisters and Associates and the various projects and activities they worked on together. She has kept a scrapbook of her Associate years. Even though there are no Sisters in Meadville today, JoAnn and the Associates continue to reach out to the dear neighbor where they live – Guys Mills, Conneaut Lake, Meadville - through their many acts of kindness and good works.

JoAnn recently joined the Associate Outreach group which reaches out to Associates who live outside the area, who

are in nursing homes, or Associates who find it difficult to get out by sending them notes, cards, and making phone calls.

Many thanks to **JoAnn and Associates Nancy Brown, Valerie Carlson, Nancy Donnelly, Carol Dorr, Cynthia Gruzca, Kris Huber, Maggie Link, and Suzanne Newsman** for making a special effort to stay connected with and reaching out to all Associates - the dear neighbor- especially those who are included in any of the above groups.

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

## International Founders' Day Celebration

A Livestreamed Prayer Service  
with the Global SSJ Family

*Celebrate 374 years since our founding in France*

Join with Sisters of St. Joseph and the family of Joseph from around the world to pray and celebrate the 374th anniversary of our foundation in France.

**Monday, October 14**

*(Founder's Day Eve)*

**7:00 p.m.**

**Community Living Center**

*We will show a recording of the prayer on Tuesday morning, October 15th at 9:00 a.m. in the Gathering Space for our employees and anyone else who would like to come.*

*Join us at the Community Living Center or, if you prefer, you can [register here](#) to get the link and watch it independently.\**

*\*If you are going to join us at the CLC, there is no need to register and get the link.*



THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH  
MISSION & MINISTRIES FOUNDATION  
INVITES YOU TO

**VENEZ CÉLÉBRER!**

*"COME CELEBRATE"*

THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH  
AT OUR FOUNDERS DAY SOIRÉE!

JOIN US TO TOAST THESE "EXTRAORDINAIRE" WOMEN.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024

OPEN HOUSE 3 TO 5 PM

5031 WEST RIDGE ROAD, ERIE PA 16506

THE SSSJ BEGAN IN LE PUY, FRANCE, IN 1650, AND CAME TO  
THE ERIE DIOCESE IN 1860. "VENEZ CÉLÉBRER" MORE THAN  
160 YEARS OF FAITHFUL LOVE AND SERVICE TO OUR NEIGHBORS.

THE SISTERS ART WILL BE ON DISPLAY & AVAILABLE FOR A DONATION.

PLEASE RSVP BY OCTOBER 7 TO ALMITRA CLERKIN:

814.836.4202 OR  
ALMI.CLERKIN@SSJERIE.ORG  
**MERCI BEAUCOUP!**



## TAKE BACK THE SITE

Prayer vigil  
at the site of the  
September 5, 2024,  
murder of

**Michelle Sue Hanson**

We reclaim the place where  
violence has occurred.  
We pray for all people who are  
harmed by violence,  
both victims and perpetrators.  
We believe that a nonviolent  
way of life is possible!

**Please join us in prayer  
Tuesday, October 1, 2024  
5:15 p.m.  
700 block of E. 9th Street**

Benedictine Sisters of Erie  
and Oblates

Sisters of St. Joseph,  
Agréées, and Associates

Sisters of Mercy  
and Associates

*"We adopt the means of  
nonviolence because  
our end is a community at peace  
with itself."*

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Erie Gives Day Results

**2024 Donor Goal: 350**

**Total Donors: 348 - 99.4% of Goal**

**2024 Gift Goal: \$50,000**

**Total Gifts & Match: \$48,560.99 - 97% of Goal**

*Thank You!*

➔ In 2023, 309 donor gifts and  
the prorated match totaled \$39,769.



## Associates' News and Happenings

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Associate Director

### Prayers

Please remember in prayer **Associate Mary Barzano DeSanti**, who passed away August 29, 2024. May Eternal Light shine upon her O Lord! May she rest in peace. Please remember Mary's husband Joseph and her family at this most difficult time.

Also remember **Cody Eric Schwenk**, 4-month-old great grandson of **Associate Mary Roach** who passed away unexpectedly September 15, 2024, at Saint Vincent Hospital. Please remember the family in your prayers at this most difficult time.

We also ask prayers for **Associates Shirley Byers and Ruth Mercier** and all the Sisters, Associates, Agrégées and their family members who are dealing with health issues.

### Change in Plans!

Please note that the **Associate Welcoming** that had been rescheduled for **October 27, 2024, had to be changed again to October 13, 2024, due to a conflict in scheduling.**

### Meadville Associates

Many thanks to **Associate Nancy Donnelly** for making the arrangements for the Meadville Associates to get together at Perkins for lunch and friendship on Monday, September 23, 2024. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Nancy for the door-to-door service from Erie to Meadville and for assembling the little bags of treats that she gave to everyone in attendance: **Associates Jerry Derby,**

**Rosemary Oehmler, Lorna Waddell, Kay Hotchkiss, JoAnn Elwell, Debbie Hamilton, and Nancy Donnelly** enjoyed each other's company as well as **Carl Hotchkiss, Rita Cappello and Barb Daube** who joined the group. An enjoyable time was had by all!

### Outreach Committee

Many thanks to **Carol Dorr** and the committee for all their work organizing the Memorial Service which will be held on November 3, 2024. See the invitation on the cover of this issue of Interim.



## Associate Welcoming Rescheduled



Sisters, Associates, Agrégées and guests

**Associates Welcoming**  
**Sunday, October 13, 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 Oct. 7 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.](#)

[Click here to access the Transforming Grace Prayer/Reflections](#)

## Gannon signs agreement with Ursuline College

A premiere institution of Catholic higher education on Lake Erie is taking shape as the presidents of Gannon University and Ursuline College announced they had signed a Letter of Intent to enter a strategic partnership. The move, which is contingent on the successful completion of due diligence, will create an



institution with about 6,000 students, 1,300 employees, and campuses in three states – Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Once complete, it will be the largest Catholic university system in the region.

Left: Sr. Maureen Grady, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland (left), with Sisters Mary Drexler, Lucille DeStefano and Linda Fusco.



Above: Sr. Mary Drexler (right) with Sr. Maureen Doyle, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland.

Right: Sr. Mary Drexler (right) with Sr. Gretchen Rodenfels, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland.



Some of our Sisters with the Leadership Team of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. Pictured (l-r) are: Sr. Laura Bregar (Ursulines), Sr. Mary Drexler, Sr. Lucille DeStefano, Sr. Linda Fusco, Sr. Kathleen Flannery (Ursulines), Sr. Maureen Doyle (Ursulines), and Sr. Gretchen Rodenfels (Ursulines).

## get to know the Agrégées

*Michelle Tortorelli*

**Associate Companion:  
Renee Calabrese  
Agrégée Mentor  
Sr. Joyce Lowrey**



"I love being retired. I've lived a full life and done a lot of things. I love learning and serving," recalls Michelle Tortorelli.

Michelle spent her professional career as an educator in Erie at Wilson Elementary and in San Diego and Indio, CA. She taught science, language arts, social studies, and reading to students from fifth through eighth grades. And, along with her long service in the education field, she served our country as a United States Marine from 1972-1975. After retiring, Michelle moved to The Villages, FL. Upon returning to Erie, she took classes at Saint Vincent for Pastoral Care and volunteered with Visiting Nurses. Health issues derailed her plans for a few years but Michelle lives the charism in and around her apartment complex on the grounds of Brevellier Village.

Along with assisting at Mass held for residents, Michelle does chair yoga three days a week, helps with potluck dinners and happy hours as well as participating in special events that are offered. Michelle and Pickles, her two year old black and tan Miniature Dachshund, are a great presence to all the residents.

# **COSMOGENESIS:** **Autocosmology as a Spiritual Practice**

*Steps to Planetary Consciousness, Deep Belonging,  
and Participation in an Evolving Universe*

A six-week course with  
BRIAN THOMAS SWIMME, PhD,  
assisted by Jennifer Morgan  
**Tuesdays: Oct. 15, 22, 29;**  
**November 5, 12, 19**  
**7:00 – 8:30 p.m. ET**



**Registration Deadline: October 11, 2024**  
[Click here for more information or to register.](#)

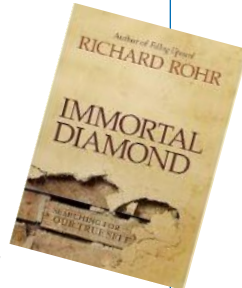


**The Sisters of St. Joseph are being recognized as  
the Helping Hands of Justice Honoree at this  
years' Helping Hands Gala.**

## **Book Study Opportunity** **"The Immortal Diamond"** **by Fr. Richard Rohr**

**Tuesdays at 6 p.m.,  
beginning Oct. 1**  
**Cathedral of St. Paul**  
*Parking in the Gannon Library  
lot on 7th Street*

Join Gary Loncki to study  
Fr. Richard Rohr's *"The Immortal  
Diamond: The Search for Our  
True Self."* Learn how to navigate spiritually  
difficult terrain with clear vision and tools  
to uncover our True Selves, or who we are  
in God. Rohr likens the True Self to a  
diamond, buried deep within us, formed  
under the intense pressure of our lives,  
that must be searched for, uncovered, and  
separated from all the debris of ego  
surrounding it. In a sense the True Self  
must, like Jesus, be resurrected, and that  
process is transformation. For the first  
session and discussion, read the first three  
sections of the book: The Invitation,  
Preface, and What is the True Self. Order  
your copy of "The Immortal Diamond" on  
Amazon. Everyone is welcome; bring a  
friend. Register at  
[crowe@saintmarkserie.org](mailto:crowe@saintmarkserie.org)



And, here is a link in which Richard  
describes ["The Immortal Diamond":  
Richard Rohr on The Immortal Diamond.](#)

Catholic Charities presents the

# *Helping Hands Gala*

Help us celebrate our 2024 Helping Hands Honorees:

**Helping Hands of Justice - The Sisters of Saint Joseph  
of Northwestern Pennsylvania**  
&  
**Helping Hands of Service - Dale DeMarco**

*Thursday, October 10*  
*Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom*  
*6:00 – 8:00 pm*

\$100 each or \$750 for a table of 8



Can't attend?  
Check out our online silent auction at:  
<https://hhgala24.givesmart.com>



SCAN ME



SSJNN Youth Programs could use support in the form of volunteer tutors, prepackaged snacks, juice boxes, and small prizes for the kids! Thank you for your continued generosity. Interested in learning more? Contact Connor Herron at 814-454-7814 x209.

SSJNN was awarded the annual Mission & Ministries Foundation grant to create a documentary honoring the Sisters of St. Joseph NWPA and its ministries. The mission and hope of the SSJ Legacy Documentary is to preserve the legacy of SSJ NWPA, create tools to ensure SSJ ministries' self-sustainability for the future, and increase community engagement with the volunteers, donors, and neighbors. We are excited to be sharing this project! Be on the look out for future announcements.

## Living Laudate Deum

### Change a Bulb

*by Deb Seng,  
SSJ Social Justice  
Coordinator*

As Season of Creation ends, we must not think that our responsibility to Hope and Act with Creation is over. Every person can do their part to keep global warming below the 1.5 degrees Celsius. If every household in the U.S. replaced one light bulb with a compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL) or a Light-emitting diode (LED) it would save enough to light 3 million



U.S. households for a year. The bulb may cost more upfront, but they use up to 75% less energy and last 10 times as long. A cost saving in the long run. As your incandescent bulbs burn out replace them with CFLs or LEDs. These bulbs come in almost every shape and size. These are small changes for you, but BIG wins for the Earth.

## Fight Against Cancer

*(Continued from page 8)*

who've received such news, and they require support from Washington. That is why I traveled to Capitol Hill to ask Congress to make a full and unwavering commitment to help prevent, detect and treat cancer. I want our lawmakers to know that volunteers from Pennsylvania and every state in

the country are counting on them to take a stand.

After meeting with lawmakers, volunteers gathered at the Constitution Gardens in Washington, D.C., to honor cancer survivors and remember those lost to the disease during the annual Lights of Hope ceremony. Illuminated bags decorated with the names of those who have faced a cancer diagnosis were displayed as a powerful message of hope.

## SSJ community October Birthdays

- 1 A. Karen Grove
- 5 A. Nancy Imler
- 5 A. Mary Ann Weber
- 9 A. Patricia Fronzaglia
- 10 A. Richard Marshall
- 11 A. Joan Fels
- 12 A. Jennifer King
- 13 A. Kristina Huber
- 14 A. Sheila Causgrove
- 15 S. Mary Arnold Tann
- 15 A. Elaine Clyburn
- 16 A. Kay Hotchkiss
- 17 A. Dave Sharie
- 20 Agr. Judi Janke
- 28 A. Stephen Kuhn
- 29 A. Elaine Mozdy
- 31 A. Kathy Anysz



## Important dates for the 2024 election:

**October 21 4:30 p.m.**  
Last day to register to vote or update registration.

**October 29 4:30 p.m.**  
Last day to apply for mail-in or Absentee Ballots

**November 5**  
General Election

## Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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WWW.  
SSJERIE  
.ORG



## Continuing the Fight Against Cancer

On September 17, I joined nearly 750 cancer patients, survivors, and their loved ones from all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico, including almost

every congressional district to unite in Washington, D.C., as part of the annual American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)

Leadership Summit and Lobby Day. ACS CAN volunteers urged their elected officials to take specific steps to make cancer a national priority and help end a disease that still kills roughly 1,676 people a day in this

country.

Over the course of several decades, I have served as a caregiver for a number of loved ones who battled cancer, giving

me firsthand insight into the many issues that patients face, and that require attention from lawmakers. I brought this perspective

with me into meetings with members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation. I discussed the need to support an increase in federal funding for cancer research through the National Institutes of Health

*by Deb Seng, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator*

(NIH) and prevention programs. I also asked lawmakers to support legislation to create a pathway for Medicare to cover new multicancer early detection tests once they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and proven effective.

Roughly 1 of every 3 people in the U.S. will hear the words 'you have cancer' in their lifetime. I have known and cared for many people



*(Continued on page 7)*