

# NEWSLETTER

## SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA

A PUBLICATION FOR SISTERS, ASSOCIATES, AND FRIENDS

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### Assembly 2010 — *Prophetic Hope:*

Some 600 Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates filled Martino Hall at Chestnut Hill College for the Fall Assembly held on October 10, 2010.

### *Imagine the Possibilities*



**Sister Constance FitzGerald, OCD, delivered the Assembly Keynote Address. For Sisters of Saint Joseph and Associates, the day held hope and challenge. For Connie the day held the opportunity to renew friendships with Sisters of Saint Joseph with whom she has shared life and ministry.**

important events of life and ministry.

During her presentation, Connie offered insights taken from her scholarly research, from her lived experience of prayer and contemplation, and from her own experiences of ongoing movements of renewal in our Church and our world. Connie's own roots in the Carmelite tradition, as well as her scholarly explorations of the richness of the contemplative and mystical traditions associated with Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila led her to invite Assembly attendees to new understandings of the purification of memories, the prayer of dispossession (graced self-emptying), the evolution of consciousness, the courage needed to cross thresholds of personal and communal transformation, that lead to prophetic hope as our God comes — as God always comes — from the future.

When Connie spoke

about new members, she used the experience of the Baltimore Carmel as a touchstone.

That experience led her to suggest the importance of every member's willing gift of self, every member's desire to extend a warm welcome

to those passionate, mature, dedicated women, who are attracted by vital community life, where deep contemplative prayer is a priority and where ministry serves people who cry out for hope and healing.

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**Sister Constance FitzGerald, OCD, chats with Baltimore colleagues Sisters Connie Gilder at left and Carol Marozzi at right.**

From the moment Connie named her coming to Chestnut Hill 'a homecoming,' spoke of being drawn there by 'connections of the heart,' and claimed fond memories of wonderfully happy years spent at Fontbonne and the 'Old Mount,' Connie held the hearts of her audience. For Connie, being at Chestnut Hill also evoked memories of many times through the years she and Sisters of Saint Joseph shared

## Centenary celebration sets the pace for the next 100 years

Saint Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House sits in a quiet neighborhood at Cape May Point, NJ, but on Saturday, October 2, that neighborhood was abuzz. Runners and walkers were gathering for the 8:30 start of *Sole Sisters*, a five-mile run and two-mile walk/run fundraiser topping off the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Retreat House.

According to Patrice Callahan, who handled a myriad of details as she worked with the SSJ Office of Development to coordinate *Sole Sisters*, "Pre-registered runners/walkers numbered 120 and an additional 60 came the day of the run." Runners competed in categories by age, ranging from 11 to 60 plus. Volunteer firemen from Cape May Borough, familiar with borough expectations involved in such events, helped with logistics and safety concerns. Plenty of sunshine, a bright blue sky and a cool ocean breeze added to the pleasure of the participants in the initial *Sole Sisters Run*.

If the Sisters of Saint Joseph were thinking of their *Sole Sisters Run* as 'a once in a hundred years event,' they may have been surprised to hear many happy participants saying, "You have to do this again next year, and "When friends in my runners group hear about this, I know next year will be bigger."

As she welcomed Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates and Friends of the Congregation to the afternoon events, Congregational President Sister Anne Myers said, "Caring for the soul is an important pursuit for all peoples. The mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph calls us to union with



**First Place Winners celebrate. They reached their goals at the 2010 Sole Sisters Run, and they're already thinking about next year.**

God, all people and all creation.... And so for 100 years our sisters and eventually other congregations, our associates and lay friends have been allured to this place by the sea, drawn by God's invitation... We rejoice in the ocean of grace and the tides of transformation that have washed over our collective souls for 100 years. This is what we celebrate today."

Saint Mary by-the-Sea Administrator Ms. Joan Dollinger, echoed Anne's welcome. Joan spoke of the strong sense of collaboration she experiences as she works with Sister Carol Zinn, member of the General Council of the Sisters of Saint Joseph who oversees Saint Mary by-the-Sea. She noted her appreciation for all the volunteers whose gifts of time and talent enhance the visit of every guest. Beaming one of her broad smiles, Joan hinted that plans are underway for one-day events that will enable even more guests to experience the Retreat House.

Sister Carol Zinn recalled all those whose generous service has been a mainstay of the Retreat House for a hundred years. She looked forward to the ways Saint Mary by-the-Sea may be graced to serve men, women, and children of various faiths in the next hundred years. She spoke with deep gratitude for the understanding of our Loving and Amazing God that time at the Retreat House awakens. "God continually calls each of us to be persons of peace, persons who recognize that we are one and act to transform our world."

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**Sister Barbara Farrell knows everyone who registered to run or walk will like the *Sole Sisters Run* T-shirt.**



**Patrice Callahan checks results on the tally board.**

## Award honors service



The moment when Cardinal Wuerl presented the *Manifesting the Kingdom Award* to Sister Constance Ward was captured by photographer Paul Feters, whom Connie calls whenever photos of the Center Chapel are needed.

Archbishop of Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, honored some 200 lay people and religious with the *Manifesting the Kingdom Award* as he offered Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his ordination as bishop.

Cardinal Wuerl thanked the honorees, noting that across the archdiocese they have generously given thousands of hours of service – mostly unseen and unsung – as they go about their good works and volunteer services. They are women and men “who shine Christ’s light to others,” the Cardinal said.

Nominated by the

Office for Worship, where she has served since 1977, Sister Constance Ward was one of six women religious honored at the celebration, held on the Feast of Epiphany, January 2, 2011.

The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate the presence of Jesus in their lives and who are exceptional in their ways of manifesting the Kingdom of God among us.

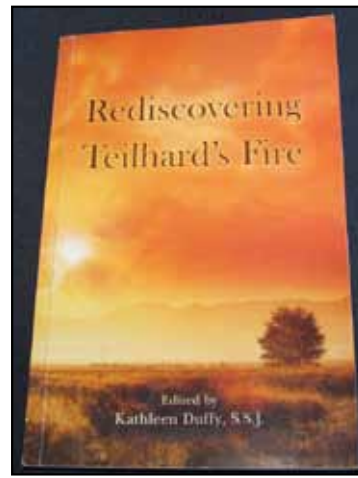
Over the years, one of Connie’s many interests has been the Sunday TV Mass, which is aired as a way for the archdiocese to offer homebound persons the opportunity to participate spiritually in the Catholic Mass.

In September 2010, Saint Joseph’s University Press published *Rediscovering Teilhard’s Fire*, a collection of 17 essays edited by Sister Kathleen Duffy.

The essays emerged from reflections on Teilhard’s life and work delivered by scholars during anniversary celebrations held in 2005, 50 years after Teilhard’s death on April 10, 1955.

In her introduction to the collection, Kathy explains that she has organized the essays by section, providing an introduction to Teilhard’s thought and spirituality in Section I and devoting Section II to Teilhard’s aesthetics. Essays in Section III, *Teilhard*:

## In Print



*In Dialogue*, offer points of view that contrast Teilhard’s theological and philosophical work with that of other scholars, while those in Section

IV, *Teilhard: Contributions to Science and Technology*, include opinions held by scholars whose views differ from those Teilhard proposed.

Included in the collection is *Toward a God for Evolution: A Dialogue between Teilhard and Arthur Peacocke*, an essay by Sister Gloria L. Schaab, and *Teilhard’s Physics Imagery*, an essay written by Kathy herself.

Always inspired by writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Kathy believes that *Rediscovering Teilhard’s Fire* offers “deeper insight into Teilhard’s life, work, and thought,” and can awaken recognition of the “impact that his thought has had and can have on our religious, scientific, and social thought.”

## Weaving as a Lifestyle

*Weaving as a Lifestyle* is a compilation of personal reflections and photographs of original paintings and weavings by Sister Lilian Lane. It also includes Scripture, poetry, and art. A Sister of Saint Joseph for 52 years, Lilian died in 2005.

Rev. Gaspar Genuardi, pastor of Saints Cosmas and Damian Parish in Conshohocken, PA, where Lilian served as Director of Religious Education and participated in a variety of parish services, valued the *Notebook* that Lilian shared with him. Before giving the *Notebook* to the Congregation, he arranged to have it edited by Sister Catherine Corrigan and printed by Minuteman Press in Conshohocken.

An artist in many ways, Lilian played piano and violin,

exhibited talent for sewing and needlework, and was involved in the creative art of weaving. Every skill Lilian learned, she shared by teaching others.

Invited by Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark to teach weaving at the SSJ Earth Center in Mount Airy, PA, Lilian drew illustrations to accompany her directions. Those directions guided beginners from the art of preparing and dying yarn, to the dressing of the loom, to the placing of a completed weaving.



For Lilian, all was rooted in God’s call to share the beauty of creation. The beautiful threads of her own spiritual life are woven into the threads of the story gathered in *Weaving as a Lifestyle*. One of Lilian’s finest tapestries hangs at Saint Mary-by-the-Sea Retreat House in Cape May Point, New Jersey.

## SEPCHE art faculty exhibit hosted at Chestnut Hill College

Chestnut Hill College hosted the 2010 SEPCHE Art Faculty Exhibition in the Dwight V. Dowley Art Gallery, October 18 – November 18, 2010. The exhibit showcased the diverse talent of the art faculty serving at Arcadia University, Cabrini College, Chestnut Hill College, Gwynedd-Mercy College, Holy Family University, Immaculata University, Neumann University and Rosemont College.

Visitors viewed a panorama of pieces that included acrylics, etchings,

digital posters and mixed media, graphic designs, oils, pastels, watercolors, printmaking and woodcraft. Works by **Chestnut Hill College Professor of Art Sister Therese Benedict McGuire, and Associate Professor of Art Sister Margaret Thompson as well as Adjunct Art Instructor Andrea O’Driscoll were among the approximately 50 entries exhibited.**

The light and space of Dowley Gallery, located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Saint Joseph Hall, enhanced the impressive display of the artists’ works.

An Opening Reception was held October 20, 2010.

SEPCHE, The Southeastern Pennsylvania Consortium for Higher Education, is a consortium of eight independent higher education institutions in the Greater Philadelphia region that collaborate to improve the quality and efficiency of academic programming, student access, faculty development, institutional operations and community outreach, through a range of shared activities, services, technology and information.



*Water Lilies* is one of several pieces Sister Therese Benedict McGuire submitted for the SEPCHE exhibit.

**Editorial Policy:** The goal of the SSJ NEWSLETTER is to further our mission of unity and reconciliation by sharing information significant to the Congregation with our sisters, associates, and friends. SSJ NEWSLETTER is published by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. Address correspondence to: Pat Marnien SSJ, Editor, Communications Office, Mount Saint Joseph Convent, 9701 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118-2694. (E-mail pmarnien@ssjphila.org; phone 215-248-7269; FAX 215-248-7277.)

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**Photographers include:** Sisters Miriam Richard Allorto and Cathie Meighan and Mr. Paul Feters and Mrs. Chris Thistle.

**Mailing:** Sisters Maria Rita Lannutti, Gerald Vincent McDevitt, Terry Pierson, Ann Seif, Margaret Mary Smith, and Rose Agnes White.

Students at Saint Rita Parish School, Alexandria, VA, collected PENNIES during the month of January. They sent \$1,000+ to Saint Joseph Villa! Sisters Terry McCrossen and Alma Bernadette Hurley cheered them on! Thank You, Saint Rita Students.

# Assembly

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At the Assembly, many were touched by the *Intergenerational Conversation*, a Mary and Elizabeth dialogue between Sisters Helene Gardner and Charlene Diorka. The view of community life that Helene has shared for the 72 years since she first became a Sister of Saint Joseph in 1938 touched hearts and won many smiles of recognition. At times Helene's eyes twinkled with glee or misted with the memory of sorrow as the years of life stories came to mind. "We cared about one another, so over the years there were times for laughter and times for tears." Helene's stories sparked connection with Charlene's own experience and to them she added national and even international experiences she has shared with women discerning God's call to religious life.

With a listening ear and an open heart Helene and Charlene demonstrated the possibilities of prophetic hope.

## Local Communities and Grassroots Groups are bringing Assembly Challenges to Life

The Fall Assembly is spreading roots in the daily life of Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates. The day-to-day practice of *Generous Promises* is leading sisters and associates to heightened zeal for deeper prayer life, richer community life, and active concern for the needs of the world.

Members of the General Council and the Assembly Planning Committee carried an experience of the Fall Assembly to Saint Joseph Villa. The energetic participation of so many Sister Residents awed all those who enabled their participation in various features of the Assembly. Copies of the *Generous Promises* were forwarded to the Villa and the sisters are supporting one and all with their prayer.

**Connections flow readily from Chapter 2009 to the Strategic Plan, to the Assembly.** Those connections are taking life in the daily prayer and ongoing commitment of Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates.

**The Prayer Committee** has provided two useful resources: Advent Prayer



A moment of laughter follows the *Intergenerational Conversation* Sisters Helene Gardner and Charlene Diorka shared at the Assembly.



Sister Marie St. Paul Alsbaugh deposits grape stems in one of several compost collectors available at the Assembly, which was, as far as possible, a "No Waste" event.

initiative and the Sharing the State of the Heart guides.

More than 50 sisters responded to the Strategic Plan Committee's invitation to bring their creative energy and best thinking to **Grassroots Groups** designed:

To learn and utilize the skills of social analysis as a tool to help us live the prophetic dimension of our vowed life style.

To promote a theology of vocation that includes the laity and to support lay ecclesial ministry and leadership in our

church.

To collaborate with others in finding new ways to be in direct service to those who are poor.

To approach the complex challenges of housing.

**Imagining the possibilities of being persons of prophetic hope needs no greater boost than Sister Connie FitzGerald's closing assurance:**

*God will overwhelm you with joy.*



Sisters Assunta Bonner and Marie Jerome Hennessey are pleased that the Assembly "traveled" to the Villa.



Sisters Margaret Mary McLaughlin and Anna Mary O'Mara "catch up" before heading home.

# Saint Mary by-the-Sea

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Participants who gathered with Sister Rita Woehlcke prayed, often by name, for the wisdom shared by so many retreat leaders, for staff and volunteers, sisters and associates with whom they have welcomed, the Tides of Transformation, days of retreat have offered them. Rita said, "The same dynamic we experience at Cape May is present wherever we are living our mission," and she asked, "Do I allow the God who has met me here to meet me where I live?"

Sister Rita Woehlcke called for remembrance of staff and volunteers who with less than no ado have humbly and graciously served the needs of retreatants through the 100 years celebrated throughout this anniversary year.



In her reflection, Sister Joan Riethmiller presented Saint Mary's as God's Dream. As she sees it, Saint Mary's was God's Dream when Rev. Daniel I. McDermott proposed the purchase of what had been the Shoreham Hotel, and when collaboration with other religious communities and with SSJ Associates, led the Congregation to see that it was time to open wide the doors so that not only Sisters of Saint Joseph but religious of other congregations, SSJ Associates and others might also draw graces of transformation as they rest in the beauty, spirituality, and hospitality, of so sacred a space.

Joan said, "We celebrate the fruitfulness and the ongoing movement of God's dream in persons past, in persons present, and in the persons and choices yet to come. However Saint Mary by-the-Sea is remodeled and refurbished in the future," Joan said, "God's desire will always be that it be a place that fosters deepening union with God. This is the vision, the dream we are to fan into flame. This is the vision, the dream for which God asks us to be faithful stewards."

Rev. George Williams SJ, who presided at a Celebration of Eucharist toward the close of day, spoke of the many graces he attributes to the peaceful atmosphere and beauty of Saint Mary by-the-Sea, and in their prayers of petition, Sisters of Saint Joseph voiced high hopes for the next 100 years. The chapel rang with songs of praise and thanks for the many blessings Saint Mary by-the-Sea has been for the Sisters, their guests, and their Cape May Point neighbors.

## Moving forward — rich in hope

On the final day of the 100th anniversary celebration, both Sister Carol Zinn and Saint Mary by-the-Sea administrator Joan Dollinger expressed the hope that in future days, Saint Mary will host not only Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates, but also men and women of varied faith traditions. October 2011 had not ended when Joan emailed Carol to share a poem she received.

The poem expressed the thanks of **The Methodist Men of Hope Church**, Voorhees, NJ. The men made a weekend retreat at Saint Mary's in mid-October. In a report to their church leaders, The Methodist Men said that they "came to Saint Mary's unsure of what we'd find... rocked in the chairs of HIS mercy and grace... and left with fulfilled hearts." In addition Joan said, "The men's group, which was moved beyond words with the hospitality and beauty of Saint Mary's, has already scheduled another retreat and is looking into ways they can offer volunteer service. A women's group from the same church has scheduled retreats for the fall of 2011 and 2012." For Carol the message matches the SSJ charism. Carol said, *It seems clear that our charism has had the Cape for over a hundred years, and it is likely that our charism will continue to have the Cape for many more years!*

Already on the calendar is the **second annual: Sole Sisters Run 2/5 mile Walk/Run October 1, 2011**



Ready to help the Sole Sisters Run go smoothly are Cape May's Firemen.

## con-ser-va-tor: noun

*Conservator* may not be a word you use every day. The term refers to a person who is in charge of maintaining or restoring valuable items, as in a museum, library, or archives.

**Conservator did become an everyday word for Sister Roberta Archibald as she explored ways to respond to a 2008 evaluation by the Center for the Conservation of Art and Historic Artifacts.**

The evaluation recommended treatment of several Heritage Area treasures including three oil paintings. Two oil paintings by Sister St. Luke Kelly: *Mother St. John Fontbonne* and *Mother St. John Fournier* are in the motherhouse foyer; another oil painting by Sister Francis Vincent Sturgis, *Monticello*, is in the Heritage Area.

After reviewing a list of regional paintings conservators, Roberta sought advice from Dr. Michael W. Schantz, former Director and Chief Executive Officer of Woodmere Art Museum. Dr. Schantz gave a glowing recommendation for Steven B. Erisoty, who had done exemplary work for Woodmere. He has a studio in Chestnut Hill.

Steven completed treatment of the three paintings through processes that not only arrest deterioration but also improve overall condition. The processes included: consolidation of insecure areas of paint, reduction of deteriorated varnish layers and repaints. An isolating layer of polyvinyl acetate was applied over all, paint losses were filled with pigmented wax and along with repaints were inpainted with pigments. He applied a layer of finish varnish overall.

Because the *Monticello* canvas was ripped along the top and left edges, it had to be removed from the stretcher, humidified and flattened under vacuum pressure and then lined with a new layer of linen canvas.

On Founders' Day 2010, Steven joined the motherhouse community of sisters and partners in mission for the unveiling and reinstallation of *Mother St. John Fournier's* portrait, a highlight of the day. All three paintings, now fresh and bright, have been returned to their respective places of honor.



Sister Roberta Archibald (left) and Sister Gee Bell welcome Conservator Steven Erisoty to the Motherhouse dining room. Steven was pleased to be part of the Founders' Day program and to be present for the blessing of the painting he restored. "It was impressive," he said, "to realize that your founders came here in the 19th century to teach persons who were deaf. It was also impressive to find myself among so many women who are doing so much good in our world."



Steven Erisoty and Sister Roberta Archibald stand with the restored painting of *Mother St. John Fournier*. Steven said, "As time passes a treasured piece is no longer in the best condition. Providing a piece like your painting of *Mother St. John Fournier* with the particular kind of care it needs is the best way to preserve its beauty for future generations."

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We ask your prayerful remembrance of  
our Sisters and Associates  
who have entered eternal life  
from August 28, 2010 through February 22, 2011

Sister Grace Dorothy Fenning	August 28, 2010	68 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Cyrilla Hood	September 14, 2010	78 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Cecilia Maria Leipert	September 14, 2010	54 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Ann Beatrice Kelly	October 5, 2010	76 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Adela Slagle	October 29, 2010	70 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Marie Antoinette Scherr	October 29, 2010	56 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Paula Deufel	November 24, 2010	55 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
SSJ Associate Agnes Burgess	December 23, 2010	
Sister Agnes Albert Scheckenbach	December 24, 2010	72 <sup>d</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Marie Esther Kenny	December 27, 2010	72 <sup>d</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Dennis Eileen Gamber	December 30, 2010	76 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Frances Gervase O'Brien	January 2, 2011	69 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Mary Ann Boyle	January 2, 2011	55 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Mary Theresa Flood	January 19, 2011	66 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Marie G. Scanlon	January 22, 2011	70 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Mary Madonna Siebold	January 25, 2011	59 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Helen Victor Mitsch	February 1, 2011	60 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister John Cecelia Lent	February 17, 2011	47 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Alma Dolorine Taylor	February 22, 2011	58 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life

*Eye has not seen nor ear heard  
what God has ready for those who love God. 1 Cor. 2:9*

## Prayer for Vocations – Harvest Holy Hour at Saint Joseph Villa

**Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates and friends of the Congregation are invited to a Holy Hour for Vocations scheduled from 12:30 to 1:30 on Sunday, March 13th at Saint Joseph Villa.**

When *Newsletter* asked Sister Pat McClure about the Holy Hour, Pat emailed a cascade of facts and feelings, describing in detail the November 2010 *Holy Hour for Vocations*. Pat wrote:

**I think so many Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates and friends of the Congregation desire to participate because they realize how powerful prayer really is.**

Our prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is reverent and reflective. **We asked Sister Connie Murphy to share her reflection on the readings.**

Connie was powerful. Her presentation was sincere and real. She focused not only on the call, but also on the mission of Mary, Joseph, and the 72 disciples.

Connie said, "Today we come together to pray for vocations to religious life. We pray that people will hear God's call, and that they will come to know and accept the mission God asks of them. We pray especially that women called to religious life will have the fortitude to answer God's call, that women will join us in our mission as Sisters of Saint Joseph.

One of the reasons *mission* caught my attention is that I'm a 'mission novice,' a second year novice. My canonical year, my contemplative time in sunny California is over.



Sister Connie Murphy offered both reflection and challenge at the Harvest Holy Hour for Vocations to religious life.

I experienced my first missioning letter from our Congregational President, Sister Anne Myers last summer.

I am currently involved in full time teaching ministry at Pope John Paul II High School, the new Archdiocesan high school in Royersford. I've come to understand that my primary mission at the high school is *not* studying scripture or the teachings of the church with the students.

Many of my students have never had a Sister as a teacher, and what has become very apparent to me is that my primary mission at the high school is a ministry of presence.

How I live, work, and interact with those around me is all part of my mission as a Sister of Saint Joseph at Pope John Paul II High School. How I live, work, and interact with those around me is a public witness to religious life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As we pray together today, Connie said, I ask you not only to remember your call ... where you found the

courage to say, *yes ...* and why you came to our community. No, I ask you to ponder your mission. How do you live your mission? Why do you stay? How can we as individuals and as a community burn with passion for our mission? And what invitation are we extending to others?

**In closing, Connie said, May we pray that we live our mission with a sense of zeal and joy. May our mission burn with passion for years to come.**

The idea to come together for a Holy Hour for Vocations originally came from the experience of Sisters and Associates gathered as a House of Prayer during Chapter 2004, Pat said.

Among the members of our planning group are Sisters Jane Day, Mary Elizabeth Gebhart, Kathleen Leary, Kathleen Moriarty, and I. Our network of helpers has included our Formation Directors, Sisters Fran Hart and Kathy Clafin as well as our Villa contacts Sisters Geri Capra, Kathleen McMenamin, Pat Murphy, and Grace Pino.

# The Hot Lunch at Our Mother of Sorrows is a match for one of the many needs of the Dear Neighbors of OMS

If Sister Margaret Keane packed several boxes as she prepared to move to Saint Joseph Villa, surely one of the largest was labeled: *Memories: Social Ministry at Our Mother of Sorrows*. Peggy's ministry at Sorrows is legendary.

While many people instantly associate Peggy with Our Mother of Sorrows Soup Kitchen, a close look shows that Peggy understood that often as not, the need for food suggests other paramount needs such as secure housing, clothing, work, education, and above all the need for caring companions and active membership in a strong faith community.

In the early days of her outreach ministry, Peggy accompanied then pastor Msgr. John Daly (died 3/27/2005) on parish visits. Father Daly, Peggy explained, "wanted me to begin a series of visits that would eventually include every family that had children attending Our Mother of Sorrows School. Having already served as a teacher at OMS, I knew many of those families well, and they were happy to welcome me into their homes."

On those visits, Peggy heard family stories firsthand, and she soon found ways to connect people who had particular needs with people who wanted to help. For years now, members of Saint John Neumann Parish in Bryn Mawr, sister parish to Our Mother of Sorrows, have been finding ways to meet Peggy's requests. Their responses run the gamut from donations of skill, time, talent and treasure, to delivery of dinners prepared for parishioners who live just down the street at the Stephen Smith Home. Some volunteer to teach English as a Second Language; others serve Thanksgiving Day dinners at OMS. Young adults from St. Joseph's University are tutors at Our Mother of Sorrows – Saint Ignatius Schools.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, guests are invited to share the meal Peggy calls *The Hot Lunch*. The men, women, and occasionally children, who join the porch line, know they will be welcomed as guests. That's because Peggy took her cue from a homily Pope John Paul II delivered at Yankee Stadium: "...you must treat them like guests at your family table."

*The Hot Lunch* table at Our Mother of Sorrows holds small bouquets of flowers and tiny potted plants. Works by African American artists are displayed on the walls. Nothing is fancy, but everything is clean and neat.

When the dining room door opens at 11:30, the first 22 are admitted. Each guest's meal is served on a tray. As one guest finishes, Peggy, a staff member, or a volunteer refreshes that place. Then another guest is seated and another tray is delivered until all are served. Those who wish to return for seconds are re-admitted when a place is available. "Our dinners are ample," Peggy says, "and as in every family, guests are welcome to help with clean up."

A typical menu includes baked chicken, greens, and sliced potatoes, plus dessert, a drink, and a roll. "Amoroso's bread is one food donation we can count on," Peggy said. "Sometimes there is something extra. Take a look at those four pizza boxes, for example. Someone brought them here, so pizza bits will be arranged and served as hors d'oeuvres. Our guests will be pleased with the pizza surprise."

As Peggy was preparing to retire to Saint Joseph Villa, many men and women stopped to greet her and to wish her well. Each had a story about Peggy's ministry to them or to a loved one.

One said, "She's like my mom!" Another: "I volunteer here. I was homeless. Twelve years ago, she asked me to go to the food bank, and I have never left." Shaking her head for emphasis, a third woman said, "We're going to miss her so much. There was nothing inside my house. I mean no walls, no floors. I had bad wiring. Sister Peggy found volunteers willing to help me. They made my house like new. Now my home is beautiful and I feel safe. I've been a volunteer here for 20 years." When one OMS parishioner spoke about the positive impact Peggy has had on her family, she noted especially the comfort Peggy offered when her son was killed on 9/11.

On November 14, 2010 Peggy was honored during the Sunday liturgy; a gala breakfast reception followed. Principal of Our Mother of Sorrows and Saint Ignatius of Loyola Schools Sister Owen Patricia Bonner welcomed all who gathered to celebrate Peggy. She pointed out that we could no more count



Sister Margaret Keane (second from left) interrupts staff members at work and gathers them for this photo.

Always room at the table for one more guest. A volunteer delivers another tray from the kitchen. Peggy tidies a space and the guest is soon seated.



the number of persons whose lives Peggy touched through her social ministry than we can count the stars in the heavens.

Present Pastor Rev. Jeffrey Stecz expressed his gratitude for all Peggy has done through her social ministry at OMS, and he displayed a plaque, which will hang in the soup kitchen dining room.

Asked about that celebration, Peggy had a ready reply: "Magnificent. All my family and friends were there."

Peggy's outreach efforts, so long a staple of Our Mother of Sorrows Parish community, will continue.

Sister Nancy Roche is looking forward to meeting families and volunteers and to collaborating with the Center's staff and volunteers to meet the needs of 2011 and beyond.



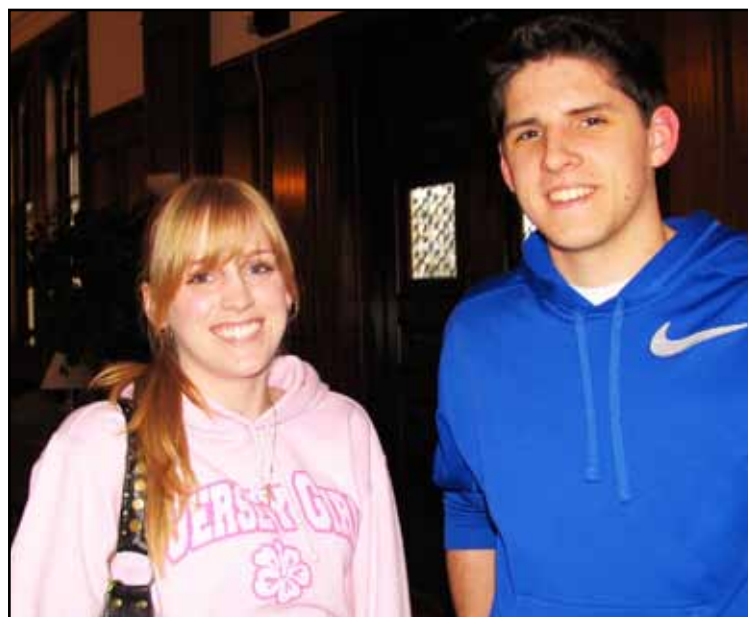
Sister Nancy Roche is eager to learn all about Our Mother of Sorrows many outreach programs.

## Human Trafficking: The Facts and the Warning Signs

Sister Mary Beth Hamm, Social Justice Coordinator for the Sisters of Saint Joseph, delivered the lecture, *Faces and Facets of Human Trafficking*, at Chestnut Hill College on December 1, 2010.

At the outset, Mary Beth invited students to consider what they already know about Human Trafficking. Then she displayed accurate, current numbers in her PowerPoint. Example: At any given time, 27 million people are enslaved worldwide! Those numbers and the realization that Human Trafficking exists in every state across the US, and that although most trafficking victims are women and children, many young men are also lured into human trafficking – surprised the CHC students.

Mary Beth explained that more often than not desperate poverty, high unemployment, lack of gender equality, and lack of opportunity are at the root of the naive acceptance of an empty promise of a better life for themselves and their families. She pointed out that market demand cannot be ignored; in part, trafficking



CHC students Dara Bellingham and Evan Alvarez have a new understanding of Human Trafficking in the US and abroad.

thrives because it is a lucrative business.

As she explained that once transported across international borders, victims experience isolation, she asked, "Where can victims turn? Where dare they place trust?" In most cases, human trafficking victims lack the ability to speak the local language, and physical and psychological coercion as well as fear of further abuse leave them with little hope.

"Increased awareness is needed," Mary Beth said. "We Sisters of Saint Joseph and our colleagues in the Catholic Coalition for Justice and the Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking Coalition emphasize the need to 'look below the surface,' as we work with church leaders, law enforcement, and legal resources to raise awareness of the fact that Human Trafficking is a form of modern day slavery that involves recruiting, retaining, transporting and coercing young children, teenagers, men and women for purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor."

# Norwood-Fontbonne Academy proudly celebrates 90 years

Need a mid-winter lift? *Newsletter* has a suggestion: skip the spa, cancel the cruise, and schedule a visit to Norwood-Fontbonne Academy, a private Catholic Academy for boys and girls from preschool level through grade eight, sponsored by the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1920, Norwood-Fontbonne Academy (NFA) is celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. Visit and warm welcome is guaranteed. Visit and find your spirits soaring!

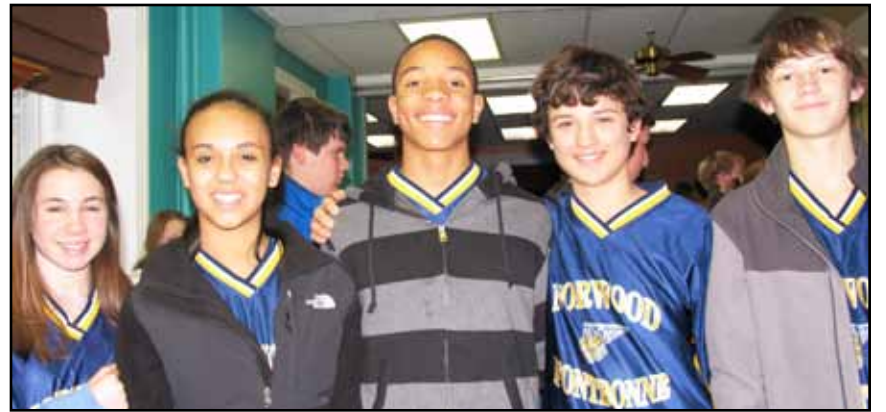
Each school day, some 400 boys and girls share learning experiences with teachers and peers. Working together, students (even three-year-olds!) often ask perceptive questions. Introduced to issues of our times, students sometimes propose tentative solutions that invite a fresh consideration of viewpoints.

To honor both Catholic Schools Week (January 30-February 5) and NFA's 90 years, campus ministers Will Dennis and Terri Hutsell invited Sisters Roberta Archibald, Mary Beth Hamm, and Rose Andrea Loughery to visit the Academy and to offer presentations to help students appreciate more deeply the NFA legacy born of their relationship with the Sisters of Saint Joseph and their Mission: *to live and work so that all people may be united with God and with one another.* Sisters Roberta, Mary Beth and Rose geared their presentations to the students each would meet. They focused not only on the history of the Congregation of Sisters of Saint Joseph that grew from the first six sisters who lived in Le Puy, France to the 13,000 plus Sisters living their Mission in more than 50 countries across the globe today, but more specifically *on the ways the legacy of the very first sisters has been handed on through the generations from 17<sup>th</sup>-century Le Puy, France to Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, and most particularly to students attending Norwood-Fontbonne Academy from 1920 to 2011.*

Mary Beth brought along a mirror. It served as the perfect prop as she spoke with students from grades seven and eight. Each time she pointed to a value the Sisters hold sacred, Mary Beth held up the mirror and asked the students, "Do you see yourself reflected in that value? Can you see NFA reflected in that value? Sisters of Saint Joseph are concerned whenever someone's need for food and clean water, for clothing and shelter, for health care and education, is not being met. Sisters of Saint Joseph are concerned when a voice cannot be heard at the table. Do you see yourself in that mirror? You are the bearers of the legacy of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

When students from grades four through six assembled, Roberta used a PowerPoint she has created to accompany a brief history of the Congregation. One of her images displays a photo of the original house of the Sisters who gathered in Le Puy, France. As she mentioned *The Kitchen*, the room where the first Sisters of Saint Joseph gathered to pray, to make lace, to share their meals, and to plan ways to help poor and sick people who were their neighbors, Roberta explained that the house was confiscated during the Revolution. The Sisters dearly loved that house, Roberta said, and after the Revolution, they asked local officials to return it to them. They were unsuccessful at first, but they were women of both courage and ingenuity. Instead

Even at the close of a busy school day that included Gym class, NFA students have smiles to share. They wore the same smiles on Service Day, when they collected socks for the homeless. NFA students are aware, and they choose to make a difference.



of writing to local officials again, they prepared another letter of request. This time they wrote to: Her Imperial Highness, Mother of Emperor Bonaparte. *Dear Madame Mère*, they wrote. They were successful! "I'm really glad that they got it back," a student responded. "It was so unfair that the Sisters' house was taken from them."

Rose spoke with students ages 5 to 9. She told them that Father Jean-Pierre Medaille who guided the first Sisters of Saint Joseph advised them to "Show love for your neighbor at all times." When Rose asked, "Who is your neighbor?" students offered answers like, "The family that lives next door," and "the person who sits beside me." Second grader Jack Harvey said, "Everyone is my neighbor."

Students came forward to explain how they have helped a neighbor shovel snow, how they picked up something that had dropped, how they greeted their neighbors in a friendly way.

As the group left the assembly, Nicholas Mustin rushed to help put away some



Students volunteer to tell Sister Rose Andrea Loughery how they help their neighbors.

folding chairs. Nick "got it." Without even being asked, he knew exactly how he could help his neighbor, at the close of the Catholic Schools Week Assembly. **More on page 11**



Quick to see a need and to help his neighbor, Nicholas Mustin rushed over to help stack chairs used at the assembly.

## Needed: Increased Awareness of Human Trafficking

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Increased awareness leads to rescue and to assistance. Mary Beth named several local organizations that work to rescue those trapped in domestic servitude, sweatshop work, and sexual exploitation. She spoke about her own firsthand experiences of hearing the stories of trafficked women who have found opportunity for long-term healing and rehabilitative services at the non-profit, Dawn's Place.

She also pointed to the work that a local Covenant House does to help teenage

runaways. Their work helps to prevent human trafficking. Without help, many boys and girls are easily caught up in human trafficking situations.

Like many of us, some students seemed surprised to learn that the need for the services offered at Dawn's Place and Covenant House could possibly exist so close to their everyday lives. Mary Beth noted that learning gained from research required to pursue topics suggested by their teachers for presentations, papers and class discussion, helps Chestnut Hill College students become young men

and women able to identify and eager to address issues of social justice. Awareness leads them to collaborate with others who are working toward systemic change.

Mary Beth's lecture was one of a number of *Passport Events*, a mix of educational, social, and recreational opportunities that comprise the First Year Initiative class Chestnut Hill College provides to help new students assimilate into college life and responsibilities.

Written with:  
Mary Beth Hamm SSJ



Coordinator of the SSJ Commission for Justice Sister Mary Beth Hamm (left) and Professor of Religious Studies Marie A. Conn, Ph.D.

## Chestnut Hill College hosts *Development 101* for nonprofits

Chestnut Hill College hosted the non-profit management seminar, *Development 101: Learn the Essentials*, on November 4, 2010. Program presenters were Development Consultants Sisters Madeline Franze and Mary McFadden, both Certified Fund Raising Executives, who specialize in consultation for Catholic Congregations of women and men religious.

One attendee was Sister Louise Kane. Louise has decades of experience with Catholic Social Services, but only minimal experience with professional efforts at fund raising and development. Louise shared her experience of the program Madeline and Mary offered this way:

**Development 101: Learn the Essentials** — sounds elementary, right? Anything but! For me learning the basics involved setting up and operating a development program was like learning a foreign language. I discovered that development has a language of its own! Most enlightening was gaining insight into an understanding of the “Culture of Philanthropy”

and recognizing differences between development and fundraising.

Mary and Madeline were so at ease as they stressed the importance of the infrastructure of a development program. I realized the need to: present our case, have a plan, and so much more.

Before I took *Development 101*, I was unaware of the many program vehicles a healthy program involves, but I walked away with ideas about direct mail, publications, special events, planned giving, major gifts, foundations and grants, and capital campaigns spinning in my head.

When Director of the Cardinal Bevilacqua Community Center at Visitation Parish, Sister Karen Owens, was asked about her *101* experience, she smiled and gave a succinct summary. Karen said, “It was a day of learning for me. I realized that you really have to have a plan to be effective.”

Director of the SSJ Welcome Center Sister Eileen Marnien said, “Building a Development program is an overwhelming challenge. Madeline and Mary make it



Sister Karen Dietrich and Pamela Lawler attended the program on behalf of the Catholic Partnership Schools, a nonprofit eager to provide the children of Camden, NJ with a Catholic education in a safe and nurturing environment.

seem possible. Thanks to their expertise and encouragement I believe that participants in this workshop left feeling confident and prepared for the task of fundraising and friend raising.

Finding ways to help others who promote good works through development is a constant with Mary and Madeline, and it is one of the reasons Madeline was honored with *The George T. Holloway Award for Distinguished Service* in September 2010. Presented annually at the National Catholic Development Conference, the award is named for former NCDC President George T.

Holloway. Its recipient must give evidence to “tireless and devoted service to the Catholic philanthropic community.” NCDC is recognized as the nation’s largest association of religious fundraisers.

Chief Development Officer for the Sisters of Mercy, New York, Pennsylvania and Pacific West, Sister Peggy Gorman, RSM was more than pleased to learn that Madeline would be the 2010 awardee.

Peggy said, “Madeline contracted with the Sisters of Mercy, New York, Pennsylvania Community to assist with establishing a new

Development Office for the combined communities of Buffalo, Erie, Pittsburgh, Rochester and Philippines. Without the assistance she and Mary offered us, we would never have been able to accomplish all that we did. Under her guidance, we worked very hard, producing a tremendous amount of work in a short time. However, she never let the work interfere with the relational aspect of her consulting work. We also had great fun ‘learning development!’ Madeline is never too busy for a stop for ice cream, sightseeing and a bit of fun!



Sister Madeline Franze accepted the Holloway Award.

## Professional conservation preserves SSJ art legacy

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Two additional treatments were recommended in the 2008 evaluation: one for a parchment and the second for a textile.

The care those pieces required was accomplished by Susan L. Duhl and Virginia J. Whelan, both Steven’s colleagues in The Art Conservators Alliance <www.artconservatorsalliance.com>.

Roberta engaged paper and parchment conservator, Susan L. Duhl, to treat the *1870 Articles of Incorporation*. Susan consolidated inks, cleaned the parchment surface to remove dirt and accretions and then humidified and flattened the document. She attached hinges of Japanese paper to the back perimeter to facilitate matting. The 100% rag board mat provides important spacing between the parchment and the ultraviolet-filtering glass. The *Articles of Incorporation* hangs in a period frame in the large Heritage Room.

Virginia J. Whelan, filament conservator, examined the *Berlin Wool Embroidery of George Washington* that had been stitched by Mount Saint Joseph Academy student, Ellen Ritchie in 1858. (Previously, Ellen had attended Saint Joseph Academy in McSherrystown, PA.) Because this textile had been separated from its frame, Virginia first had to pull the nails that held it in place. She then used several processes to clean the piece section by section: low-suction vacuuming, spraying with a cleaning agent, blotting with linen, rinsing with a distilled water solution of 2.25 g/L of sodium chloride. After the textile dried, Virginia repaired a break in the fabric, supported the piece with nylon netting and secured it to a prepared padded mount. The textile was secured in the original frame behind ultra-violet glass using rag board spacers to prevent contact between the glass and the textile. This embroidery is in the Mount Saint Joseph Academy Room.

Visitors to the Sisters of Saint Joseph Heritage Area will be able to appreciate the investment of care and resources that flows from the Congregation’s responsibility for and attention to her own cultural, historical and artistic patrimony — eloquent witnesses of her mission.

Written by:  
Roberta Archibald SSJ

## Fourth Elevator, once only a Dream Project, is now a reality

As she greeted Sisters of Saint Joseph who reside at Saint Joseph Villa on Monday, November 15, 2010, Administrator Sister Dorothy Apprich said, “Today the Villa Dream Project is a reality. We gather in great joy and thanksgiving to bless and dedicate this brand new, fully operational elevator, now formally and officially approved for use.”

Without the dream-come-true fourth elevator, Saint Joseph Villa had to manage with one service elevator and only two passenger elevators for almost 300 residents. With so many Villa residents using walkers, wheelchairs and electric scooters, space in the elevators was at a premium.

The new fourth elevator, Dorothy said, will add so much to life at the Villa. Not only will it alleviate congestion and wait time, but also it will take Villa residents to places that have been difficult to reach.

Separate from the existing elevators and located in an outside tower on the south side of the Villa, the elevator is accessed at the end of C Wing. On the first floor, it opens directly onto the main dining room. On the ground floor, it opens onto newly renovated doctors’ offices.

Openings to the outside on the ground level and to the roof are added features that go a long way in helping the Villa receive and transport heavy deliveries.

“Although benefactors are in the prayers of the Villa community on a daily basis, special occasions call for special prayer,” Dorothy said. “Today we ask God’s



Brave voyagers step aboard for the maiden voyage of the new elevator, completed after many ‘detours’ but now fully operative and approved for use.

abundant blessing on each and every friend and benefactor who has helped us reach our dream. We give thanks that workers including our own maintenance men were safe and free from injury during the building of the elevator. We pray, too, for those whose kindness made possible the refurbishing and modernization of our three already existing elevators. As we begin to use this elevator, we pray for safety in all our ups and downs.”

Supervisor of Maintenance Mr. Dennis Finn opened the elevator door and with him at the helm, sisters and staff boarded the elevator for its maiden voyage. At the first stop, they prayed for all who will use the newly renovated area designed to provide office space for onsite visits from podiatrists, dentists, eye specialists and other physicians.

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# Keystone State Boychoir wows the audience at Motherhouse Concert

The SSJ Office of Development sponsored the performance of The Keystone State Boychoir held in the Motherhouse Chapel on Sunday, February 13, 2011. With a moving rendition of the sacred motet, *O Vos Omnes*, the Boychoir's most advanced singer-musicians opened the concert from the Chapel choir loft. From that moment on the Boychoir engaged an audience delighted "with their vibrant sound, energetic stage presence, and joyful music-making."



From the Choir Loft, The Chamber Choir of the Keystone State Boychoir opened the Motherhouse Chapel Concert. Music Director Mr. Joseph Fitzmartin (second from left, row two) joined the boys for the photo.

Throughout the performance the sound of the singers varied — at times their sound was sweet and full, at times deep and tempered, at times softly evocative and prayerfully reverent. Some sounds held the pure clarity associated with a treble choir, but baritone voices also had opportunities to shine.

Classical pieces, medieval chants, folk, pop, and readily recognized Broadway show songs all have a place in a Boychoir concert. At the Motherhouse, the concert bill included a variety of musical selections. *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, *Peter Piper*, *Dream Keeper*, *Whistle Maggie Whistle*, and *We are the Boys* are just a few of the pieces Associate Choir Director Steven Fisher chose from the choir's repertoire. The choir is so well-prepared that Steve needs only to make a judgment, nod to Music Director Joseph Fitzmartin, signal a soloist, and begin to conduct. The Boychoir is ready to shine bright eyes and smiles, use gestures to signify peaks of excitement, agitation, worry, sorrow or whatever emotion is appropriate, and following Steve's hand signals on cue, begin the piece with a flood of sound.

Over the past ten years, the Boychoir has been welcomed for performances in all seven continents. ("Yes, seven continents, the Boychoir sang in Antarctica last year!")

A favorite piece or a medley of the music loved by the people who make up their audience is always on a tour program. In 2011, the Boychoir will return to South Africa, the site of their first overseas tour. They plan to visit Cape Town, the Kimberly Diamond Mines, and schools in the poorer areas of South Africa.

When they founded the Boychoir in 2001, Steve and Fitz dreamed of offering boys a world-class music education, performance opportunities, and more. They dreamed of young men who would form friendships with one another, who would treat one another and everyone associated with the choir with respect, who

would learn to appreciate cultures different from their own, and who would see themselves as leaders with gifts to share with others.

Being a member of the Boychoir calls for a great amount of self-discipline. Learning the vocal arts of singing well and learning a repertoire of music worthy of an audience requires commitment from each boy. Regular attendance at rehearsals, prompt arrival for performances, and attention to such details of choreography as rhythm, speed, and syncopation are elements that demand the kind of concentration and effort each boy has to contribute toward the success of the choir.

The Boychoir directors know that boys also have to have fun. They plan breaks and provide opportunities for games as well as time for simply "hanging out." Of course, wholesome snacks have a place in the picture, too.

Parents and friends of the Boychoir do their part to support all aspects of the program, and the Boychoir submits grant requests. Members of the Keystone Boychoir learn to give back, too.

Eight young boys in training for a new Boychoir recently founded in New York City, also participated in the February 13, 2011 performance at the Motherhouse. Calling on those youngsters to stand, Steve called attention to their red vests, (Members of Keystone State Boychoir wear green jackets (after they are well-earned). Steve explained that he wanted members of the new group to see "what can happen in the next ten years," so he and Choir Manager Martha Platt arranged an overnight with families of the Philadelphia choir, took the boys to see the Liberty Bell and planned a run up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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In the photo below are eight young boys, original members of the *New York Boychoir*, a brand new venture for Steve and Fitz. Steve's invitation to perform with the Keystone State Boychoir gave them the opportunity to "look at the future and see what they will be able to do" as their group matures.



Associate Director Steven Fisher led a pre-concert run through for each choir.



# New elevator is great boon to Saint Joseph Villa

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Also located in this area is an entrance to the Physical Therapy Department. There are also offices for Medical Scheduling Coordinator Sister Eleanor McFadden and Medical Records Assistant and Podiatry Appointment Coordinator Sister Jeanne Barnard.



Sisters Eleanor McFadden and Jeanne Barnard arrange appointments for physicians using the newly renovated office area.

Eager to extend their ride, the first voyagers traveled to several floors. At each floor, the new elevator opened onto a comfortable, attractive waiting area. Each boasts one of Sister Anne McVeigh's framed photographs, seasonal decorations, two comfortable chairs and plenty of space for wheelchairs.



"Having a fourth elevator in operation is indeed a dream come true," Dorothy said, as she greeted everyone who stepped into the new elevator. "So many people with 'generosity of heart' have helped us achieve our *Dream Project*."

Written with:  
Dorothy Aprich SSJ

# Catholic Climate Ambassadors Prepare to Spread Church Teaching on the Environment

Director of the Sisters of Saint Joseph Earth Center and Special Assistant for Sustainability to the President of Chestnut Hill College, Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark, joined Catholic leaders from across the country, at a gathering held at the Potomac, Maryland, Bolger Conference Center, located just outside Washington, DC, December 3-5, 2010. The twelve leaders immersed themselves in Catholic teaching on care for creation in light of climate change.

Most Reverend William Skylstad, recently retired bishop of Spokane and honorary chairman of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, welcomed the ambassadors via a video link on the first day of training. "Pope Benedict has inspired millions of Catholics around the world through his words and by his example and is now known to many as 'The Green Pope,'" Bishop Skylstad said. He assured the new Ambassadors of the value of their efforts, noting that "By your enthusiasm for this project and your willingness to visit parishes, schools, and gatherings of the Catholic faithful, many more will come to appreciate the need to recapture and live out ancient biblical teaching about proper stewardship of God's gift of Creation."

Delighted with the caliber and enthusiasm of the new Ambassadors, Executive Director of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change Dan Misleh said, "The Catholic community across the country will soon have access to Catholic Climate Ambassadors: men and women who understand and can articulate the messages of Pope Benedict XVI and the U.S. Catholic bishops on care for creation and climate change."

A second group of Catholic Climate Ambassadors will meet for a training session in March 2011. The Coalitions' *Covenant Campaign* and *St.*



In her role as an ambassador of the Church's message on Care for Creation, Director of the SSJ Earth Center Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark finds "a clarion call to each of us to live lightly on our one Planet Earth."

*Francis Pledge* is designed to help Catholic individuals, families, parishes and schools fulfill the obligation of their faith to care both for creation and for those least responsible for climate change, so many of whom are already suffering its consequences.

Ambassadors will promote the *Catholic Climate Covenant: St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor*. The *St. Francis Pledge* is a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's Creation and advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change.

Those taking the *St. Francis Pledge* commit themselves to act on each of the five elements of the *St. Francis Pledge*:

**PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.

**LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.

**ASSESS** how we – as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations – contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.

**ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.

**ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in

climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

The work of the Coalition is supported by 11 national Catholic organizations including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Mary Elizabeth said, "The opportunity to be with the women and men who responded to the call to be ambassadors as well as with the staff of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change reignited my zeal for sharing our Church's message on care for creation. The program sounds a clarion call to each of us to live lightly on our one Planet Earth."

Written by:  
Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ

# SSJ Earth Center and The Grail collaborate for Winter Solstice Celebration



Gloves, flashlights, and candles at hand, Sisters Clare Madeleine Tully, Joan Riethmiller and Peg Oravez are ready to brave a chilly evening as they celebrate Winter Solstice 2010.

Earmuffs and hats, flashlights and candles give only a hint of the story!

In collaboration with Maureen Tate and other members of the Grail, Director of the SSJ Earth Center Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark welcomed participants to a Solstice Prayer on Tuesday, December 21, 2010.

The winter solstice marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Then the sun is at its southernmost point in the sky, but from that time on, the days begin to get longer.

To celebrate the solstice, Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates, other friends and members of the Grail gathered at the SSJ Earth Center. Just as winter began, at 6:38 PM, the group processed to the Labyrinth.

There amid prayer and readings, a tall pillar candle

was lighted to welcome the 'return' of the sun. Then the group moved to the Federation Room, for prayers of petition, a spiral dance, and a simple sharing of good food and conversation.

In 1921 Grail was founded in Holland by Rev. Jacques van Ginneken SJ. It is now an international, intercultural, ecumenical women's movement. Inspired by faith, women of the Grail work for social justice, environmental sustainability, and community development. They pray, strategize, and network to transform the world into a place of peace and justice.

Members of the Grail and Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark have collaborated on programs that promote sustainability at both the original and current sites of the SSJ Earth Center.

# Villa residents participate in *Life Review*

Jack Neill treasures his friendship with Sisters of Saint Joseph. Jack and Sister Marie St. Leger became friends when both were studying to earn graduate certificates in spiritual direction at Neumann University. Presently, Jack is serving on the Senior Services Board with Sister Eileen Dorothy Maguire and on the Religious Education Board in the Diocese of Wilmington with Sister Sally Russell.

Over the years, Jack has offered the program, *The Process of Life Review*, at parishes, nursing homes, retreat settings, and faith sharing groups. Recently, Jack visited with about a dozen Sister Residents at Saint Joseph Villa, and he offered to share his adaptation of *Life Review* with them.

He sees the program as a way to make connections with God, self and others. All that is expected is a willingness to share remembered experiences. In every group, Jack explained, some people speak more easily than others, and some prefer the role of active listener.

Jack has found that people who have known and cared about one another for years often discover similarities in their experience they had never realized they shared. "You don't always know what has been energizing for people with whom you frequently associate and even among those with

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Prayer, song, and most significantly, the lighting of the candle, marked the Solstice Celebration at the Labyrinth.

# Navigating Life's Transitions

*Bless all of us in transition, God of the journey, and gift us with the graces we need and desire.*

(Opening Prayer for the Navigating Life's Transitions Seminar)

Diane Allen, a certified Business and Life Coach, from Mount Laurel, New Jersey led the interactive seminar, *Navigating Life's Transitions*, held at Mount Saint Joseph Convent Auditorium, September 18, 2010. In all, 45 Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates and friends of the Congregation participated in the Transitions workshop.

She noted that in mid air, the trapeze artist experiences a letting go that includes a feeling of emptiness. Even after catching the next bar, she pointed out, the artist needs "settling in time" to feel secure.

The trapeze image helps persons in transition realize that what seems no more than an instant as the artist flies

through the air, may feel like an extended journey to anyone transitioning from a very familiar aspect of life to one that feels quite new.

Through reflection and sharing, the participants gained greater understanding and appreciation of experiences



**Life Coach Diane Allen has a plan. She will help you meet your transitions with grace and confidence.**

Diane Allen, encouraged participants to find healthy ways of coping, to focus on self-esteem, and to formulate practices that make life transitions peaceful and productive.

As she identified significant life transitions and suggested ways to manage them, Diane welcomed input. Retirement, loss of health, change of ministry, and death of a loved one were quickly named as life-altering experiences that cause stress and require considerable adjustment.

Using her four-step *Transitions Management Plan*, Diane encouraged the recognition that a rich beauty rises to the fore when individuals adopt healthy coping methods as they embrace life's transitions.

Think about flying on a trapeze, Diane suggested.

common to persons in transition.

Among several handouts Diane offered is one she calls *My Areas to Continue to Grow*. Working with that handout is just one of Diane's ways of encouraging each participant to continue to follow the four-step management process in the days that stretch beyond the program.

Sister Eileen Dorothy Maguire, who had just stepped into the position of Director of Senior Services, stated that she felt like Exhibit A! "As I prepared for this workshop and went through the list of last minute details, I smiled to myself at the irony – there I was in the midst of my own transition!"

I was relieved when Diane Allen said that we would develop a support network! That was just what I needed – help from many sisters, associates and friends."

*Written by: Adele Solari SSJ*



**Members of the planning team included Sisters Eileen Dorothy Maguire and Marie Olwell, Presenter Diane Allen, and Sisters Sheila Kennedy and Adele Solari. The Center for Holistic Living sponsored the seminar.**

# Grogan family makes a visit they will "never forget"



**Front row, Marie and Michael Grogan. Back row, Lorraine Grogan and Sister Roberta Archibald. While visiting from Ireland, Marie wanted to see the Motherhouse she remembered from Sister Bibiana Burns' stories and letters.**

When Michael Grogan left Roscommon, Ireland, to work in the US, he knew email would make it easy for him to keep in touch with his family. When he received word that his mother, Marie Grogan, and sister Lorraine Grogan were actually coming to visit him in Roxborough, he was delighted. "I know they really care about me, and they are happy about all I am accomplishing here," Michael said.

Soon Sisters of Saint Joseph heard that in addition to visiting Michael, Marie wanted to see the place her aunt, Sister of Saint Joseph Bibiana Burns, (1901-1968) had called home. Michael Grogan knocked on the door to the Motherhouse to arrange a visit.

In September, after enjoying lunch in the Dining Room, where many sisters stopped to welcome them, Sister Roberta Archibald gave them a tour of the SSJ Heritage Rooms. They visited the Motherhouse Chapel and had the opportunity to pray at Sister Bibiana's grave in the Convent Cemetery.

In the afternoon, the

trio visited Saint Joseph Villa. Sister Margaret Mary Smith had provided a list of all Sisters of Saint Joseph who had lived with Sister Bibiana. Those who are still living were notified of the Grogan family visit.

A "Gathering of Remembrance" was planned and sisters who had lived with Sister Bibiana at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Newark, NJ, greeted the family in the Villa Community Room. Among them were Sisters Rita Ciabattoni, Annemarie Feeley, Teresa McKenna, and Frances Gervase O'Brien. They remembered Sister Bibiana as a "fun-loving, creative, well-loved, and humble" Sister of Saint Joseph, and they shared letters written by sisters unable to attend the Gathering.

In a thank you note sent to Sister Roberta, Marie said, "It was an historical tour, a visit I will never forget. It is no wonder Michael loves the USA." Marie told Roberta how happy she was to see the beautiful chapel where Sister Bibiana made her vows, and how much she appreciated

all they learned about Sister Bibiana during their visit. "Your memory will remain in our hearts," Marie said.

Later, Michael did some traveling himself. He went to Tanzania for a wedding. While there he learned about the *SEGA Girls School*, (SEGA stands for Secondary Education for Girls' Advancement). Now Michael is a passionate supporter of *Nurturing Minds*, a US-based nonprofit, established to provide financial support for the education of Tanzanian girls.

Informed that sharing his experience of visiting in Tanzania could be helpful, he joined Professor of Religious Studies at Chestnut Hill College Dr. Marie Conn and a group of Chestnut Hill College Students as they were preparing for their own journey to Tanzania, where they planned to assist secondary school students at the Bigwa School with their English skills.

**Perhaps Michael has inherited a touch of his Great Aunt's charism and mission!**

**After celebrating with friends at a wedding in Tanzania, Michael Grogan visited the SEGA School. There he learned about the need to assist poor and orphaned girls in Tanzania with a quality education. Michael became an advocate for SEGA. But, this photo suggests that young boys as well as young girls caught Michael's heart during his visit.**



## Students share the *inside story* as NFA turns 90



Christine Sedlack and Jack Quirk speak up for Norwood-Fontbonne Academy.

**Your school is celebrating 90 years. You have quite a history. As an eighth grade student at NFA please tell Newsletter readers What being a student at NFA means to you? What have you learned at NFA that you think will always be part of your life?**

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**Christine Sedlack:**

I have attended Norwood-Fontbonne Academy since the age of three. I have grown up in this school community. Norwood-Fontbonne Academy is a school community rooted in faith, growth, service, value, and excellence. I am proud to be a part of such a loving family that supports one another during times of both joy and sorrow. I take pride in wearing my uniform with the NFA logo. It reminds me that we are much more than Catholic school students and staff attending a Catholic school—we are a true family.

Throughout my entire life, I will never forget that reaching out to someone less fortunate than yourself can change both their life and your own for the better.

**Jack Quirk:**

NFA is celebrating 90 years! To me that means that NFA is a great school. I am extremely lucky to go to such a good Catholic school that is so well known in the area. I am proud to claim NFA as my school because when someone hears that you go to Norwood, they give you respect. They know that you belong to a great school.

Classes are not extremely large, so our teachers can focus on specific students and work with them individually to satisfy their learning needs. That's one of the best things about NFA today.

I think the Catholic values I have learned at NFA will always be a part of my life. I think that not only those values, but also the work ethic that has been instilled in me by my teachers will stay with me.

## Meet Natalie: a newcomer to the SSJ Development Office

In July of 2010, Natalie Treviño joined the Development Office staff. The understanding is that Natalie will assist with development at both the Motherhouse Development Office and at the SSJ Welcome Center.

Natalie calls Hazleton, Pennsylvania home, and her love for the open spaces and the farms of that area brings a smile to her face as soon as she says: *Hazleton!*

Growing up, Natalie had often heard her Great Aunt, Sister Dorothy Dee speak about Chestnut Hill College so when the time came, she explored that option. One look at CHC's campus and neighboring Fairmount Park, and Natalie was ready to apply. By 2009 she had earned a degree in Political Science and had gained experience by participating in a Work Study Program at the College's Office of Institutional Advancement.

Her study of Political Science called for considerable research as well as the writing of dozens of essays. Along with her technology skills, the research techniques and writing skills Natalie developed during her college years, really help her today. She uses the skills those assignments demanded as she writes grant proposals for Saint Joseph Villa and for the

Welcome Center. Her familiarity with research techniques enables her to provide answers quickly, and that is a definite plus when she joins the Welcome Center staff in the early stages of event planning.

At both sites, Natalie works with the entire staff. "As I learn a little about the roles of each staff member, I get a broader sense of all the work of a development office. I enjoy learning how it all connects."

As she speaks about her experience, Natalie says, "My sister Jessica lives in Philadelphia so I knew a little about the city's neighborhoods before I moved here myself. Still, Philadelphia has been an eye-opener for me. Sometimes something really simple takes me by surprise. I belong to the Manayunk Sport and Social Club, where I play two-hand touch coed football. One weekend, my Manayunk friends and I went to a local farm to pick pumpkins. Later, as I started to share with some of the people at the Welcome Center how much fun I had going pumpkin picking, I suddenly realized that what is an ordinary "do-it-every-fall" experience for me, may well be something many of my Kensington friends have never



Natalie Treviño is part of the SSJ Development Staff.

had the opportunity to enjoy. Being at the Welcome Center has also opened my eyes in more ways than one.

I see firsthand that the needs of the people who come to the Center are basic. I am grateful to be even a small part of the help those people receive. Without the opportunity to connect more easily with the agencies that can assist them, it would be even harder for the people to surmount the difficulties they face.

I've come to realize that things change only very slowly for people who are poor, and I see the Welcome Center as a place that offers hope that those changes will come in time."

Asked what she would most like *Newsletter* readers to know, Natalie has a ready answer.

"I'd like readers to know that I really like what I do, that I enjoy having a small part in the events of the Development Office and the Welcome Center. The more I learn, the more I want to contribute to the Mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph."

## Members of the MERIT Program Staff help Principals and Teachers to educate Catholic School Students

*MERIT* is a non-public school program offered to Title One Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. A primary goal of the program is to enhance the education process for students by providing staff development for teachers.

Now in her fourth year with the *MERIT* program, Sister Therese Michele Destefano speaks about her role as a mentor of principals and teachers in a variety of ways. One of her favorite ways of explaining her ministry is to say: "These days, many people have a personal trainer. I sometimes think I am a personal cheerleader for the principals and teachers who lead the four schools I visit each week. This year I am visiting Saint Anne, Christ the King, Saint Donato and Maternity B.V.M. schools. At each school I am privileged to work with enthusiastic principals, teachers, and students.

Initially I am a stranger, knocking at the door of their schools and classrooms. Over time we come to know each other. As they learn that I have access to books and educational materials that I can readily share with them, they often have questions ready for me. One may ask, "Do you have something that



Sister Therese Michele Destefano

focuses on fractions? My students are having trouble reducing them." Another may say, "We've been doing some writing on experiences we share with our families. Can you suggest a better way for me to get them fired up for writing on that topic? It's been a slow go for us."

Recently, along with my *MERIT* colleagues, I have been helping principals and teachers prepare for the Terra Nova Achievement Test, a standardized test designed to provide achievement scores that aid educational decision-making. Elementary Schools in the Philadelphia Archdiocese expect to administer Terra Nova in grades K-8 February 28-March 4, 2011. I am able to provide directions and practice tests. and I encourage teachers to appreciate how much more confident students will be if they take class time to work with the practice tests.

Fridays are "Office Days" for *MERIT* staff members. We use that time to gather materials that will respond to the questions teachers have asked. We may prepare a lesson we will model or will co-teach with a classroom teacher in the coming week.

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# Development Office brings the male voices of the Keystone State Boychoir to Motherhouse

Whether it's rehearsal or performance time, it's always time to give your best if you sing with the Keystone State Boychoir.



Along with clear vocal diction, it is sometimes a facial expression, the shift of a shoulder, the gesture of a hand, or the tap of a foot that convey the rich meaning of a particular song.

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Whether they were moving from whimsy to prayer, or to the rapid beat of popular Broadway tunes, the Boychoir singers produced sounds larger than life.

At one point, they introduced the song, *I Need You to Survive*, and after teaching the refrain, they

invited the audience to sing along with them.

Tickets for the performance at the Motherhouse benefited Sisters of Saint Joseph. Sisters of Saint Joseph played a role in the education of Steve and Fitz. As a tribute to all teachers, The Boychoir sang *Thank You Very Much*, and everyone who is teaching or who had ever been

a teacher was invited to stand to be acknowledged.

At the conclusion of the concert, the Boychoir formed a reception line of sorts, greeting guests as they made their way to the convent lobby, where light refreshments were served — just one more sign of Boychoir poise and one more way to express gratitude to the audience.

SSJ Development Board Member Eileen Newcomb said, "Aren't they fabulous! Their sound! Their energy! The way their movements bring the music alive. All I'm hearing is, 'How soon are they coming back?'"

Development Director Sister Elizabeth Ferguson assured Eileen, "A repeat performance is already in the works. They will be back with us sometime next year."

**Have your calendar ready so you can save the date!**

## Ministry with Merit

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The MERIT program also offers faculty inservice opportunities. Sometimes principals invite us to bring a program to their schools, other times they prefer to bring their faculty to the MERIT office. Principals choose the topics they feel will be most helpful to their faculties, and we develop a program that will give teachers new teaching strategies for the reading, math, social studies, or technology concern the principal has raised.

For me, as for every teacher, the best moment of a day may come when a student says, "Let me tell you ...," and a student proceeds to share a personal story. Recently, that happened when a third

grade boy said to me, "Sister Therese, I'm so excited. It's going to snow, and my dad is going to let me ride with him in the snow plow." Next time I saw that boy he was beaming, and he rushed up to say, "Sister, I did. I did ride with my dad!"

At MERIT, we all appreciate the magic moment when a student suddenly realizes that he or she understands and can articulate and apply a concept not understood before. **We are privileged to see young eyes grow bright and to watch smiles of satisfaction and achievement spread across faces, and we can't cheer loud enough for the principals and teachers who make that happen!**

## Life Review Process continued from page 9

whom you live," Jack said, "Sharing stories often brings to light something deep that resonates with the group." Jack explained that groups that have shared the *Life Review Process* find as group members tell and listen to one another's stories, they find themselves sorting grateful memories of their own. **Sally and Marie will join Jack as facilitators at the next meeting scheduled for March 11, 2011.**

## Dear Readers,

The first issue of the *SSJ Newsletter* was published in April 1992. More than 50 issues have followed.

For the first issue, Sister Catherine Knobbs, editor from 1992 through 1999, called on then Superior General Sister Margaret Fleming to set forth the mission of the *Newsletter*. Peg said, "The publication of the first issue of this newsletter... launches an ongoing attempt to widen our tent and to share more broadly some good news of faith, hope, and love.... It offers us an opportunity to link our hearts with our sisters, associates, and friends who share our mission."

Highlighted in the first issue was information about SSJ Associates, CSSJ Federation, Justice Ministry, Ongoing Education, Sponsored Works, Development and Formation.

Through the years *Newsletter* has been able to shine light on the many ministries that engage the energies of Sisters of Saint Joseph and their SSJ Associates in Mission — ministries in education, parish outreach, social services, direct service to the poor, health and pastoral care, spiritual direction, justice, and more. Always we have welcomed readers to join us in prayerful remembrance of our deceased sisters. *Newsletter* has also celebrated anniversaries — one stretched back 150 years to the coming of the Sisters of Saint Joseph to Philadelphia!

We were still doing layout with scissors and paste when Cass Knobbs introduced me to the *Newsletter* and to the many sisters and associates whose generous gifts of time and skill have contributed to each issue.

**Serving as editor of *Newsletter* has been my ticket to the joy of learning firsthand (often on site!) the gifts our sisters, associates and lay partners bring to their ministries every day. Indeed, wherever we are, the SSJ Mission is bursting with new life.** Each visit, as well as your many phone calls, letters, emails, and photos, enriched and delighted me. I've appreciated sisters who called to ask, "Would *Newsletter* be interested in ..., or did you hear that...?" Sister Residents of Saint Joseph Villa have been especially good about sending word of a potential story.

Appreciated too, has been the generous response, "Yes, I can write something on that. When do you need it?"

Collaborating with our CSSJ Federation Communicators and with members of the National Communicators Network for Women Religious has been yet another plus for me. We share a mission. We learn from each other.

**Of course, I have depended mightily on our SSJ proofreaders!** Sisters Marion Aherne, Thérèse Ganly, and Ann Seif have been 'steady enders.' More recently, Sister Beatrice Keegan has joined them. Volunteers stepped forward when it was time to fold and label *Newsletter*, and Sister Rose Agnes White handled the first class mailings.

Sister Rose Albert Reda faithfully posted *Newsletter* on our website, where it shines **in color** and is available to all.

With the help of many sisters, associates, lay partners, and friends of the Congregation, *Newsletter* has stretched toward the fulfillment of the hopes of Sisters Peg Fleming and Cass Knobbs.

**Now, as we publish this last issue of *Newsletter*, we invite you to look forward to a yet wider tent.**

Today, our General Council and all involved in our communications efforts recognize that ever-changing technologies, especially in the areas of social media, invite us to share our stories with you in new ways. You will be hearing about our plans. Please stay with us. Whether you connect by clicking on a link or by turning a page, know that we are grateful for your faithful support through the years.

We know you share our zeal for the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia.

*Blessings, Pat Marnien SSJ, Editor*

## SSJ NEWSLETTER

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