

# NEWSLETTER

## SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

Of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA

A PUBLICATION FOR SISTERS, ASSOCIATES, AND FRIENDS

Philadelphia, PA

Vol. 16 No. 2

October 2009



Jackie Newns, Mary Beth Schluckebier, and Caitlin Sullivan affirm their commitment to the four values of the newly-formed SSJ Mission Corps: spirituality, justice, simple living, and community.

## SSJ Mission Corps commissioned

On Sunday, September 20, 2009, Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates, family members and friends joined Jackie Newns, Mary Beth Schluckebier, and Caitlin Sullivan, for a formal commissioning ceremony. During the ceremony, Jackie, Mary Beth and Caitlin accepted responsibility for living with integrity the four values of the SSJ Mission Corps: spirituality, justice, simple living and community.

The three initial members of the newly-established SSJ Mission Corps, Jackie, Mary Beth, and Caitlin are co-founders with the Sisters of Saint Joseph in shaping this exciting new venture. They have been invited to "make a difference in our world...one neighbor at a time." They will be called to open themselves to God's transforming power within as they work for justice and reach out to meet the needs of their "dear neighbors." They will live together in an intentional community (in a house located directly across the street from the Welcome Center on Allegheny Avenue) as they serve in ministries with those who are materially poor.

Caitlin will minister at the Welcome Center; Mary Beth will work with Sister Linda Lukiewski at Visitation Parish; and Jackie will minister at Our Mother of Sorrows/Saint Ignatius Schools with Sister Owen Patricia Bonner. At heart, the Volunteer Corps is deeply rooted in the spirit and spirituality of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, so the volunteers will also be mentored in sharing the state of the heart, the practice of theological reflection, and participation in retreat experiences.

Caitlin, Mary Beth, and Jackie began their year as SSJ Mission Corps Volunteers with a four-day orientation experience, held August 15-18. Initially, they met at the SSJ Spirituality Center. Their orientation also included time at Saint Mary by-the-Sea in Cape May Point, NJ. They began their ministries on Monday, August 24. Their volunteer experience will conclude June 30, 2010.

In 2009, during the months of January and February, applications were reviewed and an interview process was determined. In March, three women — all graduates of Mount Saint Joseph Academy — applied to the program. In April, each was interviewed by two committee members as well as by a staff member from the Chestnut Hill College community. All three women were accepted shortly thereafter.

Committee members included: Sisters Mary Barrar, Regina Bell, Peg Conboy, Kathy Clafin, Julie Fertsch, Fran Hart, Terry Hayburn, Michelle Leshner, Rose Andrea Loughery, Eileen Marnien, and Nancy Roche.

How wonderful that the volunteer corps seeds planted for many years have taken root and the SSJ Mission Corps has burst into life!

Written by: Julie Fertsch SSJ

## Sisters and SSJ Associates gather for October Celebration of Chapter 2009



During the June session of Chapter 2009, Sisters Mary Dacey, Anne Myers (President), Carol Zinn, Constance Gilder and Regina Bell were elected to serve on the General Council of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. They assumed their ministry of leadership in August.

Members of the General Council and the Chapter Planning Committee invited Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates to a Celebration of Chapter 2009 held in Martino Hall at Chestnut Hill College on October 10, 2009.

Selected prayers, hymns, mantras and readings, along with time for reflection and table conversations encouraged participants recall highlights of Chapter 2009 from the initial session held in January to its June 26 conclusion. Particularly significant to the day of celebration was a *Ritual of Commitment*. As Congregational President Sister Anne Myers addressed the assembly, she spoke of the *Celebration of Chapter 2009* as a time for "mutual commitment, full and vibrant" for Sisters of Saint Joseph and for SSJ Associates alike. Anne called both Sisters and Associates to give life to the question: *In response to God's transforming grace and the signs of the times, how do we dare to live the SSJ values: contemplative life stance, right relationship, courageous risk-taking and self-emptying, inclusive love?* As the day drew to a close, Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese of Camden, Rev. Terry M. Odien, presided at the Eucharistic Liturgy.

In earlier editions *Newsletter* detailed events of the January and March weekends of Chapter 2009.

Below, Sister Patricia O'Donnell captures the spirit of the May and June sessions.

Chapter 2009 ended joyfully June 26 with the election of a new General Council. Sisters Anne Myers, Mary Dacey, Carol Zinn, Regina Bell, and Constance Gilder bring ready hearts and a wide variety of experience to their new ministry of leadership.

As Congregational President and Vice-President, Anne and Mary bring recent terms as general councillors as well as earlier experience in counseling psychology and secondary education, respectively. Carol is finishing a term as representative for the Congregations of St. Joseph, an NGO (non-governmental organization) at the United Nations, and she has had broad experience in education. Gee comes to the Council from her position as a pastoral associate and has worked in multiple capacities as an educator. Connie has been Assistant to the Vicar Bishop and the Delegate for Religious in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Balloting at the Chapter of Election was smooth and quick, aided by handheld electronic voting devices whose simple operation delighted even the less technologically inclined delegates. The energetic sound of 500-plus voices rose in thanks, and a receiving line lasted well into the

afternoon as Sisters, Associates, and friends greeted the new Council enthusiastically, wished them well, and pledged their support.

This chapter took its shape from a realization that, as author Margaret Wheatley claims, the days are past when we could predict what to do next, "and we won't be able to understand [our complex world] unless we spend more time in not knowing." During the May weekend, the Chapter body prepared to spend time in "not knowing" by identifying congregational values as well as obstacles. The signs of our times — hunger for spirituality, individualism, globalization of the call to justice, and the new science — provided a framework.

At the beginning of the June session, the delegates concluded the Chapter of Affairs by affirming the question that will guide the congregation in its prayerful "not knowing" for the next several years: "In response to God's transforming grace and the signs of the times how do I dare to live out these SSJ values?"

It will be the challenge and the privilege of the new General Council to lead the Congregation in pondering its way into the future in fidelity to our values: contemplative life stance, right relationship, courageous risk-taking, and self-emptying inclusive love.

Written by:  
Patricia O'Donnell SSJ

Members of the House of Prayer, who kept prayerful vigil before the Blessed Sacrament throughout all the sessions of Chapter 2009, joined delegates and advisors in Martino Hall on election day.



## Awards and Accolades

The Saint John the Evangelist School Community Severna Park, MD is bursting with pride! The Dedication Event held a big surprise: the new playing field is named **Larsen Field!** The name honors principal **Sister Linda Larsen**. During the ceremony, students were told that seeing Sister Linda's name reminds them to imitate Sister Linda and to ask themselves: "How will I help others so that all people may be united with God and with one another?"

Students also learned that Saint John's has earned the **Maryland Green School Award for Environmental Education**. The award notes achievement in the area of best practices and focus on community issues.

If you catch **Sister Alice Yohe** (right) off-guard, she will agree, "Yes, I received the **President's Award** at RENEW International's Tenth Annual Gala on June 4, 2009." She will say she received the award for her commitment to community and to faith in action, and if you are lucky, she will even confirm that the committee also selected her for the President's Award because she exemplifies the spirit and mission of RENEW. After that, Alice moves on.

Making light of the committee's view that she has played a significant part in RENEW's growth, Alice notes that from RENEW's earliest days, Sisters of Saint Joseph have played a role. She readily names Sisters Mary Elizabeth Clark, Pat McGinley, Cathy Nerney, Monica Osaben, and Dot Urban. "And don't forget, our current staff member, Sister Eileen Rush," adds Alice.



Mr. Rich Huebler and Mr. Ed Gibbons (right) definitely enjoyed surprising Sister Linda Larsen.



Early in September, **Sister Virginia Stanton** (left) was awarded a papal honor, the *Benemerenti* Medal for Religious, in recognition of her outstanding work as Director of the Ministerial Development Center for the Archdiocese of Newark. The papal honor was conferred on her during an evening prayer service led by the Most Rev. John J. Myers, Archbishop of Newark.

Friends speak of Virginia's pastoral sensitivity and her enthusiasm as well as her regard for the multitude of lay ministers who serve throughout the diocese.

*Benemerenti* means to a well-deserving person.



The **National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry** conferred the *Companion on the Journey Award* on **Sister Linda Lukiewski** at a Recognition Liturgy celebrated at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on May 11, 2009.

The award recognizes the generous service of persons who are creating a future for the Catholic Church by spending their time nurturing young men and women and encouraging their hopes and dreams. Linda was nominated by **Visitation Parish** where she serves in parish ministry. Along with other parish and youth ministry leaders, Linda has participated in parish and diocesan programs and workshops with local youth.

**Mayor John Arvanites** read a **proclamation** that honored **Sister Annemarie (Rie) Crowley** at the Borough of Roseland, NJ, Council Meeting held February 17, 2009.

Rie was recognized for her "devotion, dedication and service to the borough through her support of families in need. Mayor Arvanites said that the resolution will serve as a "permanent record in gratitude for her community service." As she expressed appreciation, Rie said, "I love doing this work and being of service to the community...and I get more from the people I serve than I give."

Pastoral Associate for the Sick and Elderly at Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Roseland, Rie provides outreach services to the sick, the homebound, and others in need. She arranges shopping services for the homebound, coordinates rides for medical appointments, visits parishioners who are hospitalized, leads a bereavement support group, and works with UNICO and other local organizations that offer the assistance needed by those she serves.

## Time for favorite songs, ice cream and balloons

For the woman who says "no fuss, please" — a lovely wrist corsage! "Rose, we're so happy we can celebrate your 100th birthday with you," says Bethlehem Village Manager, Sister Judy Oliver.



Balloons, cake, ice cream and more than 75 bright smiles told the story as residents gathered in the Social Room at Bethlehem Village to celebrate Rose Kerper's 100th birthday.

Rose is one of the *Originals*, a title claimed by the first residents to move into Bethlehem Village when it opened in 1984. "Living here has been a Godsend," Rose said. "I've had good friends and neighbors and wonderful trips. I was able to volunteer for many years at Saint Joseph Villa and I am an SSJ Associate. I don't feel 100. It came fast."

Rose grew up and went to church and school in Wyndmoor, PA. "Seven Dolors, my parish, was the center of everything," Rose said. "The parish had a club for young people and we all did everything together. We worked at carnivals and card parties; we had plays and dances." My husband George and I were blessed to have our son and daughter, George and Ann. I love our family — our grandchildren and great grandchildren, our nieces and nephews and their children, too."

Rose didn't want to put anybody out with a big celebration, but Bethlehem Village Manager Sister Judy Oliver and Social Concerns Director Sister Rita Therese Kehoe had no intention of letting the 100th birthday of a Bethlehem Village resident pass without notice.

As they expected, everyone was eager to celebrate Rose Kerper. Rita turned to the Village hospitality committee, and the group gathered willing workers who made every part of the party — from set up through clean up — run smoothly. Assistant Manager Sister Anna Regina Zink, who has created a photo archive of Bethlehem Village events, volunteered to take photos Rose could share with her family.

Rose is not the only one celebrating a milestone this year. **Bethlehem Village is engaged in a yearlong celebration of its 25th Anniversary.** A sponsored work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, **Bethlehem Village** is an award-winning HUD residence — a residence 101 certified residents are glad to call home.

Written with: SSJ Associate Rose Kerper

When Sister Margaret Garvin encouraged a summer program for young language learners at Saint Joseph's in Camden NJ, students, faculty and staff gave 110%. *Voilà! Students' Stage Performance earns rave reviews!*



## Congratulations

MASTER'S DEGREE

**Sister Bernadette McMenamin**

ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY  
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Pastoral Ministry with the Deaf

**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@aol.com; phone 215-248-7269; FAX 215-248-7277.

**Contributors to this issue include:** Sisters Marion Aherne, Roberta Archibald, Mary Barrar, Regina Bell, Mary Helen Beirne, Barbara Bradley, Dorothy Crowley, Mary Dacey, Mary Jane Daily, Julie Fertsch, Mary Kay Flannery, Mary Ellen Ford, Thérèse Ganly, Connie Gilder, Fran Hart, Pat Kelly, Joan Krukoski, Marjorie Lawless, Rose Andrea Loughery, Linda Lukiewski, Gerald Vincent McDevitt, Ann Moriarty, Mary Ann Mulzet, Connie Murphy, Anne Myers, Cathy Nerney, Patricia O'Donnell, Judy Oliver, Rose Albert Reda, Barbara Reuben, Ann Seif, Dot Urban, Mary Veasy, Alice Yohe, Carol Zinn and SSJ Associates Angela Godshall and Rose Kerper.

**Photographers include:** Sisters Miriam Richard Allorto, Mary Juliano, Donna Minster, and Dianne Osaben. Exhibit photo courtesy of Annmarie Sanders IHM.

**Mailing:** Sisters Thérèse Ganly, Bea Keegan, Marie Fatima Kretschman, Maria Rita Lannutti, Peg Maguire, Terry Pierson, Ann Seif, Denise Sharp, Margaret Andrew Sherlock, Margaret Mary Smith, and Rose Agnes White.

**Don't Miss The Exhibit: Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters In America — See page 5 and make your plans!**

## Ties That Bind draw SSJs to Holy Family Academy in Bayonne, NJ

*Moments historically significant and those familiar moments that commonly mark every school year played across a PowerPoint screen as Holy Family Academy principal Sister Mary Ellen Ford welcomed Sisters of Saint Joseph and priests who are graduates of HFA, current and past administrators, teachers, staff, as well as friends and neighbors to "a simple celebration of sponsorship."*



Among so many who claim ties of remembrance and affection led them to the celebration are (top, left) Sisters Dorothea Newell, Margaret Mary Smith, Peg Fleming, Judy Ridley, Margaret Mary O'Connell and her sister Helen, and Merilyn Ryan. Sister Marcella Malone (bottom left) who was at Holy Family 25 years and Sister Catherine Elizabeth Murphy who graduated from HFA in 1937.

While Sisters of Saint Joseph had sponsored Holy Family Academy since its opening days in 1925, enrollment patterns and the challenge of adequate financial resources, led the Congregation to the difficult decision to withdraw as the school's sponsor, and the May 31<sup>st</sup> gathering, held at HFA, was a bittersweet moment marking that change. HFA, Inc. has leased the building. A Board of Trustees will govern the school when it reopens in September.

At the May gathering, concelebrants Msgr. Edward Hajduk and Msgr. Edward Matash joined presider Most Rev. Thomas A. Donato, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark and Regional Bishop for Hudson County, at the Celebration of Eucharist. In his homily, Bishop Donato noted that new life often follows transition.

Principal of HFA from 1975-80, Sister Catherine Roche said, "Each year the incoming freshmen instinctively imbibed the joyful spirit and great traditions that permeated HFA from its beginning days." Catherine believes that guided by a dedicated faculty and staff, those students left four years later with an "excellent Catholic education, one that enabled them to enrich their lives and to live life more abundantly."

Sister Patricia Kelly, who taught at the academy for five years, said, "Gratitude takes center stage today." As she spoke of gratitude for the past, the present, and the future, Pat said, "Holy Family is a school cherished by our Congregation and by all who have experienced it in any way since 1925."

Calling it "inspiring to the Congregational administration," Pat commended the generous desire of the Board of Directors to continue the mission of HFA, and she extended fond wishes and prayer for the success of the new endeavor. She said, "I believe the Holy Family Board wants to serve the common good for all persons involved. To that end, we hope in and pray for many more happy and successful academic years for the students of HFA, for Dr. Karen Fasanella, and for the truly committed Board of Directors of the new corporation."

In a closing prayer, Pat recalled a line from HFA's school song: *We ask for choicest blessings on each task along life's way,* and she prayed: "In the Pentecost spirit of this time, ... reproduce in all of us, and in the mission of this academy, the zeal of Jesus, the fidelity of Mary, and the cordiality of Joseph."

A time to tour the school, to recall wondrous days at HFA, and to enjoy a table of delectable refreshments followed.

**Written with:**  
*Mary Ellen Ford SSJ*

## Congregation welcomes Sister Constance Murphy during a Rite of Initiation



**Congregational President Sister Anne Myers admits Sister Constance Murphy to the Novitiate, encouraging her to engage all the opportunities her novitiate experience will offer as a means to integrate ever more deeply, the apostolic, contemplative and communal dimensions of religious life.**

During a Rite of Initiation celebrated in the Federation Room at the Medaille Center on July 7, 2009, Sister Constance Murphy was admitted to the Novitiate, a two-year program of initiation into the essential and primary elements of life as a Sister of Saint Joseph.

As she welcomed all present, Sister Mary Barrar said, "It is good for all of us to keep in mind that during her novitiate Connie will deepen her relationship with Jesus and her life of communal and personal prayer. We know Connie will count on our prayers for her as she continues on her journey."

Present for the Rite of Initiation were members of the General Council – those who have been following Connie's desire and encouraging her at each stage of her incorporation into the Congregation – and several new councillors. Also present were the sisters who welcomed Connie to their home at Saint John the Evangelist Convent in Severna Park, MD when she began the community living stage of her candidacy, and the sisters who are now welcoming her to the Novitiate/Resurrection Community.

Several sisters who have accompanied Connie as friends and mentors from her first inquiry period through both stages of candidacy as well as Formation Director Sister Frances Hart, Vocation Coordinator Sister Kathy Claffin, Associate Director of the National Religious Vocation Conference Sister Charlene Diorka, and Formation Teacher Sister Roberta Archibald. Sisters of Saint Joseph currently in initial formation also

participated in the celebration.

The theme for the Rite of Initiation, "Put out to deep water and lower your nets for a catch." (Luke 5: 4) invited all attending the Rite of Initiation to remember the call of the first disciples and their own vocation call to follow Christ and to recall that the Novitiate is a time when a novice becomes more deeply aware of the spirit and heritage of the Congregation, gains a deeper understanding of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and has additional experience in community living.

In her reflection, Congregational President Sister Anne Myers noted that credentialed to operate a sailboat, Connie has more than once put out into the deep in Baltimore's harbor! Anne offered her hope that Connie be "totally attuned to the subtle winds and movement of the Holy Spirit in her life, as she takes this next step in a life of service to God and neighbor — a life of living Jesus' mission of unity."

Connie, who became an SSJ Associate in Mission in 2006, has continued meeting with associates and Sisters who gather in Baltimore. This year, she will participate in the CSSJ Federation Novitiate in Orange, California. Throughout the time of Connie's novitiate, Formation Director Sister Frances Hart, will continue to offer guidance as Connie journeys through the many experiences and classes that are essential requirements for those in initial formation.

**Written with:**  
*Frances Hart SSJ*  
*Constance Murphy SSJ*



**Congregational President Sister Anne Myers, Formation Director Sister Frances Hart, and Sister Connie Murphy are all smiles at the reception that followed Connie's Rite of Initiation.**

# They're not in Kansas anymore!



No longer at Concordia, where they shared in the retreat, *Weaving Threads of Love*, Sisters Ann Moriarty, Marjorie Lawless and Ellen Poist are still working at their pillows with pins, bobbins, threads, and patterns to create intricately designed pieces of lace. The pieces they are making are not unlike those made by Sisters of Saint Joseph in Le Puy, France in 1650.

Sisters Marjorie Lawless, Ann Moriarty, Ellen Poist, 16 other Sisters and CSSJ Associates from many parts of the United States and two laywomen, gathered as a community of lacemakers for a guided retreat held at Manna House of Prayer in Concordia, KS, August 8-15, 2009.

Lacemaker Sister Janet Lander CSJ led the retreat, *Weaving with Threads of Love*. During morning and evening prayer Janet offered input to guide the group in the ways early Sisters of Saint Joseph gathered daily to make lace and to share the state of the heart.

Janet said when the first sisters gathered at the kitchen table in Le Puy, they discussed their mission and the deeper meanings of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille's *Little Design*. Filled with a spirit of contemplation, they interwove their lacing with conversation *about things that really matter*: the concerns of their dear neighbors. Contemplation, lacing and courageous action — threads of lace matched with threads of love — strengthened them for mission. Each day they put down their lacing bobbins and went out to minister to the poor across the city.

Some retreatants were experienced lacemakers; others were using lacing bobbins for the very first time. Familiar with many lacing techniques, Sister Ramona Medina CSJ gave general instruction and one-on-one assistance to beginners and confident practitioners alike.

What did the participants take home? New regard for sisters they view as their foremothers, new samples of their own lacemaking skills, and desire to further connect lacing and contemplation in their daily lives.

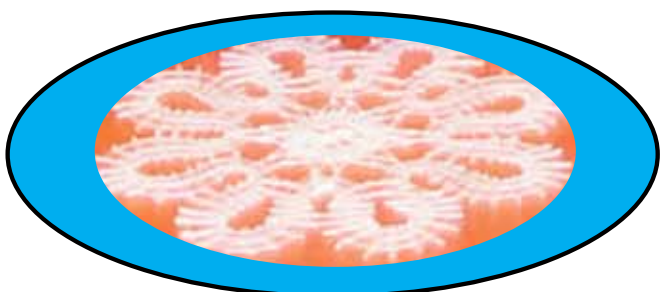
All who aspire to become skilled lacemakers are invited to next summer's sacred lacing circle. *Weaving with Threads of Love* is a retreat that brings together lacing arts long treasured by Sisters of Saint Joseph and transforming graces that strengthen for mission.

The retreatants came together each morning and evening for prayer. Being together for those moments to share Psalms, Scripture readings and petitions highlighted the connection between lacing and contemplation. Later, working together in a spirit of quiet attentiveness and recollection, they found that the simple tasks of dealing with broken threads or the art of knot-tying could enhance their sense of God's grace and the call of their charism and mission.

The contemplative retreat will be offered again in Concordia, KS from July 31 – August 7, 2010.

*Written with:*

*Marjorie Lawless, SSJ and Ann Moriarty, SSJ*



**A finished piece —  
Awesome!**



*We ask your prayerful remembrance of our Sisters and Associates who have entered eternal life from April through September 2009*

SSJ Associate Fran Lutz	May 1, 2009	
Sister Adelaide Bennett	June 9, 2009	in the 66 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Elizabeth C. Bowdren	June 22, 2009	in the 47 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Miriam Carmelita Romanelli	June 26, 2009	in the 53 <sup>rd</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Francis Elizabeth Keech	July 3, 2009	in the 77 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Anne Roberta Rucker	July 8, 2009	in the 76 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
SSJ Associate Sarah M. Carney	August 1, 2009	
Sister Mary Frances Thomas	August 2, 2009	in the 68 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Gertrude Mary Brown	August 7, 2009	in the 57 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Mary J. Golden	September 9, 2009	in the 62 <sup>d</sup> year of her religious life
SSJ Associate Connie D'Agostino	September 13, 2009	
Sister Rose Josepha Ganly	September 17, 2009	in the 64 <sup>th</sup> year of her religious life
Sister Marie Philip Halligan	September 23, 2009	in the 62 <sup>d</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*

## Saint Mary-by-the-Sea at 100 years

continued from page 8

Dot invited everyone to process through the retreat house as sisters offered prayers of blessing for the porches, doorways, bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, and gathering spaces. The procession of blessing ended in the chapel. Dot thanked Mayor of Cape May Borough Carl Schupp and neighbor Marianist Rev. Ted Cassidy for their presence at the opening event and for their good wishes for the years ahead. She acknowledged the overwhelming generosity represented by the service of many, many sisters, associates, and volunteers, noting in particular, the unstinting service of Sisters Dorothy Annas, Kathy Hart, Patricia O'Donnell, Ellen Poist, Ann Raymond Rafter, Roseann Tribuiani and so many more sisters whose names are forever tied to the history of Saint Mary-by-the-Sea.

Dot also introduced a newcomer to the Retreat House — Ms. Joan Dollinger. Joan, who is beginning her ministry as Administrator of Saint Mary's, said that she is "delighted to be working with and among the Sisters."

The opening celebration closed with refreshments and conversation shared in the dining room.

Commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary continues. At the beginning and the close of each retreat offered during the summer of 2009 prayers of gratitude and remembrance were offered. Plans for a full celebration in 2010 are underway.

*Written with:  
Marjorie Lawless SSJ  
and  
Dorothy Urban SSJ*



Sister Jeanne Morgan enjoys some "Cape May Stories." Do you have a Cape May memory you would like included in the 100th Anniversary Collection? Send your story to Sister Cathy Corrigan: ccorrigan@ssjphila.org.



Sister Joan Dolores Boyce tends candles used to commemorate the 100th Anniversary. During each retreat the candles were lit as retreatants raised prayers of gratitude for the past and present as well as prayers of hope for the future of Saint Mary-by-the-Sea.



Sister Kathy Hart and Saint Mary administrator Joan Dollinger greet a new group of retreatants.



Ah-h! For a clear sky,  
and a rocking chair  
on the porch at  
Saint Mary-by-the-Sea  
Retreat House —  
always a space gifted with oceans  
of grace; tides of transformation.

## You *simply must* See The Exhibit *Women and Spirit:* Catholic Sisters in America

Currently the exhibit is booked as follows:

**Dallas TX:**

*The Women's Museum: An Institute for the Future*  
September 2009 – December 2009

**Washington DC:**

*S. Dillon Ripley Center at the Smithsonian*  
January 2010 – April 2010

**Liberty Island New York:** *Statue of Liberty*  
*National Monument/Ellis Island Immigration Museum*  
September 2010 – December 2010

**Dubuque Iowa:**

*National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium*  
February 2011– April 2011

For information and new bookings go to  
<http://www.womenandspirit.org/schedule.html>

Google *Women and Spirit* for more options.

A mother shares points of interest with her daughter as they tour the exhibit, *Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America.*



## Center for Holistic Living

*"It remains the dream of every life to realize itself, to reach out and lift itself up to greater heights. There is within each heart a hidden voice that calls out for freedom and creativity. We often linger for years in spaces that are too small and shabby for the grandeur of our spirit."*

*To Bless the Space Between Us*  
John O'Donohue

**Reflection Questions:**

What choices are you making in your daily life to nurture the gifts of *CREATIVITY* and *CHILDLIKE WONDER*?

Do you need to let go of a particular area of your life that has become "too small and shabby" for the grandeur of your spirit? What will it ask of you to **LET GO**?

**Reflective Activity:**

Contemplate one aspect of God's creation – e.g. soil, leaf, tree, water, stone, air, sun, breeze – until awe and wonder open you to the unique presence and gift of this being. Hold it with great care ... gaze upon it with love ... allow it to speak to you ...

- What **NAME** would you give this gift from God?
- What is its **THEME** for you this day?
- What **FEELINGS** surface as you contemplate this gift?
- What is this special gift from God revealing to you today?

**Creative Activity: *Nurturing the Gift of Childlike Wonder***

Sketch or draw symbolically the element of creation with which you communed ... In order to embrace a childlike spirit, try drawing with your less dominant hand ... be in touch with how this feels to you. You may even try to journal this way as well ....

*Taking the time to do such contemplative exercises on a daily basis can make all the difference in the midst of our far-too-busy lives. They are a "recipe" for holistic living!*

*"Both what you run away from – and yearn for – is within you."*  
Anthony de Mello, SJ

Compiled by:  
Mary Kay Flannery, SSJ



## Welcoming a guest—just one thread of ministry at Divine Providence Village

Divine Providence Village, a residential facility for women with developmental disabilities, operates under the oversight of the Secretariat for Catholic Human Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Currently, 92 women ranging in age from 18 to 70 make their home in six cottages spread across the Village campus.

Last spring, Administrator of Divine Providence Village Rosemary Bellenghi received this good news: Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, the Most Rev. Joseph R. Cistone would make a pastoral visit on May 29, 2009. Sure that news of his visit would please the residents and Village staff alike, Rosemary promptly spread the word.

As she expected, staff members seemed pleased and residents were definitely excited. Residents' responses ran a gamut including: "I hope the Bishop will stop by my room; I want to show him my new poster," to "Good. I'll make a welcome sign for him," to "The Bishop is coming? Great, I want to shake hands with him."

Village Pastoral Associate Sister Mary Veasy planned a prayer service. With the feast of Pentecost just around the corner, Mary chose the theme, *Come, Holy Spirit*. Several women agreed to lead prayers of petition or to serve as readers. Mary chose hymns she knows the residents like to sing, and she contacted Director Marty Hyde to make arrangements for the Residents Bell Choir to perform.

On the day of the bishop's pastoral visit to the

Springfield, PA residence, Rosemary led a tour of the Village, and Bishop Cistone greeted residents as he visited living, dining, and recreation areas. Rosemary explained how carefully residents are assigned to Village cottages and how those arrangements enable caregivers to offer needed assistance while allowing residents the opportunity to strive toward their own goals.

Staff members and volunteers rearranged schedules so everyone could take advantage of an opportunity to meet the Bishop at an informal gathering, where they shared iced tea and cookies. As he greeted staff and volunteers individually, the Bishop inquired about the particular skills each brings to the Village, and asked, "How many years have you been here?" When Bishop Cistone learned that so many Village caregivers, staff members and volunteers have been serving at the Village for ten, fifteen or more years, he expressed deep appreciation. Bishop lauded the care he saw at every turn. "It's clear that you love the residents. They look so well cared for – they are a credit to you. Everything shines; the Village is spotless. You are doing such a great job."

When he joined the Village family in the Chapel, Bishop Cistone invited residents, "Sing with all your heart. Let our Lord know just how much you love Him." Bishop Cistone won nods and smiles of understanding and agreement when he continued, "You just sang: *Open my eyes, Lord*. Today, I invite you to see all your neighbors as your friends when



Rosemary Bellenghi (left) and Sister Mary Veasy welcome Bishop Joseph R. Cistone to Divine Providence Village.

you open your eyes, and to be nice to them. That's not always easy, but look at your neighbor and try to see Jesus."

Explaining that since the time he initially made arrangements to visit the Village, he had been appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw, MI, Bishop Cistone said, "I am happy to do the work of the Lord in Saginaw but, I am sad to be leaving Philadelphia. Will you pray for me as I take up my new work?"

Applause rose from every corner of the chapel as residents offered congratulations and promised their prayers. They were more than ready to join their voices with the Bishop's and soon a joyful sound filled the chapel. Bishop Cistone and Divine Providence Village residents sang with full voice: *This is the day that the Lord has made.*

Written with: Mary Veasy, SSJ

## SSJ Associates in Mission celebrate 25th Anniversary

The day began with the straightforward task of parking – and there were volunteers to direct and to offer rides to the chapel. Associates and sisters exchanged joyful greetings of warmth and affection, and right away it was apparent: *This was the start of something big.*

In 1984, as the SSJ Associates in Mission formed, the congregation's charism and mission spread to new hearts, and Sisters of Saint Joseph opened their hearts to receive women and men who wanted to share in the SSJ vision, in good works, and in spiritual growth and companionship. And on April 19, 2009, more than 300 Sisters and Associates gathered to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SSJ Associates in Mission.

As all gathered in the Mount Saint Joseph Convent Chapel (exuberance restrained at last), Sister Patricia Kelly welcomed and congratulated each Associate and offered heartfelt reassurance that Associates are a vital part of the SSJ family. She urged all to look up and to try to count the stars on the chapel ceiling, where a seemingly limitless number of golden stars dance on an expansive blue canopy. Surely Anniversary Day was a day for dancing, sparkling, and sharing light. While timeless, Pat's message was also pointedly appropriate to the day. "Embrace the boundless joy, act with zeal, and live with gratitude," Pat invited.

The liturgy, presided over by the Reverend Rick Malloy, SJ, opened with several hundred voices combining to sing *Join in the Dance*; categorically, this set the tone for the Mass. Father Malloy's homily and the reflection given by SSJ Associate Oksana Larson were clothed in the sentiments of Divine Mercy Sunday and the guarantee of unconditional love.

After the liturgy, Sisters, Associates and their guests gathered in the dining room for refreshments. Needless to say, the enthusiasm of the day was unrestrained once again, as friendships were reaffirmed, renewed, and celebrated. The serving tables were laden with what was repeatedly described as a "veritable feast." All of this was a fitting prelude to what followed: *the telling of the story.*

As she welcomed all to this phase of the celebration, SSJ Associate Margot Zuccarello spoke of Sister Roberta Archibald – so instrumental in the founding and growth of the relationship. Roberta's commitment to "storytelling" set the tone for this session, and her admonition was key: *Never tire of your stories.* Margot's closing words emphasized the theme: *our stories ground us, keep us united, and strengthen our relationships.*

Sister Rose Andrea Loughery, Director of the SSJ Associates in Mission, spoke on behalf of all of Sisters of Saint Joseph, thanking the Associates for their work and commitment, referring to the connection between the Congregation and Associates as grace from God, planted in our hearts.

Rose's remarks prepared the way for presentations from Associates Marellen Mayers, Dannah Addalli, and Bethany Davis. Marellen spoke of the transformational power of our experiences and told the story of the Baltimore Associates – their founding, their charism, and their undertakings. Dannah and Bethany highlighted the Good Works Program, which offers volunteer and reflection opportunities. They told stories of caring and achievement that characterize the endeavor. This piece of the agenda pointedly echoed the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph: *We live and work so that all people may*



Strong in heart and voice, Associates renew their commitment to the SSJ Mission.



Sister Roberta Archibald (left), Margot Zuccarello, and Sister Rose Andrea Loughery lead the Associates in stories of remembrance and celebration.

*be united with God and with one another.* Even as they celebrated, Associates were challenged with reflection questions:

***How have our experiences transformed us?***

***What actions has this day inspired?***

As the day drew to a close, Associates joined in a prayer of recommitment, joyfully renewing once again, their deep union with the Congregation.

Written by: SSJ Associate Angela Godshall

## It takes a village — or a group of sisters behind the scenes

During her summer sabbatical, Sister of Social Service Sister Mária Almásy – called Sister Alma by her friends – has been visiting at the Motherhouse with Sister Rose Albert Reda and the sisters in the Sophia Community. *Here's how Alma tells her story.*

**"The relationship between the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the Sisters of Social Service began with a call," Alma explains. "The American Bishops' Conference asked women religious in USA to invite sisters from the former communist countries from Eastern Europe to help them learn English.**

"In 1996, Sister Franciska Berkecz, another Sister of Social Service, came to Chestnut Hill. After she returned to Budapest, Franciska became the superior of the Hungarian district, and in 1997 she invited Sister Rose to come Hungary for three months to teach English to our sisters. I became one of Rose's students and she and I became friends.

"Rose was my first English teacher, and it is still her charge. She never stops working with me. But, all the sisters at the Motherhouse have been helpful, and I appreciate their efforts to show me how to improve my pronunciation and sentence structure.

**"Reading Psalms with Sister Margaret Mary O'Connell, practicing phonetics with Sister Kathleen Sheehan and working on idioms with Sister Barbara Bradley have been a big help."**

Barbara said, "Alma understands and speaks English well, but idioms like, *It's raining cats and dogs*, leave her puzzled. That's why Alma and I have



Sister Barbara Bradley turns to nonsense phrases to help Sister Alma (right) improve pronunciation skills. It looks as if it's fun!

spent time on various strands of English: vocabulary, comprehension, and pronunciation. In a typical lesson, I usually include words that require repetition of letters Alma finds difficult to pronounce. The letter 'w' is one of those troublesome sounds, and repetition increases Alma's skill and confidence. Bursting into laughter helps, too, so to make practice fun, we often work with a nonsense phrase."

One phrase Barbara recommends is: *Will Willy the worm want to go near water when Wally the whale is wallowing nearby?*

Not all is fun and games. Since its release in early July, Barbara and Alma have been reading Pope

Benedict XVI's new encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*. "I am eager to learn to read about my Catholic faith in English, and I need to learn the vocabulary of religious life in English, too," Alma said, adding, "and now I need it even more and I am even more thankful for all I am learning this summer – because in July, I was elected to the General Council of the Sisters of Social Service. We are an international community, and although members of the General Council come from different countries, the common language is English."

Were you to speak with Alma, you would most likely hear a phrase she tends to repeat often: *I am so grateful for the opportunity to be here.* Sentence structure and pronunciation – perfect!



Calls to ministry often open the way to relationships.

## Institute for Forgiveness and Reconciliation established at Chestnut Hill College



Rev. John Dear, SJ and Sister Catherine Nerney welcome guests attending the inaugural lecture of the *Institute for Forgiveness and Reconciliation*.

Chestnut Hill College has established an *Institute for Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, an *Institute* seeking new opportunities to challenge assumptions, inspire change and walk together on the path of forgiveness and reconciliation; Sister Catherine T. Nerney, Chair of Religious Studies, is serving as its founding director.

The mission of the *Institute* grows from the legacy of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and their mission of unity and love for all without distinction. It is a mission that leads the Chestnut Hill College community to work for the healing of divisions among human persons and communities, beginning with themselves and extending outward as they plant seeds of forgiveness not only among their own families and within the college community, but also among their neighbors – neighbors near and neighbors far – in fact, the whole global family.

Inclusive, collaborative and multi-disciplinary by nature, the *Institute* seeks the common good not only by teaching, but also by advocating for and witnessing to peace-building, the moral alternative to violence and retaliation. The *Institute* incorporates: Research and Scholarship – Networking, Outreach and Service – Formation, Education and Skill Development – in its efforts to challenge assumptions, inspire change and walk with others on the path of forgiveness and reconciliation.

In March, Jesuit priest and peace activist John Dear delivered the *Institute's* inaugural lecture, "To Change the World We Must Change Ourselves." He

expressed his appreciation for the dream of the CHC *Institute for Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, for the clarity of its goals and the boldness of its purpose. He gave a brief history of his involvement with peace-building, beginning with a call he first recognized during a visit to the Chapel of the Beatitudes where Jesus is believed to have preached his *Sermon on the Mount*, and continuing through his efforts to build peace at such sites as Ground Zero, El Salvador, the Middle East, Northern Ireland and Iraq and more, as well as through his participation in hundreds of demonstrations and non-violent actions for peace.

John Dear spoke with reverence for the firm commitment to non-violence witnessed faithfully by such seekers of peace and justice as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Thich Naht Han, and Mother Teresa. He spoke firmly about his conviction that war always begets war; that war never leads to peace.

To hear John Dear speak is to be fired with his earnest enthusiasm and to look seriously at his suggestion: "Choose one issue and take one step toward peace and justice." In proffering that call, he reminded his audience of Oscar Romero's teaching: *None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something.*

In addition to delivering the inaugural lecture, John Dear met with students, led a procession to the CHC's Garden of Forgiveness, and praised the newly formed *Institute of Forgiveness and Reconciliation* as a sign of hope in a broken world.

## Sisters of Saint Joseph Commission for Justice



## Sustainability

Meeting the needs of this generation  
without jeopardizing the needs  
of future generations.

*We will deepen our understanding of the spirituality of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in relation to both Global Spirituality and consciousness of the Universe. Through the lens of this understanding we will focus on specific sustainability issues. We will make the individual and corporate choices that witness to our belief that all is one.*  
**Chapter Commitment 2004**

**The call of Sisters of Saint Joseph and SSJ Associates in Mission to "treasure and care for Earth" came to the fore many times during Chapter 2009, and in recent months it has also been reiterated throughout the world community.**

In his recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI states: "The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it, we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole."

World leaders, who met in Italy in July, issued declarations concerning climate change and the basic right of all people to food and clean water that echo the Pope's concerns.

U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama brought attention to the issue of locally grown produce as she and 26 elementary school children tended a new herb and produce garden on the White House grounds.

Those recent developments resonate with presentations offered during the May Chapter Weekend. Those presentations concerned the four signs of the times Albert Nolan presents in his *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*: Hunger for Spirituality, Individualism, Globalization and Developments in Science after Einstein.

Today, as a global community, we face enormous problems, yet we have hope and we share an ever-deepening desire for unity. As Karen Dietrich noted, "Science is confirming what our souls have already known." We know that the call to be a more responsible member of the universal family has its roots in the call to be one with God, self, and all of creation. We trust God will effect our movement toward unity if we open ourselves to divine grace.

Hopefully, we will accept the transformative graces of our time and dare to live in a more simple, conscious and courageous way so that others may simply live.

### Resources

The full text of Pope Benedict's Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, is available online at: [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/index\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/index_en.htm).

*Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 2006

### Actions

**Consult** the resource, *Living Lightly: An Ecological Resource*, recommended for prayer and reflection, faith sharing, and local gatherings. The Commission for Justice has made *Living Lightly* available on the *SSJ Web site*: [ssjphila.org](http://ssjphila.org).

**Find** *What we do on* the home page and **scroll down** to *Social Justice*.

**Click on** *New Monthly Justice Resources* and **scroll to** *Sustainability* and to *Practical Resources* for a full version of *Living Lightly*.

In addition, the Commission for Justice has made a paper copy of the packet available to the SSJ Associate serving as a social contact person for each group, and to each local community of Sisters of Saint Joseph.

**Be Proactive:** Put sustainability on the agenda of SSJ cluster gatherings and local community meetings. Make sustainability concerns part of SSJ Associate in Mission Meetings.

*Be courageous risk-takers in areas of sustainability.*

## Historian, Editor and Time Traveler!

My birthday is August 9<sup>th</sup> and recently I had a 'time traveler' kind of experience. These days in my office in Star of the Sea Convent, Baltimore, I am working a final draft of sentences and paragraphs of our new history, and I was paging through the Sister Maria Kostka Logue history, when the date, August 9, 1875, leaped right off page 157 and captured my attention.

August 9, 1875 is the day we Sisters of Saint Joseph opened our mission here at Star of the Sea Baltimore!

For a brief moment, I transported myself to 1875 and to our front sidewalk. There I joined Mother Mary Salome and Sisters Stanislaus, Mary Francis, Antoinette, Alberta, and Mary Rose who were just arriving at that very spot. While separated by 134 years, I felt our shared life and mission.

Turning back to my computer, I sensed those good women looking over my shoulder. I felt as if they were reading *our story* and enjoying it. They seemed to realize that even today our mission often calls us to new places, where we live and work among new peoples. They are watching *us* pioneer!

*Written by: Mary Helen Beirne SSJ*

# Celebration marks 100th Anniversary Saint Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House at Cape May Point New Jersey

Nearly 150 Sisters of Saint Joseph, SSJ Associates and friends came to Cape May Point, NJ, on June 14, 2009, to open a yearlong celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Saint Mary by-the-Sea, the Sisters' retreat house since 1909.

No sooner did they reach the familiar intersection of Lincoln and Lehigh Avenues than they caught sight of the parade of banners that display the anniversary logo and theme: *100 Years – Ocean of Grace, Tides of Transformation*.

Everyone assembled just outside the chapel, where a 'boardwalk' connects the wings of the U-shaped building, and where – soon after the Sisters acquired the building that had been the Shoreham Hotel – a statue of Mary was mounted on a mound in the center of the grassy quadrangle.



to look back on all that has been, to count blessings, and share memories.”

Sister Dorothy Annas began the reading of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Proclamation. The proclamation did not include such words as 'whereas' or 'resolve,' so typically included in proclamations. Instead, it noted with praise and gratitude that the Sisters who christened the property Saint Mary by-the-Sea began there an “unbroken tradition of prayer, rest, silence, and recreation that continues to this day.”

Members of the General Council Sisters Mary Barrar, Mary Dacey, Anne Myers, and Dot Urban closed the proclamation, “remembering all that has been, celebrating all that is, and entrusting all that will be to our gracious God.”

continued inside, page 4



Sister Dorothy Urban offered a warm welcome and a blessing.

Soft chuckles rippled through the air as Sister Kathy Hart pulled the rope of the retreat house bell. For many years that bell announced: *dinner is ready*, and Kathy used the bell to waken those warm memories and to sound the message: *time to begin*.

As General Council liaison for Saint Mary by-the-Sea, Sister Dorothy Urban welcomed all to a graced moment to look back at 100 years of blessing, she spoke of anniversaries as “a special time to pause,



Borough of Cape May Point Mayor Carl Schupp offered good wishes for the next 100 years!

## Solo Show – *Summer Reflections* – features 30 Watercolor Paintings

During the month of August, the Atlantic City Art Exhibit Center presented *Summer Reflections*, a display featuring more than 30 watercolor paintings by Sister Celeste Mokrzycki.

The paintings show “the glory of God’s creation in landscapes, seascapes and the human form,” Celeste said. She explained that she loves to work freely and quickly allowing the watercolor to express itself, and that she paints the nature around us with its magnificent details “to engage us in delighting in the imagination of the creator.” For Celeste painting is an act of worship, honoring the Divine Artist.

Viewers say that Celeste’s paintings capture movement in nature and they note that her colors seem to dance with one another. By creating a sense of movement and selecting vibrant colors are choices that fit with Celeste’s love for all of nature and creation.

Nine Sisters of Saint Joseph were among those in attendance at the opening reception held August 9, 2009. For them, highlights of the exhibit included the triptych *Walking through Fairmount*, on loan from Mount Saint Joseph Convent and *Saint Mary by-the-Sea, Cape May Point*. Showcased paintings included floral pieces, garden scenes, and local scenes from Pennsylvania and the New Jersey seashore.

Celeste’s paintings have also been displayed at the Woodmere Art Gallery and the Dowley Art Gallery of Chestnut Hill College, both in Philadelphia PA, the Ridgewood Art Center, Ridgewood NJ, as well as at the Gallery of Light, Lawrenceville, NJ.

Celeste has been a participant at several summer SSJ Art Colony gatherings held in Cape May, New Jersey. The SSJ Art Colony offers sister artists a weeklong opportunity to work in a variety of media and to share techniques.

Written by:

Joan Krukoski SSJ



And the artist is:  
Sister Celeste Mokrzycki SSJ



Delighted by each painting they viewed, Sisters Jane Hill, Joan Krukoski, Clarisa Vázquez, Pat Ash, Harriet Corrigan, Ann Toner and Donna Minster surround Celeste Mokrzycki (third from right) at the Atlantic City Art Exhibit Center.

Non-Profit  
Organization  
Bulk Rate  
US Postage  
Paid  
Permit 59  
Flourtown, PA

SSJ Newsletter

SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH  
9701 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19118-2694

Address Service Requested

