

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Journeys

20th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner at the Marketplace Grill



SISTERS OF
ST. JOSEPH
OF NORTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA

Connecting with God ✚ Connecting with You

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Message from Leadership



SSJ Leadership Team (left to right):
Moira Sullivan, SSJ; Mary Ellen Dwyer, SSJ; Joyce Lowrey, SSJ.

When we watch the news, read news magazines and newspapers, or browse the Internet, we learn about numerous challenges facing our country and the world including the transition to a new President, the current global economic crisis and continuing conflicts, and extreme poverty conditions.

By electing the first African-American president in U.S. history, Americans send a powerful message that change is necessary. President-elect Barack Obama must approach these chal-

lenges with a sense of unity and reconciliation -- much like the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Over the years, the Sisters of St. Joseph have continually served the economically, spiritually and educationally poor. The Sisters' mission of unity brings together those who *need* help with those who *can* help. In this issue of *Journeys*, we share with you the many ways the Sisters and our Associates continue to serve through numerous ministries and individual efforts to bring hope wherever and whenever possible. We acknowledge that we could never reach so many people without the help of our Associates. They are truly a gift to us.

Twenty years ago, we began serving Thanksgiving dinner at the Marketplace Grill to those who are poor or lonely. A few years later, we began delivering dinners to homebound persons in addition to serving at the restaurant. With the help of hundreds of benefactors and volunteers, close to 20,000 Thanksgiving dinners have been served through this effort. But more important than the meals, the event brings people together to experience true "thanks giving." The people who come to eat are grateful for the meal and fellowship and the volunteers express gratitude for the reminder of all they have to be grateful for in their lives.

The economic realities of today are having an impact on everyone and caused us to seriously consider the timing of the construction of our new administrative office building. Because the primary purpose for the building is to provide administrative office space that will allow us to continue effectively ministering and serving the needs of the era and area, we are moving ahead as planned. A secondary benefit of the new building will be the additional space that will be gained in the existing Community Living Center, thereby serving to improve the quality of life for Sisters who reside there. We trust this is the right direction and that God will be with us as we begin this project. We ask your continued support and prayers.

Please continue to remember all those who are in need. It is through your generosity that we are able to help so many. We are grateful to you and will hold your special intentions in prayer throughout the upcoming holy season. May peace reign in our hearts, our families and friends and our world! God Bless.

Sister Joyce Lowrey, SSJ

Joyce Lowrey, SSJ

On behalf of the Leadership Team

On the cover: Left-right: Sister Teresa Marie Bohren, SSJ; Peter Lyons, owner of the Marketplace Grill and Sister Mary Fromknecht, SSJ. Peter and the Sisters have collaborated for twenty years to serve Thanksgiving dinner to those less fortunate (see page 7).

Corrections to the 2007-2008 Development Report – Dr. Mary Jo Cherry's gift was incorrectly listed in Estates; it should have been listed as an Unrestricted General Gift in memory of Sister Eunice Carlos, SSJ. Robert and Kathy Piccirillo's gift incorrectly listed Kathy's maiden name as Sette.

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37 million Americans live below the poverty line.

(U.S. Census Bureau)

© 2008, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Catholic Campaign for Human Development)



by Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ, Social Justice Coordinator

The scandal of poverty is an on-going crisis and a moral indictment of our times. One look at the current statistics and it is easy to understand the magnitude of this crisis as well as the need for both immediate relief and long term solutions.

In recent years, many groups throughout the world have begun to confront the urgency of this global problem. In September 2000, 189 heads of state and government came together at the United Nations and firmly committed themselves to fight poverty, hunger and other pressing social issues. These commitments gave birth to eight **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**, each with measurable targets. The first goal aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and has as a target to reduce, by half, the number of people whose income is less than \$1 a day by the year 2015.

Members of the **U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph**, in their efforts to become a more conscious, global community, made a commitment to integrate the MDGs wherever possible in their peace and justice ministries. Also joining in the worldwide struggle, the **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** and **Catholic Relief Services** have launched the **Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty**, which encourages Catholics to work for U.S. policies that foster economic and social development for people living in poverty throughout the world. The assistance promised by developed countries of the world, in particular the United States, is essential to achieving the MDGs. Jeffrey Sachs,

an economist who has extensively studied global poverty, estimates that for less than one per cent of the annual income of high-income countries — the U.S., Europe, Japan and a few others — we could end poverty once and for all. Although the U.S. gives more money in development aid than other countries, it ranks 26th of 27 countries when assistance is expressed as a per cent of gross national income.

Complementing these international efforts in the fight against poverty, **Catholic Charities USA** has launched a similar effort. The goal of its **Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America** is to cut the poverty rate in the U.S. in half by the year 2020. Catholic Charities' agencies serve more than 7.4 million people each year. Many of its clients are among the working poor, underscoring the need to improve government programs. It is leading a broad effort among its partners in social service agencies and in the faith community to work together to bring about systemic changes in government in four key areas: health care, affordable housing, nutrition assistance and family economic security. Its website, www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/ is an excellent resource for information about the issue and how to become an active participant in increasing awareness and developing solutions to reduce poverty. Among its many suggestions about things that we can do are: volunteer, share, donate, advocate, learn and especially to pray for God's assistance in alleviating the pain and needless struggles of our brothers and sisters in need.

"Ours is the first generation in the history of the world with the ability to eradicate extreme poverty. We have the means, the resources and know how. All we lack is will."

Jeffrey Sachs, author of the book, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*

Poverty Facts

Nearly half of the world's population lives on less than \$2.50/day; with 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25/day.

One in every two children in the world lives in poverty; close to one in five American children live in poverty.

In 2006, a child was born into poverty every 35 seconds in the United States.

The overall poverty rate of the U.S. is 12.5%, in Erie County the rate is 14.5%

In Erie County, one of seven residents lives below the poverty threshold and, in some regions, the rate is as high as one in two or three.

Twenty-five million people in our nation sought help from food banks in 2007 — an increase of 18 percent.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau August 2008, World Bank Development Indicators 2008

On Good Friday, April 1, 1983, a rainbow appeared as Sister Benita Repasky, age 68, drove into Shenango Valley to establish a new ministry to serve the poor. Her notes indicate, "I seemed to hear these words . . . 'My child, take my hand and I shall bring you into a new life and give you health as never before. I will give you vigor and radiant joy. Be not afraid. My love surrounds you and my power preserves and protects you. You are starting out upon a ministry, the foundations of which no man has laid. It shall be a path to holiness, a way of miracles and a life of glory. Lean on Me and trust Me wholly.'"

That trust in God led to a ministry that has served the growing needs of the poor population in Sharon and Farrell, Pennsylvania for twenty-five years at the Prince of Peace Center, first known as the St. Paul's Catholic Center. The agency, an affiliate of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, is committed to strengthening families, building community and reducing poverty among people of all races, faiths, ages and backgrounds. The Prince of Peace Center provides emergency assistance, counseling, a food pantry, mentoring and advocacy, a soup kitchen, a thrift store and other services. At a recent dinner commemorating its 25th anniversary, the Sisters of St. Joseph and, in particular, Sisters Benita Repasky and Clare Marie Beichner, and SSJ Associate Adrienne Ward were among those honored for their vision and leadership in this vital ministry.

"Listening and being with the poor teaches me that we are to cherish the face of God in all we meet and companion them to a better quality of life," said Sister Clare Marie Beichner.

Be diligent in serving the poor. Love the poor, honor them as you would Christ himself.
Saint Louise de Marillac

Though Sister Benita died in 1999, the Sisters' ministry to the impoverished, one rooted in the Congregation's origins in France in the mid 1600s when the first Sisters taught lace making to poor, local women as a trade to support themselves, endures.

"Ministering to and bringing together the People of God is the unity to which we, as Sisters of St. Joseph, profess," said Sister Mary Fromknecht who has been involved with the annual Thanksgiving Dinner and St. Patrick Haven for many years. "Serving the poor is an aspect of that ministry which always has, and continues to be, close to the heart of our community."

The Sisters' long-standing mission of responding to the needs of the era and area, combined with the ever-present

poverty conditions in the world (see page 2), keeps them serving the poor both globally and throughout the Diocese of Erie through a variety of ministries.

St. Patrick Haven and St. James Haven

St. Patrick Haven was originally founded as an outreach of St. Patrick parish in 1984 to provide shelter for homeless persons. Eventually, St. Pat's Haven became a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Today, the shelter is strictly for men and can accommodate as many as 21 each night. The men come in the evening and leave by eight o'clock the next morning. They may return each night as long as they follow the rules: no guns, no drugs, no alcohol, no fighting on site. Unlike other shelters who turn away men who are visibly intoxicated, St. Patrick Haven welcomes them as long as they do not cause trouble. The Haven serves dinner on Saturday and Sunday which is supplied by area churches. Sister Marie Eileen Moyer serves as administrator and Sister Mary Fromknecht as President of its Board.

St. James Haven is an outreach ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph that was established by the SSJ Associates in the Meadville, Pennsylvania area. St. James Haven is a 6-bed, temporary, overnight shelter for homeless men that provides a comfortable bed and clean, dry shelter on a first come, first served basis. A simple evening meal is served. The Haven is staffed by a resident manager and is open daily from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 a.m.

The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network

The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network (SSJNN) ministers in cooperation with Saint Vincent Health Center. The SSJNN serves the residents in the neighborhood from 12th to 21st Streets and State to Cranberry Streets in Erie, including the area known as "little Italy."

The SSJNN offers a free neighborhood dinner on Monday evenings at St. Paul Center, tutoring, advocacy, emergency food, rent/utility assistance, budgeting help, referrals to other agencies and neighborhood development. A five-week program for moms is conducted in collaboration with Catholic Charities.

In an effort to improve housing in the neighborhood, SSJNN works closely with HANDS (Housing and Neighborhood Development Service) and the Redevelopment Authority.



Sister Benita Repasky, SSJ rolled up her sleeves in response to God's call to establish a ministry to serve the poor in the Sharon and Farrell, Pennsylvania area.



St. Patrick Haven and St. James Haven provide shelter and fellowship for homeless men.



Sisters Mary Herrmann, SSJ (left) and Carol Wilcox, SSJ (center) have implemented numerous programs at the SSJ Neighborhood Network since 2000.

Home ownership is encouraged and the staff works closely with individuals to assist them in the process of purchasing homes.

Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Since 1988, the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Marketplace Grill – one of Erie’s premier restaurants – have offered a free Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings to the lonely, needy or those who otherwise would not celebrate the holiday (see page 7.) In addition to the meals served in the restaurant, the Sisters deliver meals to those who are homebound due to illness or age. Peter Lyons, owner of the Marketplace Grill, and his staff prepare the dinner, which is served by Sisters, Associates and friends. It is estimated that since 1988, nearly 20,000 meals have been served. The annual event is supported through individual and corporate donations, all of which benefit the dinner and provide food and other items to those in need.

“We believe that sharing the spirit of the holiday is one of the greatest gifts we can give,” said Sister Mary Claire Kennedy, SSJ, co-chairperson of the dinner. “While food is basic to survival, it is the spirit of togetherness – the unity – that makes Thanksgiving special.”



Guests line up waiting to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner at the Marketplace Grill. Each year nearly 1000 meals are served to the lonely and poor.

For the Christian there is no such thing as a “stranger.” There is only the neighbor... the person near us and needing us.

Saint Edith Stein

Catholic Rural Ministry

The Erie Diocese consists of many rural communities with high incidences of poverty, unemployment and under and uninsured people who lack access to social services and health care.

In 1999, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, the Sisters of Mercy and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie collaborated to serve 15 parishes in Potter and McKean counties. The goal was to provide a pastoral presence with two women religious; give spiritual support to the parish communities via education, retreats, enrichment programs and faith sharing; and respond to the most basic needs of the people in the area.

The success of the ministry led to the 2007 establishment of Catholic Rural Ministry II to serve 18 parishes in the Clarion, Venango, Crawford and Forest Counties within the Oil City Deanery. Statistically, these counties have shown higher rates of poverty than the state’s average (according to Center for Rural PA). Sisters Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ, and Marian Wehler, OSB, are working together to “bring hope and God’s compas-

sionate presence” to the people through building relationships and working partnerships with pastors and faith communities.

Six primary goals of this project have been established; one of them being to help minister to the basic human needs of community by educating people about food, clothing, finances and available resources.

Erie DAWN

Together with the Sisters of Mercy and the Benedictine Sisters, the Sisters of St. Joseph provide supportive transitional housing to impoverished women and children through the ministry of Erie DAWN, which was established in 1995. Erie DAWN serves women without regard to age, race, religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity. Erie DAWN’s vision empowers women to gain and maintain their independence and self-sufficiency so that they can better their lives and become active members of the community.



Sister Clare Marie Beichner, SSJ offers hope and compassion to those served by Catholic Rural Ministry II.

BE DILIGENT IN SERVING THE POOR

by Stephanie L. Hall, SSJA

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES THAT BENEFIT YOU *and those we serve...*

Charitable Gift Annuity

Economic uncertainties and an unstable stock market have no affect on Charitable Gift Annuity.

A charitable gift annuity, or CGA, is a contract between an individual donor and the Sisters of St. Joseph. The Congregation receives a donation of money or property (typically stocks, bonds or real estate) and assumes responsibility for managing the investment. The Congregation agrees to make fixed payments to the annuitant (benefactor) for the remainder of their life.

Eligibility

- Minimum Age ~ 70
- Minimum Annuity Investment ~ \$10,000

Contract Restrictions

- A “single life” agreement (pay only one person for their lifetime)
- Distributions are given biannually and directly mailed to the annuitant.
- Rates are based upon age of annuitant at the time of application.

Types of Annuities Available

- Traditional Gift Annuity
- Deferred Gift Annuity
- Flexible Annuity

Charitable Gift Annuities Offer These Benefits:

- Fixed Income for Life
- Guaranteed Payments
- Federal Income Tax Charitable Deduction
- Capital Gains Tax Savings
- Federal Estate Tax Savings

Personal Satisfaction

By making a gift of lasting significance to the Sisters of St. Joseph, you are assured that your intention to continue the mission and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph will be honored.



The IRA Charitable Rollover

Extended to 2008 and 2009

The new bill passed by Congress makes no changes in the provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Assets from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) may be directly transferred to a qualified charitable organization, such as the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania. These gifts may be deducted from income that could otherwise be subject to tax under federal law and the laws of many states.

Some specifics and benefits of the legislation:

- Charitable gifts are to be made directly from an IRA to a charity.
- IRA (traditional and Roth) charitable rollovers may be made in 2008 and 2009.
- Donors must be at least age 70½ at the time of the transfer.
- Individuals can make as many gifts, in any amount, to as many charities as desired as long as the total does not exceed \$100,000 per year.
- The gift may not be made in exchange for a charitable gift annuity or to a charitable remainder trust.
- The rollover may be applied to the required minimum distribution from the retirement account

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania do not provide tax, legal, accounting, insurance or investment advice. Please consult with your own professional advisors for guidance.

For more information about giving opportunities with the Sisters of Joseph, contact the Development Office.

SSJ Development Office
5031 West Ridge Road
Erie, PA 16506-1249
814-836-4202
kristina.huber@ssjerie.org

Thank You! 20TH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER

It was 20 years ago when Sister Teresa Marie Bohren and Peter Lyons, owner of the Marketplace Grill, teamed up to offer a traditional, hot Thanksgiving dinner to area homeless persons. It's estimated that we have served more than 20,000 meals over the years -- those served in the restaurant in addition to those delivered to homebound persons. Annually, hundreds of volunteers, students and benefactors make this project possible. From the custom decorated placemats provided by local school children to the hundreds of pies baked and donated by various individuals and organizations, this truly is a group effort.

The financial support over the years has been tremendous. We are fortunate that we have been able to share that with area food banks and other service agencies that provide support for those in need. In addition, we are able to respond to "emergency needs" in the community and help those who may have been affected by tragedies such as fires and accidents.

"Happy Thanksgiving and thank you all so much! We enjoyed the fellowship, the service and the food was great!"

Thank You!

Dear Sisters, I wish I could send more. I'm sure all will go well. Much Love, Madelyn

Our students have raised money by sponsoring a jeans day. Enclosed is \$61.50. We hope you will use it toward your Thanksgiving Dinner for the needy. Thank you. God Bless you and your work.

We are very excited to donate to your Thanksgiving Fund. We hope that you are able to reach out to even more people in need. Enjoy your holiday season! Sincerely, McDowell High School Student Council

Please no need to send an acknowledgment - save the money for the poor. God Bless! Wish I could do more!

A big thank you for the Thanksgiving meal delivered to Carol. She reports that it was delicious and your thoughtfulness lifted her spirits. May the Lord continue to bless you in your ministry.

I'm 80 years old and you sent food enough for 3 meals -- so I'm sending you an extra \$3.

I appreciate the lovely dinners on Thanksgiving Day. I am very much alone. Thank you. Mrs. O.

We are pleased to lend support to this project. We appreciate all you do for our community. The Levins

SSJ ASSOCIATES . . . LIVING THE MISSION

by Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ and Jane Zawacki, SSJA

For 26 years, Associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania have been living the Sisters' mission, in part, through their works with those less fortunate. The ways in which SSJ Associates are doing this are as varied as the individuals themselves.

As director of MHEDS (Multi-cultural Health Evaluation Delivery System) **Agnes Priscaro** coordinates health care services for the medically at-risk and indigent patient populations of Northwest Pennsylvania and Northeast Ohio. She has also served



Associates Evelyn Coleman and Charlotte Keyes are actively involved in ministries to help the poor and homeless.

on the boards of HANDS (Housing and Neighborhood Development Service) and Community Shelter Services helping to provide for the housing needs of immigrants and others.

Ron and Delores Miller devote time to Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry which seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world and to make decent shelter a matter of

conscience and action. Numerous other Associates work to help provide shelter through involvement with St. Patrick Haven and St. James Haven which was begun, and continues to be run, by Associates in the Meadville area. Current directors are **Ruth and Paul Mercier, Marlene Lyda, and Zeline Euler.**

Charlotte Keyes and her sister **Evelyn Coleman** spend countless hours visiting the sick in hospitals and their homes, and helping out at the Upper Room, a volunteer-run shelter in downtown Erie. Evelyn was recognized by the Visiting Nurses Association as Volunteer of the Year 2001 for her work with Hospice. Many Associates work or volunteer at local hospitals or nursing homes bringing Christ's presence to those who are sick.

Adrienne Ward was recently honored by the Board of Directors of the Prince of Peace Center for her work with the poor in the Shenango Valley. **Patricia Marshall**, in her role as Director of the Diocesan Mission Office, spreads the SSJ charism across national boundaries as she coordinates efforts to aid the needy in Yucatan, Mexico. **Judi Janke** has also made that trip to Mexico as a volunteer doing whatever is needed, working with everyone from children to the elderly.

As co-coordinator of her parish food bank, **Debbie Brasili** is one of a number of Associates who follows the Gospel mandate to "feed the hungry." Others volunteer at their own parishes, for Angel Food Ministries or at the SSJ Neighborhood Network soup kitchen. Still others support the annual Thanksgiving Dinner, a ministry effort of the Sisters in collaboration with the Marketplace Grill.

Many people benefit from the work of **Shirley Pfadt**. She is one of the founders of the Sunshine Group, which gathers to make gifts that are given to people of all ages in the Erie area and beyond. Gifts go to those in nursing homes, in nurseries,

or those who just need some cheer. Shirley is also one of several Associates involved in ministry to prisoners. Others who serve in that capacity are **Harvey and Linda McQueen and Marlene Lyda.**

Reaching out to the "dear neighbor," the Sharon area Associates have completed many projects. Among them were a clothing and diaper drive to help Catholic Charities and Adoption Services in Mercer and Venango counties. They have also made pillows to give to mothers and children in shelters in the area and provided help for Prince of Peace Center.

Associates **Elaine Clyburn and Jean Heintzel** have aided disaster victims all over the U.S. through their work with the Red Cross. Locally, **Liz Reid** works at the Erie Red Cross office and



Left-right: Associates Eileen Jeffreys, Cindy Polesnak and Charlene Kellerman are involved with the Associates' "That's a Wrap" event each year.

was honored with the 2008 Volunteer Hero award. Other Associates contribute to the welfare of those closer to home through the annual "That's a Wrap" event which provides clothing and gifts for the needy at Christmas.

SSJ Associates are Christian men and women who share in the nature, spirit and ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the mission of all Christians to further the reign of God. It is impossible, in a single article, to include all of the Associates and the ways this commitment is fulfilled. Those mentioned here are only a small representation of the 225 SSJ Associates and the many good works they are doing. Each Associate reaches out to the "dear neighbor" every day through parish involvement, work, or interactions with others. Associate membership is open to all Christian men and women, regardless of age, marital status or vocation.



Associate Agnes Priscaro (right) works with many efforts to provide housing and shelter.

Photo Journeys



S. Mary Kay McNelis (left) with Virginia DEHaven, a former SSJ Spirit of Courage honoree, at the Circle of Friends Celebration in August.



Sisters of St. Joseph celebrating Golden Jubilees: Left-right: Frances Therese Matia, SSJ; Mary Fromknecht, SSJ; Elizabeth Ann Niebauer, SSJ; Margaret Pellerite, SSJ; Dorinda Young, SSJ; Rosemary O'Brien, SSJ; Joseph Marie Fitzgerald, SSJ; Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ; Marie Eileen Moyer, SSJ; and Naomi Wood, SSJ.



2008 Diamond Jubilarians, left-right: Sisters Christine Quirk, Margaret Joseph Mokes and Kathleen Kirsch.



Funds received through a grant from SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious) were used to purchase a pool/spa lift (demonstrated above by S. Margaret Ann Hardner), a defibrillator (above right) and a pulse oximeter (demonstrated on S. Mary Theno, right.)



Above: S. Jean Baptiste DiLuzio (center, back) with members of the Frisina family at this year's Circle of Friends celebration. Left: (left-right) S. André Feulner, Eileen Kirsch McLaughlin, S. Rosemary O'Brien and Associate Cindy Brown share some fun at Circle of Friends.

Right: Sister Lorraine Delaney, CSJ, General Superior of the Chambery CSJs (center) was a recent guest at the Community Living Center. Sister Lorraine is originally from India and currently resides in Rome at the Generalate. She is pictured here in the snow (at her request) with (l-r) Sisters Mary Claire Kennedy, Margaret Ann Hardner, Moira Sullivan, Mary Ellen Dwyer and Ann Loretta Urmann



2008 SSJ Spirit of Courage honorees (left-right): Margie Fischer (wife of deceased honoree Richard Fischer), Katie Holland, Tom Hogan, Jodi Rae Stankowski Schersten and Amber Austin.



S. Ann Marie Cappello (left) and S. Joyce Lowrey at this year's Saint Vincent Foundation Crystal Ball.

We Remember...



Carol Fischer, SSJ

Sister Carol Fischer, SSJ, died at the Congregation's Community Living Center on August 13, 2008, after a year-long, valiant struggle with cancer. During that time she remained involved in the life of the Congregation and her ministry of education.

Sister Carol was born on April 10, 1942 to the late Francis and Catherine Heid Fischer. She entered the Sisters of Saint Joseph on September 8, 1960 and professed her final vows on August 15, 1968. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee on May 17, 1986.

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.
~Kahlil Gibran

Sister Carol, formerly Sister Mary Lea, received a BS in Elementary Education from Villa Maria College in 1968 and a M.Ed. and Reading Specialist Certification from Edinboro University in 1974. She attended numerous NCEA, Diocesan and PA State sponsored education workshops. Sister Carol spent her life teaching children, and she possessed a special ability to help those with learning challenges. Though teaching children to read was an important part of her mission, Sr. Carol's primary focus was to lead children to find the truth.

During her years of education ministry, she taught at Blessed Sacrament, St. Patrick and St. Peter Cathedral Schools in Erie; and St. Brigid School in Meadville. She served as a Reading Specialist with the Intermediate Unit, Erie County and at St. John and Sacred Heart Schools in Erie. Sr. Carol had been at Villa Maria Elementary School, Erie, since 1975 where she worked as teacher/reading specialist and, for the last ten years, as assistant principal.

Sr. Carol served as Executive Secretary for the Congregation from 1985 to 1989. She was a member of the Villa Maria Elementary School Board.



Virginia Ann Gardner, SSJ

Sister Virginia Ann Gardner, SSJ, died on October 13, 2008 while in her 68th year of religious life. A native of Erie, she was born on November 3, 1920, the daughter of the late Arthur and Elizabeth (Carlin) Gardner.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on June 29, 1941 from St. Brigid parish, Meadville and professed her final vows on August 15, 1947.

Prior to entering the convent, she worked as Publicity Chairperson for the Erie Diocesan Sodality Union and was responsible for writing a weekly Sodality column, *The Blue & White Quill*, for the *Lake Shore Visitor*.

Sister Virginia Ann earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Science from Villa Maria College in 1953 and a Master's degree in English from Marquette University in 1960. In addition, she studied at Fordham, Case-Western, University of Chicago, State University of Iowa and Cambridge University.

Sister Virginia Ann was a well-known and respected teacher. She taught at Villa Maria Elementary, St. Joseph, Sacred Heart and Cathedral Schools in Erie. She was Department Chair and English teacher at St. Bernard High School in Bradford and Department Chair and English teacher at Villa Maria Academy. She was Director of Public Relations for Villa Maria College and she served as pastoral minister at St. John the Baptist parish. Sister Virginia Ann's involvement in ecumenical activities earned her the Inter-Church Ministries Service Award in 1984. She served as Director, REAP Community Relations; Dean for Adult Learning; and Resource Writer for Villa Maria College. In addition, she served the Congregation as Director of Communications and served on numerous boards in the Erie community.

"From heaven, I hope to watch our remnant continue its restoration and renewal-in-love. Oh, God, let it be . . . let it be . . ."

~ The final words from Sister Virginia Ann's book, *Let It Be*

In her retirement, she taught English as a second language in addition to writing. In 1999, she published a book titled, *Let It Be . . . a catholic sister remembering the past, living the present, pondering the future.* In addition, she has published numerous articles in various Catholic periodicals.

Sister Virginia Ann was a kind woman with a sharp wit and sense of humor. She was loved and respected by many former colleagues and students, many of whom continued contact with and visited her.

We also remember SSJ Associates who have died recently:

Mary Erhart	9-24-08
Jack Peterson	10-8-08

In the spirit of collaboration and “being and acting as one,” the Communications Directors from several member Congregations of the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph have begun meeting regularly in an effort to brainstorm, share ideas and collaborate. One outcome of this group’s meeting this past June in Latham, New York was the development of the following message and logo which is available to all members of the Federation for use in promoting a unified message of peace.



PEACE

Let It Begin With We

US FEDERATION of the SISTERS of ST. JOSEPH

Pope John Paul II stated,
“Peace is not just the absence of war.”

Peace is not an abstract state - it is a positive,
action-oriented concept brought to reality
through right and just acts.

Examine your prayer life --
be aware of God’s peace within your heart.



SISTERS OF
ST. JOSEPH
OF NORTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA

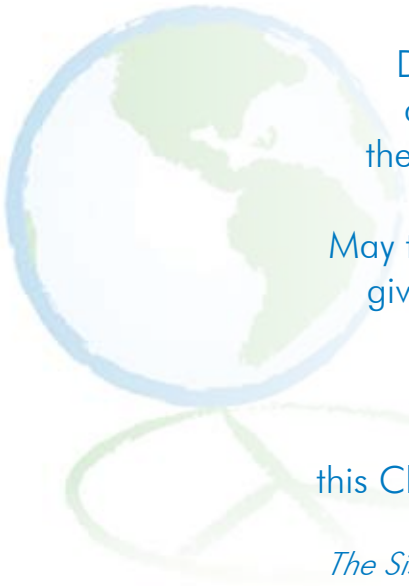
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Our Holiday Wish for you . . .



Deep in the darkness of a silent night
and quietly in the secret of our souls
the mystery of God continues to be born.

May the still, small voice of Love in each of us
give birth to shouts of hope and songs of
peace on earth.

Let us walk together in peace
this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

Written by André Feulner, SSJ