



MEDIA RELEASE
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SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
CELEBRATE 150 YEARS IN DIOCESE OF ERIE
Sisters to Pay Tribute to Deceased Sisters in the Diocese

As part of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania 150th Anniversary of service in the Erie Diocese, the Sisters will pay tribute and honor the 455 deceased Sisters who served the Diocese. Wreath laying services will be held on Saturday, May 29th at the three cemeteries where these women are buried. The tribute will begin with a prayer service at Calvary Cemetery, 3325 West Lake Road, Erie at 10:30 a.m. (Enter on West Lake Road – Sisters will gather near the southwest corner of the cemetery). From there, the Sisters will go to Trinity Cemetery, 2971 West Lake Road, Erie and then to St. Ann Cemetery in Corsica, Pennsylvania.

It was on May 24, 1860, at the invitation of Bishop Joshua Young, that Mother Agnes Spencer came to the Erie Diocese and assumed the direction of St. Ann's Academy for Girls at Corsica. Education became an important work of the Congregation and within twenty years there were more than two thousand children under the Sister of St. Joseph instruction. Next, the care of orphans and of the sick was undertaken, first in Meadville and then in Erie. The Sisters founded Spencer Hospital, Meadville; Saint Vincent Hospital, Erie; Saint Vincent school of Nursing; Saint Mary's Home of Erie; Villa Maria Academy, Elementary School and Villa Maria College among numerous other ministries. The Sisters staffed schools throughout the Diocese as well as St. Joseph Orphanage and Harborcreek Home for Boys.

The anniversary theme, ***WOMEN OF SPIRIT, COURAGE AND VISION*** honors the earliest Sisters of St. Joseph in seventeenth century France; Mother Agnes Spencer, SSJ, the first superior of the Congregation in Northwestern PA; and the generations of Sisters who have ministered in the Erie Diocese. Since the Sisters arrived in northwestern Pennsylvania, they have served in the 13 counties of the Erie Diocese and in numerous foreign lands.

The Sisters' complete history is available at www.ssjerie.org. In conjunction with the 150th anniversary, the Sisters have launched an online digital museum with thousands of photos. It can be also be accessed via the Sisters' website.

During this anniversary celebration, the Sisters look forward to connecting and re-connecting with those they have ministered with and to throughout the years. Feel free to contact the Sisters via phone, email or postal mail to share a story or memory. Contact information is available at www.ssjerie.org. You are also invited to place a prayer request via their website, or connect with the Sisters on Facebook.

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