

Spring/Summer 2019

# onewith

MAGAZINE OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH



Sisters of  
Saint Joseph™  
CHESTNUT HILL • PHILADELPHIA

## The Power of **ONE** Person

*Never underestimate the power of your actions. With a small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or worse, God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way.*

— Jane Wagner

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## Welcome to *One With!*

As Sisters of Saint Joseph, we are grateful for the opportunity to share a glimpse of our life and mission with you, our friends, through this magazine. With great gratitude to God and to you, our benefactors, we recently completed the updating of our motherhouse chapel. Our newly restored chapel retains its original beauty and gothic architectural character, with

needed changes that have made it more comfortable! New lighting and sound systems, heating and air conditioning, pews and floor, and a beautiful new altar for liturgy have enhanced our worship space. At this altar, all are welcome. From this place of encounter and communion with the living God made flesh in Jesus, we go forth to see Christ and serve Him in our dear neighbors and all of creation.

In this edition, you will read stories about the impact one person can make and of the enduring power of relationships.

You will discover some places where we have seen Christ and served Him through the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC). You will learn of one sister whose unwavering support for Athletics at Chestnut Hill College inspires athletes. Read also of the sacred work of our SSJ benefactor, who creates faith-based films sharing the love of Christ with others. We are so blessed to join with many who share in the mission of Jesus.

This is my final letter as Congregational President. During our General Chapter in June, a new President and Council will be elected to serve. These 10 years have been such a graced experience for me. I have been inspired by your goodness and selfless generosity. It has been a privilege to meet so many of you. Your loving care for the Sisters of Saint Joseph and your participation in our mission of uniting all people with God and one another have been a source of strength, hope and great joy for me.

In parting, I offer you this SSJ maxim\* (#14) to remember always: "God's free gift of love supports your life at every moment. Rely on it." Please know that you and your families will always hold a special place in my prayer and my heart. Rely on it!

With prayerful gratitude,

*Sister Anne Myers*

Sister Anne Myers SSJ  
Congregational President

\*Maxims of the Sisters of Saint Joseph are 100 pithy "spiritual nuggets" written by Father Jean-Pierre Médaille.

## Editor & Layout

Cecilia W. Rupell

## Special Thanks

Roberta Archibald SSJ  
Thérèse Ganly SSJ  
Kathryn Miller SSJ  
Celeste Mokrzycki SSJ  
Ann Moriarty SSJ  
Ann Seif SSJ  
Kate Shelly SSJ

## Contributors

Kathleen Anderson SSJ  
Cristina Diaz  
Kathleen Pales SSJ  
Carole Pollock SSJ  
Rita Woehlcke SSJ

## Photography

Cristina Diaz  
Carole Pollock  
Cecilia W. Rupell

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**On the Cover:** *The Power of One*, original watercolor by Celeste Mokrzycki SSJ

Mount Saint Joseph Convent  
9701 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19118-2694

215.248.7200  
[www.ssjsphila.org](http://www.ssjsphila.org)

## General Council

Anne Myers SSJ Regina Bell SSJ Teresa Shaw SSJ  
Eileen Marnien SSJ Maureen Erdlen SSJ



# Listen to Your Life, Discover Love

by Sister Rita Woehlcke SSJ

In her poem *The Summer Day*, Mary Oliver ends with the question,

“Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?”

In Catholic parlance, this is the “vocation question.” For many of us it was addressed as the set of choices associated with the words “priest, sister (few remember the choice of brother), marriage, or single life.” An option that after we made it, we thought had completed the task. However, the fundamental vocational questions—“Who am I, and who I am I called to be?”—pose themselves daily in myriad ways.

Life is always *vocare*, a calling to us to call something out of us. Frederick Buechner writes, “Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis, all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.”

There are endless voices calling out to us in our daily life: the expectation of others, the cache of the culture, the demands of ego and exclusive self-interest, the punishing and negative tapes of our past. They all want to have a say. They are frequently filled with *shoulds*. At the same time, God’s voice and face appear and appeal to us in the circumstances we face and the people we encounter. It is more an invitation than an expectation. The invitations are always marked by honesty, an opportunity to love, to bring the “good, the true, the beautiful to the sweet face of Mother Earth” (Angeles Arrien). They point out opportunities to be faithful to our deepest values and best desires.

At times, God’s invitation is revealed in circumstances where we are far from our best selves. These are not meant to shame us. Images may help us here. Picture a fawn or even a mature buck, caught in brambles, a ditch, or an unforgiving fence. When the animal tries to escape on its own, it wounds itself even more. Sometimes the pain we experience when we fall into destructive habits can open us to the God who wants to liberate and heal us. Picture yourself or someone you love facing the ashes of a lost career, relationship, or a personal health crisis. Can I allow God to be with me in my ache? Can I trust God to receive my rage and tears? Many of you know this God because you have made these journeys and found God faithful.

Buechner’s invitation to “listen to your life” echoes the wisdom that permeates the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. During a long period of convalescence from battle wounds, Ignatius slowly noticed how things affected him. He noticed what gave him energy and lasting enthusiasm, and what, on the other hand, gave him momentary satisfaction but not enduring joy and purpose. From that “listening to his life,” he came to trust the Spirit of God speaking to him through his experiences. He came to know that his inner compass revealed itself in what was stirred in him. It revealed to him what his heart most deeply loved and where he was likely to be lured away from—that deep true sense of who he was, and who he was called to be. He passed that on to his Jesuit brothers and to us in a prayer that is called the Consciousness Examen, a spiritual practice he describes as the most important prayer.

*“Listen to your life. See it for  
the fathomless mystery it is.  
In the boredom and pain of it,  
no less than in the excitement  
and gladness: touch, taste,  
smell your way to the holy  
and hidden heart of it,  
because in the last analysis all  
moments are key moments,  
and life itself is grace.”*

— Frederick Buechner



It is the perfect prayer for busy people, since it asks so little time (usually not more than 15 minutes) and a good deal of attention to your day-to-day experiences. You do not have to be a saint or poet to practice this prayer, though practicing it may unwittingly make you one or the other. The prayer practice invites you to develop a habit of noticing and recalling any strong feelings at various moments of the day, and of inviting God's Spirit to reveal the significance of those moments. In all things, it fosters gratitude to the God who accompanies you at each moment. It reveals to you what you most love and desire, the path to becoming the one God dreamed you to be.

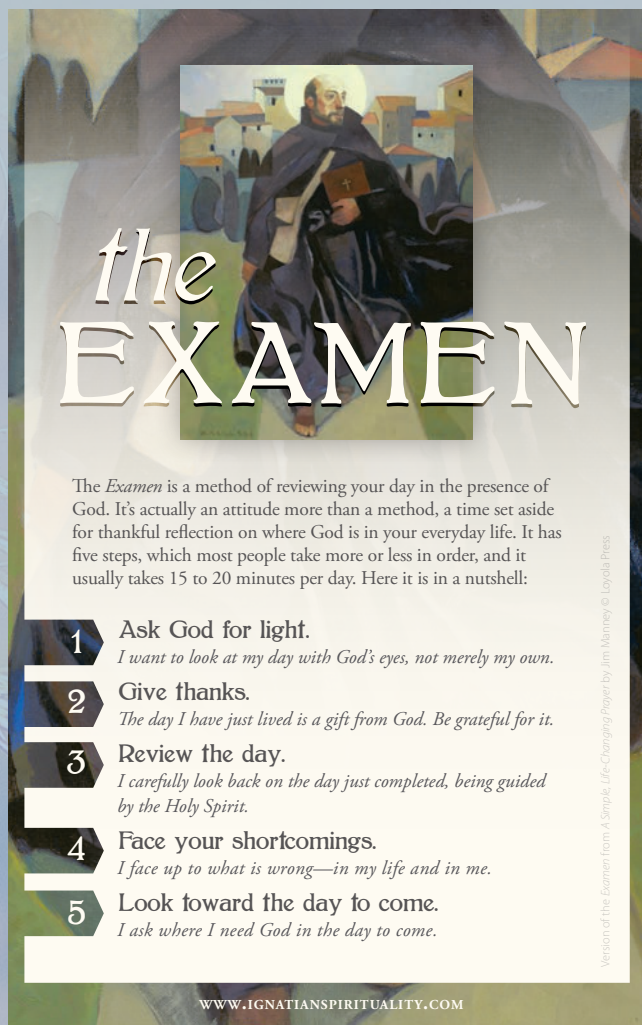
With that kind of awareness, each of us can live with abandon the poet Rumi's chant: "Let the beauty of what you love be what you do!" We can trust God speaking, the daily *vocare* luring us to the place Buechner describes as, "where our deep gladness meets the

world's deep need." We will know irrevocably in the marrow place what Pedro Arrupe SJ knew when he wrote:

*Nothing is more practical than finding God,  
that is, falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination,  
will affect everything.  
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evening,  
how you will spend your weekends,  
what you will read,  
who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.*

Resource for Ignatian consciousness examen: *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*  
Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn

The following is taken from [IgnatianSpirituality.com](http://IgnatianSpirituality.com)

# the EXAMEN

The *Examen* is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's actually an attitude more than a method, a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1 Ask God for light.  
*I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.*
- 2 Give thanks.  
*The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.*
- 3 Review the day.  
*I carefully look back on the day just completed, being guided by the Holy Spirit.*
- 4 Face your shortcomings.  
*I face up to what is wrong—in my life and in me.*
- 5 Look toward the day to come.  
*I ask where I need God in the day to come.*

Version of the Examen from *A Simple Life-Changing Prayer* by Jim Manney © Loyola Press

WWW.IGNATIANSPIRITUALITY.COM

## "God is in it"

The heart of the Examen is the third part: reviewing your day.

"Think of it as a movie playing in your head," writes James Martin, S.J., in *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*. "Push the play button and run through your day, from start to finish, from your rising in the morning to preparing to go to bed at night. Notice what made you happy, what made you stressed, what confused you, what helped you be more loving. Recall everything: sights, sounds, feelings, tastes, textures, conversations. Thoughts, words, and deeds, as Ignatius says. Each moment offers a window to where God has been in your day."

And remember that no experience is too trivial for spiritual investigation.

"Nothing in our lives is so insignificant that it doesn't deserve God's attention," notes Jim Manney in *A Simple Life-Changing Prayer*, a book about the Examen. "In fact, the mundane and the humdrum parts of our lives give depth and texture to our relationships with God. Washing the windows and cooking dinner are as much a part of the relationship as graduation day. If it's part of our human experience, God is in it."

Ignatius was emphatic about the Examen. He told the early Jesuits that if they for some reason did no other spiritual exercises, they should do this one. Then as now, the Examen is a spiritual tool for sizing up your days—and planting the seeds for a more purposeful life.



# Daniel Roebuck

## Celebrating God's Grace

### Through Faith-based Films

by Cecilia Rupell

*Throughout our lives, the relationships we form, be they parent-child, teacher-student, neighbor-neighbor, boss-employee and countless others, have an impact on our lives. It is through these relationships we learn, grow and become the people God meant us to be. For many of us, we cannot identify a defining moment or person that set us on our course. Daniel Roebuck is one of the lucky ones who can. For Danny, his first-grade teacher, Sister Kathleen, was the person who provided "that moment" for him.*



Daniel Roebuck may just well be one of the hardest working character actors in Hollywood. This year marks his 35<sup>th</sup> year in the entertainment industry where he has worked as an actor, writer, director and producer in hundreds of projects in film, television, theatre, on the Internet and even in video games. He arrived in Hollywood in 1984, the same year he landed a role—the lead role—in his first movie, *Cavegirl*. Anyone who has watched television over the past three decades has seen Danny.

Behind his success, Danny claims are the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia. "Nuns are the heart of the Church," says Danny. "Without nuns, I wouldn't be sitting here with you today. I wouldn't have the foundation of faith that I have or the moral and ethical foundation that I have. My parents did a great job, too, but the Sisters of Saint Joseph were the exclamation point."

Sister Kathleen (now Mary Pat Keys) was Danny's first-grade teacher at St. Anne Elementary School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. "While in her class, I got this nutty idea," shared Danny. "I watched a *Popeye* cartoon in which his nephews made a cartoon movie and my take away was that, although I couldn't make a movie, I could make a show of some sort, like their movie. I drew pictures of the action in the scenes and then I took all of these pictorial scenes to school with me the next day and couldn't wait to present them to Sister Kathleen. I told her my story, about my passion and my dreams. She took a deep breath and instead of saying what 1,000 percent of all other first grade teachers would've said when presented with the absurdity that I had concocted the previous night, Sister Kathleen affectionately said, 'Danny, I'd LOVE to see your play!'"

"Those seven simple words transformed me from a dreamer of dreams to a maker of dreams. I was no longer a thinker, I was a doer, thanks to this special lady." He cast classmates, Ann and Tony, and after a quick rehearsal, they performed the play. They were a hit. Sister Kathleen picked up the phone and contacted the school principal, Sister Margaret Anthony, who immediately arrived in the classroom, and asked Danny and company to perform the play for her. "Sister Margaret Anthony clapped louder than anyone when we were done, and immediately asked if we would perform it for every class in the school." By the end of the day, they had performed the play 16 times.

From that point forward, Danny knew he was to be an entertainer. That Christmas, Santa brought Danny a cardboard television cutout, and he was officially on TV. At the age of 10, Danny started appearing in talent shows, impersonating movie stars he loved. He joined a local circus two years later, and made his debut as one of the youngest clowns in the country. His clown act eventually segued into a magic act and he performed

that throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. From there, Danny took to the stage acting in, directing and writing more than 40 plays. He also began performing stand-up comedy. In 1984, at the age of 20, he started his career in film and television.

"I strongly feel that we are all given our personal vocations. I believe that God is talking to us always, and think God put the idea in my head. I would argue the only difference between me and any other guy who wants to be an actor is, that from the beginning, I had this intuition that this was what I was supposed to do. When I was six, I knew that I would be on TV. When I peered into my life not yet lived, I saw myself right where I am today. It wasn't enough that I saw it or knew it or believed it, I had to earn it. Every decision I made was with the objective to get me where I am right now. When people wanted to do drugs, I said, 'no.' When they wanted to drink to excess, I said, 'no.' I saw these activities decimate the dreams of others around me, and my dreams were too precious and too vivid to spoil," shared Danny.

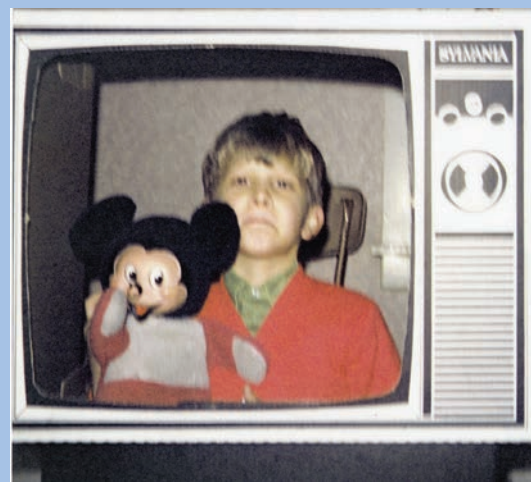
That six-year-old *aspiring* actor could not have predicted that four and a half decades later he would be *inspiring* others through the creation of faith-based films, produced by Magic Bean Entertainment, a company owned by Danny and his wife, Tammy. His first film, *Getting Grace*, debuted in 2018. It is about a teenage girl (Madelyn Dundon, a Bethlehem Catholic High School graduate) who is dying of cancer and changing the lives of others while on her journey. Grace goes to a funeral home to learn what happens when she dies, and teaches the funeral director (Danny Roebuck) how to celebrate life. Danny directed, produced and co-wrote it with Jeff Lewis and stars in the movie. The film is both a comedy and a drama, filmed in the Lehigh Valley with child actors from the area. "*Getting Grace* is

an allegory for God's grace," said Danny. "God's grace is available to all of us, whether we recognize it or not."

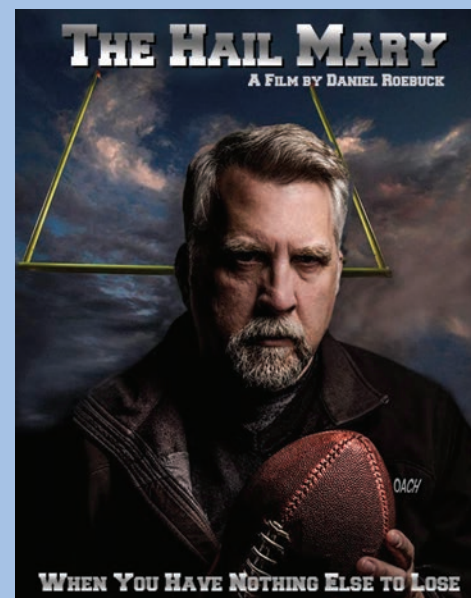
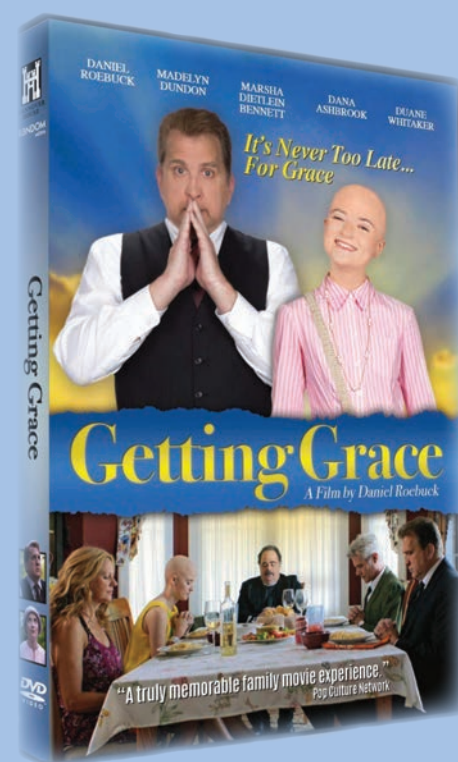
For Danny, *Getting Grace* has been an extraordinary experience. Since its debut, the movie has had a significant impact on those who have seen it. Danny explained: "If I told you everything that people have said to me, you would think I am making it up. In the long run, people have said, 'this movie changed the way I thought about life, changed the way I thought about death, changed the way I thought about suffering.' The most extraordinary thing that anybody said after seeing the movie was that they saw the movie and two days later they got a cancer diagnosis. Having seen the movie made the diagnosis easier. That's just a movie that was told through our hearts and which celebrated life and having faith in something great."

"I have partnered with Funeral Directors throughout the United States and Canada to share the movie in their communities. Often, we get to play the film in the town's oldest movie houses, which is such a treat," said Danny. "It's extraordinary, with *Getting Grace* just as a fundraising opportunity, we've probably already raised about \$50,000. We gave away \$25,000 of it in the Lehigh Valley, and since then, we have partnered with funeral homes to raise money for hospice care, for cancer research, and for various Relays for Life or the Courage of Carly Fund. If the movie didn't exist, that's a whole revenue stream for an organization that would not have been present otherwise."

While Danny is writing, filming and editing his movies, he is unavailable for other work. Reluctantly, he admits that, from a financial standpoint, it's not the smartest thing he has ever done. However, Danny feels compelled to make movies with a message. Danny explained: "I'm in the shower one



**Six-year-old Daniel Roebuck performs inside his cardboard television.**





day and I'm thinking and praying, because that's often where I have my conversations with God, and I just say, 'Is this my mission?' It's a simple question. And then, the phone rings. I clean the glass to see who's calling. It is the only friend of mine who ever served as a missionary. He spent a year and a half as a missionary, and he's the one who calls the second I ask the question, which I took as an answer."

His next movie, *The Hail Mary*, is about an irascible nun who cons a man in need of redemption into coaching an all-boys Catholic high school football team to give him purpose. He hopes to film the movie in the Lehigh Valley this summer. With this movie, Danny pays homage to the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia. His main female character, Sister Kathy, was named for Sister Kathleen, and another character, Sister Margaret Anthony, is named for his former principal. One scene, which takes place in front of a statue of Mary, reveres Saint Joseph and refers to him as a *Superman*.

This movie celebrates Catholic sisters for who they truly are. "It saddens me now that our business has cast nuns into an illogical archetype," shared Danny. "If we find them portrayed in popular culture, they are cruel or stupid and always an anachronism, a symbol of an outdated faith that some think has no place in our modern world. Imagine the millions of the world's poor and disenfranchised, all cared for by these selfless women—the poor wouldn't find this absurd depiction of nuns funny. It's hard to imagine that every nun that I had was concerned about my wellbeing and every nun everybody else had was concerned about hitting them or abusing them in some way. Were there bad nuns? Yes, and there were bad presidents and bad cafeteria ladies. But you show me a woman who dedicates her entire life to helping others, and I wonder why there isn't a ticker tape parade.



While filming "Getting Grace," Daniel Roebuck (third from left) views a scene.

I never had a nun hit me, but I had a nun change my life."

Storylines for *Getting Grace*, *The Hail Mary* and his future film, *Rocket Boy*, include adopted fathers who step in where another father didn't. Danny feels strongly about the portrayal of fathers in movies and television today, especially with comedies. "If I am going to play a dad on TV, you know I am going to play the stupidest person in the household," says Danny. "From my own experience, I certainly wasn't the stupidest person in the household. There is no reason that you can't love and accept a man *and* a woman's contribution to making our society better."

"I recognize God's hand in my momentum forward, and truly believe that God brought me to this point as a filmmaker. I am doing His mission—I needed to get here." Throughout his journey, Danny rejected using his platform as a public figure to comment on politics as many celebrities do today. Instead, Danny says, "What I tried to do was use that platform to always speak in positive terms about our individual ability to reach these dreams that we have—that God has for us."

*Of course I am delighted to learn how I affected a former student. Who would expect that 50 years later!*

*When I taught elementary school I always tried to teach my students a love of God and neighbor, as well as a love of learning.*

— Mary Pat Keys  
(formerly, Sister Kathleen)

It is a commonly held belief that art and popular culture should reflect life—what's in the media is how people act. Hollywood is producing few movies with Judeo-Christian values. "If we want to get these movies out, we have to make them," stated Danny. He is determined to get the best people possible, and the help needed to create these stories—stories that will exist 20-30 years from now. "People seem to have forgotten films like the *Trouble with Angels*, which give you the same concepts of commitment, forgiveness and service. Maybe *The Hail Mary* can be that movie for this generation. "We've got to restore the father to his rightful place in the family, without in any way infringing on the mother's role. We just have to bring people back to the idea it's okay





to believe in God, and when you fail, you can fix it. All you have to do is ask.”

Danny’s experience as a filmmaker has led him to develop A Channel of Peace ([achannelofpeace.org](http://achannelofpeace.org)), a 501 c(3) foundation. The foundation will create content which promotes ideas of faith, worship, service and family. The main feature of the foundation’s work would be to create narrative and documentary films—people’s stories that reflect faith. Danny stated: “We are going to get A Channel of Peace up and running, and the next project on my agenda is a documentary about forgiveness. I think it’s called, *The Lost Art of Forgiveness*. I want to examine the idea of how we’ve lost the art of forgiving. Today, people are not only not forgiving each other, they have forgotten how, or worse, they’re not asking for it. Everyone digs in so deeply that when they are wrong, they just don’t say, ‘I was wrong about that.’ If they did, you know what the next person would say? ‘I forgive you.’ We have to live every day like it’s our first. God is very smart. Every night the sun sets and every morning the sun rises, and you can say, ‘Forgive my trespasses and forgive those who have trespassed against me.’ You can do that every morning.”

Over the past 35 years, Danny depended greatly on the support, the prayers and the hopes of all of those who believed in him. “It’s been a fantastic and fulfilling 35 years,” says Danny. “I’ve been so blessed in my life. I have been able to stand next to some of the most talented people who have ever appeared on a stage, or on screen, or in movies. I have tried my best to learn everything I could from them.”

“It seems that with the success of *Getting Grace*, a new chapter of my life has opened up and it’s my hope that, perhaps with the next movie, *The Hail Mary*, we can continue to spread this simple message that God is good and that with his help anything is possible.”

To learn how you can see  
**Getting Grace**, visit

[www.gettinggracethemovie.com](http://www.gettinggracethemovie.com)

All photos courtesy Daniel Roebuck.

Top left: From left, Tammy Roebuck and Daniel Roebuck on the red carpet at the 2017 Northeast Film Festival where “Getting Grace” won multiple awards.

Bottom left: *Matlock* cast, from left, Warren Frost, Brynn Thayer, Andy Griffith and Daniel Roebuck

Top right: From left, actor Tommy Lee Jones and Danny Roebuck in the film *The Fugitive*

Second right: Daniel Roebuck (left) as Alexander Graham Bell for a Geico commercial

Third right: From left, Daniel Roebuck as a Romulan and Leonard Nimoy (Spock) in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

Fourth right: From left, Daniel Roebuck and Jorge Garcia on the set of *LOST*

Bottom right: Daniel Roebuck promoting Catholic education for the Diocese of Allentown

To learn more about *The Hail Mary* and future projects, visit [achannelofpeace.org](http://achannelofpeace.org).

(type it in if it doesn’t appear in web searches)



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John Gallagher

# A Lifetime of Gratitude for Sister St. Carthage

by Sister Carole Pollock SSJ

For this year's Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade, Mr. Leo Gallagher sponsored a float in honor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. The float, built by Leo and members of the Painters' Union, accommodated 10-12 sisters, who were chosen by lottery and Gallagher family members and friends. It featured a reproduction of Rockwell's mural of a Sister of Saint Joseph welcoming an orphaned child painted by Mount Saint Joseph Academy students. The mural was especially meaningful to Leo as it showed the impact the sisters had on his family.

Throughout the parade experience, Leo Gallagher, his family and friends were so hospitable, and made sure that all the sisters had a wonderful time the entire day. Sister Kathleen Pales SSJ, who was riding on the float shared: "It was wonderful when people along the parade route called out to us to tell us, 'I had your sisters in grade school! Thanks for teaching us!'" The Fralinger String Band was directly behind the SSJ float. Their spirited music kept the energy and excitement high the whole time. A number of police officers standing all along the route, waved back at us and cheered as our float went by."

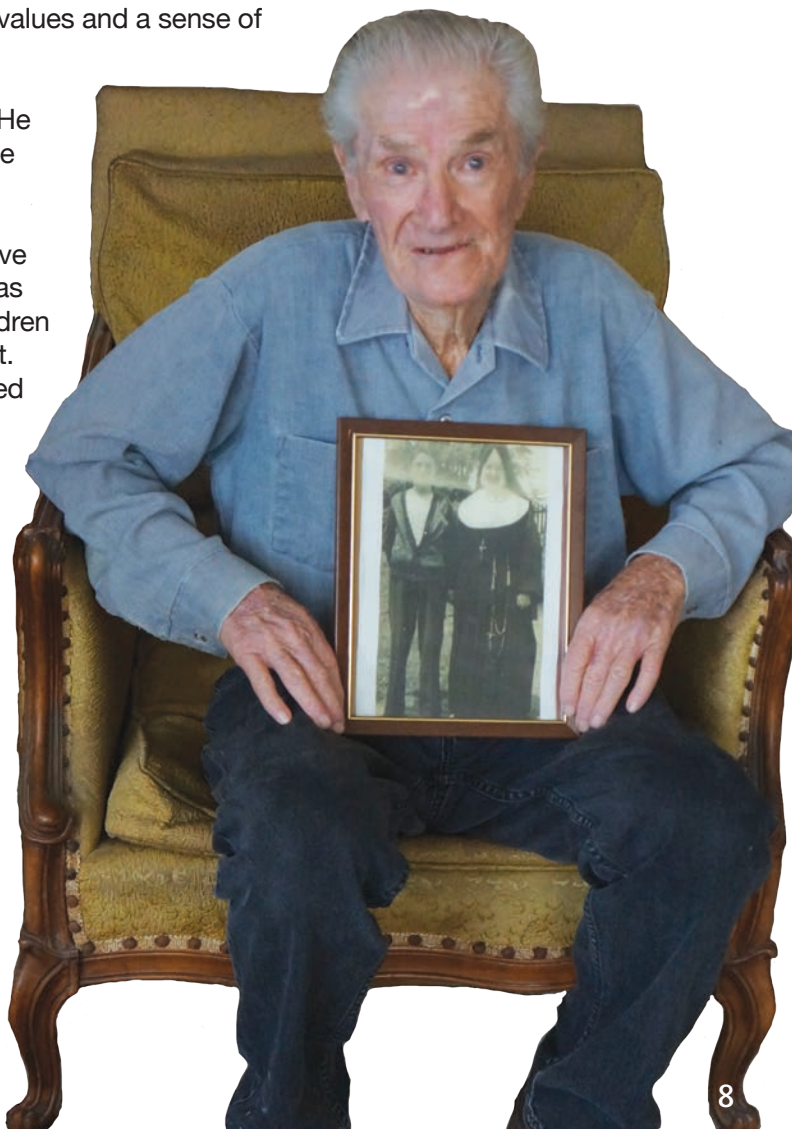
After the parade, while Leo and the sisters enjoyed dinner together, he shared the experiences of his father and uncle, who grew up in St. John's Orphanage. When Leo's father, John, and his uncle, Leo, were five and six respectively, their mother made the excruciating decision to put them in St. John's Orphanage in Philadelphia. Leo remembers his father taking him to visit the sisters at St. John's quite frequently. "Those sisters were all his mothers, as far as he was concerned. He loved them for raising him to have good values and a sense of discipline in life," said Leo.

Today, Leo's father is a sharp, energetic and warm 95-year-old. He lives with his granddaughter outside Philadelphia, in the home he and his wife Catherine bought in 1984.

He tenderly recalls the story of his childhood. "My mother had five children. I do not remember my father except that my mother was left to raise the five of us alone. It's very difficult to raise five children with no father. It was 1930—Depression time—very, very difficult. My mother went to the court for help and advice and was advised that the best thing to do would be to put Leo and me, the two oldest children, in St. John's. She hated to do it, but she felt it was the best decision for us."

John remembers the day he and Leo arrived at St. John's. "I can remember vividly coming over Girard Avenue on the street car with my mother and Leo, all the way over to 49th and Wyalusing Avenue. It was about 7:00 in the evening and I remember getting off the street car and going up the steps. As we went through the door, a very elderly sister, Sister Elijah, welcomed us. When the time came for my mother to leave, of course, I didn't want her to go. I can still see her. She really had no choice, and I was so young and couldn't really comprehend the fact that she was leaving. And that is when I met the sisters!"

At the time there were between 350-450 boys residing at St. John's, and they followed a strict schedule. Although it was



a challenge for a young boy, John has only fond memories of his time at St. John's. He recalls: "As young as I was, I realized that it was the best thing for me and the saving grace was Sister St. Carthage, Sister Cora Maria, Sister Eileen Dolores and Sister Eileen Francis." Although John had affection for all of the sisters, Sister St. Carthage was his favorite. "She was from Ireland, and for some reason or other she took a 'shine to me.' She was like a surrogate mother and she took care of me like I was her son. She constantly reminded me that my mother didn't want me to be at the orphanage but she had no choice. She would tell me, 'Do the best you can; don't hurt anybody.'"

"Visiting hours were once a month on a Sunday, but here's the good part. My mother worked as a secretary in the city and sometimes during the week, usually a Wednesday, she would come out to St. John's and Sister St. Carthage would let her in the back door for a visit *on the side*. So, Leo and I would be with our Mother for an hour or so in the afternoon. It was a bonus! My mother thought the world of Sister St. Carthage and knew that she was taking good care of us. That made me so happy. Sister probably would have been reprimanded if anyone found out, but it was harmless. She was just plain goodness. I looked forward to Saturdays when she would make the Communion hosts, and she would let me help her. We would talk about how I was doing, how the family was and who I was playing with. I was only five or six and that was 88 years ago but the memories are still there. Talking about her is difficult. She was a wonderful woman, and I will never forget her until the day I die."

John remained at St. John's Orphanage for five years. When he turned 11, he transferred to St. Francis Industrial School in

Eddington, Pa, which was operated by the Christian Brothers. During his time at St. Francis School, John saw Sister St. Carthage once a year at the picnic at Woodside Park for the children at St. John's and St. Francis'. John remembers those cherished visits: "I can still feel it—it was just like seeing my own mother, and I feel it to this day."

In 1940, John graduated from St. Francis School and at the age of 17 joined the Merchant Marines. During the 45 years he served in the Merchant Marines, he traveled all over the world. He said: "I served in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Desert Storm. My ship was sunk by the Germans in the South Atlantic Ocean, and I spent four and one half days in a lifeboat at 18 years of age with 25 other men and I survived." The first person he would go to see each time he returned back home was Sister St. Carthage, who wrote letters to him the whole time he was away.

John married Catherine in 1954, in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia. They had three sons: Leo, Peter and Jack and have eight grandchildren. John recalls: "A few years later in 1957 we took our two oldest boys, Leo and Peter, out to see Sister. She told me, 'I am so happy for you, John.' Every time I talk about her, I fill up."

John proudly displays a picture of him and Sister St. Carthage in his living room. When he thinks of her, he says: "I was privileged to know her. I don't know why God picked me but, I imagine him saying: 'Okay Gallagher, this is your friend. You take care of her.' How lucky can you get!"

John continued to visit Sister, when he could, until her death in 1976. Every year on Saint Joseph



Day, Leo puts flowers on Sister St. Carthage's grave for his father.

John reflected: "I tell my three sons: I was very fortunate. I had some difficult things happen in my life but, somehow, I got through it all. I want you to understand one thing. When it is my time to check out, don't feel bad. Look at it this way: I will be back with your mother; I will see Sister St. Carthage again and the people I cared about."

He continued: "Every life has its ups and downs. But the places I've been, the people I've met, the experiences I've gone through—my life turned out okay. I was so fortunate to meet Catherine and together raise our family. I am very grateful, and, I am still 'chugging' along! For a kid from St. John's—who wound up as I did—Alleluia!"



*Pictured opposite page: Young John Gallagher on the steps of St. John's Orphanage.*

*Photo courtesy John Gallagher*

*Pictured top: From left, John Gallagher reminisces with his dear friend, Celeste Mokrzycki SSJ.*

*Photo by Carole Pollock SSJ*

*Pictured middle: Sister St. Carthage's grave where John's son Leo places flowers every Saint Joseph's Day.*

*Photo by Carole Pollock SSJ*

*Pictured bottom left: John Gallagher visits with Sister St. Carthage.*

*Photo courtesy John Gallagher*

*Pictured bottom right: Sisters of Saint Joseph are honored at the 2019 Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade. From left, Sisters Pat Gannon, Rosemary Golden (back), Kate Leary, Ellen Poist, Eileen Cooke, Celeste Mokrzycki, Donna Cicalese (back), Kathy Pales(back) and Jeannemarie Jordan.*







*Pictured from left: Kaya Swanek, Jean Faustman SSJ, Alessandra Messina, Lily Winn, and Victoria Grillo*

*Photos by Cristina Diaz*

# OUR Sister Jean

by Cristina Diaz

It was the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) March Madness Basketball Tournament in 2018 when Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt BVM, chaplain of the Loyola University Chicago men's basketball team, became a media sensation as Loyola shocked the nation with a run to the Final Four. On a smaller media scale, Chestnut Hill College (CHC) has been blessed with a similar symbol of hope and faith for their athletic program. Sister Jean Faustman SSJ, is an Associate Professor of French and Spanish at Chestnut Hill College. When Sister Jean is not in the classroom, you will most likely find her in the bleachers of a CHC sporting event.

Unlike Loyola's Sister Jean, "our Sister Jean" (as a former student fondly referred to her during the NCAA tournament last year) makes it her mission to support all 18 of CHC's Division II athletic teams.

For Sister Jean, commitment to CHC athletics started simply as a way to support the students she taught in class. "More and more as I had students in different sports, I tried to support them at their games," said Sister Jean. Sister Jean's presence at sporting events and her dedication to her students did not go unnoticed. Prior to the start of the 2016-2017 season, Sister Jean was appointed by Sister Carol Jean Vale SSJ,

President of CHC, as Faculty Athletics Representative.

The NCAA defines the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) as a member of the institution's faculty or administrative staff, who is designated by the institution's chief executive officer to represent the Athletics Department, the College and its faculty in the institution's relationship with the NCAA. The role of the FAR is to ensure the academic integrity of the institution's athletic programs and provide advice about athletic programs to the Director of Athletics and the College President.



“As far as the role of FAR goes, Sister Jean has taken this position beyond anything that has ever been done at CHC before,” said Jesse Balcer, director of athletics and recreation and head men’s basketball coach, “and she improved this role just by following the goodness of her heart.”

No matter the outcome, Sister Jean sends all student athletes and coaches emails before and after each sporting event. The messages are never generic; they are carefully crafted for each team and event.

“Getting an email from Sister Jean changes my whole mood,” said Makenzie Hooven ‘19, cross country and track student athlete. “Sister Jean’s emails on game days are something all student athletes look forward to. She is so supportive of every single athlete and team, and I have never woken up for a cross country or track meet without having an email from Sister Jean wishing our team the best of luck and success. No matter what the outcome of the game, meet or match, she sees us as superstars and winners.”

Athletics has always been a big part of Sister Jean’s life. Her brother was a very talented basketball player, and she has many memories of watching him play since she was about eight years old. She also played basketball and softball herself. As far as her favorite sport goes, she chooses not to share, because Sister Jean attends as many CHC athletic events as she can, no matter the sport.

“It is always refreshing when she walks by Sorgenti Arena and stops in to watch part of our practice,” said Mike West, head women’s basketball coach. “I always make a point to give her a minute to talk with the players to share any words she has. Sister Jean



*Jean Faustman SSJ attends Chestnut Hill College men’s tennis match.*

is present in the bleachers in as many games as she can and if we are on the road, she is probably finding a way to watch the game or follow the stats on her computer.”

Athletics at Chestnut Hill College are demanding and challenging; however, they are designed to teach students the importance of teamwork, discipline, respect, commitment and sportsmanship. These values support the mission of the College and promote a holistic experience which can develop student athletes of strong character. In the CHC athletics environment, they can strive to enhance their educational experience not only through competition, but also in their involvement as good citizens and leaders in the community.

“The Division II motto is ‘Life in the Balance’ and at CHC we really encourage that,” said Sister Jean. “To see really well-rounded students who can manage their time, still be career focused and involved in thousands of service projects, is the real beauty of it all.”

Sister Jean is a big supporter of student athletes academically. Often, she makes known whether a student has missed a class or needs some extra support. She has also been a key person in the installment of the National Honor Society for student athletes.

“Many, many of our student athletes are incredible students who work very hard,” said Sister Jean. “One thing I was able to start at the College was Chi Alpha Sigma, the National Honor Society for student athletes. Last year we had our first induction, and we just inducted another 35 this year. Students who qualify must have high moral character, a 3.4 GPA and play at least one year in a sport.”

Besides teaching foreign languages, working with student athletes and the Athletics Department, Sister Jean’s other passion is the work she does in Yauri, Peru. A three-year mission from 2006-2009 gave Sister Jean the opportunity to live among the





*Pictured, from left: Jean Faustman and Lily Winn*

poor in Yauri. She returns every summer to visit with the people she loves, to spend time at the children's center and with families. She brings donations to buy food, clothing, wheelchairs, walkers and cribs; musical instruments and crib mobiles are also popular items.

"Sister Jean went on a three-year mission to Peru while I was at CHC, and she taught me for one semester my freshman year before she left," said Jessica "Jess" Day '09, associate director of athletics and recreation. "The impact she had on me from just that first semester, I'm not sure if she truly understands. Because she was going to Peru, I became very much interested in traveling there as well. For my honeymoon I went to Peru with my husband and another CHC alum and her partner. We spent one day climbing Machu Pichu all because Sister Jean put that in my ear when I was 18 years old."

As an alumna of CHC, Jess has had the opportunity to know Sister Jean as a student, softball player and now as an administrator.

"She is so special," said Jess. "I make sure our students know how different their experience is here because of Sister Jean. So many of our students are coming to the College from farther and farther away, and she sort of fills this special place in so many of their hearts. You can see her passion in everything she does, and you can tell she is so thrilled to be part of the journey for each and every student she encounters."

For Sister Jean, making connections with students and being part of their journey is so important to her whether the student is an athlete or not. She believes students' passions inside and outside of the classroom should be supported and encouraged.

"I have a commitment to all students at Chestnut Hill College," said Sister Jean. "It is my goal always to be as present to all students as much as I can. I do go to the musicals, students' recitals I'm invited to, Quidditch games, anything I can! I do it because, as a Sister of Saint Joseph, I believe in relationships. Getting to see the students in a different way is really important to me. I get to see what they are passionate about, what their *thing* is, what they excel in. Even if they don't excel it's what they love, and I get to appreciate that."

From all indications, that's exactly why the CHC community appreciates "our Sister Jean."





*Kathryn Miller SSJ (center) gathers with SLDI graduates in Cape Coast, Ghana, 2018  
Photo courtesy Kathryn Miller SSJ*

**ASEC**



# OVER TWO MILLION SERVED!

## The African Sisters Education Collaborative

by Cecilia Rupell

In 1995, leaders of four Pennsylvania congregations of women religious and presidents of their sponsored Catholic colleges/universities had a shared dream: transforming Africa through the education of Catholic sisters. That dream—the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC)—was implemented in 1999.

ASEC serves 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Southern Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

African sisters are in a unique position to address the many needs in their continent—extreme poverty, chronic hunger, disease, ecological degradation, violence and a lack of education. An educated sister is better equipped to help more people. Today, there are approximately 40,000 sisters in ASEC countries who have

no higher education. ASEC is committed to changing that through four programs: Higher Education for Sisters in Africa (HESA); Sisters Leadership Development Initiative (SLDI); Scholarship Program; and Service Learning.

The Collaborative partners with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to deliver SLDI and HESA programs.

The two-year program, SLDI, is the largest ASEC program. Its purpose—to provide leadership, finance and technology training to African sisters.

HESA offers opportunities for African sisters to access undergraduate and master's level education. To accomplish this, ASEC partners with colleges and universities in Africa. Sister students study online with ASEC Charter Member universities in the United States and then complete

### CHARTER MEMBERS

Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia and Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, PA

Society of the Holy Child Jesus and Rosemont College, Rosemont, PA

Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and Marywood University, Scranton, PA

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and Neumann University, Aston, PA

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati

DePaul University

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Sisters of the Redeemer

Saint Leo University



their degrees at a participating school in Africa. For many sisters, HESA is the next step after participating in the SLDI.

The Scholarship Program provides two-year scholarships for sisters wishing to complete high school. Since 2012, approximately 245 sisters have benefited from this program.

Through ASEC's Service Learning program, students from Charter Member colleges and universities travel to one of the ASEC-served countries. During this two-to three-week program, students have tutored English as a second language (ESL) in Tanzania and provided service at various orphanages, feeding programs, refugee centers and hospitals in Kenya. A group of Chestnut Hill College students traveled to Ghana in May 2019 to serve (*see page 19*).

The results of these four programs are astonishing. Since its inception, *ASEC alumnae have served over 2.1 million people* where the need is the greatest—in poor, rural communities across Africa. By sharing skills learned with other sisters and community members, *educated sisters have mentored more than 6,000 people*. Together, *ASEC alumnae and their mentees have raised \$13.7 million in funding* for community sustainability and improvement projects. Projects initiated by alumnae have created 3,300 jobs.

While ASEC's statistics are impressive, the stories of the sisters, empowered by this education, have gone on to create awe-aspiring programs and places in their communities. The *asec-sldi.org* website is filled with these stories. For example, in Kenya, Sister Lucy is using the skills she learned from the SLDI program to sponsor and support orphans in desperate need of quality education.

When Sister Patricia finished the SLDI program, she used skills learned in technology, administration and leadership to help orphaned and vulnerable children living with HIV/AIDS.

In Ghana, after completing the SLDI program, Sister Mary, an optometry nurse, was able to develop grant writing and managerial skills. She has spearheaded multiple projects throughout Ghana, including the building of midwife and administrative facilities.

SLDI graduate Sister Hellen of Malawi used her newly learned skills to tackle the issue of food insecurity, especially for new mothers and pregnant women. Her multi-pronged response was a project that included income-generating activities of raising goats, farming and a kitchen garden, collaboration with local media to increase awareness, the training of 95 caregiver Ambassadors, 10 cooking clubs and cooking demonstrations. She also purchased and distributed

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*"When we are children, we believe we can change the world. When we are teenagers, we dream we can change the world. When we are young adults, we work to change the world. When we are mature adults, we wish we could change the world. Though their efforts are laudable, few succeed in their attempts to alter society. However, I belong to one organization that has demonstrably and dramatically transformed lives. ASEC is a group of daring women whose bold vision and determined actions have changed the world. Because of ASEC, the future for people in 10 African countries has been transformed, a transformation that will positively affect the entire continent and from there the world."*

Sister Carol Jean Vale SSJ  
President, Chestnut Hill College

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***Pictured top: Lisa Olivieri SSJ with HESA students in Nigeria, 2018***

***Pictured bottom: Kathryn Miller SSJ and 2018 SLDI graduates in Ghana cut a celebratory cake.***





food and porridge to pregnant women, lactating mothers and their children.

At Chestnut Hill College (CHC), Sisters Kathryn Miller SSJ, Assistant to the President for Administration and Special Projects and Lisa Olivieri SSJ, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Technology, are actively involved with ASEC. Sister Kathryn serves on the ASEC Board and Sister Lisa serves on the SLDI Advisory Board and teaches sisters on-site in Africa. Both have traveled to Africa multiple times.

Sister Lisa first experienced the ASEC program in 2004 when 18 African sister leaders attended a conference at Chestnut Hill College and Marywood University. The following summer she made her first trip to Africa to teach the sisters and was joined by Sister Rose Reda SSJ. "Life changing," is how Sister Lisa described her ASEC experience in 2005, and that description continues to be true

each time she returns to Africa. She admires the determination of HESA students who encounter many challenges on their ASEC journey. "Lessons are taught in English, which isn't their first language," explained Sister Lisa. "These sisters do not do a lot of writing in their ministries. They are busy working with orphans—not writing academic papers in another language. Most sisters come to this program with some basic computer skills."

With the HESA program, the first course is held in person in Africa, followed by 24 credits through distance learning with CHC faculty. Then, sisters transfer to the local university to complete their education. "In the introduction course, I teach them programs including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Screencast-O-Matic, which is a screen recorder and video editor. This allows them to do a bit of public speaking and presentations. They also are introduced to the CHC learning

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*My participation on the Board of ASEC for the past 10 years has been a graced experience for me personally and for the Congregation. ASEC provides a unique opportunity for us to share our mission of unity with our African sisters and to build meaningful relationships across the globe. Through education, ASEC empowers the sisters with increased knowledge and greater confidence to be leaders, teachers and ministers to the most vulnerable in Africa. Partnering with sisters in Africa through the Service Learning Project offers us the opportunity for more SSJs to deepen our relationships and broaden our perspective. We have much to give and even more to receive.*

Sister Anne Myers SSJ  
Congregational President

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**Pictured below: The first 14 HESA sisters graduate from the Catholic University of Ghana in October 2018.**  
**Photo courtesy Kathryn Miller SSJ**





management system. It enables them to download and upload assignments, communicate with their instructors and do research through the CHC library. Sisters must complete a research paper in the English language, submit it, understand the corrections, revise and resubmit it,” said Sister Lisa.

The class work is challenging and often complicated by the availability of electricity, and sometimes, a lack of Internet access. Sister Lisa explains: “In Nigeria last year, just two weeks after the session began, the village’s transformer burned and we had no electricity from that point on. Thanks to a generator, work could get done as long as the laptop batteries were charged.”

Sister Kathryn last traveled to Africa in 2018 to represent the ASEC Board at the SLDI graduation and to prepare for the 2019 Service Learning Project. “I love to visit the students in the SLDI program because of all the things they are doing,” said Sister Kathryn. “It’s just amazing. A few years ago in Tanzania, Sister Benedicta’s congregation was given a piece of property and sent her there to develop it. She was in the SLDI program and was introduced to grant writing. The first day the class learned how to do a cover page. Sister Benedicta went home, did research and created six cover pages. The following day they learned something else, and she went home and did that. By the time the class was finished, Sister Benedicta was ready. Since participating in SLDI, she has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. Among her accomplishments is the building of a convent, starting a pre-school and the purchase of sewing machines to teach women how to sew. These projects were possible, thanks to what she learned from ASEC.”

Sister Kathryn visited with Sister Pauline in Zambia and was fascinated by her ingenuity. “Sister



*Pictured top: Lisa Olivieri SSJ with HESA students*

*Pictured middle: Lisa Olivieri SSJ and HESA students share a moment of fun.*

*Photos courtesy Lisa Olivieri SSJ.*

*Pictured bottom: Kathryn Miller SSJ in Tanzania with SLDI graduate Sister Pauline.*



*Page 18  
Pictured top: Kathryn Miller SSJ in Zambia, fishing with SLDI graduate Sister Pauline*

*Pictured center: Kathryn Miller SSJ in Zambia with SLDI graduate Sister Pauline.*

*Pictured bottom: Nutrition Project, Malawi*







had a big, refrigerated tank that served as a community milk bank. People who had cows and a little milk could bank it there until there was enough to go to market. She also had a machine people could use to grind up stones to make something new out of them. These things make such a difference in their lives,” said Sister Kathryn.

After a graduation ceremony in Zambia, one sister came to see Sister Kathryn. “She told me of the confidence she gained from the SLDI program and how much it meant to her to be with other sisters.” This sister shared, ‘Even to pray with sisters from other parts of the country has taught me so much about prayer.’ ” Sisters often share how much it means for them to know sisters in other parts of Africa and how they are getting in touch with the world through technology.

The dream of the Charter Members continues. It has been realized with help from Associate Members, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, African sister participants, ASEC staff, and advocates who have contributed to this cause. ASEC is an excellent example of the power one person has to make a difference in the life of another, in the community, in a country and in the world.

To learn more about ASEC visit  
[www.asec-sldi.org](http://www.asec-sldi.org).





## ASEC 2019 Service Learning Project GHANA

by Cecilia Rupell

ASEC's 2019 Service Learning Project took place in the West African country of Ghana. Sister Kathryn Miller SSJ participated in the site selection last year. She was joined by Sisters Francisco Damaoh, SIJ and Martha Attakrum, SHCJ. Together, these sisters carefully planned a service project certain to enrich the lives of the volunteers and the Ghanaians with and for whom service is given.

Students from CHC and Marywood prepared for the trip with a three-credit course on serving in a developing country that focused primarily on Ghana. Participants were required to conduct fundraising to defray the cost of the journey that began on May 20, 2019. The faculty mentors are Nicole Monteiro, Ph.D., (CHC) and Melinda Krokus, Ph.D., (Marywood). Completing the group were sisters from both

congregations/schools, including Sister Teresa Shaw SSJ, and Jacki Reich, Ph.D., who was faculty mentor for the 2007 trip.

Three wonderful organizations selected for this trip include Mary Queen of Peace School, Cornelia Connelly School of the Holy Child Jesus and the Padro Pio Rehabilitation Center for children and adults. Each location offers volunteers the opportunity to discover the Ghanaian culture and ways of life and to work side-by-side with others yearning to make a difference for the dear neighbor as they give back in a meaningful way.

The Padro Pio Rehabilitation Center for children and adults began in 1983 to provide support and care to leprosy sufferers and their families. Today, the center includes St. Joseph's Childcare

and Family Support Centre, St. Clare's Residential Home (long-term nursing care and assisted living for survivors of leprosy) and St. Elizabeth's Childcare and Family Support Centre (for those with special needs and their families).

Cornelia Connelly School of the Holy Child Jesus serves approximately 200 children between the ages of one-and-a-half and 11.

Mary Queen of Peace School has 300 children between the ages of two and 12.

*Pictured above: The 2019 ASEC Service Learning group visits the Padro Pio Rehabilitation Center in Elmina, Ghana, where they were treated to a traditional welcoming meeting with the chief of the Atonkwa village.*

*Photo by Nicole Monteiro, Ph.D.*



Some service-related activities include: teaching young children rhymes, songs and dances; coaching soccer and volleyball; tutoring elementary students in the subjects of English, math, science and art; and assisting with the set-up of a new Reading Center.

Before departing for Ghana, several Chestnut Hill College students and their Faculty Mentor shared why they chose to participate in this adventure and their hopes for this service learning project. Jaala Welch shared: "I feel closest to God when I serve others. I hope to return with stories of each Ghanaian person I met and with a new perspective on how I can about life and interact with others."

Danielle Jones took part in the 2017 trip to Kenya. "These trips let you really see how things are in other parts of the world," said Danielle. "The world is much bigger than us, and this is a beautiful way to realize that."

Alexandra McCown also traveled to Kenya in 2017. "I want to make a positive difference," said Alexandra. "That experience was the most profound, enlightening and joyful experience of my life. Ghana is another opportunity to spark inspiration for me to make a meaningful humanitarian change in the future."

Megan Gibbons says, "This trip can help me make a positive difference. I hope to learn how to challenge myself, my attitudes and my abilities. I hope some people that I meet I'll remember forever and that I made a difference somehow for them."

*Pictured top: the Padre Pio Rehabilitation Center*

*Pictured middle left: Louisa Huni-Dadzie, SHCJ head of Cornelia Connelly School  
Also pictured, Cornelia Connelly School*

*Middle right: CHC Madison Coyne Lumpkin in Kenya with a baby from the feeding program.*

*Pictured bottom: from left, Sisters Mary Ann Matachinskis, SSND who has served at the school for 44 years and Kathryn Miller SSJ  
Also pictured, Queen of Peace School*

*Photos courtesy Kathryn Miller SSJ*







"I know that something is calling me to go to Ghana—something awaits me there," shared Erin Bitting. "I hope I grow as a person, capable of seeing things from other world views. I am seizing the opportunity and letting fate show me what waits for me across the ocean."

Nicole Monteiro, Ph.D., says she is honored and excited to serve as the Faculty Mentor. "As an avid traveler—especially throughout the continent of Africa, I am eager to share this life-changing experience with such an accomplished and committed group of students," said Nicole.

Jacki Reich, Ph.D., was faculty mentor for the 2017 trip to Kenya and accompanied the group this year. Following that trip, she penned a reflection titled, *The African Sisters Education Collaborative: Why It Matters*.<sup>\*</sup> She writes: "The effects of ASEC's investment in the human capital of various congregations of sisters were palpable to me during my time in Kenya. I observed the sisters helping to address some of the greatest challenges that African nations face: presenting vocational opportunities to refugees; helping the poor cope with the scourge of HIV/AIDS; running schools for children who would not otherwise have access to an education; combating hunger and joblessness; and just generally providing dignity, hope and a listening ear to those who would otherwise have none. This work is little recognized in studies on development in Africa.

The sisters are able to have such a significant effect because of the unique set of strengths that they as women religious bring to African development. They constitute a local presence in African communities that is networked regionally



**Pictured top: Chestnut Hill students participating in the 2019 ASEC Service Learning Project in Ghana enjoy a visit from ASEC sisters. Back row, from left: Lisa Olivieri SSJ, Terry Shaw SSJ, Megan Gibbons, Danielle Jones, Sister Francisca Damoah, Dr. Nicole Monteiro, Sister Lina Wanjiku and Kathryn Miller SSJ. Seated, from left, Jaala Welch, Erin Bitting and Dr. Jacki Reich (Not pictured: Alex McCown)**

**Pictured bottom: Sister Julliette, an SLDI participant, elicits joy from a special needs child at the Padre Pio Rehabilitation Center. Photo courtesy Kathryn Miller SSJ.**

and globally through the Catholic Church and through ASEC. The sisters have earned significant social trust by local communities, giving the sisters an entree into slums and villages that Western-based NGOs lack. The sisters are known for their commitment to serving the common good and this commitment is unquestioned because of the sisters' dedication to God and to serving the dear neighbor. Finally, the preceding assets are catalyzed and made more salient by the education and mentorship that is nurtured through ASEC."

<sup>\*</sup> The reflection is available on the SSJ Blog at [www. http://ssjphila.blogspot.com](http://ssjphila.blogspot.com) type ASEC in the Search field





## A Beautiful Update for Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart Chapel

by Sister Carole Pollock SSJ

The chapel in Mount Saint Joseph Convent has a special place in the heart of every Sister of Saint Joseph. It is the sacred place where every novice prayed and as a professed sister, pronounced her first and perpetual vows.

The chapel was dedicated on April 15, 1891, to Saint Joseph, Friend of the Sacred Heart and Patron of the Universal Church. It is of Gothic design, lifting us up heavenward to seemingly limitless reaches.

In 1954, under the direction of Sister Mary Julia Daly SSJ, the chapel was restored, modeled

on Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. The blue vault with its gold leaf stars is typical of medieval Gothic cathedrals, all of which were dedicated to Mary. Other motifs found in the chapel include the cross of Christ, stars and lilies for Mary, and the carpenter's "L" and saw-toothed patterns for Joseph.

Alterations to the chapel in 2001 included the removal of several pews in order to provide a procession to Holy Communion that did not require the communicant to ascend a step, although it was still necessary to navigate a few steps in order to assist the presider during mass.

In 2017, the General Council, along with a committee of sisters, began to consider improvements to the existing 5,400 square foot Saint Joseph Chapel that would contribute to a more enriching environment for prayer life and worship. The alterations would allow a more intimate worship space for daily liturgy and private prayer, while preserving the ability to have large congregational celebrations. To achieve these desired goals, they engaged the Bernardon architect firm for the project.

The update included the installation of a sprinkler system, air-conditioning and a new heating



system. The sound and lighting systems were also upgraded and the marble floor was removed and replaced with porcelain flooring. The steps to the side altars were trimmed back in order to provide a larger space for private prayer; a ramp was incorporated on the Saint Joseph side of the chapel. The altar railing was removed and the sanctuary extended into the nave with the creation of a predella, the platform on which the altar stands. The reconfiguration of the altar creates a more intimate arrangement for an assembly of 40 to 50, while remaining functional for larger gatherings of 375-400. Chairs were placed around the predella, new pews were installed and the chapel doors replaced. Several rows of pews were removed from the back of the chapel to allow for more gathering space.

A central part of the lighting system is the corona, a large metal circle with a fluorescent fleur-de-lis motif, suspended from the ceiling directly above the altar. It provides light for the presider and participants at liturgical celebrations, and also allows all present to see the actions at the Eucharistic table.

Condy and Wynn Design Team was engaged for the fabrication of the liturgical appointments: altar, ambo, presider's chair and cantor stand.

The sisters hoped that their design would convey the strong sense of community between the sisters and the greater faith community who worship in the chapel. This desire inspired the Design Team's conceptual design for the appointments: arms raised in an open hand gesture. In the altar, multiple arms working in concert surround and support the top.

The hand-blown glass font, which reflects the blue and gold of the chapel, is the work of local artisans, Joel and Candace Bless.



Paul Sgroi, lead architect for Bernardon architects, shared his personal thoughts about the chapel project: "I have contributed to a great number of projects over the past 30 years, and I have discovered that those that touch me most are those projects where my design contributions

*Page 19: Sisters, Associates, family and friends gather to celebrate Saint Joseph's Day, March 19, 2019.*

*Pictured top: The large metal corona features fleur-de-lis motif and provides a new source for lighting.*

*Pictured bottom: A view from the front of the chapel*

*Photos by Carole Pollock SSJ*



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*The gift to work on the design of your chapel was one of the most professionally and personally rewarding of my career.*

Lee Casaccio, AIA, LEED AP/  
Director BERNARDON

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are manifest both physically and spiritually. Knowing that our design expertise and personal relationship with the Congregation contributed so greatly to the success of the updates to Saint Joseph Chapel celebrates the personal vocation to which I have been called.

Our interest in the Congregation, its charism, and its mission, was paramount in the development of the updates to the beautiful chapel. Simply remembering that we are 'surrounded by the sisters who have gone before us' was an important message for us to receive, as it reminded us of the sacred place that was and that is to remain. The updates at Saint Joseph Chapel will always be special to me because of the relationships created and for the memories that will remain."

As Sisters of Saint Joseph, we desire that our mission and charism of unioning love is visible and celebrated in the new design of the chapel. All are welcome without distinction; all are invited to gather around the Eucharistic table, opening our minds and hearts to the Word so we may go forth and proclaim the gospel by our lives.

*Pictured top right: This hand-blown glass font, which reflects the blue and gold of the chapel, is the work of local artisans, Joel and Candace Bless.*

*Photo by Carole Pollock SSJ*

*Pictured center: The altar, ambo, presider's chair and cantor stand are designed to symbolize arms raised in an open hand gesture. In the altar, multiple arms working in concert surround and support the top.*

*Pictured bottom: New glass doors feature the fleur-de-lis motif found on the corona.*

*Photos by Cristina Diaz*

*See more photos on Flickr at <http://bit.ly/ssjflickr>*





# Chapter 2019

## Liberate Us to a Radical Sense of Mission

by Kathleen Anderson SSJ

Every five years, the Sisters of Saint Joseph hold a General Chapter. This assembly of our sisters, as stated in our Constitutions, “expresses our unity in love and concern for constant renewal and adaptation according to the call of the Church, the needs of society, and the spirit and mission of the Congregation.” (#197) It is a sacred time when we prayerfully reflect, discern together how God is calling us forward, and elect new leadership.

A General Chapter is a significant event in the life of the Congregation. For almost two years, we have been preparing for this event with the assistance of our Facilitators, Sisters Esther Anderson, OSF, Lynn Lavin, OSF, and our Chapter Planning Committee. The Chapter Theme is “Eyes Open, Ears Attentive, and Spirit Alert...Liberate Us to a Radical Sense of Mission.” During our Pre-Chapter Processes, sisters identified and prioritized the key issues and concerns.

Chapter 2019 began with prayer and a proclamation by Sister Anne Myers SSJ, our Congregational President: “Confident in the power of the Holy Spirit, reassured by the communion and vision of those who have gone before us...Eyes Open, Ears Attentive, Spirit Alert...I proclaim that on this day March 31, 2019, General Chapter 2019 of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, is now open.” The General Council then presented their report which highlighted the ways they “attempted to direct the Congregation’s energies, attention, and decision making during the past five years in light of our mission of unity.”(General Council Report 2019)

The Chapter will meet from June 22 to June 29 at Chestnut Hill College. During that time, through a communal discernment process, the sisters will set the congregational direction for the next five years and elect the sisters who will serve on the General Council. We ask your prayers that this will be a graced time for us, for the life of the world and for all of creation.

Simultaneous with the Chapter 2019, our SSJ Associates in Mission embarked on a similar journey. With similar processes, the Associates are discerning how God is calling them to live the SSJ mission now and into the future. In October, as sisters and associates, we will come together to give thanks and celebrate the ways our loving God is calling us to be faithful to the mission of Jesus “that all may be one.”



**Chapter 2019  
Planning Committee**

*Pictured from left:  
Sisters Terry Shaw  
(Council Liaison), Jean  
Laurich, Roseanne  
Orchon, Lynn Lavin  
OSF (Co-Facilitator),  
Mary McFadden,  
Meaghan Patterson,  
Kathleen Anderson,  
Esther Anderson  
OSF (Co-Facilitator),  
Michelle Leshar,  
Cathie Meighan and  
Jane Field*





*Pictured top left: from left, Sisters Christine Konopelski, Michelle Leshner and Eileen Marnien*

*Pictured middle left: from left, Sisters Kathleen Coll, Nancy Roche and Mary Jane Daily*

*Pictured bottom left: standing from left, Elaine Dombi, Donna Minster, and Judith Gallen  
Seated from left, Mary Butler and Mary Elizabeth Clark*

*Pictured top right: from left, Sisters Helen Wiegmann and Joan Blair*

*Pictured middle right: from left, Sisters Maureen Erdlen, Sharon McCarthy, Gerri Kent and Bonnie McMenamin*





*Pictured top left: Roberta Archibald SSJ pays tribute to the General Council on behalf of the Congregation*

*Pictured middle left: from left, Sisters Trudy Ahern, Cealy Cyford, Carol Beevers and Ruthann O'Mara*

*Pictured bottom left: standing from left, Sisters Lourdes Kennedy, Maureen Fichner and Lisa Breslin  
Seated from left, Sisters Elaine Cullen and Maggie Butler*

*Pictured top right: Ms. Cristina Diaz, Associate (taking photo), from left, Sisters Rose Reda, Meaghan Patterson, Kathy McShane, Jean Laurich and Eileen Dorothy Maguire*

*Pictured middle right: from left Sisters Karen Dietrich and Rita Woehlcke*

*Pictured bottom right: from left, Sisters Pat Loughrey, Jane Lawrence, Barbara Springer and Jacquelyn Staub*

See more photos on Flickr at <http://bit.ly/ssjflickr>



# Jubilee!

## Saint Joseph Villa Sisters Celebrate

by Carole Pollock SSJ

What a joy and an inspiration to celebrate Jubilee Day at Saint Joseph Villa! On Saturday, May 5, 2019, 16 Sisters of Saint Joseph came together with sisters, families and friends to celebrate 60, 70 and 75 years of vowed commitment and faithful love as Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Congregational President, Sister Anne Myers SSJ, warmly welcomed all present in the Chapel, recalling with gratitude the lives of the Jubilarians, lived for God in service of the Church. "On this springtime day, we see the beauty of God revealed in all of creation and the beauty of God revealed in a special way in the faithful lives of our Sister Jubilarians. Our Jubilarians have encountered Jesus and have lived a life consecrated to Him through chastity, poverty and obedience. In turn, they have encountered others and generously shared the love God has poured into their hearts, as they have lived our mission of uniting all people with God and one another.

As residents here at Saint Joseph Villa, they live our mission of union as they continue to encounter God very specially through their lives of prayer and compassionate presence to so many. Our Congregation, Church and world have been enriched so beautifully by your lives, Sister Jubilarians. Congratulations. We love you!"



*Pictured top: from left, Anne Myers SSJ, Congregational President, greets Jubilarian Therese Benedict McGuire SSJ and companion Mary Helen Kashuba SSJ*

*Pictured bottom: Sisters gather for prayer.*

*Photos by Carole Pollock SSJ*

*See more photos on Flickr at <http://bit.ly/ssjflickr>*





# 75 Years



*Pictured from left: Sisters Sally Dougherty, Therese Benedict McGuire, Dorothy Rooney, Ann Muriel Ronan and Veronica Kaiser*

# 70 Years



*Pictured from left: Sisters Mary Rose Dugan, Jean Levenstein, Helen Patrick Clifton, Eileen Kean, Eleanor Mary Bringenberg, Alice Patrice McGinnis and Dorothy Annas*

# 60 Years



*Pictured from left: Sisters Ellen Casey, Arleen Mary McNicholas, Mary Margaret Fee and Kathleen Moriarty*





# IN MEMORIAM

We remember with love each of these women, our sisters and friends, who died recently. We celebrate their lives and the example they offered to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, their families, their friends, the Church and the world. These women embraced the call to *"Let your life be a continuous act of love."* (Maxims of the Little Institute)

They lived lives of faithfulness and commitment while they were with us, and we depend upon them now to continue to pray on our behalf. May they rest in the arms of the loving God they so faithfully served!



**Sister Anne Marie Bradley**  
(formerly Sister Bernard Patrick)  
May 23, 2019



**Sister Patricia Ann O'Neill**  
(formerly Sister Hugh Patrice)  
May 9, 2019



**Sister Rose Edward Carlin**  
April 22, 2019



**Sister Eileen Clare Hubbert**  
(formerly Sister Vincent Gerard)  
April 22, 2019



**Sister Maureen James Barr**  
April 10, 2019



**Sister Marie Elizabeth Cooke**  
(formerly Sister George Miriam)  
April 4, 2019



**Sister Ella Mae Hill**  
(formerly Sister Michael Andrew)  
March 17, 2019



**Sister William Eileen Jester**  
February 22, 2019



**Sister Dorothy Payne**  
(formerly Sister Joseph Francis)  
February 3, 2019



**Sister Kathleen Brabson**  
(formerly Sister Thomas Audrey)  
January 23, 2019





# Nuns Who Cook A Delicious Success!

By Sister Kathleen Pales SSJ

On April 6, in the newly renovated dining room, 125 Nuns Who Cook attendees dined and donated to help Saint Joseph Villa gross \$17,667 to support the elderly and infirm sisters who reside there. Nuns Who Cook was a celebration of some of the Sisters of Saint Joseph's and their Associates' hallmark attributes: cooperation to promote our mission of unity, extending hospitality to our dear neighbors, and deepening relationships all along the way.

The nuns did cook and they cooked a lot! From Piquant and Robust Hors d'oeuvres to Mamma Pino's Pasta, Meatballs and Braciolo to Apple Crisp, with lots more in between. Twelve Sisters of Saint Joseph and their Associate assistants cooked and competed. Once the attendees made their way into the dining room, they were greeted by the Emcee, Sister Theresa Maugle SSJ, Villa Executive Director Sister Dorothy Apprich SSJ and event chair Elly Kline. Guests visited as many of the 12 cooks' stations as they liked, going to their own tables to eat and then back to their favorite cooks' stations for a second helping of Mini Quiches, French LePuy Lentil Salad, Busy Day Beef Casserole, or Chocolate Chip Cookie Bars, just to name a few.

Dan Allridge, Mary Ann Gatti and Erik Thompson judged our talented sister-cooks. They reported having a very difficult time choosing the winners because every single dish was so delicious. In addition, many of the cooks and their assistants wore costumes and decorated their stations, adding to the fun. "If they were this good their very first time, I can only imagine the costumes and decorations they'll come up with next time," commented Dave Headrick.



*Pictured top: Diners receive instructions for the evening.*

*Pictured middle: Dessert Winners: from left, Kerry Rusak, Rose Reda SSJ and Cristina Diaz*

*Pictured bottom: Appetizer winners for Zuppa Toscano, from left Rosemary House, Patricia Dunn and Christine Joseph Iacobacci SSJ*



Sister Christine Joseph Iacobacci SSJ, with Associates Patricia Dunn and Rosemarie House, took home the medal in the Appetizers category with their delicious Zuppa Toscano. The judges chose Sisters Madeline Franze SSJ and Vickie Fanino SSJ's Pulled Pork Sliders to win in the Entrees category. The sisters were assisted by Pat Harrington. Sister Rose Albert Reda SSJ, assisted by Cristina Diaz and Kerry Rusak, won the medal in the Desserts category with their authentic Italian Pizzelles. Sister Sharon McCarthy, assisted by Rita McGlade and Bonnie Kozemchak, wowed the crowd with their Chicken a la Heaven and were awarded the Peoples' Choice Award, having received the most votes (tip money)!

"It was fun. It was relaxed. There were no long speeches. Just people having a super casual good time eating and drinking with the sisters," remarked Anne Hampton.

"I ate dessert first, and it was perfectly okay. Nothing like starting off dinner with one of Sister Colleen Gibson's Bourbon Brownies," said Sister Terry Shaw SSJ.

"Most amazing raffle baskets ever! I won the fire pit and everything to go with it," noted Michael Santacroce.

Special thanks to all the sponsors and advertisers who supported Nuns Who Cook so generously!



***Pictured top, Entree Winners: from left, Pat Harrington, Madeline Franze SSJ and Vickie Fanino SSJ***

***Pictured middle: People's Choice Winners: from left, Rita McGlade and Bonnie Kozemchak***

***Pictured bottom: A crowd gathers around the Piquant and Robust Hors D'oeuvres station. From far right to left, Nancy Dachille and Dorothy Bredehoff SSJ***



***Photos by Carole Pollock SSJ***

***See more photos on the SSJ Flickr site at <http://bit.ly/ssjflickr>***





*Pictured left top: from left, Emily DePaul, Ally Monteiro, Dorismarie Gonzalez SSJ*

*Pictured left middle: from left, Pam Thornton and Mary Veasy SSJ*

*Pictured bottom left: from left, Sue Lindinger SSJ and Carol Beevers SSJ*

*Pictured middle bottom: from left, Theresa Cute, Nancy Daschille and Regina Bell SSJ.*

*Pictured top right: Anne Myers SSJ and family*

*Pictured middle right: from left, Mary Katherine Ortale Colleen Gibson SSJ and Marie Leahy SSJ*



# Gifts in Wills

## Heritage Circle Membership

by Kathleen Pales SSJ

For many of us, there is a compelling need to make a difference—to leave a lasting impact on the people most dear to us and the world in which we live. Joining the Heritage Circle by leaving a gift in your will to the Sisters of Saint Joseph is perhaps the easiest and most tangible way to support our mission well after your lifetime. This may also be an effective way to lessen the burden of taxes on your family and estate and to make a lasting statement about what is most important to you.

### Types of Bequests

There are several ways you can give such a gift to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Here are a few:

#### SPECIFIC BEQUEST

A specific bequest involves making a gift for a specific dollar amount.

Another kind of specific bequest involves leaving a percentage of your overall estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 10% of your estate to the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

#### RESIDUAL BEQUEST

A residual bequest is made from the balance of an estate after the will or trust has given away each of the specific bequests. A common residual bequest involves leaving a percentage of the residue of the estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 30% of the residue of your estate to the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

#### REVOCABLE GIFT

A gift in a will is generally a revocable gift, which means it can be changed or modified at any time. You can choose to designate that a bequest be used for a general or specific purpose so you have the peace of mind that comes with knowing that your gift will be used as intended. Bequests to the Sisters of Saint Joseph will result in an estate tax charitable deduction which will reduce or eliminate any estate taxes payable if you have a taxable estate.

To give a gift in your will, you will want to obtain the counsel of a professional advisor or an attorney who specializes in estate planning.

If you are considering giving such a gift to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, you will need to know that *our legal name is Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. Our address is Mount Saint Joseph Convent, 9701 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19118-2694. Our Federal Tax ID number is 23-1352546.*

If you are giving a gift to the Sisters of Saint Joseph in your estate plan, please contact us to let us know so that you can be in our Heritage Circle. We would like to thank you and recognize you for your gift. **Heritage Circle members** receive a daily remembrance in the prayers of the sisters, a listing by name in our Annual Report of Giving (with donor permission), and a Certificate of Appreciation honoring your participation in the program. You will be invited regularly to mass in our newly renovated Motherhouse chapel and to have brunch with the sisters and their friends in the convent dining room.

Large or small, the most meaningful gifts come from people like you who care about the work we do and want to ensure it continues well into the future.





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# EVENTS

Join us for one or more of these upcoming events!  
Your support makes it possible for our sisters to continue their good works.

**Swing**  
for the Sisters  
12<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament



Flatbush Golf Course  
Littlestown, PA

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Swing for the Sisters Golf Tournament  
September 28, 2019**

**Littlestown, Pennsylvania  
8:30 AM Tee Off**

The tournament will be held at the Flatbush Golf Club.

Sponsorship opportunities are available from \$100-\$1,500.

Price per golfer is \$75 or \$300 per foursome.

**Please contact the Sisters of Saint Joseph Office of Development for more information:**

[www.ssjphila.org](http://www.ssjphila.org) • 1-800-482-6510 • [development@ssjphila.org](mailto:development@ssjphila.org)