

Mercy



Message

PROVINCE EVENTS

Winter 2020

Camden Diocese Honors Sister Jubilarians

On Sunday, February 2, the World Day of Consecrated Life, three of our sisters from Villa Rossello, Newfield, NJ, were among those honored at the annual Mass for the Sister Jubilarians of the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey:

Sister M. Ambrogina (our Provincial) – 60 years

Sister Joseph Marie – 60 years

Sister Grace Marie – 50 years

The special Mass, celebrated by Rev. Dennis J. Sullivan, Bishop of Camden, took place at Holy Family Church in Sewell, NJ. Following Mass, everyone gathered in the parish hall for dinner and a brief program in honor of the jubilarians. We sincerely congratulate Sisters Ambrogina, Joseph Marie and Grace Marie* and we wish them many more happy years in the Lord's service.

Also celebrating anniversaries this year are Sister Tarcisia - 70 years, and Sister JoAnn Marie – 50 years. Both these sisters are stationed in Harrisburg Diocese. A community celebration for our Sister jubilarians will take place later this year at Villa Rossello. We look forward to this event.



Sisters Reginald, Francine, Joseph Marie, Bishop Sullivan, Sister Ambrogina, Sister Margaret
*(*Sister Grace Marie was not able to attend this celebration.)*

SISTER ELZA RENEWS HER VOWS



On February 2, World Day of Consecrated Life, Sister M. Elza Cezalien, our first vocation from Haiti, renewed her vows of poverty, chastity and obedience during the celebration of Mass at the mission church in Gonaives, Haiti. We congratulate Sister Elza and we wish her many more happy and fruitful years in the Lord's service.

Sister Elza is the charge nurse at the Mission's Health Care Dispensary.

Sister Vincenzina, as superior of the Haitian Mission, receives Sister Elza's renewal of vows.



THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE – February 2 (Feast of the Presentation of the Lord)

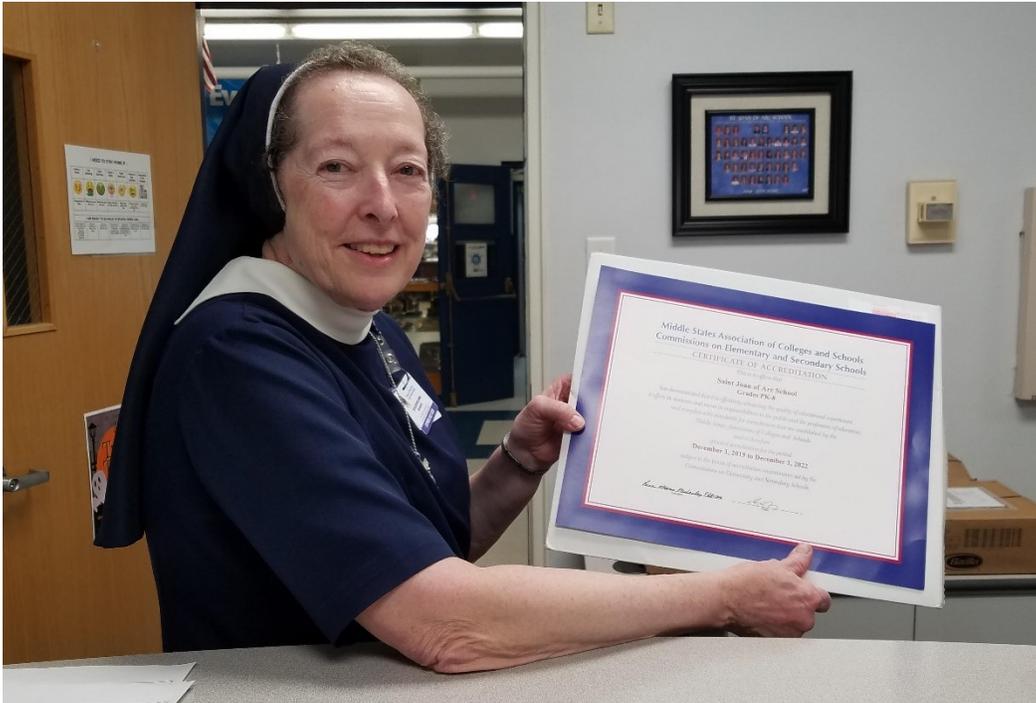
“Each year, the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day for Consecrated Life. Instituted by Pope John Paul II in 1997, the celebration is in conjunction with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas Day, commemorating the coming of Christ, the Light of the World, through the symbolic lighting of candles. Similarly, consecrated men and women are called to spread the light and love of Jesus Christ through their unique witness of selfless service, such as caring for the poor, the contemplative work of prayer, or through their professional careers.” USCCB

In the words of St. John Paul II, this day is “to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.”

SCHOOL DAYS, SCHOOL DAZE! ST. JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL IN HERSHEY, PA MAKES GREAT STRIDES

At St. Joan of Arc School has achieved STEM certification because the school community believes and has invested in the value of STEM education.

STEM education is the practice of educating students in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines as an integrated curriculum based on real world applications. Teaching STEM means teaching skills the way they will be used in the workforce. A STEM based curriculum uses real-life situations to help students learn. Many STEM activities provide hands-on lessons for the students and require critical thinking.



Sister Eileen holding STEM certification received by St. Joan of Arc School

Recently, the Parish of St. Joan of Arc, Hershey has been blessed to begin the process of acquiring the former Hershey Campus of the Lancaster Mennonite School! A capital campaign project had been underway to renovate and add on to the present school which no longer has adequate space to accommodate all the grades and programs. But when this “blessing” was presented to the pastor and people of the parish, plans went in a different direction. After much prayer and discernment, the decision was made to purchase this beautiful building which is ideal for the new school.

The new home of St. Joan of Arc School and Religious Education Program will be located just two miles from the parish on Sandhill Road. This state-of-the-art building is 100,000+ square feet and sits on 36 acres of Hershey real estate. The building itself is only twelve years old and has all that the parish school and REP needs plus so much more! Everything is already in motion for the student body to occupy the new building for the 2020-2021 School Year. The school has 360 students in pre-K to eighth grade. The new building will allow the school to have a second sixth-grade class next year as well as a full-day pre-K-3 option, which will be a new option.



God placed this entire “dream plan” into the hands of St. Joan of Arc Parish. The pastor, Father Alfred Sceski, Principal, Sister Eileen Marie, the school community, and the people of the parish are cooperating with **His** new plan for the good of their children’s education for generations to come!

Sister Eileen sums it all up: *“All that is happening is beyond our wildest dreams for our school. It came to us at just the right time.”*

RFO REVIEW AND VIEWS

The RFO Members of the York Center enjoyed an Epiphany Get Together on January 5 at Misericordia Nursing Center. The afternoon started with a special prayer which focused on the meaning of the Gifts of the Three Kings.

Next, we gathered in the Activities Room to enjoy some community presentations:

We watched the video which was made for our Province’s 100th Anniversary Celebration showing photos of our sisters down through the years. This brought to mind many nostalgic memories of those who went before us as well as those of us who are still laboring in the Lord’s vineyard. May the Lord “Find Us Faithful.”

Sister Mary Grace gave a brief overview of the Institute’s plans to open two new missions; one in Papua New Guinea by the Sisters of the Province of India; and the second in Mozambique, Africa. Two Sisters from the Province of Osasco, Brazil and one sister from the Delegation of Africa will be sent to begin the mission in Mozambique. The language spoken in this country is Portuguese.

We support these missions with our prayers as the loving arms of St. Mary Joseph Rossello reach out to “embrace the whole world” as was her dream!

We then enjoyed refreshments and music provided by...as known to us as... David, the vocalist and Nancy, the pianist. They are wonderful volunteers who frequently share their gift of music – a gift that touches the hearts and souls of the residents at Misericordia



This special time together on the Feast of the Epiphany was a wonderful gift. We are grateful!

Prayers in the Chapel



Gathering time while watching our history.



JAMACIA? - NO PROBLEM!!

2020 JAMACIAN MISSION TEAM - ST. JOSEPH PARISH, YORK, PA



Photo: Lou Pioli, RFO is to the left of Father Steve; Dona Smyser is pictured in the last row right behind Father Steve.

Each year in January, a Mission Team from St. Joseph Parish, York, PA travels to the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica to do mission work. This year, the Mission Team, headed by Father Steve Fernandes, OFM.Cap, pastor, included two of the RFO Members of the York Center: Lou Pioli and Dona Smyser. From January 21st through Monday, January 27th the Mission Team worked hard to help the poor in and around Mandeville, Jamaica. One of the goals they fulfilled was to build a house for one very grateful family. The Team also visited some of the diocesan ministries including St. Margaret Mary School where they did some painting of the building and other repair jobs. Their interaction with the children brought joy to the givers as well as to the receivers.

For many months before the Team's visit, the parish had been collecting clothing and school supplies. These were shipped to Jamaica prior to the Mission trip. Each year, St. Joseph Parishioners also financially sponsor many of the children who attend St. Margaret Mary School.

Speaking to Lou and Dona we were happy to hear that this spirit-filled trip was a wonderful experience in every way. They both felt that what they spiritually received in return far surpasses what they gave! We thank them for sharing their time, talent and treasures with those in need.

From Rome to Barcelona!

From November 23 to Dec. 2, 2019, Benjamin and Lillian Bacquero, RFO traveled to Italy and Spain – a surprise birthday gift to Lillian from Benjamin! While in Rome they stayed with our Sisters at the Provincial House which is located not very far from the Vatican. Lillian and Benjamin enjoyed their visit and seeing many parts of Rome with their wonderful tour guide, Sister Annamaria Chacko! Ben and Lillian also went to Florence, Venice and other places. They even spent a few days in Barcelona, Spain before going back to Rome for their return trip home. What wonderful memories were created!

Here are some photos of their visit at the Provincial House.



The sister in the middle of Ben and Lillian in the last photo is named Sister Giovannina. She just celebrated her 105th birthday and was presented with a certificate of congratulations by an official of the city of Rome. In addition, the sisters, former students and friends had a special birthday celebration for her. She certainly is living to a ripe old age!

A TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND

Organized by St. Joseph Parish, York, a group of our York RFO Members traveled to the Holy Land in October and early November, 2019. The York RFO members who went on this trip were Bill and Shirley Gibbons, Adele Naglieri, Phil Shar and Rosalind Young.

Phil and Adele give us a summary and some photos highlighting this privileged trip.

After a smooth flight from Newark NJ to Tel Aviv, Israel via Austrian airlines, Our intrepid band of 48 pilgrims, headed by Fr. Steve Fernandes, were met by our tour guide, Hani Awad, a Syriac Christian living with his family in Nazareth. After initial greetings and retrieving our bags, we all boarded the tour bus and our driver, Samir, skillfully navigated the bus through city traffic to our hotel.

The next morning, we arose early for a hearty breakfast. Afterwards we proceeded to the tour bus and started 8 days of prayerfully encountering Jesus with daily Mass and enjoying religious and historical sites. The Gospel stories came to life as we visited:

Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, Magdala, Mt of the Beatitudes, Mt Tabor, Jericho, Jordan Baptismal site, Qumran caves and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Bethlehem Manger Square, Church of the Nativity, Ascension Chapel, Mt. of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Wailing Wall, Upper Room, Caiaphas' Palace, Holy Sepulcher.

While each holy site visited was special, we must say that the highlights of our experiences were:

- a. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem where Jesus was born
- b. The Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher in old city Jerusalem to attend Mass next to the crucifixion site and walk into the Burial Tomb of Jesus
- c. Sharing a dinner with a Palestinian Christian family and listening to the heart-warming accounts of their daily lives that they eagerly shared with us. Our Holy Land experience lives on in our memories!



Actual Site where Christ was born



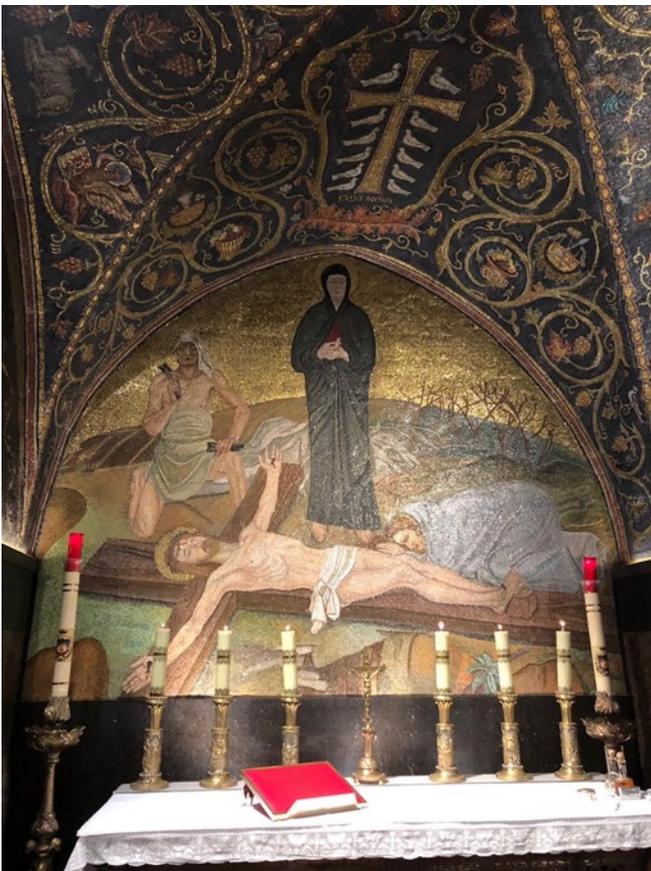
Church of the Nativity of the Lord



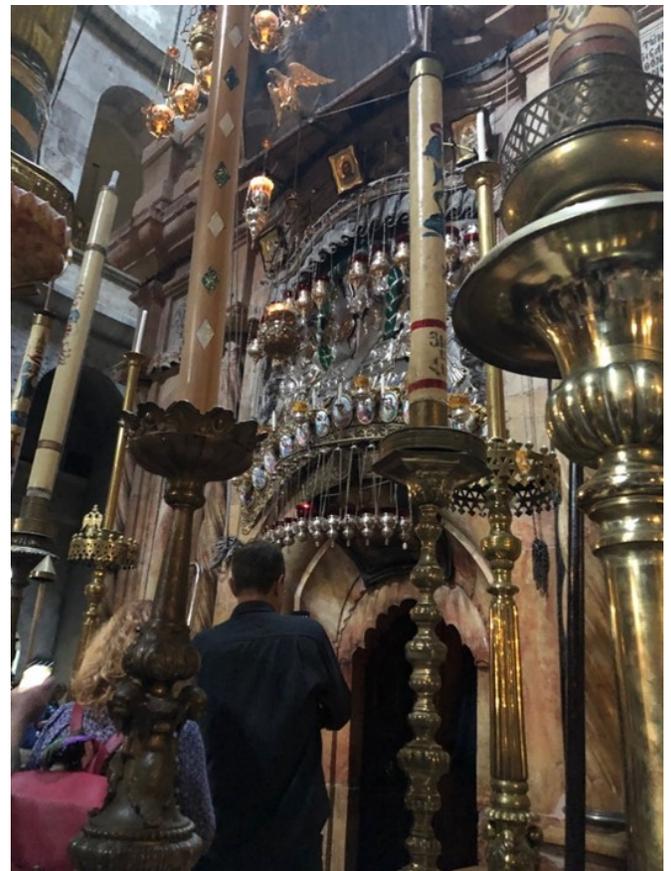
Site of Institution of the Eucharist



Jerusalem from a Distance



Site of the Crucifixion



Entrance into Church of the Holy Sepulcher

PRAYER REQUESTS

Called Home to the Lord:

Florence Ferrarie, Vineland NJ - the first Health and Physical Education teacher at Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Newfield.

Barbara Obin - February 3, 2020, mother of Jeff Obin, RFO



Those who are ill and in need of our prayers:

Sisters Matthew Marie, Mary Theresa and Mary Paul

Victoria Harvey of Berwick - friend of the community

Janet Gensamer, mother of Bill Gibbons, RFO and Janet's Sister Judy who is very ill

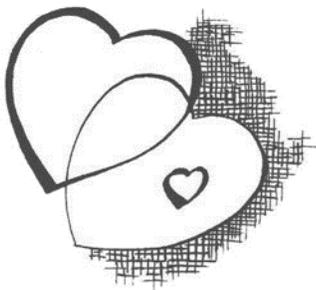
All our family members and friends who are ill or suffering in any way



POINTS TO PONDER - Shared Wisdom!

- ⇒ *Common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes ...*
- ⇒ *Deal with the faults of others as gently as your own ...*
- ⇒ *Justice is truth in action ...*
- ⇒ *A new broom sweeps clean but an old broom knows the corners ...*
- ⇒ *Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and he'll eat forever ...*
- ⇒ *Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission ...*
- ⇒ *You can never plan the future by the past ...*
- ⇒ *He who has a why to live can bear almost any how ...*
- ⇒ *Take into account that great love and great achievements improve great risk ...*
- ⇒ *Lost time is never found again ...*
- ⇒ *In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on ...*

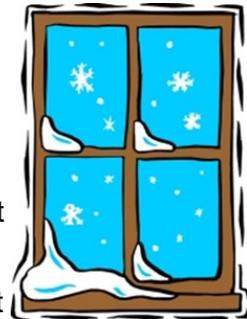
*Love grows
in the giving.*



A VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

The Year 2020...Proverbially speaking!

By Sister Mary Grace



It's a new year – a special year! At least the number 2020 sounds special! There's just something compelling about that number! Do you agree?

Let's step back in our memories to the year 2000. At that time there was much hype about entering into the third millennium. There were all kinds of, somber predictions, worries, expectations, questions, anxieties, hopes and dreams held in most hearts as we cautiously crossed over the unknown threshold into a new millennium – a step into an uncertain future. Yet, isn't the future always uncertain? Really, can any of us be sure about tomorrow or even the next hour?

Now here we are in the year 2020. How can it be? The passage of time is just that...the passage of time! For some, it seems to fly by; for others- perhaps it goes more slowly, it limps along, it drags or even seems to stand still. Yet we know of course that "time waits for no one."

If we review these past 20 years, we would find that there are so many changes – giant advances in technology, tremendous progress in the medical field, and surely in many other areas such as education, economics, ecology, social mores, government, etc. The list is endless!

Thinking about the above led me to a reflection on some "wisdom of the ages" – a wisdom that applies to all times...past, present, future. I am referring here to the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. Perhaps we can reflect on a few of them in this new year that we recently began. And, through our reflections, just maybe we may wish to weave some of their thoughts into our new year's resolutions. It's not too late for that! And now let's see what wisdom we can glean from some of these sayings:

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." Isn't this a good point to ponder on, especially as we think of the state of our world today? Yes, there is much evil in our world, but there is also much good. Good always overcomes evil! Truth triumphs! God sees to that, and we can do our part to make it happen, too! Let us be genuine witnesses of Christ's Truth in our world today!

"The tongue of the wise pours out knowledge, but the mouths of fools spurt forth folly." How true! It's wise to carefully weigh our words before speaking. It's important to know what we are talking about and to whom we are speaking before putting our words out there! Let's resolve to speak always with truth and sincerity, while being aware of the impact our words may have on those who hear them – an impact that can be positive or can be negative.

"A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse one crushes the spirit." There are many examples of this in our world. There are so many people hurt by the careless actions and words of uncaring, imprudent people. Let's be "the soothing tongue" that speaks kindly and gently at all times. For we know that harsh words, once spoken, even when deeply regretted, can never be taken back. Let us treat others with the mercy of Christ!

And lastly:

"The one who oppresses the poor blasphemes his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy glorifies Him." The charism of Mercy which we profess compels us to have a preference for the very poor as did St. Mary Joseph Rossello. In serving the needy among us, we greatly please our Merciful God who desires that each of us reaches out compassionately to all his creatures, and to all of creation as we walk alongside Him who walks with us!

May 2020 be a year in which we truly strive to be Christlike, thus making our world a better place in ways that will truly make a positive and life-giving difference!