WE BELIEVE...

that we create the future
As we move with the Spirit
in giving full expression
to our giftedness as women in the Church
Sharing equally in its mission—
In living a life that is simple
prayerful
courageous and
compassionate—
in proclaiming with prophetic voice
the Gospel to all people—
in strengthening our corporateness
as women in community—
in demonstrating our belief
in the dignity of the human person
and the call to secure this dignity
for all women and men—
in expressing our solidarity
with the poor and oppressed.

IN FAITH AND HOPE
WE ACCEPT
THE CHALLENGES
THESE BELIEFS IMPLY.
Sisters of St. Joseph • Brentwood, NY
—Vision Statement

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Each time one stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, one sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

—Robert F. Kennedy June 6, 1966
Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

As we approach the celebration of the Incarnation, Christ active and alive in our world, we are reminded that this is a season of hope. It is not limited to a particular time of the year but visible and vibrant in our response to be Christ’s loving, healing and reconciling presence where there is injustice, exclusion and oppression. Today, more than ever, our congregation’s mission to foster union with God and one another is needed in our world.

Reading the articles in this issue of Focusing, you will be reminded of the powerful historical ways our congregation has provided for the greatest needs of the time. St. Joseph’s College was founded 100 years ago to provide higher education for women in Brooklyn at a time when it was not accessible. Three of our sponsored schools celebrate significant anniversaries: The Mary Louis Academy, 80 years, Fontbonne Hall Academy, 80 years in 2017 and Academia María Reina, fifty years. Each of these schools was founded to provide educational opportunities steeped in gospel values, not easily available to young women at that time. Our Maria Regina Residence, founded fifty years ago to provide care for our aging and infirmed Sisters, has expanded its mission to provide healing and comfort to religious and lay people as a skilled nursing facility. For twenty years, the Spiritual Direction Program has enabled hundreds of participants to be attentive to the stirrings of the Spirit in their hearts and discern ways of responding for the sake of our world. These ministries have created multiple ripples of hope for the thousands they have served.

Those ripples of hope expand into ever-widening circles as we join with others to meet the critical needs of this time. Being present to those suffering from trafficking, gang and institutional violence and prolonged incarceration has brought hope, peace and joy into the lives of many. New struggles emerge for underpaid supermarket employees, unaccompanied immigrants and farm workers. They thirst for companionship and advocacy that would be signs of hope for them and indicate that God is with them in their struggles.

Our congregation is committed to continue to be beacons of hope in the midst of the complex issues our world faces today. We celebrate our jubilarians and our newly professed Sisters. We seek to continue our mission of inclusive love, unity and reconciliation as we look to provide more adequate space for our elder Sisters through the renovation of the Motherhouse Convent. We ask for your continuing prayers and support. The Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis has come to a conclusion but all of us are invited to continue to bear witness to God’s mercy and compassion wherever we are.

Helen
S. Helen Kearney, CSJ

Rejoicing in God’s faithfulness, we announce the newly-elected Leadership Team who began their five-year terms on August 6, 2016. They are President Sister Helen M. Kearney (center) and her Council: Sisters Teresa Fitzgerald, Elizabeth A. Hill, Joan Gallagher and Kathleen M. McKinney.

The team gathered for a celebratory prayer in Sacred Heart Chapel. They are (back row, l. to r.) Sisters Patricia A. Ryan (Regional Superior), Agnes White (Vicar of Maria Regina Residence), Joanne M. Ross (Regional Superior), Mary Ellen Vesey (Regional Superior), Eileen M. Kelly (General Treasurer), Elizabeth Myles (Regional Superior), Gloria E. Cruz (Vicar of Puerto Rico), Phyllis G. Esposito (Regional Superior), (front row, l. to r.) Sisters Teresa Fitzgerald, Elizabeth A. Hill, President Helen M. Kearney, Joan Gallagher, Kathleen M. McKinney. Absent from photo: Sister Helen Rooney (General Secretary).
The editors of *Focusing* must have been channeling Dorothy Day when they called for articles that illuminate the theme “Ripples of Hope.” Dorothy Day was a prominent Catholic social activist. She was an opponent of war and violence and an advocate for compassion to the poor; especially homeless persons served by the Catholic Worker Movement which she co-founded.

Hear Dorothy’s word: “What we would like to do is to change the world—not make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And to a certain extent, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of workers, of the poor; of the destitute...we can change the world to some extent...we can work for the Oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw a pebble into the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world.” Mentors and models like Dorothy Day help us live out what the Constitution of our Congregation encourages us: “to internalize the values of social justice and to find ways to show concern for the economically poor.” (promulgated A.D. 2000)

Where are CSIs “tossing pebbles” to create better conditions for others that are little cells of joy and peace in a harried world? We meet life in more places than any article can describe. So focusing only on our more recent efforts warrants some reflection.

**Farmworker Advocacy**

With the New York State Catholic Conference endorsing this priority and farmworker advocates on Long Island taking the lead, the Sisters of St. Joseph are participating in legislative action to end the singular injustice farmworkers experience. Although they are essential producers in the U.S. workforce, they are denied traditional worker protections such as overtime pay, collective bargaining to resolve workplace complaints, unemployment and disability compensation, and one day of rest per work week. We are “tossing pebbles” when we talk with and write to our State legislators about changing the unfair labor practices abetted by the State of New York. We also “walk the walk.” CSJs participated in a 7-mile Long Island segment of the 200-mile pilgrimage for farmworkers from Smithtown to Albany (May 2016). CSJ High School students made posters displayed along the line of march.

**Shopping for Justice**

As much as ever, CSJs live up to our experience as “sisters of the neighborhood.” We shop locally, and the employees who serve us most often live locally themselves. So their good jobs contribute to the local quality of life. So, where’s the “beef”? If Best Yet (Best Market) replaced your Waldbaum or Pathmark supermarket recently, workers got a “raw deal.” The pay, benefits and work hours their previous employers guaranteed, were bargain away by the new owners, and workers’ families are suffering the loss. CSJs, along with civic and interfaith advocates, are engaged in efforts to get Best Yet to “do better” by their employees.

**Partnering With Unaccompanied Immigrants**

CSJs support immigration reform on a national scale. With a wide network of other advocates, we also do practical outreach to protect, sustain and comfort immigrants traumatized by current immigration policy. CSJs are adding something more to their advocacy toolkit; we are becoming part of the Accompanying Project. Immigrants who seek relief from deportation or who have grounds for permanent status often endure an extended and intimidating course of court appearances. Now we can say to them: “You are not alone.” Sisters, associates and colleagues are “in training” to be at their side as silent witnesses and an influential presence. When those who accompany raise awareness that they are in solidarity with their immigrant neighbors, the outcome is generally more positive for the immigrant.

So by our prayer, presence and advocacy, CSJs have been “little cells of joy and peace” that change lives. Those whom our compassion has touched, to name only a few: victims of trafficking, gang and institutional violence, and prolonged incarceration, can now see new possibilities for a circle of inclusion — farmworkers, supermarket employees and unaccompanied immigrants. Ripples of hope abound!

(Written in memory of S. Elizabeth Profriedt, cherished for her life-long example of non-violence and her advocacy to end systemic violence. She died April 29, 2016. May she rest in glory.)
s we celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of St. Joseph’s College on October 2, 1916, we pause to consider how it all began. I’ve been asked to sketch in, very briefly, the origin and early development of the College, and the contribution of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The First Announcement of St. Joseph’s College for Women proclaims that it had long been the desire of Bishop Charles McDonnell to establish a Catholic college for women in the Long Island Diocese and that the Bishop was happy to announce that it would be staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph. And this was true. But the real beginning was a little bit different.

To put the beginnings in context, we need to recall that anti-Catholic prejudice was endemic in New York State, New York City, and Long Island in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The impact of this prejudice was direct. One example: to reduce the hostile atmosphere, whenever the Sisters left the convent, they wore straw hats to conceal their habits. That continued until the early 1920’s. In the educational sphere, graduates of the Academy of St. Joseph were accepted academically at Barnard College but were not welcomed socially.

To Reverend Mother Mary Louis asked Bishop McDonnell to chair the Board of Trustees, and as President of the Board, he became President of the College. S. Celestine Gill was named Dean, Sisters Lumena and Augustine Maria were the two Sister faculty. What is remarkable, truly remarkable for that period of history, is that these Sisters already had Master’s degrees, at a time when most women did not finish high school and very few women had college degrees. The Congregation was way ahead of the American public in emphasizing the importance of education. By 1921, three Sister faculty members had Doctorates, and by 1925, five Sister faculty had Doctorates.

The curriculum was the traditional liberal arts curriculum: English, history, languages—Latin, Greek, Spanish, French, math, music, and, of course, leading the list, religion. The program each semester called for approximately 25 hours of class. The number of credits is not spelled out until the second catalog in 1921. There was virtually no choice, although in second-year students could opt for Greek or analytical chemistry and in third year, the option was for language or analytical geometry. Which would you have chosen? No fluff here.

An interesting side-note: Oral tradition holds that the State Education Department would not approve the inclusion of the religion courses in the traditional 120 credits for the degree. The Sisters therefore added the religion credits to the total. There is no written evidence of this but it would explain why a St. Joseph’s College degree required 128 credits. And where were the first classes held? From 1916 through June 1918, the College was located in one of the houses on the St. Angela Hall property, very different then from the present buildings.

Who were the students? The first twelve pioneers came from three public and six Catholic high schools. They were, in fact, a remarkable group. Within the first semester they had formed a class organization, then outlined an Undergraduate Association that developed over the next three years. And during that first year they formed a literary society and arranged some social activities. They were strongly encouraged to participate in their local parish activities. Within their four years, the Twelve Apostles, as they were called, joined by two transfer students, established a religion club, a French club, an orchestra and Glee Club, an athletic association and a varsity team, and a Dramatics Club. With the end of World War I, they were able to have a Junior Prom and a Senior Prom. And during Commencement week, the Dramatics Club staged Iphigenia in Taurus at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on June 14, 1920.

In the 1920 Yearbook, one of the students wrote of the “triumphal progress from the dream to the reality—the evolution in four short years of St. Joseph’s College for Women.” And that triumphal statement reflects the confidence—and the achievements—of the first twelve students, the Twelve Apostles.

There is no triumphal statement from the Sisters; there is no statement at all. But clearly the first twelve students needed a sense of what was expected at the college level and the support of experienced educators in creating this first Catholic college for women on Long Island. The first Sister faculty established a very strong academic and student-centered environment that encouraged the students to grow intellectually and spiritually, and inculcated a strong sense of service.

One measure of the effectiveness of their education may be discerned in their post-graduate work. From the first class, one earned the Ph.D. and another the M.D., and one graduate joined the Sisters of St. Joseph. From the second class came the second Ph.D. and the first J.D. Clearly SJC students were well prepared. This is an extraordinary record for this period in American history—and a tribute to the vision of the Sisters of St. Joseph very effectively communicated to the students. The real is history.

Let me add that the contribution of the Sisters of St. Joseph extended far beyond the academic. In 1918, the Sisters bought the Pratt house at 243-251 Clinton Avenue—and sold it to St. Joseph’s College for $1. Between 1923 and 1936, the Sisters paid for the extension on Waverly Avenue—now the student lounge and biology wing. They bought the Metz house at 253 Clinton Avenue, had it razed, and paid for the construction of the present main building; and finally, bought the Alson House at 265 Clinton Ave, named Lorenzo Hall for S.M. Lorenzo Sullivan, early Librarian and Registrar. Each of these buildings was then given to St. Joseph’s College. The actual contribution from 1918 to 1936 was almost $800,000.

Then, of course, there was the ongoing education of the Sisters with Master’s and Doctorates from Fordham, St. John’s, Minnesota, Catholic University, Yale, Pennsylvania, Columbia, and New York Universities. No one has tried to calculate that cost. And no one has tried to calculate the total of the contributed services of the Sisters. The Trustees reviewed the topic in 1972 and concluded that for the five year period, 1967-1971, the contribution equalled more than two million dollars. And that was just for five years.

As we celebrate the centennial of the founding, and look back over the number of women educated from 1916 to 1970, and since then, the number of men as well as women—more than 40,000 alumni in all, we give thanks for the vision, courage, and determination of the founding Sisters, and the generosity of the Congregation. May God continue to bless St. Joseph’s College and the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph.
80th Anniversary at TMLA

As the Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood, NY celebrate 160 years of ministry in both the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Diocese of Rockville Centre, The Mary Louis Academy is also rejoicing in their 80th anniversary of providing an unparalleled high school experience for young women. Our philosophy—rooted in the Sisters’ charism of unity, reconciliation, and all-inclusive love—emphasizes intellectual, social, and spiritual growth. Our TMLA community kicked off the 80th anniversary by celebrating the very first day of the school’s opening on September 14, 1936. Faculty, staff, and students started the day with a special blessing ceremony in which they honored Mother Mary Louis, Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph from 1892-1932, for whom the school was named. The day concluded with a mass and induction ceremony for THE – The Mary Louis Academy Hall of Excellence. Inducted this year were several alumnae and supporters as well as S. Grace Avila Seckendorf who has been a member of the faculty since 1969. Further events will be celebrated in the spring in honor of the special anniversary.

The 80th Anniversary Homecoming followed on October 1. More than 600 alumnae returned to reunite with their former classmates and teachers as well as current faculty, staff, and students. The day concluded with a mass and induction ceremony for THE – The Mary Louis Academy Hall of Excellence. Inducted this year were several alumnae and supporters as well as S. Grace Avila Seckendorf who has been a member of the faculty since 1969. Further events will be celebrated in the spring in honor of the special anniversary.

The Mary Louis Academy Hall of Excellence.

FONTBONNE HALL ACADEMY APPROACHES A MILESTONE

September 2017 marks the 80th Anniversary of Fontbonne Hall Academy! This milestone will be marked by a series of commemorative events still in the planning stages.

Our school-year opening Mass will be celebrated as our kick-off to this special year. It will initiate a “homecoming” for our entire FHA community which will include our school community, parents, alumnae, benefactors, and donors.

A black-tie Gala dinner dance will be celebrated with special guests of honor at the El Caribe Country Club at the end of September where the greater community who have supported Fontbonne over these past eighty years will be acknowledged and honored for their support. That same weekend, our annual alumnae reunion will be held. Alumnae from all over the country have made inquiries and are planning on attending. These events will also underscore our “Giving Tuesday” campaign as a symbol of the gratitude our community has for the many years of service Fontbonne Hall Academy has given to the thousands of women who have graduated from our school and who have become the mothers and professional leaders of their time—a rich history of women professionals who have not only served in the traditional roles afforded them in their day but also who are now the corporate leaders, doctors, PhDs, entrepreneurs, professional women in non-traditional female roles, and who are a spiritual and moral presence in the Global society.

Our students will be engaged in a series of academic projects demonstrating the new and enhanced programs Fontbonne has introduced in the new millennium that underscore the magnitude of a “new” Catholic education in the 21st Century. Some of these projects will showcase how everything we do at Fontbonne is centered in the teaching of Jesus Christ and illuminates our Mission of all inclusive love, unity, and reconciliation for all.

The Fontbonne Community is excited to be approaching this milestone anniversary and is proud to be a leader in the education and empowerment of young women in this new millennium.

Mary Ann Spicijaric, Principal; Gloria Musto, Director of Alumnae Relations; Lauriann Wierzbowski, Assistant Principal; and Gilda King, Associate Principal
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ver the lifespan of the Congregation, Sisters who were aged, infirm, or in need of convalescing were cared for in various convents. At first, retired Sisters shared a convent space with younger Sisters in the second motherhouse, St. Joseph Convent in Flushing, founded in 1860. Later, when the property in Brentwood was purchased in 1896, the Austra Hotel served as a convalescent home even before the mother- 

house officially moved to Long Island. In 1929, the Austra became the new novitiate when St. Joseph’s Convent opened in Brentwood. Sick and retired Sisters were moved across the grounds to the new motherhouse and were cared for in the infirmary on the second floor. Both convents of St. Joseph—Flushing and Brentwood—continued as residences for elderly Sisters until Maria Regina Convent opened expressly for that purpose in 1968.

Concern for the Congregation’s aging Sisters compelled Mother Charles Edward Cherry and her Council in 1953 to renovate the infirmary at Flushing, and permission was received to sell some of the Brentwood property to help finance the construc-

tion. Community letters from Mother stressed the importance of the Coupon Drive in the schools and the contribution of each convent to make the renovation possible. The financial burden of the Community, with the simultaneous construction of a new novitiate, the Academy gymnasium, and the infirmary at Flushing was enormous. With great trust in St. Joseph and in her Sisters, Mother moved forward with the construction and by September of 1954 a new wing opened in St. Joseph Convent, Flushing, as an Infirmary and Rest Home.

But the need continued. By 1963, accommodations in the convent at Brentwood were no longer adequate and Mother Immaculata Maria Clark hoped to renovate the old convent at Flushing once again, adding porches and patios for the sick Sisters and landscaping the grounds anew. — Yet later, however, Mother and her Council realized that Flushing itself was a problem: constant noise from street and air traffic was not conducive to a place of rest and prayer. Mother turned to Brentwood where, she said, “We will locate the villa,” for there was “beautiful scenery, ample space, and quiet.” Plans for a new building were set in motion. Mother Immaculata was adamant that the new rest home be named for Mary the Queen; in Latin, Maria Regina. Bishop Kellenberg, after turning down her repeated requests because the name was already in use, finally relented when Mother insisted that Mary herself desired it.

From secular society to religious life, the sixties ushered in tremendous changes. The Second Vatican Council shook Church tradition to its foundation. Simple concepts of renovation turned into much deeper ideas of renewal. The Sisters of St. Joseph were preparing for their Chapter of 1968, in which they would re- evaluate their constitution in light of the recent Vatican II decrees, and their intense prepara-

tions coincided with the construction of Maria Regina. The concepts of renewal and adaptation shaped both efforts. The original model of a rest home had dramatically changed as Mother and her Council looked outside the community for ideas to incorporate into this special residence. “Equipped with modern facil- ities for nursing care and therapy, the two-hundred bed structure will include porches and patios for purposes of relaxation, and a Chapel easily accessible to the residents” read a fundraising brochure. The Congregation planned “adequate facilities and services for a greater number of elderly and infirm Sisters” since the large number of voca-
tions in the twentieth century would be a future concern. Mother Immaculata was unafraid to take advantage of secular resources and sent Sisters to the Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged in Manhattan for training in Nursing Service Administration, Oc- cupational Therapy, Creative Recreation, and Nutritional Practices for the Aged. The Sisters of St. Joseph Guild, founded a decade earlier, provided much-needed financial assistance.

When it opened on April 23, 1968, the Sisters from the second-floor infirmary in St. Joseph’s Convent were moved first to Maria Regina Convent, accompanied by Sisters of the convent and the students of Brentwood College. Sisters from the infirmary at Flushing followed over the next two days, brought by ambulance or car. “Careful planning, fair weather and many helpful volunteers” made the move a successful one. S. Margaret Quinn, archivist, reported. By April 30th, there were 101 Sisters residing on the 2nd and 3rd floors. The long-standing and cherished tradition of the Sisters caring for their own continued, S. Miriam Eugene Kenny, superior, and a Sister from St. Joseph Convent that same day and became the first Administrator of Maria Regina. S. Genevieve Therese Kenny was the first Superior. Mother Immaculata Maria Clark, at the end of her term as Mother Superior in August 1968, became the first Vicar of Maria Regina Convent.

The first residents of Maria Regina Convent, however, were actually the delegates to the Chapter of 1968! During Easter week, they resided in the rooms on the first floor. Chapter sessions were held in the large room in the basement that summer; it was there that the delegates first implemented “the bold declarations of Vatican II with honesty and openness, prudence and hope.” The vision of Maria Regina became reality in those heady days.

MARIA REGINA RESIDENCE CELEBRATES... 50 YEARS OF SERVICE IN 2017

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roughout its history, the Sisters of St. Joseph have been a forward looking congregation, consciously open to new ideas and ministries to meet the ever changing needs of the “dear neighbor.” As the congregation aged and the medical needs of the sisters became more complex, the congregation realized that Maria Regina Residence needed to provide a higher level of skilled nursing care. After much prayer and deliberation the decision was made to apply to New York State to license Maria Regina as a skilled nursing facility, specifically to meet the needs of religious women, brothers, priests of the diocese and lay people as space permits. As the congregation awaited New York State approval, S. Helen Clancy began the challenging task of training to become a licensed nursing home administrator.

In early 2000 under the leadership of S. Helen and S. Edith Maher, Maria Regina Residence underwent major building renovations in order to comply with the State and Federal codes required for certification as a skilled nursing facility. Professional nursing, medical and other staff were hired and new policies and procedures were developed to meet complex regulations and to ensure the highest quality care. Maria Regina became a fully licensed skilled nursing home in February 2002.

In June 2003, Maria Regina expanded its mission beyond religious communi- ties and opened its doors to the first of many lay persons. That same year the congregation again looked to the needs of the “dear neighbor” and established a medical model adult day health program to meet the medical and social needs of people living in the community. In 2012, Ellen Bartoldus joined Maria Regina as its first lay administrator and currently guides MAR as in response to challenges of an ever changing healthcare system. In 2015 Maria Regina opened a sub-acute rehabilitation program which provides physical, occupational and speech therapy, allowing a person to return to the community after a serious accident, planned orthopedic surgery or a serious spell of illness. Skilled nursing services have expanded to include intravenous therapy and specialized treatment for serious wounds.

The Pastoral Care team of seven Sisters of St. Joseph continues to minis-
ter to the spiritual needs of the residents. In addition to a team of health care professionals over 100 volunteers serve in a variety of capacities such as Eucharistic Ministers, working in the Gift Shop, delivering newspapers, one-on-one visiting, transportation residents to the beauty salon, chapel, rehab therapy and dining room... and much, much more!

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Maria Regina Residence, we continue to rely on the personal generosity of the friends of the Sisters of St. Joseph to provide the financial support that allows us to be a beacon of hope, healing and hospitality to the “dear neighbor.” Our commitment to the mission of “bringing Christ’s healing comfort and power to all” re-
mains at the heart of our ministry and we will be well into the next fifty years.

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Celebrating twenty years of the Training Program in Spiritual Direction is exciting for the community of spiritual directors as well as all those men and women who journey with us in prayer. On October 1st, Roberta Nobelman, woman of prayer, actor and performer, has been with us for these 20 years. At the end of the year of making the 19th Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, Roberta prayerfully presents the “Life and Story of St. Ignatius Loyola.” Ignatius’ story is told through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, a journey with Jesus through the Sacred Scriptures. Roberta uses the music of Beethoven, the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and masks. Without words Roberta draws those assembled into a deeply religious experience. Karyn Brun reflects on her experience: “I have read many remarkable books, articles and essays about the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. I have also been trained to guide the retreatant through the 19th Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises. Experiencing the Exercises through Art added a new dimension to my faith life. Roberta Nobelman’s artistic presentation spoke volumes. Her body motions, her different masks illustrating the soul during the four movements within the Exercises, and the stillness she created during the performance left a lasting impression on my soul. She engaged me in reflecting more deeply on God’s unconditional love for humanity and to be more present to the Divine Presence. Roberta helped me understand that our spiritual life is not about an accomplishment but is about an experience of being gently nourished and tenderly embraced by our Creator.”

Over these past twenty years every spiritual director embraces the thirty weeks of the 19th Annotation Retreat of the Spiritual Exercises. Beth Barker, Associate Director of St. Joseph Renewal Center, was in the very first commissioning class. She reflects on the impact of the Ignatian story after 20 years: “Twenty years ago, I met S. Josephine Daspro. It was a time when I was at a point in my life where I was looking for answers as to what I was going to be when I grew up. I began the 19th Annotation Retreat with that purpose in mind. What I found was that God didn’t need me to be anything other than who I am. So my desire to be something that became a desire to just be. The program has helped me to be aware that God is in everything and I am still on the journey to being created. Since beginning the program 20 years ago, I have come to believe in the God of the more...as Ignatius would say; the magic.”

In honor of the 20th Anniversary, on October 2nd, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, came to present her talk on “inclusive love” by sharing with those assembled her reflection on “Not a sparrow falls to the ground,” the care of God for all those God has created and continues to create day after day. Elizabeth challenged us to ask the question: How big is God’s charity? To understand the call to “inclusive love” we need to be awakened to “the more,” recognizing that we are creatures created by God to care for all that was and is created. Judy Coste reflects on her call after 20 years to live the Ignatian magis in inclusive love, “I ask myself the questions who am I in God, who is God in me and how do they relate and connect me to others? God invites me to wholeness as God heals my woundedness, refreshes my spirit and draws me closer every day. It’s learning that I am unique. It’s dwelling in gratitude for the person I am with my unique gifts. It’s opening me to the splendor of creation and seeing myself as part of the glorious mystery we call God. As a spiritual director, it’s cherishing the people who come into my life and welcoming them lovingly with the love of Christ. As Elizabeth Johnson shared with us, all are welcome, all our loved and all are shared through, with and in all of God’s creation.”

We have learned after 20 years of spiritual direction that the story of St. Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises is as blest today as it was over 500 years ago. For this we are grateful!
Sister Elizabeth Johnson was invited to deed her papers to the University of Notre Dame Archives. On September 22, 2016 at the Symposium held at the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, University of Notre Dame, Beth remarked: “Doing Theology is an inestimable privilege. It means taking part in a vital human conversation that has extended over centuries and now takes place around the globe. More immediately, it means being engaged in this ongoing work with so many fine colleagues. Doing Theology in the academy is an intellectual and spiritual endeavor with practical and critical effects, or as Johannes Baptist Metz would put it, a mystical-political work questing for the living God.”

S. Beth Johnson (c.) was honored at University of Notre Dame.

On October 15, 2016, S. Mary Preenika Dabrera and S. Ginny Murtha professed their final vows of chastity, poverty and obedience in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood. The ceremony took place in the Sacred Heart Chapel.

Preenika was born in Sri Lanka and came to this country in the late 1990’s. She entered the Congregation in 2009. Preenika, a 2014 graduate of St. Joseph College in Brooklyn, had rich and varied work experience prior to entering the Congregation. She has ministered in St. Joseph High School, Brooklyn and is currently in her second year of CPE Program at Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn. The CPE Program will prepare Preenika for Hospital Chaplaincy.

Ginny first entered the Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood in 1965 and began her career in nursing. She had three older sisters who were Sisters of St. Joseph. After 30 years, she discerned that God was calling her to leave the Congregation.

Ginny continued her nursing career and maintained close contact with the Congregation, becoming an Associate. In 2010, she began to question if God was calling her back to the Congregation she loved and in 2011, Ginny reentered. She is currently on staff at St. Joseph Convent in Brentwood working with a team to provide assisted living to those in need of it.

The Second Annual Brooklyn Eagles Literary Prize for nonfiction was awarded to Mary E. Buser’s Lockdown on Rikers: Shocking Stories of Abuse and Injustice at New York’s Notorious Jail (St. Martin’s Press). A former mental health administrator, Mary Buser describes the everyday abuses she encountered while attempting to serve the needs of inmates there. “By taking readers inside America’s best-known prison during an era when its most shocking abuses were largely unknown to the public, Mary E. Buser’s Lockdown on Rikers is both a work of literature and an appeal to the nation’s conscience in the tradition of Silent Spring and The Jungle...” said Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times editor and nonfiction committee chair, Charles Duhigg.

The 35th Annual Great Irish Fair was presented on September 26, 2016 at the new Ford Amphitheater on the Boardwalk at Coney Island. Among the honorees was S. Tesa Fitzgerald who was recognized for her work at Hour Children.

Centenarians Sisters Rita Josephine Lisanti (102) and Edward Joseph Murphy (103)
This Year’s Jubilarians celebrated their Fiftieth Anniversary and Sixtieth Anniversary at a Mass on Saturday, September 10, 2016. Those celebrating their Seventieth and Seventy-fifth Anniversary celebrated at a Mass in Sacred Heart Chapel on Saturday, September 24.
“All Are Welcome”

CATHY LIBERATORI, CSJA

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he CSJ Associates Large Group Meeting on October 22, 2016 began with a Welcoming Ceremony for three of our Inquirers who are now moving into the next stage of their formation. Tiffany Hansen, Linda Oristano and Jeannette Schaefer will be attending formal Orientation sessions as they continue to discern their call to become Candidates for Formal Association in April 2017. Appropriately, our ceremony began with the song “All Are Welcome” by Marty Haugen. 

The rest of our day focused on sharing the excitement of being a part of the CSSJ Federation Event 2016 held in Orlando this past July. The Brentwood contingent included five Associates, twenty-one Sisters and nine Co-ministers. Seven hundred men and women from throughout the US and at least seven other countries experienced the reality of “Our Emerging Story of Being ONE … God’s Love Unfolding” This year marked the 50th Anniversary of the US Federation. I felt a tremendous sense of gratitude for the insights of these dedicated women. If you ever have a chance to participate in a Federation Event, I would highly recommend that you do so. The experience is life-giving and renewing. Truly, all are welcome.

The US Federation Event, held July 9-12, in Orlando, FL was attended by Sisters, Associates, Co-Ministers, Board Members, St. Joseph Worker volunteers and college students. Of the 700 participants, 25% were lay people - a first for Federation Events. During the Event, the 50th Anniversary of the US Federation was celebrated.

As we sat in the ASJ Library in October, we watched the You Tube video of S. Pat Bergen’s presentation “Moving All-Ways in the Flow of Unioning Love.” (This video can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOq4H6qoIQ). It was amazing to see how many of our own Sisters of St. Joseph have been involved in the development and workings of the US Federation. I felt a tremendous sense of gratitude for the insights of these dedicated women.

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A Meaningful Gift and a Tax Benefit Too!

Wish your gifts of financial support have been an “actualizer” of the mission and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph. You believe in the work they do, have been a partner in that work, and you wish to see it continue.

Because of your commitment to the Sisters of St. Joseph, I have been writing in this column of how you can make even a larger impact with your gift of support. Past articles have covered leaving a bequest or an IRA to the Sisters. I have also talked about becoming a monthly donor.

Today I would like to tell you about making a gift of securities. Securities include publicly traded stock, mutual funds, treasury bills, and corporate and municipal bonds. By making a gift of securities, you are able to enjoy a tax benefit.

**HOW CAN I MAKE A MEANINGFUL GIFT?**

If you acquired stock in companies that have experienced significant growth over the years, you now enjoy the appreciated value in many states of about $3,000. So after selling, the asset value has shrunk to approximately $17,000.

Rather than deciding to sell the stock and ending up with less than $17,000 after capital gains tax, consider the impact of transferring the stock to the Sisters of St. Joseph. The transfer is rewarded in three significant ways.

- First, there is a bypass of capital gains tax which may save $3,000.
- Second, the you receive a charitable income tax deduction for gifting the full value of the stock ($20,000) to charity, saving perhaps $6,000 in taxes.
- Third, the Sisters of St. Joseph now owns the block of stock and is able to sell and receive the full fair market value of $20,000.

Now, the $2,000 investment of several years ago results in a $20,000 gift to the Sisters of St. Joseph and more than $9,000 in tax savings to you!

**SOMETHINGS TO REMEMBER**

The Sisters of St. Joseph do not hold your securities, they are sold right away. We are not using your gift to “play the market.” If you are considering a transfer of securities to the Sisters of St. Joseph, it is very important to call us first. If you are a regular donor to the Sisters of St. Joseph an appeal has been mailed to you for your help in renovating the Sisters’ convent. Please consider responding to that appeal by making a meaningful gift, or a monthly gift for this purpose. If you are receiving Focus- ing magazine for the first time, please consider making a gift with the enclosed reply envelope. If you wish to honor or memorialize someone with a larger dedication gift, payment terms can be arranged. We will be selecting an appropriate dedication plaque to publicly thank our donors in the renovated convent.

**St. Joseph’s Convent Renovation**

With deep roots in the Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island communities, the Sisters of St. Joseph have ministered since 1856.

The motherhouse in Brentwood was completed in 1903. The convent used to house hundreds of young Sisters eager to minister to the needs of the “dear neighbor” whenever they were most needed.

The Sisters now number over 480. Of that number, 442 are over the age of 70 with a median age of 80. It is projected that by 2018, 134 of our sisters will require assisted care. Currently we have 65 Sisters living in our motherhouse in bedrooms designed to hold a bed next to a wall, a chair, desk, and dresser. Bathrooms are shared along a hallway and are not handicapped accessible. Those needing more skilled care reside in our Maria Regina Skilled Nursing Facility on our grounds.

Our new needs require room for Sisters’ walkers, wheelchairs and space for a hospital bed so staff can give assistance as needed, along with a small bathroom. With the help of health care professionals and architects we have a plan to enlarge rooms to accommodate the growing care needs of our sisters. Additionally, we wish to make their home a safe, comfortable place that maintains its historical significance and sacred tradition.

**How much will it cost?**

The entire project will cost $16 million.

**Why is it needed?**

- To provide quality health care services for our elderly Sisters in need of assistance.
- To maintain an active community, prayer and social life.
- To provide safe and handicapped accessible living spaces (bedrooms, bathrooms and showers) so that our staff can properly care for our Sisters.
- To replace and renovate major elements of the building’s internal infrastructure that are not functioning adequately, and are not in compliance with current Life Safety Code standards.

**Where will the Sisters live while the renovation is being done?**

The Sisters will temporarily live in the Renewal Center which is being modiﬁed to meet their needs. The Renewal Center staff and operation has moved to the Montfort Spiritual Center in Bay Shore, NY.

The Sisters plan to move to the Renewal Center in the early winter. Work will begin on the convent (Building 3) in January of 2017 and is planned for completion in August of 2018. The Sisters will return to the renovated convent in building 3 in the fall of 2018.

If you are a regular donor to the Sisters of St. Joseph an appeal has been mailed to you for your help in renovating the Sisters’ convent. Please consider responding to that appeal by making a meaningful gift, or a monthly gift for this purpose. If you are receiving Focusing magazine for the first time, please consider making a gift with the enclosed reply envelope. If you wish to honor or memorialize someone with a larger dedication gift, payment terms can be arranged. We will be selecting an appropriate dedication plaque to publicly thank our donors in the renovated convent.

James R. Rennert, CFRE
Director of Mission Advancement
MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH

Nancy Fackner, CSJ

The words on our Peace Pole on our motherhouse grounds were in our hearts on September 17, 2016 when we joined hundreds from the Brentwood neighborhood to gather for a candlelight vigil at Brentwood HS Football field. We all shared grief, sorrow and wanted to celebrate the lives of Nisa age 15 and Kayla age 16, best friends in school and on the basketball court. Nisa and Kayla were victims of Gang Violence and beaten to death. Weeks later four other bodies of young boys were found in the neighborhood, all victims of gang violence. The sobbing of parents, family and friends filled the vigils, wakes, funerals and community meetings that followed. We are deeply saddened by these deaths and the fear of parents and children.

We are committed to work toward a culture of Peace, Love and Nonviolence. We stand in solidarity and prayer with all victims of violence in our world and especially our families in Brentwood, and we call upon all leaders and each of us to take courageous action to address violence in our world.

May Peace Prevail on Earth

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta