IT’S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS
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
The message of Jesus shows us that the dignity of the human race is not found in its ability to control and dominate the Earth, nor is it found in the marvels of technology. Rather, our dignity is found in our intimate loving relationships within and among ourselves and with the whole community of species.

— Cletus Wessels, OP

Jesus in the New Universe Story

It’s all about relationships! Students from Sacred Heart Academy, Fontbonne Hall Academy and St. Joseph High School participate in the CSJ Garden Service Retreat under the direction of Heather Ganz and Phil Marinelli.
FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Sisters, Associates and Friends,

With all of you who support and encourage us, the Associates and Sisters of St. Joseph have never been more convinced that our mission of unity through love of God and neighbor without distinction is desperately needed in our world at this time. Daily we are bombarded with news of division, discrimination, violence and scandal. But as people of faith in God’s unconditional love, we live in hope.

This issue of Focusing gives tangible witness to hope that is alive through the relationships that sustain all life, witness to the dignity of all persons and meet the needs that surround us every day. We are so proud of our congregation’s history and the tremendous influence our Sisters, Associates and Co-ministers have had on countless lives. We are thrilled with the recognition of our mission by the Historic Register of New York State that now includes us on the National Register of Historic Places. This recognition gives us hope and encouragement to continue to be a significant influence in our local area, our state, our nation and the global community.

What is most significant in our ongoing influence is to join with others who share our values and passion and see new ways to witness to God’s creative and enduring love. Our commitment to our land ethic has birthed many projects preserving our land and the life it sustains. From our solar array and rain gardens to our farmers, we are truly seeing God in new ways. Our educational ministries build relationships that encourage learning, service and collaboration among faculty, students and new partners. Sisters promote the dignity of the human person, caring and listening to others as chaplains, mentors to health staff, and as an internationally recognized theologian. By building bridges across religious and cultural divides and empowering at-risk children to develop their full potential and confidence through the arts, God’s all-inclusive love is tangible.

All of these endeavors parallel similar efforts of Sisters of St. Joseph around the country and throughout the world. We are related to over four thousand Sisters and over three thousand Associates and Agregees across the country. In July, there was a national gathering of younger members to pray and discern how to continue to be a self-emptying presence in our world. These relationships, along with gatherings with other congregations through the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) encourage and influence new expressions of our mission.

We thank all of you for your encouragement and support for all of our endeavors, especially as we renovate our convent. This project will provide a safer and more accessible space for our sisters who continue to minister in such powerful ways through their prayer, presence and influence. We remember all of you in our prayers and we are grateful.

Sister Helen Kearney, CSJ
The universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects. And listen to this: The human is derivative. The planet is primary.

—Thomas Berry, CP

This quote has become a daily mantra for me especially with the divisive rhetoric, distorted reality and demeaning reactions that are causing polarization and discord to abound in our times. It serves to deepen my awareness of the Universe’s tendency towards differentiation and reminds me of the importance to be involved with programs or institutions that are actually enhancing the diversity of the world. It awakens my consciousness to the uniqueness of my being that can continually move towards greater authenticity through the interactions with my environment: gardening, art, education, and those whose thoughts are similar and even different from mine. Through contemplative practice I come to see that racism, sexism or anthropocentrism is a degradation of another and work against the very grain of life. Is not gravity God’s pull that enfolds us into one loving embrace? We are not created in isolation and have an inherent movement towards union. This truth helps me to unlearn the interpreted story of dominion, and peel back a mindset of stewardship and relearn how to live in kinship.

The four-fold wisdom as proposed by Thomas Berry: the wisdom of indigenous peoples, women, classical traditions and science have much to teach me about how to be in these times. Their wisdom touches into the core of my being and moves me to the great work of our time; to bring a new era when humanity is present to the planet in a mutually enhancing manner with all created beings. Joining in this work I am inclined and inspired to think beyond a tribal mentality and is what I believe will move us to be one sacred community of life God invites us to co-create.
Entering the Motherhouse grounds is a delight to behold! One might observe three, four, even eight organic farmers on their individual plots fertilizing soils, preparing rows, sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, all with an indescribable reverence and gratitude for the gifts of Earth. We plant the seed, God gives the increase. It’s all about relationship, isn’t it! In a recent Newsday article featuring Visitatio Garden, S. Karen Burke, Land Initiative Coordinator, was quoted, “It’s a new way of looking at our God, seeing God in all things. It’s changed our relationship with Earth and really helped us see that all the decisions we make with Earth and the environment do have a significant impact on our neighbors.”

“We appreciate how precious and sparse this type of land is in western Suffolk and realized our responsibility to preserve it,” added S. Helen Kearney. In addition to the farms, a solar panel system provides 63 percent of electricity on the campus, 28 acres are preserved as farmland; 40 acres of pristine or untouched forest are in the process of being preserved; 112,000 square feet are dedicated rain gardens in two locations; 3 acres of grassland has been transformed to a native grass meadow; a new waste management system is in process, plus a myriad of educational enrichment opportunities are offered to students and visitors throughout the year. Come and see!

Community Day, May 4, sisters celebrated the revitalization of the grounds with informational tours to the various sites. Of course, this didn’t happen overnight! Rather, it is the result of prayerful discernment, study, planning, and implementation flowing from the congregation’s EARTH LAND ETHIC STATEMENT, as well as and its ongoing commitment to its ecological vision. “The call to ecological conversion is part of our developing spiritual vision in the 21st Century. An understanding of its theological underpinnings will deepen our awareness of an interconnection with creation and the unity of all things in God. We will avail ourselves of all opportunities to develop ourselves in this understanding and to act upon it.” —Chapter Direction Statement 2011, 2016

“A new way of seeing God”- Hardly any religious or human endeavor can take priority for our concern if natural life systems continue to be undermined and destroyed. In response, new religious sensitivities have emerged among religious who recognize the sacred dimensions of Earth. In 1980, S. Miriam Therese MacGillis, OP, inspired by the new cosmology of Thomas Berry, founded an Earth Literacy Center at Genesis Farm in the Delaware watershed of Blairstown, NJ. It was she who promoted community supported agricultural initiatives in surrounding regions, particularly in congregations of women religious. It is to Miriam, the inspiration for the movement, that we owe the greatest debt of gratitude for her passionate and selfless dedication.
Courageous pioneering religious followed her lead. S. Mary Ann Garisto, SC, established Sisters Hill Farm in Stanfordville, NY, connecting people and neighborhoods from the city with food cultivated on the farm. S. Rita Wieken has done similar work on the Franciscan lands in Tiffin, Ohio. On the Motherhouse grounds of the Dominican sisters of Amityville, NY, a project initiated by S. Jean Clark, OP, has spread Earth literacy in communities across Long Island. S. Virginia Pearl, CSJ, worked with Heartland Farm outside Salina, Kansas. S. Chris Loughlin, OP, established an Earth-Literacy Center called Crystal Springs in Boston. S. Patricia Sieman, with the support of her order, created a Center for Earth Jurisprudence co-sponsored with the law schools of St. Thomas University and Barry University in Miami, Florida. Brentwood CSJs wholeheartedly embraced this Great Work inspired by the Spirit and led largely by members of the CSJ EARTH MATTERS group.

“Seeing God in all things” - There are also expansive properties owned by religious congregations where native plants and wildlife remain largely undisturbed. While former ministries focused mainly on human endeavors, these pristine spaces hold a sense of the sacred. There is an urgency to preserve spaces where native plants and wildlife can flourish and where birds can nest and raise their young. As a result, many congregations have placed their lands in “forever green” land trusts. ROAR – Religious Organizations Along the River have united to protect and preserve their land along the magnificent Hudson River in New York.

In 1984, a group of religious women from the U.S. and Canada, interested in exploring the new cosmology and its implications for this emerging world view, formed SISTERS OF EARTH. It is an informal network of women who share a deep concern for the ecological and spiritual crises of our times and who wish to support one another in work toward healing the human spirit and restoring Earth’s life systems. They are teachers, artists, writers, gardeners, contemplatives, activists, mothers, retreat presenters, from NA, SA, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and beyond. The title of this year’s conference captures their spirit – SHARING THE WISDOM, SHAPING THE DREAM: CREATING THE FUTURE WE WANT.

“The recovery of the capacity for subjective communion with Earth is the consequence and cause of a newly emerging spirituality. Subjective communion with Earth, identification with the cosmic-Earth-human process, provides the context in which we now make our spiritual journey.” —Thomas Berry
There are no accidental meetings between souls...

A deceptively simple observation, but one that unfolds every day in every life in myriad ways. Throughout the next six pages, you will witness miracles resulting from these “chance” meetings of minds, souls, hearts and hands. As individuals, each Sister brings the special gift of self — as a group, they accomplish wonders … wonders beyond their own expectations and limitless in the rippling effects throughout our society.

Preenika Dabrera, CSJ—A Competent Listener

Who is a Chaplain? A chaplain is a person who is capable of being a calming presence at a chaotic moment. He/She must be a compassionate and non-judgmental listener. This is easier said than done. My 20 months chaplaincy experience in New York Methodist Hospital taught me much about myself. Before I entered the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, I considered myself to be an excellent listener. At the very beginning of the program, I was surprised to learn how poorly I listened to people. Many times, in my mind I started to think about similar experiences I encounter while persons explained their own situations. At times, I was embarrassed when the person before me asked a question because I could not recall what he/she had said a few minutes before. I have learned many good lessons while trying to improve my listening skills. One of the most valuable lessons was how important it is for a person to know that they have been truly listened to by another person without any judgments. Many people just want to talk out loud, and by doing that, sometimes, they find the answers to their own questions. Most of the time, they feel relief for being able to express their feelings in a safe place.

Self-care and self-awareness are two of the most important things we should practice daily in order to become better pastoral caregivers.

It is hard to be an empathetic listener. When I listen to a person, my own past life experiences, my relationship with family members and my relationship with God come to the space between me and the person before me. Many times it takes the focus away from the person. The CPE experience taught me that it is important to take time to reflect on what is happening within me so my “stuff” will not interfere with my interactions with others. Self-care and self-awareness are two of the most important things we should practice daily in order to become better pastoral caregivers. I am still learning the A, B and C of chaplaincy ministry, and hope to learn the more of this ministry’s alphabet in the years to come. It’s all about relationships, isn’t it.
Beth Johnson, one of the most influential Catholic theologians in the world today, has authored 12 books and over 100 articles, translated into 13 languages including Korean and Icelandic. A frequent lecturer in university and church venues at home and abroad, she has received 15 honorary doctorates and numerous teaching awards and book prizes, and has mentored dozens of doctoral students who are now professors. Beth never ceases to attribute the influence of her ministry to the support of the congregation.

At an event in April honoring Beth’s retirement from Fordham University after 27 years of service, President Joseph McShane, SJ, touched upon her spirit. “You dance with the questions, and therefore you play with God, and God plays with your heart, and that allows you to do all you have done to become the iconic feminist theologian of American theological history, for which we are deeply grateful.” Beth has spent her life exploring the question “Who is God?” tracing the spiritual and practical importance of answers given by women, racial minorities, poor and oppressed peoples, and even the Earth.

Despite her gifts Beth is simply herself, grateful but never seeking adulation. Family and friends find her open, attentive, insightful, and fun-loving. A good cook, she loves to host gatherings with simple meals that have a gourmet touch. Her flourishing plants and little cat bring the natural world close to home. The end of a busy day finds her listening to music or curling up with a good book, preferably a mystery. Beth is one in a million – a friend of God, prophet - and beloved Sister of St. Joseph.

You Dance With the Questions...
—Joseph McShane, SJ
Reflecting on four decades at Northwell Health, S. Linda V dorick, RN, is quick to mention what has mattered most — her colleagues. Her words come as no surprise. S. Linda is grounded and practical. Her compassion is contagious. And she’s served as a positive influence to many she has encountered, especially to those in Employee Health Services, where she has worked as a registered nurse the past eight years.

“She’s had a phenomenal career here in the health system,” said William Lowe, MD, Medical Director of Employee Health Services. “She’s a real mentor to the younger staff. People confide in her for many different reasons. She’s the nucleus of our department.”

New beginnings
Linda entered St. Joseph’s Convent in Brentwood in 1962, a time when women were entering vocational life at a record pace. Most became elementary and secondary school teachers. Linda’s path was different.

“We didn’t ask for nursing. We were put into nursing,” she said, referring to her first assignment in the sisterhood. So, her career began in the emergency department of Kings County Hospital. Linda was later recruited to join the nursing staff in Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Medical Center’s emergency department in 1977. She’s seen the hospital change since. “[Back then] when you went into the body of the first floor, literally there were eight exam rooms,” she said. “You had a small lounge, where you could sneeze and be right outside the door. On the other side of our waiting area was the neonatal ICU. They were right on top of us. That’s how tight it was.”

Memorable moments
Throughout her years, S. Linda was driven by helping patients find the right care in a timely manner, and boosting LIJ’s strong reputation. Linda takes pride in several achievements, including her role in educating doctors and nurses as an instructor of advanced cardiac life support.

Attending ED physicians gave Linda a nurse of the year award in 2000. But perhaps she is most proud of joining the effort to save lives on 9/11. She was among the LIJ contingent of three ambulances carrying nurses, doctors and emergency medical technicians to Manhattan to provide care that day.

Linda also did get her opportunity in education. Linda was an associate professor of the Licensed Nurse Practitioner program at Farmingdale State College for 10 years, all while working at LIJ.

How does she get all of her energy? “I don’t have a husband,” she quipped. Joking aside, S. Linda is a special person who has made an impact in the sisterhood and at Northwell.

“Sooner or later I’m going to have to retire,” Linda said. “Right now, it’s a lot of fun. I’m there more socially than I am for work. I don’t have to do it, but the people I work with are great.” It’s all about relationships, isn’t it?
When it’s over I don’t want to end up simply having visited this world. —Mary Oliver

S. Kathleen Carberry must have felt the same way. Her life, the constant “Call to the Spirit,” and her enthusiastic response have clearly given her Congregation and the world a legacy of successful ministries, teaching and a powerful influence in the empowerment of women.

Kathleen has received numerous awards and citations. Among them, in 1986, for her role as principal of Our Lady of Lourdes School in West Islip, she was awarded the coveted “Blue Ribbon Award,” given in Washington DC by the United States Education Dept. She also received an award from the National Education Department Association. When Kathleen recently retired from the Learning Connection, she received a Citation from the Town of Islip; the list continues.

Kathleen attended St. Saviour’s grammar school and high school. She then went to St. Joseph’s College in Brooklyn. As a senior something inside her “began to percolate.” She thought she would “try it out” and entered the Sisters of St. Joseph for the fall semester. Sure she wouldn’t stay, she didn’t buy winter clothes…but the Spirit had a different life planned for her.

Kathleen took her first vows in 1966 and as a Novice and Junior Sister Kathleen taught primary grades in the Academy of St. Joseph until 1968. Then Kathleen asked Mother Immaculata Maria if she could go to Puerto Rico, and although she was still a Junior Sister, Mother Immaculata said yes. In Puerto Rico, NYU had a satellite campus and in 1973 Kathleen got her Masters. In 1977 she went to St. Joseph’s College, Suffolk campus in Brentwood, to coordinate a Child Study Department. In 1977 she went to Our Lady of Lourdes, West Islip, one year as Assistant Principal, then as Principal until 1989. At that time, she became Principal of St. Killian’s School in Farmingdale. When the school closed because of the regionalization of Catholic Schools, Kathleen began a Sabbatical and Renewal Program. In 1993 Kathleen went to Stella Maris High School to begin a 7-8 grade program called the Maura Clark Program. S. Mary Ryan, OP and S. Clara Santoro encouraged Kathleen in 1994 to begin “The Opening Word II.” Then in 1999, Kathleen partnered with the Brentwood School District and became a separate corporation under a new name, “The Learning Connection.” The rest is history. The amazing growth and expansion in size are truly impressive. All of us, teachers and volunteers, feel great pride and know the privilege it is to be there.

Kathleen created the energy that drives the entire mission. When one thinks of all she has accomplished—beginning ministries, repairing others, she is truly a visionary. Kathleen is professional and very competent, yet compassionate and kind to all, especially to the immigrant women students.

Passing the torch was heart wrenching and poignant for her! “I know that what has been done for the empowerment of women will continue as an important mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph and will continue because of the generous gift of the staff and their commitment to the mission.”

May the grace of our God continue to fill your heart, dear Kathleen, and thank you for your amazing responses, hard work, perseverance and holiness.

S. Kathleen Carberry passes the torch to Denise Murray.
The Guinness Book of World Records has recently conferred on Queens, New York, the designation of being the most diverse zip code in the world. That is one of the reasons why S. Annelle Fitzpatrick, Ph.D. is thrilled about having the opportunity to teach both Sociology and Cultural Competency at St. John’s University. Annelle states that, “within a five-mile radius of St. John’s University there are Hindu mandirs, Sikh gurdwaras, Muslim mosques, a Buddhist monastery and a Jain temple – one of the few in North America!” She is always asking her students to reflect, “As you drive past these iconic buildings, do you ever ask yourself, ‘What do I know about the cultural and religious beliefs of faith traditions and cultures other than my own?’”

Based on an educational philosophy that believes that for education to be transformative, the subject matter must be both cognitive and experiential. Annelle works to get her students out of the classroom and into the real world. Thus, Professor Fitzpatrick can be found organizing field trips that give both faculty and students the opportunity to learn about different cultures and diverse faith traditions. Last Fall, Annelle took faculty and students to tour various Hindu mandirs in the Queens area, affording them the unique opportunity to participate in a puja service – the central form of Hindu worship. The day concluded by inviting the Pandit (Hindu Priest) and all the members of the Hindu interfaith committee back to the SJU Campus for a traditional Indian dinner and Hindu cultural entertainment.

This Fall, Annelle has organized another excursion entitled “Judaism, Islam and Sikhism: Explored, Explained, Experienced.” “We selected a Friday to host this field trip because Friday is sacred to both Muslims and Jews and participants can actually see – not just a building - but they can observe their neighbors at worship.” Thus, on Friday, October 12, 2018, faculty and students will begin the day by attending a traditional Friday Jumu’ah service at the Bait uz Safar mosque in Hollis, where they will pray with their Muslim neighbors. Then they will proceed to a Sikh Temple in Richmond Hill (one of the largest in North America), where they will participate in a devotional Kirtan service, followed by a tour of the Gurdwara and lunch at the langar with members of the Sikh community. They will then head to an orthodox synagogue in Forest Hills where participants will partake in a Kabbalat Shabbat Service, followed by a traditional Friday night Sabbath meal at the Forest Hills Jewish Center, where members of the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish communities will break bread with students and faculty. Annelle agreed, “It’s going to be a full day – but who needs to travel to Saudi Arabia, Israel or India – when you live in Queens!”

Reflecting on her role as teacher, Annelle responded: “I absolutely love teaching – I’ve been doing it for almost 50 years! I find teaching so life-giving — and I find it so ironic — that the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph is so relevant today. Our charism of fostering reconciliation of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God is as relevant and as challenging today as it was in France centuries ago. In an age when hate crimes are at an all time high, when we are closing our borders and building walls instead of bridges, when many become suspicious of others just because they are wearing a turban or a hijab, the challenge of trying to unite all in God’s love is a formidable task.”

If you asked Annelle, “What is your passion?” without hesitation, she would respond “fostering reconciliation of neighbor with neighbor and neighbor with God!” It’s all about relationships. Isn’t it!
Grace Edna Rowland, CSJ—Recognizing Her Passion

We are called to give full expression to our giftedness as women in the church... revealing God’s love... and to respond with courage and fidelity by undertaking whatever ministries may best bring about the union which is our purpose. —Mission Statement

You ask, “What am I passionate about?” I love teaching: watching young people learn and grow and gain confidence, realizing their own gifts and talents and self-worth. My passion stems from my childhood. I was raised in a family surrounded by love, with parents who encouraged us, gave us self-confidence and taught us that we could be anything we put our minds and hearts to. So, I have spent my adult life “paying forward.” In the classroom, my priorities are building confidence and self-esteem, whether I am teaching second graders or college seniors.

Another passion of mine is theatre. At age seven I was putting on shows on our driveway, using the garage door as the “theatre curtain.” Directing musicals at the Academy of St. Joseph in Brentwood, at Mary Louise in Queens, and finally at St. Joseph’s College in Patchogue afforded me marvelous opportunities to build confidence and self-worth in young people and to see them grow and flourish when given the opportunity to perform and receive the affirmation of applause.

The dream of converting a run-down caretaker’s cottage on the grounds of the newly established campus of St. Joseph’s College into a theatre space similar to the charming barn-like New England playhouses which I have always loved became a reality in 1983. I met a man with the same passion for theatre! Together with Clare Rose, a successful businessman, an old house was converted into the Clare Rose Playhouse, named for the man who turned the dream into reality.

As we begin our thirty-third season, I have tremendous gratitude and great satisfaction, knowing how many young people have been impacted and given the opportunity: to perform on our stage, to take acting classes, and to learn all aspects of production in our play production courses. The achievements and satisfaction they experience in their accomplishment contribute greatly to their personal development and bring me great joy!

Driven by that same passion to encourage and empower young people and as a result of research done on my Ph.D. in theatre, I created a program Spotlight on Children. It is designed to provide at risk children from area schools with a safe, secure environment under the guidance of caring, supportive college interns. The children learn to express their feelings and build self-esteem. Spotlight on Children offers after school workshops in a clubhouse like setting, where children, especially those at risk, are empowered and encouraged to realize their full potential. The development of this program is an outgrowth of my doctoral dissertation entitled Creative Drama and Behavioral Change: Building Self-Confidence through Self-Expression.

So, reflecting on the gifts and graces God has given me as a Sister of St. Joseph, I am filled with gratitude as I realize the opportunities I have been given to pursue my passions, while living out our call.

Stimulated by the Holy Spirit of love and receptive to God’s inspiration... we live and work to bring all people into union with God and one another. —Consensus Statement from the Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph
On April 21, 2018, the CSJ Associates began their Large Group Day with a panel that reflected with them their experience of being seized by the Charism and how it impels them to carry out the mission. Each panelist spoke from the heart and gave a powerful witness of ordinary women doing extraordinary things. As a sister, associate, St. Joseph Worker or partner in mission we all share a common bond as we carry out the mission in our time. Our relationships energize and empower each other, making it clear that we all need one another. The morning’s panel came to a close with the hope that we continue to companion one another and listen to one another’s wisdom so that we can become an even stronger force for good in our world.

In the afternoon, Mary Alfano, Teresa Ford, Melanie Marzano and Doris Slevin were welcomed into formal association as CSJ Associates. Deborah Steedle, CSJA, shared a reflection on the Good Shepherd to conclude the day.

Presenters for the CSJA Day were (l. to r.): S. Joan Gallagher, Leadership Liaison, Moderator; S. Preenika Dabrera, who shared her life as a vowed member; Tina Cafaro, CSJA, who spoke of her work at The Learning Connection; Cheryl Cedillo who shared on being a St. Joseph Worker providing service at Hour Children; S. Marie Mackey who shared on her work of outreach to young adults; Serena Liguori who shared her work as Executive Director of New Hour for Women and Children LI.

Self-Emptying Love: Living the Vows for Our Times

In 2017, the youngest 7% of the US Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph held a virtual gathering in order to deepen and expand their relationships. A result of this gathering was the formation of a committee to plan for a national event. The following Brentwood Sisters volunteered to be on the planning committee: Suzanne Franck, Marie Mackey and Jo Ann Squiteri. The fruit of their work resulted in the first national gathering of CSSJs who are ‘65-ish’ and under. The gathering took place at the Felician Motherhouse, Chicago, from August 2nd to 5th 2018.

Looking through the lens of the Charism and heritage, those gathered explored the call to be a self-emptying presence in the world. As Sisters of St. Joseph, the vows of obedience, poverty and chastity call us to a deeper understanding of this way of being with self, with God and with the dear neighbor. During the course of the days the 57 Sisters that were gathered prayed, pondered and partied with one another. Those who could not travel to Chicago were able to be part of the event virtually through a Zoom connection.

Drawn together as Sisters of St. Joseph, we recognize that God is doing something new in us. The urgency of the times impels us to channel the radical nature of our call and charism, claim our corporate voice, and create transformational change.

~CSSJ Vision Statement
Recognitions, Honors and New Leadership

Ann O’Hagan-Cordes has been named the 11th Principal of The Mary Louis Academy. She succeeds S. Kathleen McKinney who held the position for 21 years. Ann is a 1984 graduate of Mary Louis and is, therefore, the first alumna to become principal.

Ann holds a BS in Education from St. John’s University and an MS in Education from Fordham University. Ann has a long history of ministering with the Sisters of St. Joseph. She has taught at St. Camillus School and Stella Maris High School in Rockaway Park before serving as the Assistant Principal at Stella Maris. Ann came to The Mary Louis Academy in 2010 as Assistant Principal for Academics. She has overseen the scheduling of the student’s programs, as well as the development of new courses and concentrations in areas such as sports’ medicine, art, STEM, and leadership.

Ann has said that she is “passionate about preserving the educational mission of the congregation and the commitment to academic excellence.” S. Helen Kearney, President of the Sisters of St. Joseph, has said, “Ann’s personal experience with TMLA as a student and as administrator makes her uniquely suited to her new role as principal. The Congregation and Board of Trustees have great confidence that Ann, along with the dedicated faculty and staff, will lead TMLA into a vibrant future.”

Ann lives with her husband, Chris, in Belle Harbor. She has a son, Sean, who is a computer forensic specialist and a daughter, Christina, who is a TMLA alumna and now teaches there. We wish Ann many blessings in her new ministry.

Denise Murray became the new director of The Learning Connection on July 1st. Denise is a graduate of St. Joseph’s College, Patchogue and has been a staff member at TLC for five years. Before her youngest child was born, she taught English as a New Language at the Brentwood Public Library for five years. Denise and her husband are the parents of four children, a son in college and another about to start college, a daughter in high school, and one in elementary school.

In addition, Denise trains other adult education teachers for the Long Island Regional Adult Education Network in how to administer the New York State required Best Plus Test for English Language Learners. She is also competent in ASISTS (Adult Student Information System and Technical Support), the New York State database which tracks student progress, demographics, attendance and teacher professional development.

With her energy and enthusiasm, Denise will carry on the educational mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph at TLC.

Newly appointed St. Joseph’s College President, Donald R. Boomgaarden, Ph.D. (c.) processed out of Sacred Heart Chapel in Brentwood following an Inaugural Mass celebrated by Rev. Francis Pizzarelli (r.) on April 8, 2018. Sisters of St. Joseph who serve as Administrators, Board Members and Faculty attended the Mass.
Each year, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Long Island Chapter (AFPLI) holds an Awards Luncheon during their one-day Philanthropy Day Conference. This year, on November 16, AFPLI will be presenting the Nonprofit Impact Award to the Sisters of St. Joseph for their environmental initiatives. This award is sponsored by the Long Island Community Foundation.

This award goes to an organization that demonstrates innovative and interdisciplinary or collaborative strategies to address a community vulnerability to achieve significant outcomes. We are very grateful to AFPLI and the Long Island Community Foundation for this prestigious award.

Lumen Christi Award

For more than 40 years, Catholic Extension has asked mission dioceses to nominate their best, brightest and most inspiring people for the annual Lumen Christi (Light of Christ) Award. In America’s poorest places, these honorees bring the light of Christ to those who struggle. Among this year’s group of 47 nominees **S. Nancy Edwards** was included.

In 1970 Nancy requested from her CSJ Congregation a missionary assignment, imagining being sent to a faraway country. Instead, she was asked to go to Appalachian Kentucky to teach Bible school, in an area where Catholics comprise less than one percent of the population. She fell in love with the people and the land and realized that even within the United States, missionary experiences exist. She is described as a modern day “circuit rider” and makes her rounds in Paintsville teaching at Our Lady of the Mountains School and serving as parish director of religious education and outreach coordinator at St. Michael Church. She even went back to school to become a LPN to help staff the local health department as a public health nurse. Each year, she helps the pastor of St. Michael, Rev. Terry Hoppenjans, to host volunteer groups who come to support residents in Appalachia. Having worked with Nancy for 53 years, he sums up her ministry as “doing whatever is needed.”

Providence House Celebration

On June 7, 2018, Providence House celebrated 39 years since its founding in 1979 under the leadership of S. Elaine Roulet. The event was a perfect moment to publicly introduce the first lay Executive Director, Danielle Minelli Pagnotta, who transitioned to the position last Fall from NYC Department of Homeless Services. The event, held at the Riverpark in Manhattan, honored three people under the title People of Hope. **S. Elaine Roulet** received the Foundress Award, **S. Janet Kinney**, the People of Hope Award and Erin Construction and Development Company, the Corporate Good Neighbor Award.

The Ladies of Charity recognized the work of Hour Children at their annual luncheon. Here S. Tesa Fitzgerald accepts the award with Sisters and friends in attendance.

**S. Virginia Down** recently completed her studies for the Geriatric Spiritual Care Certificate Course offered by the Avila Institute for Gerontology under the direction of Sister Peter Lillian, O. Carm. During this course, which consists of four weekends and one week of clinical experience, participants are prepared to serve in the field of elder care and serve the specific spiritual needs of elders. The program is taught in a team approach by a diverse and expert group of faculty – which includes our own S. Annelle Fitzpatrick.

**S. Mary Ross** accepted the the Foundress Award representing S. Elaine Roulet and S. Janet Kinney received the People of Hope Award.
Two years ago when the Sisters of St. Joseph began a partnership with the Peconic Land Trust, a group representing them came to meet with us and visit Brentwood. After seeing Sacred Heart Chapel, they were amazed that it was not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and they urged us to investigate the possibility.

We had never thought of this. As a member of the Brentwood group at the meeting, I offered to look into it. Knowing it would require research into our archives, I asked Virginia Dowd, our archivist, to join me. And so, together we began a fascinating historical journey.

The National Register of Historic Places comes under the Department of Parks which is under the United States Department of the Interior. It is the Federal Government’s official list of districts, sites, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. A listing recognizes a property as being of significance to the community, state, or nation. To qualify the property has to have been significant for at least fifty years.

Significance is recognized in four areas:
• It has contributed to the broad patterns of history
• It is associated with the life of a significant person in the past
• It possesses high artistic value or embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master
• It yields or will yield information important in history or pre-history

In May 2016, we contacted Jennifer Betsworth, the district director for our area, at the State Historic Preservation Office and requested the necessary forms. We completed the initial application and after receiving it Ms. Betsworth visited Brentwood on October 28, 2016. Her purpose was to visit Sacred Heart Chapel. Her enthusiastic reaction was that the Chapel should be presented in a context and that the entire Brentwood complex should be listed in the Register. She immediately said she was prepared to support our eligibility and nominate us for inclusion in the National Register.

Now came the real task. Being accepted into the National Register requires in-depth information. Every building considered significant needs to be described in detail including age, dimensions, number of rooms, photographs, architecture and many other details. This was a monumental task that could not have been accomplished except for Virginia’s methodical perseverance.

The entire property being presented, its dimensions, boundaries, past history, and design also requires clear and accurate description.
Finally, all the history must be narrated with detail, accuracy, and a supporting bibliography. For us, that meant from LePuy to the present land initiatives and everything in between.

The questions we were asked included details such as why Bishop de Maupas was willing to help Father Médaille or why women wanted to join the Sisters in Brooklyn! The readers were fascinated by Mother Mary Louis and requested detailed information about her. We had many back-and-forths with Ms. Betsworth on this narrative as questions were asked and answers were sent. It was a very in-depth and analytical historic investigation.

In addition, a comprehensive bibliography had to be included and it became obvious that they did check the footnotes!

We had originally intended to apply for inclusion of Sacred Heart Chapel only. Now, at their direction, we were applying for the entire Brentwood campus. Our application stated that we were presenting ourselves as eligible because of outstanding architecture and our significant contribution to an historic period of religious life and history. We also included the witness of our extensive ministry on Long Island in education, health care, and other services.

When Ms. Betsworth presented our document to her superiors at the Office of State Historic Preservation, her superior determined that Mother Mary Louis was a person of significance and so we were eligible in three of the four categories. (Eligibility in only one category is necessary for listing.)

On March 23, 2018, we were notified that we had been approved for listing on the Historic Register of New York State. On May 7, 2018, we were notified that we were accepted for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

What does this mean for us?

1. The distinction is prestigious. It is a public honor to be listed as significant and worthy of preservation.
2. We are eligible for state grants for restoration of properties when they are available.
3. There is some limited protection from state actions (i.e. building a road through our property).
4. For taxable properties, tax incentives are available.

There are no restrictions on the use of the property when using private funds. We own the property and have the right to manage, alter, or sell it. As long as no Federal money is involved, state laws are the only restriction.

As soon as we obtain them, we now can display plaques that state that this property has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior.

Mother Mary Louis would be proud.
Sisters Helen Kearney and Eileen Kelly visit the Convent to observe the ongoing renovations. Sisters Pat Mahoney and Edith Maher work as Owner Representatives on the Renovation Team.

The Main Stairs have been removed. The stained glass window of St. Joseph will be featured in this new Reception area.

Community Room

Second Floor Hallway looking towards the Chapel
Each day is a work in progress...
Dear Friends of the Sisters of St. Joseph,

As you know, Focusing magazine highlights the mission and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph. You receive Focusing because you believe in this mission and you support their ministries. Your gifts of financial support demonstrate your partnership with them and your commitment to their work. Because of your valued relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph, I ask you to take a step further in deepening that relationship -- I invite you to become a member of the St. Joseph Society monthly giving program.

As a member of the St. Joseph Society monthly giving program your donation goes further by helping reduce our administrative, postage and paper costs. More of your gift goes directly to the needs and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Also, because we can count on your contribution monthly, we can more effectively budget our limited resources. For you, giving is easier and more convenient, with no repetitive checks to write and no envelopes to mail.

Here’s all the information you need to make the decision to become a member of the St. Joseph Society.

What is a St. Joseph Society Member?
A St. Joseph Society member is a benefactor of the Sisters of St. Joseph who pledges a monthly gift to help provide for the Sisters and their ministries.

How does this monthly donor program work?
You decide on a monthly gift amount that fits your budget. You then authorize your bank (by completing OPTION 2 on the enclosed reply envelope) to transfer this amount from your checking account directly to the Sisters of St. Joseph. This can also be done using your credit card.

What are the benefits?
For you, giving is easier and more convenient, with no repetitive checks to write and no envelopes to mail. For the Sisters of St. Joseph, your donation goes further by helping reduce our administrative, postage and paper costs. More of your gift goes directly to the needs and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Also, because we can count on your contribution monthly, we can more effectively budget our limited resources.

Is this a safe method of making donations?
The automatic transfer of funds is safer than mailing cash or checks. In fact, one of the largest users of this method of funds transfer is the U.S. Social Security Administration.

What record will I have of my monthly donation?
Your monthly checking account or credit card statement will show the date and amount of your donation. In addition, we will send you a year-end letter with your total contribution.

What if I change my mind?
Just pick up the telephone and call us if you want to change the amount of your gift, stop your gift, stop the automatic donation transfers, or if you move, change banks or get a new credit card. We will need this information five business days in advance of a scheduled donation transfer date.

How does my gift get distributed?
Money raised through our donor appeals benefits one of three areas: (1) the ministry work of the Sisters of St. Joseph; (2) the retired and infirm Sisters; (3) general operating expenses needed to run the Sisters of St. Joseph’s facilities.

How do I sign up?
Simply complete the information in OPTION 2 on the enclosed reply envelope and mail it to us. If your monthly gift will be made from your checking account, please enclose a check for your first month’s donation. It’s that simple! We’ll take care of the rest.

Thank you for considering becoming a member of the St. Joseph Society monthly giving program. Please be assured of the continued prayers of the Sisters for you, your loved ones, and your intentions.

Gratefully,

James R. Rennert, CFRE
Director of Mission Advancement
Thank you to the following organizations for their generous grant funding:

- **LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**
  $20,000 for rain garden and native plant environmental initiative

- **NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**
  $75,000 for remediation of the Southern Pine Beetle in the woodlands on the campus

- **SUFFOLK COUNTY WATER QUALITY PROTECTION AND RESTORATION PROGRAM**
  $200,000 for the initial engineering design phase of constructing two alternative waste management systems

- **SUPPORT OUR AGING RELIGIOUS (SOAR!)**
  $12,500 to purchase text to speech reading machines

- **FRANK J. ANTUN FOUNDATION**
  $5,000 for the St. Joseph Worker Program

- **TOMKINS CHARITABLE GIFT FUND**
  $1,700 toward the purchase of a van with a wheelchair lift

And so we thank you --
our loving and faithful friends and partners ... for your gifts of prayer and financial support

May you be blessed with life, love, health and wisdom for all the days to come.

—FROM THE MISSION ADVANCEMENT TEAM
Sister Pat Turley, Sister Mary Owen Mullaney,
Jim Rennert, Tara Rogers, Carrie Behlen,
Alisha DeLisle, Jennifer Arevalo, Michele Infante

We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.
—Robert F. Kennedy
Living Justly

ROSALIE CARVEN, CSJ

In Pope Francis I newest apostolic exhortation on the call to holiness in today’s world, a section entitled “The Great Criterion” speaks to the inextricable link between spirituality and justice. Realizing that Sisters of St. Joseph of Brentwood have sought to recognize this link and live it out, there is an urgency to offer his text for everyone’s prayer and renewed self-offering to the call to live justly. The following are passages distilled from that text.

Passages entitled Fidelity to the Master

In the 25th Chapter of Matthew’s Gospel (vv.31-46) Jesus offers us one clear criterion on which we will be judged. “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

Given these uncompromising demands of Jesus, (it is the Christian’s duty) to acknowledge and accept them in a spirit of genuine openness . . . without any “ifs or buts.” Can holiness somehow be understood apart from this lively recognition of the dignity of the human being?

If we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he, himself, wished to be identified. In this call to see him in the poor and suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate.

For Christians, this involves a constant and healthy unease. Biblical understanding is about more than simply performing certain good works. It also means social change. For later generations also to be released, clearly the goal has to be the restoration of just social and economic systems, so there can no longer be exclusion.