

L
e
n
t



Journeying with Josephata



2
0
1
3

Newsletter of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate

59th Holy Dormition (Assumption) Pilgrimage – Aug. 10 & 11, 2013

Dear Friends in Christ,

Parishes all over the country are celebrating the *Year of Faith* proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI, from Oct. 11, 2012 to Nov. 24, 2013, with pilgrimages to various places such as Rome, Kyiv, Lviv, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and several other sites. This year, the Ukrainian Catholic Church is also celebrating 1025 years of Christianity in Ukraine with pilgrimages. These pilgrimages are meant to help us truly celebrate this *Year of Faith* and the gift of our Christianity, as well as deepen our understanding of what it means to live our faith. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints and health reasons, not everyone is able to take advantage of a pilgrimage to one of these countries.



Do not fear that you cannot make a pilgrimage during this *Year of Faith!* The 59th Dormition (Assumption) pilgrimage, hosted by the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in Sloatsburg, NY, is much closer than Italy or Ukraine. We hope that many pilgrims will again grace this sacred ground travelling by car, bus, airplane and even on foot.

This year our bishops will be attending the Synod of Ukrainian Bishops in Ukraine in August. However, we are happy to announce that Bishop Emeritus Basil Losten and Archbishop Emeritus Stephen Sulyk will be the main celebrants along with a plethora of our dedicated priests from the Archeparchy of Philadelphia, the Eparchy of Stamford and the Eparchy of Passaic. This year we will also have a group of speakers not only on Saturday but also on Sunday. We will once again have our “camp out” for teenagers and



young adults and hope to also include some activities for our younger children.

The Sisters Servants encourage you to start planning your *Year of Faith* Pilgrimage to Sloatsburg, NY. There is no need for reservations as we will not turn anyone away. We invite you to join us and the thousands of pilgrims who come to Sloatsburg each year, seeking reconciliation and renewal able to return to their daily lives filled with hope. In the words of our dear friend and former pastor of St. Vladimir’s Church in Elizabeth, NJ, +Msgr. Joseph Fedorek, “All roads lead to Sloatsburg.”

Sr. Kathleen, SSMI



SSMI Lay Associates - A Gift of Relationship by: Sr. Natalya, SSMI

On July 30, 1991, the Immaculate Conception Province of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate accepted the one-year commitment of our first Lay Associates, Gerald Muench and Irene and Joseph Kwiatkowski at a Divine Liturgy celebrated in St. Mary's Villa Chapel. In the last twenty-two years, we have had many others who have shared this covenant with the Sisters. Some, for a short time, others until they were called to eternity.

At present there are twenty-three Lay Associates who share in the work and prayers of the Sisters Servants, according to the ideals of our Founders: A life centered in Christ, nourished in prayer and in the Spirit of the Gospel, offering service to those most in need.

Why would a person seek out the opportunity to become a Lay Associate of the Sisters Servants?

In the words of a few of our present Associates:

I became acquainted with the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate through my sister Mary, who was 90 years old and was helping at St. Joseph Adult Care Home.

I became friends with Sr. Michele and Sr. Eliane during my sister's illness. Being close to them and to the other sisters, I became intrigued by the way they lived and I observed their readiness and dedication in helping others, it touched my heart. I also noticed how their little monastery made them happy, content and full of life. Their friendship and testimony brought me closer to God. I became a better person and went back to church. I thank the Sisters Servants for the opportunity they gave me to be part of their Community as a Lay Associate.

-Benny Persichetti

I learned about St. Mary's and the Lay Associates during my visits with a friend. I found a special feeling each time I entered the building. At first I wasn't sure exactly what I felt, but I knew there was something different. I finally realized it was 'Inner Peace'. I enjoyed being part of the functioning world of St. Mary's Villa. The friendships made, working together as a unit. The Liturgy, working in groups, lectures, quiet time. The more I attended, the more I loved being in this environment. I enjoyed stepping out of the busy world, setting time for prayer; refreshment of my soul. I always feel sad when I leave; then I perk-up thinking of a return visit.

I am proud to be a Lay Associate, a part of the Sisters at Saint Mary's and Joseph's. I hope I have helped you in some way by sharing my feelings.

-Jeanne Speranza

The SSMI Lay Associate Program allows me to follow in the example of Blessed Josephata. It reminds me in the circumstances/situations of my daily life, whether at home or in the community at large to serve where the need is the greatest. Sometimes, it is a gentle reminder to lend a listening ear or to go the extra step. As I work in Adult Protective Services, I am reminded of Blessed Josephata in her home care services at the time of the community being founded.

Since I was a professed SSMI with temporary vows and not able to live out the consecrated life, I am grateful to partake of the SSMI Lay Associates Program. I share the heritage of the SSMI but

live out the charism in my married life. In my life, morning prayer, meditation, family rosary and evening prayer is the normal.

Partaking of the SSMI Lay Associates functions, enables me to share fellowship and obtain spiritual nourishment. It is hard for me to remember how long I have been a Lay Associate. There was a delay in joining related to my lack of success in becoming a full fledged SSMI. My love of the Sisters remains constant.

It is my recommendation to consider becoming a SSMI Lay Associate. There are days of spiritual enrichment and days of service- Chinese auction, Pilgrimage, and Calendar Dinner. Each activity brings it's own graces. It allows an opportunity to become the icon of Christ and to be the living church with the other Lay Associates and the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate.

-Nancy Bialkowski

My involvement with the Sisters goes back to the 1980's. At that time, St. Mary's Villa was in need of repairs and renovations. There was an oil tank that needed to be dug up or replaced or something and the Sisters were sent out to the parishes to request donations for this. My parish was visited by Sr. Cecelia, so she is my first contact with the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate.

After that there were visits to Sloatsburg, helping out at pilgrimages and other activities.

It wasn't until later that I and we got involved with the Lay Associates. Over the years, I have gotten to know and care about the other members, although I still cannot remember all of their names. We usually run into each other; not only at pilgrimage, but whenever something is doing with the Sisters, like a Chinese Auction or a funeral. There we are, the same old faces, minus the ones who have gone.

And the good things? I'm part of the Sister's world now. I always will be, for I have that most precious relic, a shared past. That can never be erased, no matter what. Sister Tharasia, Sister Albina, even deceased ones like Sister Rita and Sister Rosalie. I love them all and their world will always be precious to me. And that makes me a SSMI Lay Associate.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of You." Phil. 1:3

-Ken Bialkowski

Our Lay Associates are a gift to our Province and to our Congregation. Their faith, hard work and, especially, the desire to share their lives with the Sisters has enriched all of our lives. God has blessed the Lay Associates and the Sisters with opportunities to work together and times to enjoy the company of one another. We have prayed together and for one another. Our friendships with one another and our relationship with God have grown over the years as our lives have become intertwined. God has truly gifted each one of us.

If you feel God inviting you to learn more about the SSMI Lay Associates Program, please feel free to contact: Sr. Natalya at 845-709-0769; e-mail sistematalya@gmail.com Sr. Kathleen at 845-753-2840; e-mail srkath25@gmail.com

Sister Tharasia Hladio, SSMI - "With All My Heart"

I, Sister Tharasia, was known by many in my hometown of Ambridge, PA as Mary Hladio. My parents, Andrew and Catherine (Winiarchik) Hladio, brought eight children into the world of which I am the fourth, middle child.

I grew up in a loving family with my brothers - +Michael, +Nicholas, William, and baby +Nicholas, who died at the age of one year. - my loving sisters - Ann, +Louise, and Sophie, - and so my loving nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Early childhood and growing up years were spent going to the local school of Anthony Wayne and Junior High and working at Bells' Men's Department Store in Ambridge. I entered the convent at the age of 21 where further education was continued and completed at the university.

I met our sisters, the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, for the first time when Sisters Lawrence and Andrea came to work in our St. Peter and Paul parish in 1940. At that time there was no parochial school as yet. Sisters taught after school from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., five days a week. They also took perfect care of our church including decorating for Christmas and Easter. Sisters organized the Altar Boys and Marian Sodality who always helped the Sisters to work in church.

Besides teaching and caring for our church, Sisters visited the sick, helped the needy and were very kind to all, especially the elderly. Sisters worked quietly and always appeared absorbed in prayer. They not only taught catechism, but the girls were also taught to cross-stitch. Everyone was taught Liturgical singing, folk songs were sung, and plays were performed for special occasions. Watching the Sisters do this fascinated me, and

within two years I had a strong desire to lead a life like our Sister Lawrence and St. Andrea.

When Sister Thomas, then Dorothea Hrynewich, and Anna Duda announced they were leaving to become sisters - I was surprised. After they left for the novitiate, my desire to be a Sister Servant became stronger!

Eventually preparations were made, and I was on my way to Mundare, Alberta, Canada. Upon receiving my first vows and later final vows, I taught in the following elementary schools throughout all of our diocese in the United States: Wilkes Barre, Marion Heights (Mount Carmel), Shamokin and Philadelphia, PA; Detroit, MI; Chicago, IL; Buffalo, New York; Elizabeth and Passaic, NJ.

I also was missioned in the Mundare, Alberta orphanage and was prefect of high school girls in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and St. Mary's Villa in Sloatsburg, New York, where I am at the present time. Presently St. Mary's Villa is a Retreat House where I, along with other sisters, welcome all denominations of people and religious of every rite hosting them for weekends or weeks at a time.

I am grateful to my Superiors for giving me the opportunity to attend Meadville College (St. Joseph's Teacher's College) in Buffalo from where I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education and where throughout my many years have received various certificates in Education, Catechetics, and Theology.

I have always enjoyed working with children and people. For me it is a great privilege and honor to serve Christ. I have tried to serve my God with all my heart. I hope and pray that those whom God inspires with a vocation to the Religious Life or Priesthood would have the courage answer this wonderful call from God!



SPONSOR A CANDLE

Our foundress, Bl. Sister Josaphata Hordashevskya has become a beloved intercessor for many people and this was shown by her beatification in 2001 by Pope John Paul II. In 2010, as part of our double jubilee celebrations, we built a shrine to Blessed Josaphata, which is located near St. Mary's Villa. This small chapel, housing the relics and a specially written icon of Blessed Josaphata, is a place to which people can come year-round to light candles and pray. If you cannot come in person, we would like to offer you a chance to light a candle for 30 days at the cost of \$20.



We light candles to:

Remember the many people who need your prayers joined with our prayers. . . **Remember** your dearly departed loved ones. . . **Remember** our world so direly in need of peace and not war. . . **Remember** the children who are our future. . . **And** whom else should we remember and together storm heaven, the God of All for. . .

Thank
You
God Bless
You

The SSMI's extend Heartfelt Gratitude to the Turula Family for their generosity for many years. Most recently, the Turula Family Fund has given the Sisters Servants \$15,000.00 for the purchase of generators and the maintenance of generators used on our Sloatsburg property because of major damage and destruction sustained every time there is a hurricane or major snowstorm.

Recollection Weekend

with the

Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate

For young women ages 19-40

May 17-19, 2013

**"Follow Me"
wherever you are!**

Where:

St. Mary's Villa Retreat Center
150 Sisters Servants Lane - P.O. Box 9
Sloatsburg, NY 10974-0009



Contact:
Sr. Eliane
(973)779-0249 or (845)499-9721
Email: ilnitskieli10@yahoo.com
Or
Sr. Cecelia
(315) 252-6356
Email: srcelia@yahoo.com

No cost.

This Retreat is for any young lady who wants to follow
Jesus closer however she is being called...

PAVERS / BRICKS



The walkway leading from the road to the shrine are made of bricks/pavers which you can purchase for \$50 each.

You can check on our website: www.ssmi-us.org
for the order form or
contact Sr. Kathleen at 845-753-2840

GREAT GIFTS for a wedding, anniversary,
birthday, etc.

OUR SSMI COOKBOOK - \$20.00 - English
PRAYER & SERVICE - the Life of Sr. Josaphata -
\$15.00

Booklets about the Charism, Vows or Religious
Consecration of Sr. Josaphata - \$4.00 each
available in both English and Ukrainian.

This retreat weekend allows for time to refresh both your body and your soul. In order that each participant receives the greatest benefit from this moment in your spiritual journey, the sessions will be offered simultaneously in both English and Ukrainian.

The weekend affords time with the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate and other faith-filled women, who are either discerning or continuing their vocations. Women will join the Sisters in communal prayer and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, as well as have time for quiet reflection, personal prayer, other activities and discussion. It is a time to meet and foster friendships with other modern day women disciples of Jesus.

If you are between the ages of 19-40, and are experiencing Jesus inviting you to "Follow Him" during the weekend of May 17-19, 2013 at Saint Mary's Villa, please register to come and be our guests.

TREE OF LIFE

Our Tree of Life was placed on the Gallery Wall of St. Mary's Villa in 1988, to acknowledge the benefactors who made the renovations of St. Mary's possible.

We continue to acknowledge every donor who makes a contribution of \$300 or more, with a leaf on the tree. Leaves may also be added in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving.

For more information, contact Sr. Kathleen.

SUPPORT OUR MINISTRIES THROUGH YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

If you are interested in supporting the work of the Sisters Servants, a contribution may be made by sending a check, payable to:

Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate, Inc.

**Have you considered naming us
in your will or annuity?**

Please feel free to contact us with any questions at:
(845) 753-2840

or write us at: P. O. Box 9 Sloatsburg, NY 10974
or email: ssminy@aol.com

*You are remembered in our daily prayers
and Divine Liturgies.*