



Journeying with Josaphata

Advent Issue

November 2018

SSMI's New Beginnings!



Sloatsburg, NY has been the home of the Sisters Servants in the Immaculate Conception Province in the USA since 1941, and we hope it will continue to be for many years to come.

We know that there are various "rumors" out there, and we want to be honest and share with you our future plans, and the reasons that have prompted these decisions.

In 2006 we began a process of "strategic planning" with regards to our property and buildings, realistically facing the decrease in vocations to religious life, an increase in the median age of our Sisters, and a weakened economy which affected our ability to continue maintaining all of the buildings on the property. In 2010, we sold 52 acres in the front of the property, something we needed to do to avoid bankruptcy. In 2013, we sent out an appeal letter sharing with you our situation, asking the tough question, "Will there always be a St. Mary's Villa to come home to?" We asked for your financial support and prayers for vocations. Unfortunately, the appeal gave only \$4,750.00 and no vocations, but we continued to move forward, striving to serve the needs of others. We shared with you our dreams to expand St. Joseph's Adult Care Home, but have not been able to see that dream come true, as of yet.

We have been assisted by financial advisors and professionals in determining the best way to provide for the care of our elderly Sisters as well as continue our ministries into the future. Thus, it is with heavy hearts that we will be selling St. Mary's Villa and some property surrounding the Villa. We are not selling all of our property in Sloatsburg. We will still host the annual Holy Dormition Pilgrimage, which will be August 10-11, 2019.

Dear friends, we know that you may be experiencing "heavy hearts," as St. Mary's has been home to some of you as alumnae of the Academy, retreatants, or felt it was like home whenever you visited. Please know that the Sisters Servants will continue to extend open arms in welcoming you to Sloatsburg, as we minister to our people. We ask for your support and prayers as we grieve this "loss" together, but know that we will heal and experience "new beginnings!"

Sr. Kathleen, SSMI - Provincial Superior

64th Holy Dormition Pilgrimage Hosts over 7,000 Pilgrims

On August 11 & 12, the 64th Holy Dormition Pilgrimage, which has become known as the "American Zavarnitza," hosted over 7,000 pilgrims. The Mother of God (Theotokos) held her mantle over the little mountain in Sloatsburg and provided weather which added to the spiritual atmosphere, which permeated throughout the day. The increase of the Ukrainian faithful this year was due to the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk and His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan. We were also blessed with the presence of Sr. Sofija Lebedowicz, SSMI, Superior General of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate.



His Beatitude delivered the homily for the Pontifical Divine Liturgy, in which he ended with the following inspirational words: "On behalf of our church in Ukraine and worldwide, let me express our gratitude to you, our people of God, for treasuring the biggest national treasure of our Church and our nation, the Christian faith." These words truly express the reason why we host the annual Dormition Pilgrimage, for the uplifting of our spiritual lives. The Sisters Servants are blessed with so many volunteers who assist us in hosting this pilgrimage, for which we are most grateful.

A DVD of this year's pilgrimage is available for purchase at \$15, including shipping and handling, but the supply is limited. Please call 845-753-2840.

SSMI LAY ASSOCIATES - DAY OF REFLECTION



On Nov. 3, 2018, the Sisters Servants hosted a Day of Reflection for our Lay Associates at St. Mary's Villa. The Associates gather once or twice a year for spiritual renewal, and to be nurtured in the history and charism of the SSMI's. The Lay Associates offer their prayers and service in the charism of our foundress Blessed Josaphata Hordashevska and co-founders, Fr. Jeremiah Lomnitsky and Fr. Cyril Seletsky throughout the year. The day began with prayer/reflection and a presentation by Sr. Kathleen, "Marian Spirituality & our SSMI Founders." Fr. James Spera celebrated the Divine Liturgy, at which the lay associates renewed their commitment for one year. Fr. Jim's presentation in the afternoon was, "The Philip Fast: a cure for pre-Christmas stress."

The day included the Lay Associates spending time with our residents at St. Joseph's Home working on a "turkey project." *If you are interested in information about becoming an SSMI Lay Associate, please contact Sister Kathleen. (contact information is on page 4)*



Bishop Paul Chomnycky Appoints Eparchial Director of Youth Ministry



Bishop Paul Chomnycky, Eparch of Stamford, has appointed Sr. Eliane Ilnitski, SSMI as the new Eparchial Director of Youth Ministry. Sr. Eliane was born in Brazil and became a Sister Servant in the province of St. Michael the Archangel in Brazil. In 2005, her province gave her the opportunity to go to the United States to sew priestly and episcopal vestments. She had also worked at the Retreat Center and taught catechism. In 2010, led by her missionary spirit, she made the decision to transfer provinces and become a member of the Immaculate Conception Province in the United States. Sr. Eliane is the Principal of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic School in Passaic, NJ, a position she has held since 2013.

Sr. Eliane looks forward to working closely with Bishop Paul, the clergy and the laity. She will form a committee to work with her on this great endeavor. One of her priorities is to visit each parish, beginning in December. A main goal of a Director of Youth is to assist parishes in working with the youth to strengthen their commitment to the church and deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Eparchy of Stamford is committed to the youth. They have implemented programs and activities to demonstrate their belief that strong family units are essential for vibrant parishes.



Sr. Eliane speaks with the priests at Clergy Days



A group photo of the participants attending the Eparchial Youth Day. The theme was, "Children United in Prayer."

The year 2019 will be the 100th Anniversary of the Death of our Foundress, Blessed Josaphata Hordashevskia. We will notify you of upcoming events commemorating this historic Anniversary. Please continue to pray for the Canonization of Blessed Josaphata!



“WELL DONE, GOOD and FAITHFUL SERVANT”

Sr. Tharasia Mary Hladio was born into eternal life on August 31st, just 27 days after celebrating her 75th Jubilee of Consecrated Life as a faithful and joy-filled Sister Servant of Mary Immaculate. Sister Tharasia's life of prayer and service touched the minds, hearts and lives of so many throughout her 75 years, especially in the ministry of education for over 57 years. In 2003, she moved to St. Mary's Villa in Sloatsburg, NY to be missioned at our Retreat House. Although it was an adjustment from parish life, Sloatsburg was always “home” to her. The Holy Dormition pilgrimage was a special event for her as we welcomed thousands of pilgrims. She spent each summer getting the pavilion ready from top to bottom, as well as the grounds where people would come to honor the Mother of God. In quoting from Sr. Michele's eulogy for Sister Tharasia: “She was a reminder for us, as well as for those who met her and knew her, as we saw the FACE OF GOD in her.”

SSMI JUBILARIANS 2018

On August 4th, the SSMI's, along with Lay Associates, family and friends, gathered at St. Mary's to celebrate with our six Jubilarians 75 years - +Sr. Tharasia Hladio; 65 years—Sr. Consolata Trudick, Sr. Stephanie Sema, Sr. Bernitta Dub; 60 years—Sr. Jonathan Duchensky; and 50 years -Sr. Cecelia Sworin. We thank these sisters for saying “yes” to God and giving their lives for His honor and glory!



Blessed Josaphata Shrine Pavers

If you would like to purchase one of the pavers (bricks) on the walkway to the shrine, they are still available. The cost is \$50.00 each. They can be engraved with the sentiment of your choice, along with a clipart image. An order blank is available on our website, or you can call 845-753-2840 for a form.

Items for Sale

***Blessed Josaphata books in English and Ukrainian

***Prayer Enrollment cards for Living & Deceased

Our Religious Gift Shop is open throughout the year at St. Mary's Villa

Donations help us to support our ministries, and allow you to become part of our ministry. If you have any questions, please contact us:



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