



Journeys

SISTERS OF ST. CASIMIR

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Sisters of Saint Casimir 2020 Jubilarian Sister Margaret Zalot celebrates her Golden (50 year) Jubilee. From left, Sister Elizabeth Ann Yocius, Sister Immacula Wendt, Sister Margaret Zalot and Sister Regina Dubickas in front of the altar at St. Casimir Center.

by Sister Elizabeth Ann Yocius

Jubilee Day holds memories of promises made and faithfully lived out day after day and year after year, individually and as a Congregation. It is a day of celebration that, like everything this year, has been affected by the pandemic, not diminishing the joy, but altering our manner of celebration.

Sister Joyce Ann Dopkin and Sister Nilda Varanauskas remained in Avellanda, Argentina, and celebrated their 60 years, Diamond Jubilee, with Sister Asuncion Costantini. They were greeted with a breakfast basket from the faculty at the parish school, where Sister Nilda had been the principal and the Sisters had been involved in ministry for many years.

Sister Asuncion prepared a delicious dinner for the Sisters in Avellaneda. Sisters, Associates and friends of Sister Joyce and Sister Nilda added to the joy of Jubilee day. Hopefully, it will be safe for our Sisters to come to

the States and celebrate with us in 2021.

Meanwhile, in Chicago, Sister Margaret Zalot, ready to begin the celebration of her 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Casimir, began the day in the St. Casimir chapel with morning prayer for the Solemnity of the Assumption, which concluded after Sister Margaret presented flowers to Mary and renewed her vows that were accepted by Sister Regina in the presence of Sisters Immacula Wendt, Dolorette Lopez, and Margaret McTaggart. All enjoyed a jubilee breakfast afterwards.

St. Rita Shrine Chapel was the site of the Eucharistic Celebration of Sister Margaret Zalot's Golden Jubilee. After all the planning and re-planning, Sister Margaret and the Sisters arrived early to be greeted with a power outage on a really hot, humid, August 15. This meant that there would be no organ, no microphone, no lights and no air conditioning if the power wasn't restored.

So, of course, prayers for power began and Mass

continued on page 5

A Message from Sister Regina



Dear friends,

It is with joy that we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of Sister Margaret Zalot on August 15. Our Diamond (60 year) Jubilarians, Sister Joyce Ann Dopkin and Sister Nilda Varanauskas, celebrated in Argentina. The story of that beautiful and memorable day for

our three Sisters is found in this issue of *Journeys*. We rejoice with Sisters Margaret, Joyce Ann, and Nilda and celebrate their lives of faithful service and response to the needs of our time. May God continue to bless them with an ever-deeper spirit of faith, hope, and love.

What a powerful moment in our history —so many things happening that are finding their way deep into our being. And what a powerful opportunity for transformation in so many areas of our life.

During the months of “sheltering in place” because of the pandemic, we found ways to connect with one another through the gift of technology. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious provided us with weekly reflections on the meaning and the blessing of the time we are living in, using poetry, song, readings from Scripture, and questions for sharing.

We arranged weekly gatherings on Zoom to share these reflections with one another. How wonderful that we could connect from all over the country with our Sisters, Associates, and friends, and even with our Sisters in Argentina. So many commented that they looked forward to these weekly meetings and found them helpful and supportive for their lives.

The questions that kept emerging in our reflections were – What are we learning from all this? What are we becoming through all this? What is the blessing? I would like to share with you some of the learnings:

- I came to know how fragile our life is and how we must appreciate each day.
- I realize more and more that there are things I can control and so much that I am not in control of and need to place my trust in God and in others.
- I think we have all become more aware of and responsive to each other's needs and are kinder to one another.
- I find myself thanking people who risk their lives and come to work in order to attend to our health care, safety issues, food on our tables, and so many others who provide for our needs. I try to thank them for their service. And I have heard of so many who have expressed their gratitude to those who serve our needs by treating them to a meal or a special treat. Signs appear at various places, “Heroes work here!”

- I think we have grown in awareness of how dependent we are on others and express our gratitude to them.
- I don't like wearing the mask and I know that there are a number of people who refuse to wear it for various reasons. One day I saw someone with a sign that said, “I'm wearing this for you.”
- People are thinking more of others and reaching out to assist them. At our parish there is a group of people who volunteer to shop for those who are elderly and cannot do it for themselves.

We have become much more aware of how interconnected we are with one another throughout the world, and how decisions that are made in one part of the world affect the rest of the world. May it lead us to work on the issues that affect all of us: justice, poverty, hunger, peace, climate change, and care for the world we leave for our children.

In the midst of the pandemic and how it was changing our lives arose the voices of many across our nation bringing to our awareness the sin of racism, calling us to deep reflection on our history, the biases we hold in our hearts toward those who are different from us, the need to pray and act in such a way that we bring about a world in which people see each other as sisters and brothers, sharing a common home. We had a wonderful opportunity to educate ourselves a little more about how we got to this point in our history through an assembly with our IHM Sisters in Scranton, who asked Sharon Durham to walk us through the history and understanding of the deeper meaning of the many voices calling for change.

Recently I saw a photo of someone holding a sign that read, “There is only one race – the human race!” We have it within us to be better than we act, many times unaware, to truly make the world our common home. Our faith and our love for one another enables us to do this.

I find these words of Albert Camus appropriate to remind us of the strength we all have within us: “In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer.” In the midst of the “winter” we are experiencing through the pandemic and the voices calling to be heard, we must draw on “the invincible summer” within us, those inner resources of faith and hope, the graces God gives us. We can make the world a better, holier place.

Happy Thanksgiving, a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas.

Sister Regina Dubickas

Sister Regina Dubickas
General Superior
Sisters of St. Casimir

Jubilarian Reflections

Sister Joyce Ann Dopkin 60 Years



Jubilee Day! Not the kind of celebration we were looking forward to. The pandemic left its mark on this as it did on so many other things. But with all, or many, of the extra frills removed, we stood before what was really important: Rejoicing in God's faithfulness and love over these 60 years of joys, sorrows, achievements, failures, encounters, and losses.

We began the celebration sharing a surprise breakfast tray that the leadership of Our Lady Mercy School had sent to us. This school was home to us for many years, and we always rejoice in seeing the "seeds grow." Sister Asunción had decorated the chapel fittingly for a jubilee celebration. But because of the pandemic, there were no fresh flowers until associate Fabian appeared with a bouquet in his hands.

We attempted to (virtually) join Sister Margaret Zalot at St. Rita's Chapel, succeeding about communion time. We did enjoy her reflection and identified with many of her thoughts and feelings.

Being that August 15 is the patronal feast of the diocese, I went with one of the associates to participate in the "Car Procession" in honor of our Blessed Mother and then returned for a virtual Mass transmitted from the Cathedral.

Many phone calls and messages flowed throughout the day to prove that love is stronger than the COVID-19 virus, and we did have a happy Jubilee.



Sister Nilda Varanauskas 60 Years



I am Sister Nilda. I entered the community in Argentina right after finishing my studies to be a teacher. God has been very good to me during all these years and has guided all my ways, helping me take care of all the things He put in my way. Being an only child, I never felt alone because Jesus and the Sisters in the community were always close to me.

This year, because of the pandemic, I was not able to go to the United States for the celebration of my Jubilee, but I am very grateful for everything the Sisters did to make this a very special occasion.



Sister Joyce Ann Dopkin, above on the left, and Sister Nilda Varanauskas in their chapel on Jubilee Day.

Photo on left: Sisters Joyce Ann Dopkin and Nilda Varanauskas enjoy the breakfast surprise prepared for them by the Madre de la Misericordia leadership in Avellaneda, Argentina.

*God Bless
All Our Jubilarians*

Jubilarian Reflections

Sister Margaret Zalot 50 Years



a glimmer of gold
breaking through the dark chapel
bringing light to all

a glimmer of gold
reminding me of much more
love in abundance

a glimmer of gold
God's abundant love for me
in all that happens

Yes, there was “a glimmer of gold” in all that was happening during the August 15 jubilee celebration of my 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Casimir in the St. Rita Shrine Chapel. It was not what we had been planning since our first Zoom meeting with our 60th anniversary jubilarians, Sisters Joyce Ann Dopkin and Nilda Varanauskas, in late February.

But it was what it was meant to be, and God was in the chapel in our midst despite the challenges surrounding us. There would be no jubilee luncheon after the Mass. Sisters Joyce and Nilda could not travel from Argentina because of travel restrictions, and then, discovering upon our arrival at St. Rita's, there was no power – a small brush fire had cut the power from nearby electric lines.

We were assured that power would be restored shortly. The utility (electric) company was busy at work on the downed power lines. But not in time for a planned 10:00 a.m. Mass. We could not start later than 10:30. So, at 10:30 a.m., we just forged ahead – without power, lights, or air conditioning. We used our best outside voices, used the piano instead of an organ, and prayed and sang on cue.

Somehow, as I renewed my vows, and thanked God for calling me to follow Jesus as a Sister of St. Casimir, and promised to live my vows in the spirit of Mother Maria and in service to the Church in all the circumstances of my life, I knew that God was with me, in me, and all around me and had been all my life.

It was more than a glimmer of gold – it was a golden treasure that I felt in my heart. As I said those words, I was overcome with the emotion of the moment and God's infinite love for me through my Sisters; all those whom I had taught over the years; all those whose lives had been touched by mine; those who were gathered that day in the chapel; and, through the wonders of technology, with family and friends throughout our country as well as Argentina and Lithuania.

My family, friends, and so many others were participating in the Mass, many through livestream video. All could see the liturgy in the chapel and somehow wanted me to see them. And, to me, it seemed as though I could see them. I knew they were with me. My youngest niece in Pennsylvania tried to take a screen shot of me after the Mass and was disappointed that I would not look at her!

I recalled the words on my remembrance card from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: “Glory be to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” I had used those same words on the cover of my liturgy booklet for my final profession of vows forty-five years ago. I had just begun my journey as a Sister of St. Casimir, and God's work through me was only beginning.

God had much more work to do, and God has been doing it ever since. These words continue to be words of FAITH. The FAITH God has in me and each of us to go beyond where we are to where we are called to be. The FAITH God continues to have in me despite my limitations. My own FAITH in the God who loves me, no matter what. The FAITH I am challenged to have in myself and in others.

God is so good. God has worked through me all through the years and continues to do so, and I am so very grateful. God has the power to do more than I could ever imagine.

I cannot but help hear again all in the chapel, and in their own homes singing the Celtic Alleluia after my vows were accepted in the chapel that day. And, so, I sing it once again with you: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



Sisters gather after the Jubilee Mass at St. Rita's to congratulate Sister Margaret Zalot. Front row, from left, Sr. Theresa Dabulis, Sr. Dolorine Lopez, Sr. Margaret Zalot, Sr. Margaret McTaggart, Sr. Lawrence Puishys, Sr. Sylvia Puchoras, Sr. Rose Nakibuuka, IHMR and Sr. Julie Weckwerth, CSSF. Second row, left, Sr. Mary Louise Andrulonis, Sr. Immacula Wendt, Sr. Elizabeth Ann Yocius, Sr. Margaret Petcavage, Sr. Rita Marie Kerdock, Sr. Theresa Papis, Sr. Deborah Romanuski, and Sr. Kim Mis, CSSF.

Jubilee Memories



Jubilarian Sister Margaret Zalot processing into St. Rita's Chapel on August 15, 2020.

continued from cover story

was delayed until 10:30 a.m. Richard Sokas played the piano and Gia Sokas sang loudly, undiminished by the lack of power. Sister Margaret Zalot processed in to our traditional hymn, "Come Thou Chosen."

Father Tony Pizzo, OSA, was the main celebrant, Father Ray Flores, OSA, and Father Jaunius Kelpsas concelebrated and Father Ray gave a creative homily based on the format of a recipe for making bread, relating it to teaching and life.

This was the first time many present saw flour, yeast, and water combined and kneaded into a ball of dough in a chapel! Father Ray presented Sister Margaret with a loaf of bread that he had baked prior to Jubilee Day. After the prayer/song to the Holy Spirit, Sister Margaret renewed the vows she had made 50 years ago.

God heard our prayers for the restoration of power after the first petition when the lights went on, air came back, and the organ worked.

Following the liturgy, a socially-distant receiving line provided a space for guests to greet Sister Margaret in the lobby.

Although the luncheon at the Palos Country Club was cancelled, and the SSC Community celebration had to be postponed, the Marquette Park SSC Community (Motherhouse and Nativity) shared an evening Jubilee Banquet at 2601 West Marquette Road, complete with homemade shrimp cocktail, individual orders from Longhorn restaurant, and homemade angel food cake with strawberries, blueberries, and whipped cream.

Dinner was served by courses in the council meeting room that had been transformed into an elegant banquet room by Sister Immacula. Sister Regina even led Sister Margaret into the room with our traditional Jubilee March. The three-hour, Jubilee Banquet was the longest in the history of our Community!

On August 19, Sisters Regina, Immacula, Elizabeth Ann, and Margaret Zalot participated in a Zoom (virtual) Jubilee Prayer Service with Sisters Joyce, Nilda and Asuncion in Argentina. Sister Joyce and Sister Nilda renewed their vows and received a Jubilee Blessing. Good conversation followed and, thanks to technology, the miles between us couldn't diminish Jubilee Joy!



Father Tony Pizzo, OSA, congratulates a jubilant Sr. Margaret Zalot after renewal of her vows.

'I Will Not Be Stingy with God'

-Venerable Mother Maria Kaupas

by Sister Immacula Wendt

Mother Maria's generosity and legacy continue...

During the influenza epidemic of 1918, Mother Maria called her daughters to go out to help the people who needed them: "Today, I give you permission and my blessing on your work of mercy. Truly, these are unusual times!



Venerable Mother Maria Kaupas

"I ask that especially those who will not go to nurse the sick and with school not in session, to at least pray more for themselves, and that God would protect all the Sisters, and for the suffering, that they may receive the necessary help"

(Excerpt from a Mother Maria letter of October 16, 1918).

Orphan children from the flu epidemic were cared for by two Sisters of St. Casimir at the St. Casimir Parish in Philadelphia. Our Sisters were the heroes, they were the Sisters of mercy, who gave witness in so many ways to God's love amidst the pain, suffering, and dying that plagued the country.

St. Casimir and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, our two patron saints, both defenders of the poor, have been the models for the Sisters of St. Casimir to go the distance throughout all these 113 years.

Both saints of royal birth had great love for their neighbor, especially the

Unusual Times: Legacy of SSCs Continues



*St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Artwork by Sister Mercedes*



*St. Casimir
Artwork by Sister Mercedes*

poor, as shown by their lives of visiting the sick, serving them in their needs, and their generous giving of alms.

History demonstrates that the Sisters of St. Casimir have faithfully lived out our call to make a difference in peoples' lives, especially those most in need. Walking in the footsteps of Mother Maria, we set out to teach in the Home Missions in New Mexico in 1937. Not being satisfied just to teach in the schools, our zeal to spread the Gospel message led us to many hours of missionary work in the surrounding small towns

on Saturdays and Sundays.

In 1941, Mother Maria's hope and dream was fulfilled when Sisters ventured off to begin our ministry in Argentina. The Sisters were never stingy. Wherever there was a need or whatever would make a difference in the lives of the people, the Sisters were there with their love, support, and dedication, amidst hardships and tears, too.

Countless other stories remain unheralded but imbued with Mother Maria's words, "Always more, always better, always with love."

When there were one-parent families with small children, the Sisters arranged for them to stay in a classroom during schooltime, or the Sisters became house-mothers in the convent while the parent went to work. Clothes, uniforms, schoolbooks, food, furniture, and household supplies were collected and given to families who had been devastated by fire, death, or need. This also included helping newly arrived immigrants find and set up homes or taking the children into their schools.

One can't forget money collected or raised for those who are poor and in need, for Catholic Relief Services, for purchasing food for the Motherhouse food pantry from the Greater Chicago Food Depository, for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, for financial assistance for students in need, and for so much more. Schools and individual classrooms had bake sales, raffle ticket sales, walk-a-thons, and charity day events for raising money for others. Whenever there was a need, a way was found to go that extra mile!

In 1963, the Second Vatican Council, called by Pope St. John XXIII, opened new ways to not be stingy with God. Sisters became involved: teaching English as a second language, tutoring adults and children, RCIA, social work with abused

'I Will Not Be Stingy with God'

Unusual Times: Legacy of SSCs Continues

children, pastoral care, visiting the sick and homebound, prison ministry, and free clinics. The Sisters and students at Villa Joseph Marie High School in Pennsylvania heard the cry and for years prepared sandwiches for a homeless shelter in Philadelphia. This also was the time when the Sisters branched out to become more involved in the social mission of the Church.

It also was the time when many of our Sisters began to retire from their full-time ministries. But

they also saw the need to continue to live out "always more, always better, always with love" in their retirement as they began to use their presence, power, and influence in working toward improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods. We joined SWOP, the Southwest Organizing Project, taking part in prayer actions and meetings regarding safety issues in our neighborhoods, violence in society, the cause of the uninsured, women and children issues, and respect for diversity.

In 1994, our chaplain at the Motherhouse, Rev. Joseph McCormick, OSA, spurred us Sisters to again go that extra mile when he asked us how we were continuing to work for the poor as St. Elizabeth had done. Without even a clue as to the what, how, where, we moved forward to open a food pantry. "Build it and they will come" became our cry. And for 20 plus years, this small but so-needed St. Elizabeth Food Pantry provided food for thousands of people who came in their time of need.

In 2020, our lives have been hit by another pandemic. It has brought sickness and dying, fear and uncertainty, loss of jobs, hunger, homelessness, and hopelessness in our lives and in the lives of so many.

Today, two of our Sisters are 100; half of our 39 members are 83 or older. The Sisters living at Franciscan Village are, and have been, in lock-down for these past eight months. We hear the cry of all those suffering in so many ways. And we continue to hear the words, so deeply embedded in our hearts "I will not be stingy with God." We ask ourselves: What is God asking of us? What can I still do?

It is with deep faith, trust, and love that we have deepened and intensified our commitment to being powerhouses of prayer and being that presence to others in new ways. With the donning of masks and keeping social distances, there is shopping being done for others, cheery notes being sent, wellness calls being made, giving a wave to one another, throwing a kiss, giving a helping hand to someone who needs laundry done, a



Sister Mary Louise Andrulonis with Maria High School students who were volunteering in the pantry in the early 2000s.



Part of the original crew of Sisters who formed the St. Elizabeth Food Pantry at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Casimir. From left: Sister Andreata Naudziunas, Sister Grace Ann Kalafut, Sister Mary de Sales, Sister Lourda Paulauskas, Sister Immacula Wendt, and Sister Margaret Zalot. Maria High School Campus Minister Judy Bumbul is the second from the right.



'I Will Not Be Stingy with God'

Unusual Times: Legacy of SSCs Continues



Sisters celebrate Sister Concetta's 100 birthday - social distancing and visiting through a window. Sister Concetta is behind the window, far left.

bed to be changed. The few of us Sisters still living in Chicago have gone to the Village bringing treats and visiting with our Sisters in Assisted Living outside their windows.

How we, the Sisters of St. Casimir, long to be the ones in the trenches today, the first responders, as we did in the past. But today, we count on all those who can to "go the distance" with their "always more, always better, always with love." Even though we may not be able to do this ourselves, we have been blessed to be able to help those who can, through a ministry fund that so many generous people have contributed to throughout all these past years.

We may not have our own food pantry or our own hospital or social service offices, but we have been able to help St. Rita Parish with their ever-growing food distributions, Friends of the Poor in Scranton, PA, where the need has more than tripled during these months, the



Sister Concetta Petruskas

Sister Lourdine Ramoska (in white) the blood sister of Sister Philip, provides a comforting touch.

needs of Catholic Charities, Sinai Health System, SWOP, IMAN, Archdiocese of Chicago COVID-19 Relief Fund, and PADS as each ministry tries to meet the needs of those they serve. This way of giving back certainly brings us joy and comfort. We cannot be stingy with the gifts God has given to us. Yet, somehow, it always comes back to us a hundred-fold. May God be praised.

Thank you for your generous heart. May good health and God's love goodness abound in your lives.



Sisters celebrate Sister Philip Ramoska's 100th birthday. From left, front row: Sister Dolorine Lopez, Sister Sylvia Puchoras, (sitting in wheelchair) Sister Lourdine Ramoska, Sister Philip Ramoska, Sister Elizabeth Ann Yocius, Sister Virginia Gapsis, Sister Rita Marie Kerdock, Sister Elenisa Buzas, and Sister Theresa Papsis. Second row, from left: Sister Marilyn Karpovich, Sister Janine Golubickis, Sister Margaret Zalot, Sister Lawrence Puishys, Sister Margaret Petcavage. Also pictured in photo is a caregiver from Franciscan Village and Donna Riskus.

Villa Joseph Marie

Sister Margaret Petcavage Inducted to Wall of Fame



On Saturday, September 12, Villa Joseph Marie High School inducted two new members into its Wall of Fame: Sister Margaret Petcavage, SSC, and former Science Department Chair, Marie Politowski. The evening included memorable reflections from the inductees themselves as well as from family, friends, and former colleagues. It was a wonderful celebration of these two remarkable women and the impact they had, and continue to have, on Villa Joseph Marie High School.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place, only a small gathering of the inductees' friends and family were able to attend in-person. However, many well-wishers joined the celebration remotely via a Zoom link, including the Sisters of St. Casimir from near and far including Argentina! Congratulations to Sister Margaret, SSC, and Marie Politowski as they officially join the Villa Joseph Marie Wall of Fame.



Sister Margaret Petcavage, accompanied by Sister Rita Marie Kerdock, drove to Pennsylvania for the induction.



Sister Margaret Petcavage

Testimonial by Sister Janine Golubickis, SSC

A young teen from Scranton, Pennsylvania, came to Villa Joseph Marie High School and studied and lived there in her high school years. There her inspiration grew to follow in the footsteps of Mother Maria Kaupas, who had purchased this land for an Eastern residence for her Sisters, and then founded this high school.

She became Sister Margaret Petcavage, a Sister of St. Casimir, a teacher, and a principal. In her leadership role in the religious congregation, Sister Margaret Petcavage returned to the Villa, serving ably as a Board member from 1998 to 2008. Sister Margaret has loved Villa.

As a historian, she is keenly interested in its buildings, people, and evolution. Sister knows stories about the early days and the development that has taken place there. We are enriched by what she shares about this and how Mother Maria lived, loved, and valued this hallowed space.

Today Sister's passion is for the beatification of Venerable Mother Maria whose person, holiness, and presence permeates all who walk the corridors of VJM. May Sister's endeavors contribute to the attainment of that goal.

Congratulations, Sister Margaret Petcavage, SSC! We rejoice with you as you are inducted into the Wall of Fame.



Testimonial by Sister Virginia Gapsis, SSC

It isn't every Congregation that gets to have their foundress named a holy person. We, Sisters, are truly blessed that Mother Maria left her zone of comfort in Lithuania, and founded a Congregation of religious women in Scranton, PA, the Sisters of St. Casimir. Thousands of lives have been touched through Mother's dedication to the Lord. We are pleased and grateful that Sister Margaret has pursued the beatification/canonization process for the past 28 years of her life.

In order to increase devotion to Mother Maria, monthly Masses have been held at the Motherhouse for the past 32 years. Sister searched out different priests and bishops for these Masses so that each priest, as celebrant, had come to know of Mother's heroic virtuous life and thus passed this knowledge and devotion on to their parishioners.

In addition, we are proud that along with the Holy Spirit, Sister Margaret had successfully written a book, called a positio, which was sent to Rome and now preserves the heroic virtuous life of Mother Maria and the precious memories of 45 witnesses who actually knew Mother. This 704 page book, which took Sister three years to write, was presented to our Holy Father, St. John Paul II, by Francis Cardinal George. Upon receiving it, the pope said he loves to read this type of book. The book was approved by the Committee of Cardinals and thus Mother Maria was named Venerable Servant of God.

Thank you, Sister Margaret, for your dedication to our Foundress and our Congregation.

This is a great honor for Sister Margaret who always praises and supports her alma mater, Villa Joseph Marie.

Future Business Leaders Club at VJM

Interview with Mary Frances McNulty



Club members visit Widener University to attend a leadership forum. Flanking Jeanne Frawley the conference's keynote speaker (at center) are, from left to right: Sarah Taylor, Mary Frances McNulty, Morgan Murphy, Ashley Rosica, Lindsay Morris, and Lauren Redican.

During the 2019-2020 school year, Mary Frances McNulty, a junior at Villa Joseph Marie, founded a new club called the Future Business Leaders Club (FBLC). The FBLC seeks to develop tomorrow's leaders and introduce students to the world of business. Mary Frances agreed to answer interview questions.

• *What inspired you to begin the Future Business Leaders Club? (FBLC) When did it start? Where?*

Mary Frances: Both my parents are in the business field, and I have always been curious about how businesses operate. I thought establishing the Future Business Leaders Club (FBLC) would be a great opportunity to introduce my fellow classmates to the world of business. The club was founded in my sophomore year, during the Fall of 2019. Working with the club's faculty advisor, James Bender, the FBLC members meet on the first Tuesday of every month to plan club activities.

• *What is the goal? How does this relate to VJM school work? Extra activities? What about the spiritual aspect?*

Mary Frances: The mission of the FBLC is to introduce students to the world of business and help them develop the leadership skills necessary to succeed in life. VJM is committed

to developing well-rounded students, who make positive contributions to society. The FBLC complements this goal by fostering an environment where students can learn both ethical business and leadership skills.

• *How many members? How do students join?*

Mary Frances: Although only a year old, FBLC is one of the largest VJM clubs with approximately 44 members. Students are always welcome to join the FBLC. At the start of each school year, we have an introductory session for students to learn about the club and its activities. It is at that session where students can sign up to be a member. We also have students who become club members during the year after attending a FBLC sponsored event.

• *What do you want us to know about FBLC?*

Mary Frances: The FBLC is committed to building upon the great academic and social environments that exist at VJM by organizing activities designed to broaden student knowledge about the business world and instill the skills necessary to become tomorrow's leaders. We achieve this goal by hosting fun events that put students in a position that develops them as leaders. Anyone interested in learning more about the FBLC and its activities can subscribe to

our newsletter, The Bottom Line, by sending me an email at maryfrancesmcnulty@gmail.com.

• *How can others get involved?*

Mary Frances: Anyone interested in becoming a FBLC member or assisting/participating in a FBLC event can contact me at maryfrancesmcnulty@gmail.com or the club's faculty advisor, James Bender, at jbender@vjms.org.

• *What is the COVID-19 effect? Learnings?*

Mary Frances: Beginning in March, all club meetings were held through Zoom conferences. Although it initially presented a challenge as we adjusted to our new world, it did not prevent the FBLC from meeting and organizing events. For example, on May 13, 2020, the FBLC hosted a Zoom conference with Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick. The meeting was attended by both VJM faculty and students. It covered a series of topics that ranged from the federal government's response to COVID-19 to the Congressman's initiatives to deal with the opioid epidemic. The Zoom conference lasted over an hour and a half. The Congressman was so impressed by the questions and level of participation that he extended an invitation to us to visit him in Washington, D.C.

VJM Row Boat Christened 'Sister Regina'



Rowing is a sport rooted in old traditions—one of which is the naming of a rowing shell (boat). A shell is named for someone or something that is particularly meaningful to the program.

On Saturday, September 12, the Villa Joseph Marie High School rowing team in Holland, PA, christened two shells—the new Varsity 4 shell named “Sister Regina,” in honor of the General Superior of the Sisters of St. Casimir, because she is a beacon to the Villa community, and the new Freshman 8 shell, as “Founders,” to honor the girls who founded the rowing team in 2017.

Both shells were blessed with holy water from Lithuania, homeland of Mother Maria Kaupas, (foundress of Villa) by Sister Margaret Petcavage, (pictured on the far left in photo), a Villa alum. Sister Rita Marie Kerdock, also an alum, christened the shells (photo below). Both former VJM students are now Sisters of St. Casimir, living in Chicago.

It was a beautiful morning with beautiful people celebrating the naming of two beautiful shells! Many students, former rowers and parents, along with Villa President Tom Kardish, were in attendance, making the perfect event complete.



LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) ASSEMBLY

Sisters Regina Dubickas, Immacula Wendt, and Margaret Zalot joined 900 people from across the United States and a number of other countries for LCWR's first ever virtual assembly August 12-14, 2020.

The days together focused on the topic of God's Infinite Vision: Our Journey to the Borders and Beyond and how the lives and mission of Catholic Sisters continued to be impacted by two issues – that of COVID-19 and a deeper understanding of racism at this time – were explored throughout the

conference.

Some of the usual assembly activities took place during these days – prayers, presentations, and small group sharings – all in support of leaders in these uncertain times. Of course, the informal sharing over meals and between meetings were missed.

The importance of three LCWR initiatives were noted by the LCWR officers:

- A five-year commitment to work on dismantling racism – all members were invited to name and eradicate racism

within themselves, their congregations, their ministries, and LCWR as an organization.

- A designated fund to support the future of religious life in the United States
- A national conversation on the emerging future of religious life

We, as a congregation, will be looking at how we can respond to each of these initiatives and will be taking concrete steps to begin working on the first one, the commitment to work on dismantling racism in ourselves, our congregation and our ministries.

IHM-SSC Covenant Continues

by Sister Margaret Zalot

This summer the Sisters of St. Casimir and the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Scranton, PA, have had numerous opportunities to be together, to strengthen the covenant bond between them as Sisters.

IHM Assembly 2020 – July 25, 2020.

As part of our IHM-SSC Covenant, we have gotten together since 2010 with our IHM Sisters of Scranton, PA, on a regular basis – sometimes in Chicago, sometimes in Scranton. We always have looked forward to the IHM July Assemblies in Scranton – when we met with many of their Sisters for community meetings; jubilee celebrations; remembrance of their deceased Sisters; and their annual St. Joseph Festival, a fundraiser for the IHM ministry at the St. Joseph Center, a special place in Scranton that serves people who are diagnosed with intellectual disability and those who seek pregnancy support, adoption assistance, outpatient therapy or medical day care services.

But this year was an exception because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no live gathering, but 129 Sisters, including the SSC Leadership Team, participated in the IHM's first totally online assembly on July 25, 2020.

This day included the President's Address (Sister Ellen Maroney, IHM), in which she challenged those gathered: "Our witness is critically needed today, and we need to find ways to expand our efforts. If we can't attend meetings or be a public voice, then by phone calls, letters, texts, poetry, art, and music. Our voice, our presence, our participation with and for others in whatever ways we can is necessary. People look to, and for, us to stand with them. We cannot be silent or stand on the sidelines. We need to claim our place as leaderful women religious wherever we are and whatever we do."

Following the midterm report and reports from various task forces, there were opportunities for small group discussions in "Zoom rooms." The SSC Leadership Team made presentations (video clips done by Daina Cyvas) in our legacy space, focusing on four aspects of our life: together for a great love, quality of life during the time of the pandemic, reaching out to the world as we walk the talk of peace and justice, and how we have had to readjust because of the pandemic.

Also, included in the day's activities was a video celebration of the 2020 jubilarians, including Sister Margaret Zalot, and a slide show with reflections on those Sisters and Associates, including Sister Maureen Juozopavicius, who have died since their last IHM assembly.

SSC Jubilee Celebration – August 15, 2020.

Many IHM Sisters were able to join Sister Margaret Zalot virtually through the livestreaming of the Golden Jubilee Celebration from St. Rita Shrine Chapel.

SSC Founders Day Reflection – August 28, 2020.

Individuals and groups of IHMs joined with many SSCs, Associates, and friends with the Zoom prayer and reflection Continuing the Journey: What will be my next steps? as we marked the 113th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir.

IHM Gathering: The History and Impact of White Privilege – September 12, 2020.

Twelve SSCs (Sisters Mary Louise Andrulonis, Theresa Dabulis, Regina Dubickas, Janine Golubickis, Grace Ann Kalafut, Dolorine Lopez, Sylvia Puchoras, Deborah Romanuski, Nancy Streitmatter, Immacula Wendt, Elizabeth Ann Yocius, and Margaret Zalot) joined many IHMs (from Scranton, Monroe, and Immaculata), OSPs (Oblate Sisters of Providence), and IHM Associates for special presentations and small group discussions on "The History and Impact of White Privilege," presented by Sharon Durham, Sister of Mercy Associate.

The day touched on how many of those who are White live out their White privilege, thus perpetuating systemic racism in our country. Sharon's sharing of some of the ways we got to this point in our history was very eye-opening, especially what has been called The Doctrine of Discovery. This Doctrine was formalized in the Papal Bulls of the 13th and 14th centuries, specifying that the entire world was under the jurisdiction of the Pope, as God's representative on earth. Any land not Christianized could be possessed on behalf of God. These Bulls gave Columbus and other explorers the legal and moral license to do whatever they wanted to the people and lands they encountered. It's hard to believe that was what happened. And today, there are many voices calling for change. We were challenged to hear those voices.

**IHM-SSC
Blessed, hope-filled
Praying, listening, relating
Open to the future
Covenant**



Remembering Maria Middleton

September 10, 2002 – October 8, 2020

by Sister Margaret Zalot

On February 15, 2019, we (the Sisters of St. Casimir) first met Maria Middleton. She was a sophomore at Villa Joseph Marie at the time, and she had just been diagnosed with a brain tumor. Maria, her parents, Brian and Susan Middleton, and her pastor, Father Simone Volavola, MSC, had flown to Chicago to pray at the sarcophagus of Mother Maria Kaupas in the chapel at the St. Casimir Center with the Sisters of St. Casimir leadership team.

The next day the leadership team accompanied our four visitors to Lemont for a healing service in the Franciscan Village chapel with the Sisters living there. Maria touched our hearts and led us to begin our journey of prayer with her through the intercession of Mother Maria, asking God for her healing.

God heard our prayer and Maria was healed – not in the way we were hoping for, but in the way Maria continued her life – bringing her family together as one, accepting the love and support from her school community, praying in the quiet of her home and before the Eucharist at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA, and inspiring those who attended to Maria during her last four months. Maria connected with those who came to know her throughout the world. Maria was a special young woman, and we are blessed to have known her.

On October 8, Maria passed from this life into the loving hands of our God. That morning, Maria's mother had a conversation with God – struggling with God's will versus hers. Eventually she accepted God's will for herself and for Maria. She told Maria to "Go to God. God promised that there is a beautiful place prepared for us, prepared for you. Go to God." Shortly afterwards, Maria died, surrounded by her parents and her siblings.

The very next day the Villa community gathered on the soccer field for a beautiful memorial service with some of Maria's favorite songs. Both Maria's parents gave testimony that morning – to Maria's life, to Maria's faith, to Maria's love. Of course, it all was livestreamed, so whether near or far, many could be a part of this celebration of life.

A week later many gathered – this time at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa (virtually) – for a celebration of the final farewell to Maria – by participating in the Mass of the Resurrection celebrated



by Father Volavola, who returned to Doylestown for this special Mass. Many priests concelebrated this with him. The Mass was a beautiful testimony to a life well lived.

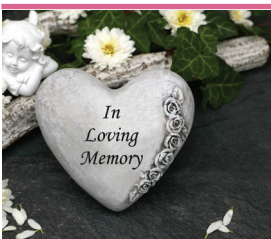
Maria did many things well during her short life. Her poem "Prayer" was featured in the Spring 2019 issue of Journeys. That poem inspired me to share two haikus which express what's in my heart as I think about Maria and mourn her loss:

*Maria, so young
Did she have to leave us now?
Yes, for Me alone*

Really, God?

*Maria's work's done
Our world is a better place
Because she lived here*

**THANK YOU, MARIA!
THANK YOU, GOD!**



In the month of October, two beloved Sisters went to their eternal rests. Sister Lucille Ann Bandyk, SSC, died on October 23, and Sister Lorraine Therese Siminas, SSC, died on October 24. Their funeral Masses of Resurrection took place at Nativity BVM Church in Chicago on October 30 and November 5, respectively. Due to the production schedule of this issue of Journeys, Sister Lucille Ann and Sister Lorraine Therese's obituaries will be published in the next issue of Journeys.

At Journey's End — *Eternal Days Beginning*

Sister Margaret Mary Mazgelis, SSC

FEBRUARY 18, 1926 – AUGUST 5, 2020



Sister Margaret Mary Mazgelis (baptized Lillian) was born on February 18, 1926, in Brockton, Massachusetts, to Clement and Margaret Mazgelis. She was the fourth of five children, who were raised with a love of God and of music.

Sister Margaret Mary came to Chicago to complete high school at St. Casimir Academy at the suggestion of her older sister, Sister M. Clement Mazgelis, who had entered the Sisters of Casimir. Sister Margaret Mary graduated from the academy in 1944 and then entered the Sisters of St. Casimir on August 15, 1944.

She continued her education after her entrance, earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Marywood College, Scranton, PA. She later earned her Master of Education degree in Administration/Supervision from Loyola University, Chicago.

Finding both joy and personal fulfillment in her life's work, Sister Margaret Mary observed, "My vocation is very precious to me. It was the way of life I accepted – to serve God and the people of God with love and dedication. I rejoice that I answered God's invitation."

Sister Margaret Mary was an educator for over 50 years, serving primarily in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Besides assignments at schools in Indiana (St. Francis, Indian Harbor) and Pennsylvania (St. Joseph, Scranton), she taught kindergarten, primary, and elementary grades in Chicago at Providence of God, St. George, and Nativity BVM, and at St. Anthony in Cicero until 1960. For many years she not only taught her regular classes, but taught music lessons after school hours.

From 1960 to 1970, Sister Margaret Mary taught English, Math, History, and Lithuanian at Maria High School in Chicago while also teaching Aspirants and Postulants, young women interested in becoming Sisters of St. Casimir. She followed by assuming the role of Superior at the Motherhouse from 1970 to 1976.

Teaching English at Maria H.S. was Sister Margaret Mary's focus between 1976 and 1983. Her mission further developed in 1983 when she returned to Nativity BVM as its principal, where she dedicated herself until 1996.

At the time of her 60th Jubilee in 2006, Sister Margaret Mary wrote, "I found it rewarding to instill spiritual values and love of God into the hearts and minds of those I taught. This realization of how so many lives were touched through my years of teaching is brought to mind every holiday when former students remind me how I have touched their lives."

She was elected to congregational leadership in 1998 and served as General Secretary until 2003. Sister Margaret Mary then became Administrative Assistant to General Superior M. Immacula Wendt, serving until 2013. Sister Margaret Mary had a flair for writing, not for just knowing the right words to say, but adding that "personal" touch to each letter. She also took joy in using her artistic touch of calligraphy on cards, posters, and documents.

One visible way Sister Margaret Mary left her mark is her gift of designing and creating floral arrangements. She decked each area of the Motherhouse with her seasonal decorations. She also decorated the altars in the chapel. Her floral arrangements still decorate areas of the St. Casimir Center and brighten each Sister's apartment at Franciscan Village.

Sister Margaret Mary also loved music, singing in the Sisters' choir and taking part in congregational singing. She played the piano – giving many lessons – and played the organ at parishes and the Motherhouse, and was a member of the Sisters' orchestra, playing violin. She also enjoyed going to White Sox baseball games – and never did admit she was a Red Sox fan.

When someone was in need, Sister Margaret Mary's heart pushed her to make a difference in their lives. She attended SWOP (the Southwest Organizing Project) action council meetings and was an active supporter of SWOP's immigration and anti-violence work in the neighborhood.

The support and love of her sister, Sister Clement, was a blessing. Sharing life together and caring for each other in good and difficult times became even more of a blessing when they both moved to Franciscan Village in 2015. In this season of their lives, they grew closer to one another, first living in rooms across the hall in Independent Living and then being together when more care was needed in Assisted Living.

Sister Margaret Mary reflected on her 60th Jubilee: "What I have learned over the years and want to pass on to others is to have faith and trust in God. I am grateful that my community, the Sisters of St. Casimir, continues to be a great gift to the Church and to the world by our faith and trust in God, our hospitality and kindness."

On August 5, 2020, Sister Margaret Mary once again answered God's call, this time to come home to Him.

At Journey's End — *Eternal Days Beginning*

Sister Delphine Grigas

JUNE 20, 1916 – OCTOBER 11, 2020



Sister Delphine Grigas (baptized Helen Dorothy) was born in Nanticoke, PA, on June 20, 1916, to Lithuanian immigrants Dominic and Theophila Grigas. Shortly after her birth, the family moved to Shenandoah, PA. Helen had five brothers and three sisters, one of whom was Casimira, who entered the Sisters of St. Casimir and professed her vows as Sister Vivian.

Events that led to Sister Delphine's decision to enter religious life and the Sisters of St. Casimir were her sister's entrance to the Sisters of St. Casimir and a relationship, through correspondence, with her godmother, Sister Petronella, SSC.

She entered the community in 1938 and professed her first vows on August 15, 1941, as Sister Delphine. She had the joy of celebrating her Silver Jubilee in 1966, her Golden Jubilee in 1991, and her Diamond Jubilee (75 years) in 2016.

Sister Delphine received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Marywood College in Scranton PA. Throughout her long life, she was a life-long learner, later receiving certification as a Pastoral Minister from Mercy Hospital in Chicago. She also took part in many educational opportunities to enhance her ministerial skills and talents in education, spirituality, and pastoral care.

For 35 years, Sister Delphine taught children in grades one through eight in eight different states: Illinois (Immaculate Conception School in Brighton Park, St. Anthony School in Cicero, St. Peter School in Volo, St. Norbert School in Northbrook, and St. Pius X School in Stickney); Pennsylvania (St. Casimir School in Philadelphia, Sacred Heart School in New Philadelphia, and St. George School in Shenandoah); Massachusetts (St. Casimir School in Worcester); Maryland (St. Joan of Arc School in Aberdeen); Florida (St. Clement School in Fort Lauderdale); California (St. Casimir School in Los Angeles); Rhode Island (St. Casimir School in Providence); and New Mexico (Our Lady of Guadalupe School). Of her years in this important ministry of education, Sister Delphine wrote, "Every child I taught, every new class I had, every state I lived in, enriched my life in some way. As I gave, so also, I received."

After 35 years of teaching, Sister Delphine felt that God was preparing her for a different ministry, that of pastoral care. She moved to the Motherhouse in 1975

and began preparing for her work in pastoral care where she would minister to the sick and those who were dying and give support to their families.

With her certificate in Contemporary Hospital Ministry, Sister Delphine served at Holy Cross Hospital from 1975 to 1983. Her following years were spent in a number of different parish settings: at St. Bartholomew in Waukegan as secretary, at St. Norbert in Northbrook in tutoring and special education, at Sacred Heart in New Philadelphia as secretary and participation in the RCIA program and the Little Rock Scripture Studies, at St. Joseph Home in Holland, PA, as assistant to the social worker, at St. Bede Parish in Holland, PA, assisting in the CCD program, and at St. Helena Parish in Hobbs, New Mexico, as a catechist.

Throughout her life, Sister Delphine adjusted to the changes in her health and energy level and to the needs of others. She wrote, "There is a time to do something, and a time to let go of something, especially when unable to continue in the same capacity." With a desire to share with others what she had found helpful, Sister Delphine put together and published "Heavenly Sense," a collection of inspirational sayings. She especially valued the privilege of going to the Holy Land in celebration of her Golden Jubilee.

The last years of Sister Delphine's life were spent at Franciscan Village where she continued her ministry of prayer and presence. Many loved to visit with her as she remained alert and attentive to all that was going on. She always had a few jokes to share with whomever visited. She often would say to someone, "I love you and there's nothing you can do about it."

She valued the friendships formed over the years. One very special one was with Dr. James Klein, whom she got to know at Holy Cross Hospital. She became part of his family, who welcomed and accompanied her in the many stages of her life and prepared a memorable gala celebration of Sister Delphine's 100th birthday.

Sister Delphine lived a very rich and fulfilling life, touching the hearts and lives of many people. As she celebrated one of her milestone birthdays, she wrote, "Most importantly was God's gift of time (and still is) reminding me to cherish every moment because it will never come again. . . Besides my family, I count among my blessings the Sisters I have lived with in community, faithful friends, and relatives."

Sister Bernadette Marie Janus, Sister Theresa Dabulis, and Sister Janine Golubickus attended to many of Sister Delphine's needs at Franciscan Village. All the Sisters shared life with her, prayed with her, and visited with her. We are grateful to God for the blessing of Sister Delphine. May she know the fullness of joy in God's presence forever.

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*St. Casimir Academy
Maria High School Alumnae*

St. Casimir-Maria Alumnae Association News

The St. Casimir-Maria Alumnae Association office was at the Maria Kaupas Center (MKC), and the MKC staff chaired the annual reunion for the past few years. Alumnae News was also included in the MKC Newsletter. During the 2020 summer, major changes in the staff at the MKC occurred, and with remote learning happening for the Catalyst-Maria students, for at least Fall 2020, the SCA-MHS Alumnae office and data base have been moved to the St. Casimir Center/Motherhouse.

The new contact information is:
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www.stcasimir-mariaalum.com
alumnae@ssc2601.com

Please continue to update your contact information and send us your email addresses and any changes so the data base can be current. It was unfortunate that Reunion 2020 had to be cancelled. We may have to wait a while until it is safe to plan another reunion.

Some alums receive Journeys, and if you know of other alums that would like to receive Journeys, please send us contact information and we will add to the mailing list.

We plan to have Alumnae News in future issues of Journeys, a publication of the Sisters of St. Casimir.