



Journeys

SISTERS OF ST. CASIMIR

Vol. 39 No. 2
Fall 2025

*2025 Jubilarians Celebrate
210 Years
of Faithful Service*



*From left: Sr. Elizabeth Ann Yocius, Jubilarian Sr. Bernadette Marie Janus (70 years),
Jubilarian Sr. Rita Marie Kerdock (70 years), Sr. Immacula Wendt,
and sitting, Jubilarian Sr. M. Dolorine Lopez (70 years).*

The Joy of a Jubilee



All smiles for Sr. Dolorine and Sr. Immacula.

SSC Jubilee remarks

By Sister Ellen Maroney, IHM

Greetings from Scranton to all our Sisters and friends, and especially to our dear Jubilarians: Sisters Bernadette Marie, Rita Marie, and Dolorine!

This is such a joyful day for all of us as we give gratitude for the lives, fidelity, and heartfelt love of our Sister Jubilarians. Sisters, on this beautiful feast of the Assumption, your jubilee is a source of joy and enlivenment for the entire congregation.

Poet and author Khalil Gibran wrote: "When you love, you should not say, 'God is in my heart,' but rather, 'I am in the heart of God.'" When we celebrate a jubilee, we're really celebrating a love story. The God who calls us by name asks us to give our total heart for the sake of the world, and enfolds us in that expansive God-heart forever. When we are faithful to our call, we do indeed find ourselves at home in God's love.



Sr. Elizabeth Ann pins Sr. Bernadette Marie's corsage.

Today is about celebrating with profound gratitude and joy the gift of life of each of these women and how they have blessed countless lives through their wholehearted response to God's call many years ago. We also give thanks for the fidelity of our God, whose call, love, and mercy have been the anchor of these women throughout their lives.

While we human beings find it easiest to measure the value of things concretely, by numbers, by size, by financial cost, the deeply rooted person is not so caught up with such physical, tangible attributes. Instead, she thinks in terms of the invisible, the essence, the silent.



Sr. Rita Marie and Sr. Immacula enjoy a moment together.

She thinks of compassion and love, sacrifice and faith, generosity and courage – the things of the soul which are the accurate measure of our humanity.

Today, we celebrate with deep gratitude these Sisters who have taught us and many others about the soul by their commitment and love for God and God's creation, through their lives of self-sacrifice, dedication, and prophetic example. Their "Yes" to God's call has woven a tapestry of God's grace among thousands of lives, and our world and all of us are richer for their presence.

Dear Jubilarians, we praise God for your heartfelt commitment to Mother Maria's words: "Always more, always better, always with love," which was lived out in each of your extraordinary lives.

We pray that God will continue to bless you as you look back on all that has been and look forward to God's continuing surprises and graces.

Congratulations, dear friends, and thank you!



Theresa Sandoval, Sr. Janine Golubickis and Sr. Theresa Dabulis dance and celebrate during the Jubilee banquet at Franciscan Village after Mass.

Jubilarian Reflections

Sister M. Dolorine Lopez



Sister Bernadette Marie Janus



Sister Rita Marie Kerdock



In her own words, Sister Dolorine's thoughts from a previous Jubilee.

For me, the past 70 years have been a great blessing. My vocation is, first and foremost, a gift from God, one that I greatly treasure. My life as a teacher, then as a principal over many years, was filled with blessings, joys, and, at times, sorrow, but the blessings are beyond imagination.

Here I am, a Mexican girl who dared venture into a Congregation founded for Lithuanian immigrants. Initially, I had to learn Lithuanian, and my Spanish tongue easily formed the musical words. To this day, I can still converse in Lithuanian.

If anyone were to question the wisdom of my decision to join a Lithuanian community, my work over the years proves that I am just where God intended me to be.

The wisdom I would like to pass on to others is to have a profound trust in God's Providence. Our foundress, Mother Maria, lived her life "with Christ." She modeled that for us and encouraged us to do the same - live our lives with Christ.

All religious life is a gift to the Church. Our Congregation especially shines with generosity and a self-forgetful love for others. I am blessed, and with a joyful heart, I give thanks to God.

The past 70 years have been filled with many blessings. The desire to be a Sister of St. Casimir seemed to be in my heart at a very early age. During my childhood and youth, the Blessed Mother had been a very real person to me, and still is. There is a deep love for her in my heart. She is always there for me. I am most grateful to God for all the gifts He has given me, to my beloved Grandparents who raised me, and all the Sisters who have in any way influenced me during my elementary and high school years.

As a religious, my life was surrounded by Sisters, parents, pupils, and friends to whom I could reach out as a teacher and then a principal, and they, in turn, reached out to me.

I believe that my vocation is to serve the Congregation, and through it, the Church and its people. Every day, we have the opportunity to impact someone's life through our words and actions positively. It is essential to remember that God's plan for us cannot be fulfilled by anyone else, and He continually directs our path. All one needs to do is trust Him.

The Sisters of St. Casimir were my teachers in elementary school at Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Carmel, PA as well as in secondary school at Villa Joseph Marie, Holland, PA. Ever since second grade, I wanted to be a Sister.

My heart overflows with joy and gratitude celebrating my Jubilee.

The following article was written by Walt Kozlowski and published in The News-Item, Shamokin, PA, on August 2, 2025. Portions of the article are reprinted here, and used with permission.

The weather outside Divine Redeemer Church, Mount Carmel, alternated between cloudy and occasional sunshine. However, the Mass brought a smile to Sister Rita Marie Kerdock's joy-filled eyes on Sunday. She had returned to her hometown to celebrate the 70th jubilee/anniversary of her profession and vows as a Sister of St. Casimir.

Her journey began like that of many young women who dedicated their lives to God. She grew up in Holy Cross Parish and received the sacraments at the "Lithuanian church." She went to the parish school before leaving her family to attend Villa Joseph Marie High School in Holland, PA. After graduation, she joined the Sisters of St. Casimir, Chicago.

At the Mass, Sister Rita Marie, with joy and gratitude, renewed her vows along with her Sisters of St. Casimir from Chicago. The ceremony had special significance in Mount Carmel. It is where Mother Maria Kaupas founded the first

Continued on page 4



Sr. Maria Chinweze Enujiofor, IHM, on left and Sr. Mary Nesta Ezeanya, IHM, congratulate Sr. Bernadette Marie.



The Joy of a Jubilee

Continued from page 3

Lithuanian Catholic school in the United States.

Sister Rita Marie confessed that teaching primary grades was her favorite assignment. At the Mass, a man brought his primary school-age daughter and preschool son to sit in the front pew directly across from her. At the sign of peace, both children spontaneously crossed the aisle to shake hands with her. After the Mass, they hugged the 90-year-old nun. Sister's smile shone even sunnier.



Jubilee Mass begins at Franciscan Village with the entrance procession.



Father Jason Malave blesses the Jubilarians.



Sr. Rita Marie shares words of wisdom with Sue Block, on left, and Jeanne Twomey.



Father Jason Malave celebrant, and concelebrants Father Ken Baker on left, and Father Bob Lucas, CM.

The Joy of a Jubilee



Sisters praying during Jubilee Mass.



From left; Sr. Nancy Streitmatter, Sr. Theresa Papsis, Sr. Marilyn Karpovich, Sr. Janine Golubickis, and Sr. Margaret Zalot.



Zenovia Andrijuwskij, on the left, and Christine Zalewski celebrate their friendship with Sr. Bernadette Marie.



Banquet guests enjoy conversations.



Father Jason shares his experience as a first-grade student of Sr. Rita Marie at Nativity BVM.



Karen Strabel and Sr. Mary Louise Andruslonis enjoy the banquet meal.

Photos by Daina Cyvas

Exploring the Strong Connections: Augustinians and Sisters of St. Casimir

For many years, the Augustinians of the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel, headquartered in Chicago, have maintained a close relationship with the Sisters of St. Casimir in various aspects of shared religious life, particularly in spiritual ministry and pastoral involvement. Serving the people of Chicago has always been a hallmark of their collaboration. The election of Cardinal Robert

Prevost, O.S.A., as Pope Leo XIV has been a joy and a beacon of light for the Augustinians, carrying special significance for both religious communities.

During his time in Chicago, Pope Leo's commitment to working with the Sisters was evident, as illustrated by his involvement with the blessing of Venerable Mother Maria Kaupas sarcophagus in 1999.

Mother Maria's witness of faith and courage continues to resonate in the Augustinian Province's mission work in northern Peru, where Pope Leo ministered for decades.

Recently, Prior Provincial Father Anthony Pizzo, O.S.A., traveled to Rome to participate in the Augustinians' General Chapter, a global gathering of Augustinian leadership. Pope Leo XIV celebrated the opening



Father Tony Pizzo personally delivers the prayers and greetings from the Sisters of St. Casimir to Pope Leo XIV.



Pope Leo XIV and Father Tony Pizzo embrace as at the General Chapter in Rome, September 2025.



Pope Leo XIV praying at the Augustinian Shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel at Genazzano.

Photo by Fr. Tony Pizzo



Photo of the center field video board with video message from Pope Leo at White Sox stadium.

*Photo at right:
From left; Fr. Ray Flores, Fr. Richie Mercado, and Prior Provincial Fr. Tony Pizzo accompany the Holy Father Pope Leo XIV to the Shrine in the days after his election to the Papacy.*



Mass of the Chapter, and Father Tony had the opportunity to spend time with him.

During a special dialogue and lunch, Father Tony delivered prayers and greetings from the Sisters of St. Casimir directly to Pope Leo XIV.

"The election of Pope Leo XIV is a blessing for the Augustinian family and for the entire Church. His ministry reflects the Gospel spirit of service and mission that inspired Mother Maria Kaupas and continues through the mission of the Sisters of St. Casimir," said Father Tony.

When asked what it is like to be a personal friend of Pope Leo XIV, Father Tony responded, "It is an honor and a privilege, truly a blessing! I have known him for over 50 years, having attended undergraduate school at Villanova and graduate school at CTU together.

Accompanying each other at our Augustinian events is a privilege!"

Regarding the connections with the Sisters of St. Casimir, Father Tony stated, "We treasure the bond of friend-



Father Tony Pizzo stopped by the Legacy Room of the Sisters of St Casimir to share insights into the connections between the Augustinians and the SSCs. Photo by Daina Cyvas

ship between our communities and our shared commitment to truth, unity, and love. These connections began long ago with Mother Maria Kaupas and Father Henry A. "Harry"

Wierman, O.S.A. (1903-1981), who was the confessor to Maria Kaupas, the foundress of the Sisters of St. Casimir."



Pope Leo with the Augustinians at the General Chapter in Rome, September 2025. Photos provided by the Order of St. Augustine.

Hope for Lithuania's First Female Saint



The cause of Mother Maria Kaupas continues under Sister Margaret Petcavage's care.

By Lukrecijus Tubys

When a new pope was elected in May, the Sisters of St. Casimir erupted with joy. For them, Pope Leo XIV – Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost of the Augustinian Order – was not just a distant figure on a television screen but someone they knew personally from his years in Chicago.

Sister Margaret Petcavage felt the moment deeply. For decades, she has championed the cause of Mother Maria Kaupas, founder of



*Sr. Margaret Petcavage
Photo by Lukrecijus Tubys*

the Sisters of St. Casimir, whose canonization could make her the first female Lithuanian saint. With Leo XIV now in Rome, Sister Margaret hopes the long process will finally gain momentum.

I met Sister Margaret Petcavage at Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis Lithuanian Catholic Mission in the Lithuanian



Father Robert Prevost, O.S.A., celebrant at Mass on August 28, 1999 in Chicago at the Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse chapel.

World Center, Lemont, a suburb of Chicago. Petite, with bright eyes and a calm presence, she greeted me with a firm handshake. A Lithuanian American, she understands the language perfectly, though she prefers English.

"No one believed that an American could become the new pope," she told me with a smile. "I never imagined Robert would be chosen." For her and the congregation, Leo XIV's election is significant. She has devoted much of her life to compiling the case file on Mother Maria, a process begun in 1986. Her greatest hope is that canonization will be completed while she is still alive.

For Sister Margaret, Pope Leo XIV is not a distant figure but someone she has known personally. Their paths crossed many times in Chicago, but one moment stands out.

In 1999, the Sisters of St. Casimir hosted a Mass to bless the sarcophagus and mosaic of Mother Maria. Sister Margaret organized the celebration and invited Father Prevost,

then-Augustinian Provincial, to participate.

The Augustinians and the Sisters of St. Casimir have been close for more than a century, their spiritual homes in Chicago side by side. Father Prevost's presence was a gesture of that friendship and of respect for Mother Maria.

"We have always been close to the Augustinian fathers," Sister Margaret said. "Whenever we had special occasions, they came. We also joined their events. They are like brothers to us."

She remembers Father Prevost as approachable and kind. "He looks at people, listens carefully, and answers thoughtfully. I've heard that priests valued his leadership. He listened well, helped wherever he could, and worked with them to find solutions," she recalled.

That memory now carries special weight, since the man who once honored Mother Maria in Chicago is now pope.

Mother Maria Kaupas was born on January 6, 1880, in the village of



Father Robert Prevost, O.S.A., prepares to bless the sarcophagus of Mother Maria Kaupas (1999).

Gudeliai, in the Ramygala District of Lithuania. At 15, she moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania, to join her brother, Father Antanas Kaupas, who served the large Lithuanian immigrant community. At first, she disapproved of America, finding the lifestyle superficial and the churches lacking in spiritual depth.

One day, noticing oddly dressed women, she asked her brother who they were. He explained they were nuns (Sisters) devoted to God.

Inspired by their dedication, Maria Kaupas began to consider religious life. Lithuanian priests supported her idea to found a new congregation for immigrants. Thus began the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Casimir, the first convent founded by Lithuanians in America.

The Sisters dedicated themselves to faith, education, and the preservation of Lithuanian culture. They opened schools in Pennsylvania, later in Chicago, where their motherhouse was located, and eventually across 14 states, many of which were within

Lithuanian parishes.

After Lithuania regained independence in 1918, Mother Maria returned with several sisters and founded the order in 1920. In Kaunas, she revived the abandoned 17th century Camaldolese monastery at Pažaislis, establishing a novitiate and a boarding school. More schools followed across Lithuania.

Mother Maria died in Chicago on April 17, 1940, after a battle with bone cancer. Thousands attended her funeral, already convinced of her holiness. "People who knew Mother Maria and read about her spoke of her holiness, kindness, gentleness, and wisdom, she was also firm when necessary. I believe that holy people gain wisdom, patience, and love for others through a devout life," said Sister Margaret.

Recognition of her sanctity grew steadily. In 1979, Chicago's Cardinal John Cody publicly spoke of her as a saint and encouraged beginning her beatification process. In 1986, under Sister Margaret's lead-

ership, the official case, known as the Positio, was prepared. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints named her a Servant of God. That status was reaffirmed in 2009, and in 2010 Pope Benedict XVI declared her Venerable. For her service to Lithuania, she was also awarded the Order of Grand Duke Gediminas, 3rd class, in 1933.

No one has studied Mother Maria's life more closely than Sister Margaret. Devoted to her vocation and trained as a historian, she spent years leading Catholic schools and educational institutions. Organization and communication were her strengths, which made her a natural choice for vice-postulator for Mother Maria's cause. Postulators, based in Rome, guide the Catholic Church's process of canonization. They collect and present evidence that a person lived a holy life and can be declared blessed or a saint.

As vice-postulator, Sister Margaret became their assistant in America. She recalls how it began. "Sister Marilyn (Kuzmickas), our newly elected superior, came to me and said she had to give up the position of vice-postu-

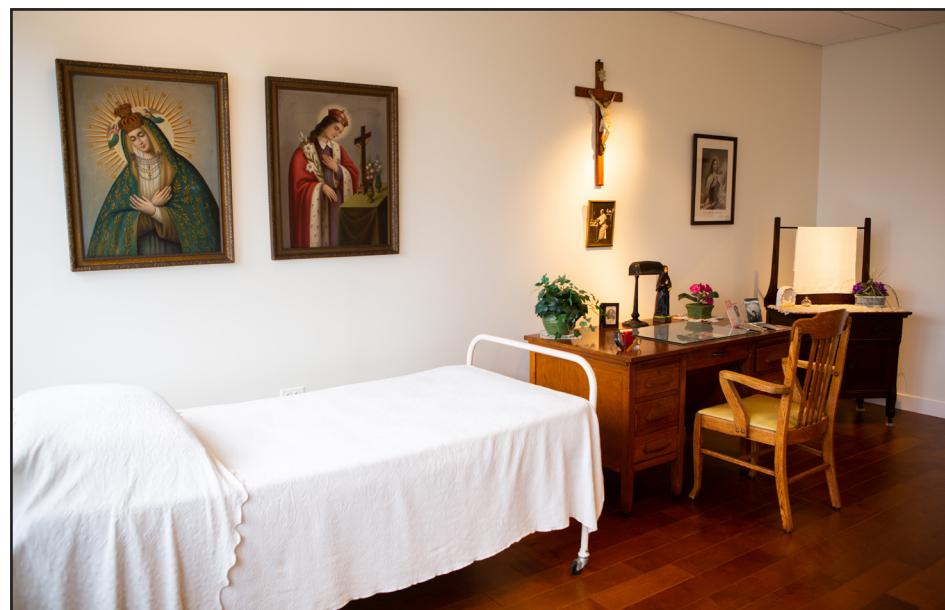
lator. She asked if I would like to take it on. She said it wasn't complicated. I answered, 'Of course,'" Sister Margaret said with a smile.

It proved far from simple. She had to compile the entire case file, interviewing 45 witnesses. The document grew to nearly 600 pages, half of which were hand-written by Sister Margaret. "It's a big, fat book," she laughed.

The work consumed three years. "Sometimes I would wake up at 4 a.m., thinking, 'I should add this or copy that.' I would spend two hours at the computer, then go back to sleep," she remembered. When she finished the final chapter, she rushed into a meeting with the sisters and Augustinians to share the news. "Everyone applauded. We were very happy," she said. "This is undoubtedly the most important work of my life," she added. "I am so moved that I was chosen for it. Thank you, God, that my family moved to Scranton, where I was baptized and where Mother Maria once lived and prayed. Just thinking about it brings tears to my eyes. It was a deeply emotional experience."

Waiting for a Miracle

For sainthood, one requirement remains: a miracle. One potential case was submitted to Rome: a Sister of St. Casimir was cured of cancer after praying to Mother Maria. Out of 80 patients, she was the only one to recover, living another 30 years. But doctors credited her survival to chemotherapy, and the Vatican did not accept it as



The bedroom of Mother Maria Kaupas, located in the Legacy Room at the Motherhouse in Chicago, is open to the public for prayer and guided tours.

More information available at: sistersofstcasimir.org

miraculous. "So we keep praying," Sister Margaret said simply. "We need another miracle, one that can't be explained away."

The Sisters of St. Casimir continue to gather testimonies of extraordinary healings in both America and Lithuania. And every day, they pray for the canonization of their foundress. "Mother Maria's holiness was real," Sister Margaret affirmed. "She was gentle, wise, and loving, but also strong when needed. We just need one miracle. That would be wonderful."

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Sr. Margaret Petcavage shares the history of the Sisters of St. Casimir. Photo by Lukrecijus Tubys

Photos from 1999: ©Sisters of St. Casimir

Prayer for the Beatification of Venerable Mother Maria Kaupas



*Venerable Servant of God
January 6, 1880 – April 17, 1940
Foundress, Sisters of St. Casimir*

O Loving Jesus, we beseech You, grant that Your servant, Mother Maria, who was imbued with Your Eucharistic Presence while on earth, may through the intercession of Your Immaculate Mother and Saint Casimir, be glorified by visible signs and miracles; so that for Your glory and salvation of souls, she may, by Your power, be declared Blessed.

Amen.



VILLA JOSEPH MARIE HIGH SCHOOL



Villa Joseph Marie High School continues to thrive as Bucks County's only secondary school for young women, empowering students through faith, education, and service. This past year, Villa celebrated record enrollment with the Class of 2029, earned recognition as an Outstanding Visual Arts Community, and launched new opportunities like Flag Football, a renovated chemistry lab, and a growing Business Ethics Case Study



VJM President Jeanne Frawley engages in a discussion with students.



VJM students enthusiastically sing in anticipation of the new school year.



VJM Field hockey team members.



VJM staff Chicago Mission Trip attendees: Front row, from left: Sr. Immacula Wendt, Jeanne Frawley, VJM President, and Sr. Elizabeth Ann Yocius. Second row: Roger Messina, Lynda Harkrader, Hynea Redd, Maureen Mathis, Matt Grunwell, and Paula Soley.



Villa Joseph Marie High School
Commissioning of Board Members and Leaders on September 19, 2025.

The Villa Joseph Marie staff's mission trip to Chicago, which took place from June 10 to 12, was a successful and unifying experience. During the trip, the VJM staff along with the Sisters shared stories, participated in a prayer service, and enjoyed meals together.

I was deeply inspired by my visit to Chicago with the Sisters of Saint Casimir. Spending time with them—and with all those who support their mission of spreading hope and joy—was truly a gift. What struck me most was their courage and openness to take unknown paths, always seeking new ways to serve. Their spirit of renewal continues to bless communities today.

Paula Soley, Assistant Principal

Competition. The Case Study Program and Robotics Team were each awarded grants from external foundations, enabling continued growth in both areas.

VJM student-athletes brought home district championships in five different sports, while the Class of 2025 overall secured more than \$21 million in college scholarships. With a new strategic plan guiding Villa toward its centennial in 2032, the future looks bright indeed! *Forward to our Future!*

From learning more about our history at the motherhouse to feeling the Sisters' continued love for Villa at Franciscan Village, these visits send us home inspired to keep driving the mission forward.

Matt Grunwell, Director of Advancement

Visiting the Sisters as a team and exploring Villa's legacy was a gift. It helped us strengthen our understanding and empower our work in preparing for the future of Villa.

Jeanne Frawley, VJM President

It was a beautiful trip with my colleagues, where we had the opportunity to learn about the extraordinary life and legacy of Mother Maria Kaupus, as well as the lives of the Sisters of St. Casimir have lived - and continue to live. Sr. Immacula and Sr. Elizabeth Ann were fabulous teachers and story tellers. I am truly grateful. Maureen Mathis, Director of Admission

Mother Maria Kaupas Center: Revitalizing the Local Church in Mount Carmel, PA



Bishop Timothy Senior, priests, Sisters, guests, and staff gather after the Mass for a group photo.

By Jake Betz

Director Mother Maria Kaupas Center

Ten years after its opening, the Mother Maria Kaupas Center in Mount Carmel, PA, continues to work on revitalizing the local church and community, drawing inspiration from the life of Venerable Maria Kaupas for living the Catholic faith. The Center, a ministry of Divine Redeemer Church, observed its one-decade milestone with a Mass of celebration Sunday, May 18, in the church, followed by a reception and brief program in the parish hall.

The main celebrant for the Mass was Bishop Timothy Senior of the Diocese of Harrisburg. Concelebrating were priests with strong ties to the Kaupas Center and the parish. They included Rev. Martin Moran, who as pastor of Divine Redeemer envisioned and established the Kaupas Center in 2015; Rev. Ryan Fischer, former pastor; Rev. Bernard Wamayose, Apostles of Jesus, the present pastor;

and Rev. Jonathan Sawicki, a “native son” of Divine Redeemer.

Representatives of four congregations of women religious, numbering more than 20 Sisters in all, proudly honored the continuing legacy of Maria Kaupas. Sisters of Saint Casimir Immacula Wendt and Elizabeth Ann Yocius were lectors for the Mass, and they were joined for the celebration by Sisters Margaret Petcavage, Virginia Gaspis, and Rita Marie Kerdock. Sister Rita Marie is a native of Mount Carmel.

Sisters were also present, representing the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scranton; the IHM Sisters living in nearby Kulpmont, whose Motherhouse is located at Immaculata (near Philadelphia); and the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius of Danville. Saints Cyril and Methodius and the IHM Sisters (Immaculata) were among the congregations that, along with the Sisters of Saint Casimir, taught

in separate parish schools. Later, as part of a regional merger, they formed Holy Spirit School in Mount Carmel.

Officials from the Kaupas Center, Jake Betz, director, and Suzanne Domzalski, project manager, presented the gifts at the offertory. Two deacons with strong Mount Carmel connections served at the Mass. They are Deacon Walt Kozlowski of Divine Redeemer Parish and Deacon Robert Wislock of Shamokin, who belonged to the former Holy Cross parish, the site of the Sisters of Saint Casimir's first ministry.

Among the special guests at the Mass and reception were Jeanne Frawley, president, and Mary Smithson, chair of the board of trustees at Villa Joseph Marie High School; Shaunna Barnhart, who leads the Bucknell University Coal Region Field Station; Carl Milofsky and Ben Marsh, retired Bucknell

professors and friends of the Kaupas Center, and Mayor Philip "Bing" Cimino, who presented a borough proclamation to the Center in gratitude for its service to the community.

During his homily, Bishop Senior made special mention of his past acquaintance with Sisters of Saint Casimir, including their involvement at Villa Joseph Marie High School and St. Bede's parish in Holland, PA. He spoke proudly of the contribution made by one of his predecessors, Bishop John Shanahan, in assisting the first Sisters of Saint Casimir, including Mother Maria, in the formation of the new congregation in

1907. He also congratulated the Sisters of Saint Casimir on the election of Pope Leo XIV, whom they knew well in South Chicago as Father Bob Prevost.

Jake Betz, Kaupas Center director, introduced those called upon to present remarks during the reception. These included Sister Immacula, Fathers Wamayose, Moran, Fischer, and Sawicki; Mayor Cimino, mayor of Mount Carmel Borough; and Shaunna Barnhart, of the Coal Region Field Station at Bucknell University, Lewisburg. The Field Station also recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, having been formed

around the time the Kaupas Center opened in 2015. The Kaupas Center was the first partner agency to work with the Field Station in identifying opportunities for experiential learning collaborations in Mount Carmel.

The Kaupas Center's Maria Kaupas Prayer Group sponsors a monthly Holy Hour in the Center chapel. The Center holds a monthly diaper program for low-income families in the Mount Carmel area and an annual winter service program for local college students. Attendees at daily Mass faithfully pray for the Beatification of Mother Maria following recitation of the Rosary.

Sisters of St. Casimir Attend Lithuanian Song Festival in Cleveland



June 29, 2025 Song Festival Concert view featuring 1,500 singers and 100 dancers.



Sisters Margaret Petcavage, Theresa Dabulis, Rita Marie Kerdock and Virginia Gapsis at the Song Festival Banquet in Cleveland, Ohio.

Sisters Theresa Dabulis, Virginia Gapsis, Rita Marie Kerdock, and Margaret Petcavage proudly attended and represented the Sisters of St Casimir at the Song Festival. The Sisters were one of many sponsors.

"One Family – One Nation" was the theme of the XI North American Lithuanian Song Festival, which took place in Cleveland, Ohio, from June 27-29, 2025.

The song festival featured over

1,500 singers from 65 choirs across the U.S., Canada, and Europe, accompanied by a folk instrument orchestra from Lithuania and 100 dancers at the Cleveland Public Auditorium.

The festival aimed to unite the Lithuanian diaspora through their shared passion for singing and to strengthen connections among generations of Lithuanians. Additionally, UNESCO (United

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) recognizes *Dainu Švente* as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.



The SSC Auxiliary Commitment Continues



From left: Susan Binkis, Paul Binkis, Sr. Immacula Wendt, Ginger Madden, Joan Mullen, and Loretta Ezerski.

By Susan Binkis

On behalf of the entire membership of the Sisters of St. Casimir Auxiliary, Ginger Madden, auxiliary President, was pleased to present a check in the amount of \$10,000.00 to the Sisters of St. Casimir for assistance on their continuing journey of faith.

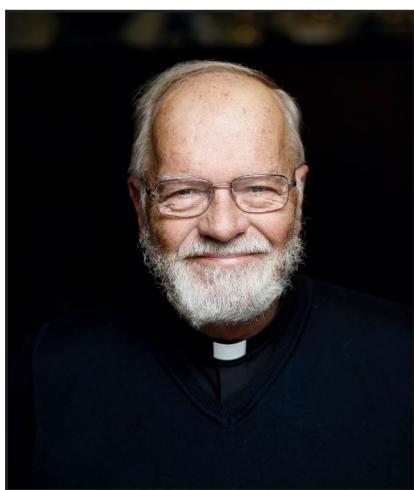
After the August 30th Mass for the beatification of Venerable Mother

Maria Kaupas, Ginger Madden and Susan Binkis spoke of the Auxiliary's continuing commitment, support, and gratitude to the Sisters for their years of service. The funds presented were accumulated through the efforts of our members and supporters, who attended our Bingo Games, Banquets, and Summer Fest venues over the years.

We encourage all our members and friends to attend the next Mother Maria Mass on Saturday, December 6th, at 9:30 a.m. in the Motherhouse Chapel.

We would love to visit with our old friends. Please add this to your Advent Calendar of Events.

IN MEMORIUM: FATHER ANTANAS SAULAITIS, SJ (1939–1969–2025)



On Good Friday morning, April 18, 2025 Father Antanas Saulaitis passed away peacefully at the Jesuit residence in Vilnius, surrounded by his fellow priests. Beloved across continents, Father Saulaitis was known for his deep compassion, boundless curiosity, and tireless service to the Lithuanian diaspora. He was especially cherished by youth as a spiritual guide at Scout camps and Lithuanian summer camps, including Camp Rakas and Camp Dainava in Michigan and Camp Neringa in Vermont. There, he shared not only faith but also lessons about stars, folk traditions, living in nature, and the joy of community.

A Jesuit priest, educator, missionary in Brazil, and former provincial of the Jesuits in Lithuania and Latvia, he was also a strong advocate for empathy and inclusion within the Church. His legacy lives on in his writings, his students, and all touched by his gentle wisdom.

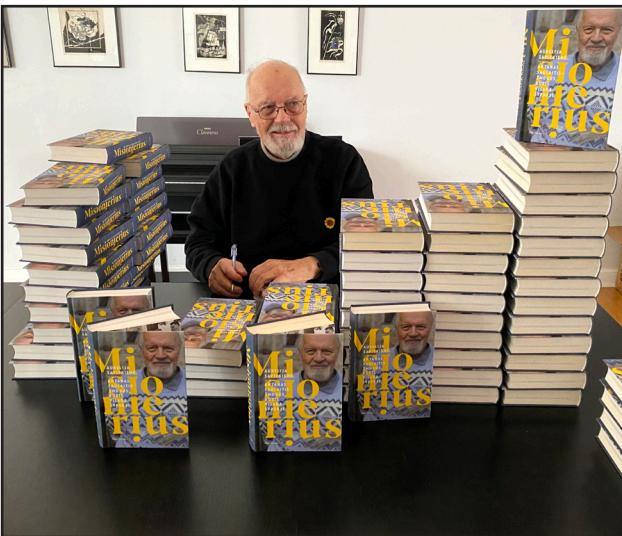
Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon him. Amen.

(From *Draugas News Facebook*)



Father Antanas with his sister, Marija Stankus-Saulaitis.



Father Antanas Saulaitis, SJ during a visit to Chicago in February 2024, signs his biography book.



Daina Cyvas visits Father Antanas in Vilnius, Lithuania, February 2025.



This photo appeared in our *Journeys* issue for Fall 2024. Father Antanas, a dear friend of the Sisters of St. Casimir, often visited them in Chicago. The February 2024 visit was at Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL. The inset photo at right, reminds us of classic Father Antanas' humor.

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Save the date!
Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.
Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.
Mother Maria Masses
praying for the beatification of Mother Maria Kaupas
at St. Casimir Center Chapel
2601 W. Marquette Road
Chicago, IL 60629

