



# Journeys

SISTERS OF ST. CASIMIR

Vol. 40 No. 1  
Spring 2026

## Go Boldly



*New trailblazers on fire with the Gospel message of Christ.*

*Students and leaders from Lithuania gather for a group photo in the Legacy Room of the Sisters of St. Casimir.*

*From left, front row: Šarūnė Jasiūnaitė-Zovienė, Augustė Raguotytė, Tomas Kavarskas, Ema Narvalaitytė, Andrius Vosylius, Julija Mironovaitė, Aušrinė Klapatauskaitė, and tour guide for the Sisters of St. Casimir Daina Čyvas. Top row, from left: Jonas Lapukas, Father Linas Braukyla, Mykolas Kulikauskas, Austėja Žalalytė, Ieva Aušūrienė, Matas Macevičius, Benas Volkovas, Pijus Aušūra, and Kamilė Vaišaitė.*

**Pope Leo XIV** urges consecrated women to witness God's presence in a world where faith and daily life often drift apart – serve as *leaven of peace* and a *sign of hope*. "Be prophets – messengers who proclaim the presence of the Lord and prepare his way."

**SSC Statutes** The Sisters of St. Casimir as vowed women religious, center our lives on the Gospel message of Jesus and His mission "by our hope and joy of a deep faith life to our present world."

**Mother Maria Kaupas** *Always more, always better, always with love, for God and neighbor.*



# Remembering Mother Maria

*By Sister Margaret Petcavage, SSC*

If true saintliness shows itself in radiating God's love, Mother Maria did so with a special human touch. The Sisters who knew her often recalled her warmth and joy, which sparkled in her lively humor. Friends, students, and her own Sisters found that she truly took a personal interest in them. Her blue eyes shone with gentleness, revealing the source of her strength in a profound inner life. Sitting in the chapel so often in the late evenings, deep in prayer, she nourished that life in her relationship with the Lord. It was God's love that flowed out so joyfully and lovingly to others.

Preserving Mother Maria's life of holiness, throughout the United States and Lithuania, Sister Margaret Petcavage, Vice Postulator, had shared Mother's picture with parish schools that Mother Maria herself had founded, schools where the Sisters of St. Casimir had taught for decades, and various other parishes.

Her picture has been enshrined in the United States and Lithuania.

Places where Mother Maria's picture is publicly venerated:

1. Sisters of St. Casimir Center, (former Motherhouse), Chicago, IL
2. St. Joseph Church, Scranton, PA
3. Nativity BVM Church, Chicago, IL
4. Villa Joseph Marie High School, Holland, PA
5. Maria Hall, at Villa Joseph Marie, Holland, PA
6. Catalyst Maria High School, Chicago, IL
7. Holy Cross Hospital, Chicago, IL
8. St. Michael Church, No. Philadelphia, PA
9. Immaculate Conception Church, Chicago, IL
10. St. Alphonsus Church, Baltimore, MD
11. St. Joan of Arc School, Aberdeen, MD
12. St. Casimir Church, Los Angeles, CA
13. Divine Providence Lithuanian Church, Southfield, MI
14. Holy Redeemer Church, Mt. Carmel, PA
15. Mother Maria Kaupas Center, Mt. Carmel, PA
16. SSC Sisters' Chapel, Franciscan Village, Lemont, IL
17. St. Pauline Visintainer Shrine, Kulpmont, PA
18. Pažaislis Monastery, established by Mother Maria, Kaunas, Lithuania
19. Church of the Visitation, Pažaislis, Lithuania
20. St. John the Baptist Church, Ramygala, Lithuania (Mother Maria's home parish)
21. Basilica of the Assumption of Mary, Krekenava, Lithuania
22. Mary, Mother of God Church, Scranton, PA



*Sisters admire Mother Maria's picture which hangs on the wall at Mary Mother of God Church in Scranton, PA. From left: Sr. Virginia Gapsis, Sr. Rita Marie Kerdock and Sr. Margaret Petcavage.*



# Celebrating Consecrated Life



*Cardinal Blase J. Cupich congratulates our Sisters Virginia Gapsis (60 years) and Immacula Wendt (70 years) at the Celebration for Consecrated Life. The event honors 2026 Jubilarians in the Archdiocese of Chicago.*



*2026 Jubilarians who attended the February 14 Celebration for Consecrated Life in Chicago. Cardinal Blase J. Cupich commented, "I had the joy of celebrating Consecrated Life Day and honoring our jubilarians. The faithful witness of women and men religious, their prayer, sacrifice, and joyful yes to Christ, strengthens our Church every day. May the Lord bless them abundantly and raise up new vocations".*

*Photo: Karen Callaway/Chicago Catholic*

## *Sisters of St. Casimir*

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Twelve years ago, the Sisters of St. Casimir began a new chapter, moving to Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL.

Our transition has been marked by milestones:  
the sale of Maria High School to Catalyst Charter School Network,  
transfer of Holy Cross Hospital to Sinai Health System,  
and sale of our Motherhouse to Catholic Charities.

By year's end, after 115 years, the last Sisters at the Motherhouse and the Business Office will move from 2601 West Marquette Road.

Details of the move will be in the next issue of Journeys.

We humbly ask for your continued prayers.

You are invited to the last Mass in our Chapel  
on Saturday, August 29, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

This special Mass celebrates the 119th anniversary of Founders' Day  
and includes prayers for the Beatification of Mother Maria Kaupas.

With gratitude and hope,  
*The Sisters of St. Casimir*





# Argentine Lithuanian Community Celebrates

The Argentine Lithuanian community celebrated the anniversary of Luján in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján in November 2025. Families of Lithuanian descent gathered from across Argentina, including Berisso, Tandil, Rosario, Buenos Aires, and other provinces. Many traveled for hours, with some bringing their children to experience the Lithuanian culture that has been preserved here for the past 75 years.

The gathering commemorated two significant occasions: the unveiling of a new image of Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn at the Shrine of Our Lady of Luján and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lithuanian community in Argentina. Archbishop Lionginas Virbalas SJ, delegate of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference for the pastoral care of Lithuanians abroad, celebrated Mass, with Marian priests concelebrating. Sisters of St. Casimir Joyce Dopkin, Estela Risso and Asuncion Costantini were in attendance for Mass and the celebration. The Berisso Mindaugo Society choir sang during the Mass.

"You have made a home here, but you have not forgotten your roots," Archbishop Lionginas stated during the homily. "This is your strength and your history," he added. He also recalled the old tradition of organizing pilgrimages to Luján, where Lithuanian independence was commemorated during the Soviet occupation.

Several years ago, while visiting Argentina, Archbishop Lionginas Virbalas suggested replacing the existing painting, which has been in the crypt of the Basilica of Luján since 1982, with a new image.

The new image of Our Lady of Mercy of the Gate of Dawn painted by Paulius Juška, was donated by the Church of St. Theresa in Vilnius and was transported from Lithuania to the Basilica in Argentina.

When Lithuanians arrived in Argentina, they established their own organizations and clubs. In 1950, a committee of Argentine Lithuanian organizations was formed to unite them. In January 1956, this group

was renamed the Council of Argentine Lithuanian Organizations and Press (ALOST).

The Argentine Lithuanian community cultural program included several dance groups from Argentina: *Nemunas*, *Skaidra*, *Griauštinis*, *Pipiras*; the Argentine Lithuanian Center's *Spindulys* and *Perkūnas*; the Tandil groups *Kaukas* and *Laisvės Akmuo*; the Rosario groups *Šaltinis* and *Dobiliukai*; and the Berisso Mindaugas Society's group *Žibutė*.

The celebration inspires Lithuanians to maintain their faith and national spirit, and encourages them to share their experiences. Over the past 75 years, this community has become more than just a national organization; it has become a bridge connecting generations — those who left Lithuania, those who remember it from stories, and those who are rediscovering it through travel, dance, song, and language. The evening concluded with the words: *We are far away, but we are Lithuania.*



*Basilica of Our Lady of Luján in Argentina.*



# Daina Čyvas Honored

By Karen Strabel

Daina Čyvas, the Communications and Projects Coordinator for the Sisters of St. Casimir, was awarded the Medal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the Republic of Lithuania for “Merits to Lithuania from Lithuanians Around the World.” The award symbolizes that “Lithuania is where the heart of a Lithuanian beats” anywhere in the world. The ceremony took place in Vilnius at the Forum Cinemas Vingis at the premiere of the documentary film “That Farm in America.”

The subject of the film is the story of the family camp named Dainava, a beloved cultural center in Manchester, Michigan. Camp Dainava was established in 1956, to provide educational and recreational opportunities for the families of Lithuanians displaced after World War II. The camp fosters and encourages Catholic values, and preserves Lithuanian heritage.

Camp Dainava is a special place where lifelong friendships and memories are made, spanning generations, all having the common theme, “Dainava – our Lithuania,” where everything focuses on love for the homeland, faith, community, friendship, and sincerity.

As a co-executive producer of the film, Daina was recognized not only for her valuable insights during the film's production, but also for her significant contributions to the Lithuanian community, particularly to the Catholic Church.

Daina has worked for decades to help Lithuania maintain its identity, language, culture, and customs. While visiting Lithuania in 1980, a young Daina met underground activists who were the authors and collaborators of the “Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.” The Chronicles played a vital role in informing the world of human rights violations and religious persecution in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. Daina successfully smuggled microfilm, photos, and typed manuscripts to the free western world and shared them with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Munich, Germany.

Daina also worked for many years at the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis Catholic Mission in Lemont. Among her many duties there, she helped organize community days, pastoral conferences, and children's bible camps, all dedicated to the Lithuanian community. She continues to organize family camps and weekend programs at Dainava during the summer months, in addition to her full-time position, in which she completes a variety of projects for the Sisters of St. Casimir in Chicago.

Daina graciously accepted the award, thankful for the prestigious honor. In her acceptance speech, she emphasized the strong ties between the diaspora and Lithuania, recalling the wise words of her dear friend, the late Fr. Antanas Saulaitis, SJ: “We are here because of each other.”



*Audra Plepytė, former Lithuanian Ambassador to the United States and Mexico, presents Daina Čyvas with the award. At left, film director Ramunė Rakauskaitė, Audra Plepytė, Daina, and Lina Žukauskaitė, Director of the Global Lithuanian Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.*



*Invited guests enjoy the documentary film "That Farm in America."*



*Friends in Lithuania many belonging to the "Ateitininkai" (Ateitis Federation) organization, attend the film premiere.*



# Students From Lithuania Find Unifying Connections With The Sisters



*Students from Lithuania gather at the sarcophagus of Mother Maria Kaupas for a group photo. From left, front row: Kamilė Vaišaitė, Šarūnė Jasiūnaitė-Zovienė, Andrius Vosylius, Tomas Kavarskas. Second row, from left: Ema Narvalaitytė, Benas Volkovas. Top row, from left: Mykolas Kulikauskas, Sr. Elizabeth Ann Yocius, Fr. Linas Braukyla. From right, front row: Austėja Žalalytė, Augustė Raguotytė, Aušrinė Klapatauskaitė, Julija Mironovaitė. From right, second row: Sr. Immacula Wendt, Jonas Lapukas. From right, top row, Matas Macevičius, Ieva Auščiūrienė, Pijus Auščiūra.*

Father Linas Braukyla, the spiritual director for the Vilnius Academic Pastoral Center in Lithuania, and Matas Macevičius, Director of the Center, and a group of students came from Lithuania to visit the Sisters of St. Casimir – during their recent trip from Vilnius to the United States, before attending the SEEK 2026 conference in Ohio.

Father Linas and Matas agreed to share some insights about their experiences in Chicago and Ohio. This is the third time they have attended the SEEK conference.

SEEK 2026 is a five-day Catholic conference organized by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) held January 1– 5, 2026, at the Greater Columbus (Ohio) Convention Center. It brought over 16,000 young adults to Columbus (part of 26,000 nationwide) for prayer, worship, adoration, the sacraments, inspiring speakers, and fellowship.



*Sr. Elizabeth Ann shares the mission of the Sisters of St. Casimir in the Motherhouse chapel.*



**What was the purpose of your trip to SEEK and FOCUS?**

**Father Linas:** Our group of academic ministry leaders continues to attend the SEEK conference for inspiration and guidance. Due to Soviet occupation of Lithuania (1940-1990), there is no established tradition of campus ministry, and most universities are predominantly secular. We are grateful to have FOCUS as our mentors and partners in bringing the spirit of Catholic missionary work to the university setting.

**Matas:** The team from the Vilnius Academic Pastoral Center, along with a group of proactive students from Kaunas, traveled to the United States for two main reasons. Our primary goal was to attend the annual SEEK (2026) conference.

We embarked on this journey to gain insights into our vision of student ministry, drawing inspiration from the organization's experiences and principles. Today, FOCUS has successfully found ways to spread the message of Christ throughout society by engaging priests, religious, lay missionaries, and university students, fostering a culture of missionary discipleship across the country.

Our second goal was to engage with the Lithuanian American community and actively support their spiritual needs. This aspiration led us to the vibrant Lithuanian community in

Lemont, where we dedicated our time volunteering at the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis Mission's Children's Bible camp, a two day event held between Christmas and New Year's day where 61 children (ages 6-12) and over 30 counselors and teachers actively participated.

**What are your thoughts about the Sisters of St Casimir Legacy room?**

**Father Linas:** Ringing the bell in the Legacy room was a joy, signaling a mission passed down by the Sisters of St. Casimir to our generation. The Legacy room effectively addresses today's challenges, presenting the Church's unity in a compelling way that inspires us.



*The clarion call of this bell rallied the Sisters of St. Casimir to prayer, service, activities, and meals. So let its chime also be your call to action as the legacy continues through you. Go forth and do good in the world.*

**Father Linas also offered these comments:**

When we arrived at the Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse, we found the Sisters praying quietly in the chapel and greeted them by singing traditional Lithuanian Christmas hymns, then discussed our missions. I felt a strong connection with the Sisters!

Throughout our conversations, we focused on the present rather than the past, talking about the Church today. It was a privilege for our group to engage in a live dialogue with Sisters Immacula and Elizabeth Ann and learn from their experiences!

**Matas Macevičius comments:**

The charism of these Sisters seemed to unite the two purposes of our journey — we encountered apostles of Lithuanian origin. In our conversations with Sister Immacula and Sister Elizabeth Ann, we recognized the same missionary zeal we had hoped to find at SEEK '26.

"Be bold," Sister Immacula urged the students, encouraging them to bear witness to Christ in their everyday lives.

We were deeply moved to discover that in the St. Casimir chapel, we could visit Mother Maria's sarcophagus. This experience greatly inspired us. Her life serves as a testament to the power of dreaming and discerning God's vision for the Church.

We prayed at the sarcophagus asking for her intercession for the mission of student ministry in Lithuania.



*Sr. Immacula engages in conversation with Šarūnė Jasiūnaitė-Zovienė.*



*Sr. Immacula encourages the students to "Go Boldly" as they tour the Legacy Room.*



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*The Sisters thank all of their benefactors and apologize for any names that may have been inadvertently omitted.*

## Happenings at Mother Maria Kaupas Center in Mount Carmel, PA

*By Jake Betz*

From Mother Maria Kaupas Center's beginning in 2015 until the present, the annual winter service project for college students has always focused on Maria Kaupas' guiding principle: "Always More, Always Better, Always With Love." What better model for life for those who commit to loving God and loving their neighbor.

A primary focus of the "center for volunteerism" has been to inspire young Catholics to discern how they can lead lives of spirituality and leadership in the Church and community. The winter service gives them an opportunity to come "home" for Christmas after spending a semester away at college and learning about civic and religious organizations and what they do to improve the quality of life of people in the community. The program has been presented 10 times in the past 11 years, with COVID preventing its sponsorship during the 2020 Christmas season.

The Kaupas Center, which is a ministry of Divine Redeemer Church, invites applications from students who are members of four

Catholic parishes in the area, including Divine Redeemer, Church of Our Lady and Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, all of Mount Carmel, and Holy Angels Church, of Kulpmont. During some of the years, participation rose to 12 or 13 students.

The 2025-26 winter service program included four students who completed the six-day service program. Half the student complement was filled by two brothers from Divine Redeemer who attend different colleges. Chase Balichik, of Lock Haven University, and twin Matthew Balichik, of Lycoming College in Williamsport, did projects together during their Christmas break. Other students were Andrew Lukoskie, of Church of Our Lady, a student at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, Lancaster, and Alexa Nowroski, of Saints Peter and Paul, a sophomore who attends Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove. All these colleges are located in Pennsylvania.

Service project sites this year included: Students' home parishes, the Mother Maria Kaupas Center, Mount Carmel Area Food Pantry, Mount Carmel Area Public Library,

Mount Carmel Area Community Center and Mount Carmel Area Historical Society. In appreciation for six days of service to the Church and the community, each student received a \$200 stipend.

During the first five years of its history, the Kaupas Center was recruiting 12 to 13 students for the winter service program. Additional projects during the ten years of its history included making soup for homebound residents, cleanup of parish cemeteries, Christmas caroling at nursing homes and visits to senior citizen day care programs. Participation dropped after the pandemic, but the Center continues to promote the advantages of the winter service program in the hope that more students will be willing to sacrifice part of their Christmas break to help their hometown.

The fact that a "future saint" walked the streets of Mount Carmel more than a hundred years ago should challenge young Catholics to respond to Jesus' call to help those in need.



# Fire Side Chat At Villa Joseph Marie

The Performing Arts Center at Villa Joseph Marie High School glowed with warmth as the Sisters of St. Casimir gathered by the fire, surrounded by curious and eager students after the Mass celebrating the Feast of St. Casimir. Questions flowed easily – about faith, purpose, and the paths that led each Sister to her calling – and with every answer, the room seemed to grow a little brighter.

There was laughter, reflection, and moments of quiet awe. One Sister paused, smiling as she looked around, and shared that visiting Villa felt like



*Jeanne Frawley, VJM President leads the Fireside chat and poses questions for Sr. Immacula and Sr. Elizabeth Ann.*

“the Disney World of high schools” – a place filled with joy, spirit, and a deep sense of belonging. The students beamed, recognizing that

same feeling in their everyday lives.

At the heart of the conversation was a simple but powerful reminder:

*Always more,  
always better,  
always with love.*

*(A Mother Maria quote).*

It wasn't just a motto – it was something alive in the room, present in every question asked and every story shared.

As the conversation came to a close, one thing was clear: this community is something special. In big ways and small, they are living miracles – together making a difference in the world, one moment of love at a time.

## Celebrating St. Casimir Feast Day 2026



*Sisters of St. Casimir, Associates, and friends gather at Franciscan Village on March 4<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Casimir.*

*Photo above, standing: Sr. Margaret Petcavage, Sr. Rita Marie Kerdock; Elenisa Buzas (seated), Sr. Virginia Gapsis, Tony Ferro, Sr. Marilyn Karpovich, Andrea Gaytan, Sr. Leandra Yerkes (seated). Photo top right, standing:*

*Sr. Eleace King, IHM, Sr. Deborah Romanuski, Ginger Madden, Sr. Theresa Papsis, Loretta Ezerski, Sr. Bernadette Marie Janus, Rosa Ciampaglia; (seated) Sr. Mary Louise Andrulonis, and Sr. Dolorine Lopez. Photo at right, standing: Sr. Theresa Dabulis,*

*Sr. Janine Golubickis, Mary Beth McCarthy, Anna Belle O'Shea, Sr. Nancy Streitmatter; seated Aldona Kamantas, and Sr. Margaret Zalot.*





# At Journey's End — Eternal Days Beginning

## Sister Juline Revas, SSC

JULY 26, 1939 – OCTOBER 4, 2025



Sister Juline (Anna Revas) was born on July 26, 1939, in Pajevonys, Lithuania, to John and Marijona Dievokaityte Revas. With an older brother (Ignas) and sister (Helen) who would become Sister Mary Eva, SSC, the Revas family lived in Lithuania until little Anna was five years old. The family fled to Germany where they lived in a refugee camp from 1944 to 1951,

before immigrating to the United States and settling in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago.

It was in Chicago that Anna attended St. George Elementary School staffed by the Sisters of St. Casimir. Following in the footsteps of Sister Mary Eva, her older sister, she left home in 1955 to begin her life as a Sister of St. Casimir, becoming an aspirant while attending Maria High School.

Sister Juline made her first vows on August 15, 1961 and her final profession on August 15, 1966. She had the joy of celebrating her Silver Jubilee in 1986, Golden Jubilee in 2011, and Diamond Jubilee (60 years) in 2021. Sister Juline's 64 years of faithful service as a Sister of St. Casimir began as a primary teacher in elementary school. From 1961 to 1974 she taught at St. Anthony (Cicero, IL), Sts. Peter and Paul, Our Lady of Vilna, Providence of God (Chicago), St. Casimir (Worcester, MA), and St. Peter (Roswell, NM).

Sister Juline's post-secondary education includes:

BS Elementary Education, Marywood College, Scranton, PA

Master's in Education, Loyola University, Chicago, IL  
DePaul Hospital School of Nursing diploma, St. Louis, MO

BS Nursing, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO  
Master's Nursing with a Major in Administration, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO

Sister Juline's education helped fulfill her heart and mind's goal to become a nurse. God answered her prayer, and her next assignment was as a nurse at Holy Cross Hospital. While working there for the next 34 years, she became acquainted with many doctors, nurses, hospital staff, and patients. She grew in her ability to serve in the important role as Head Nurse on 4A and the weekend Supervisor for the hospital. As respect for her grew, she was appointed the Director of Nursing, followed by Vice President, Nursing and Community Outreach. In 1989 she was nominated Nurse of the Year in Missouri.

Sister Juline's Professional Memberships include:

Illinois Organization of Nurse Executives

National Association of Nurse Executives

Chicago Metropolitan Nurse Administrators  
(an affiliate of Chapter of IONE)

CHAMCS Nursing Issues Committee

(Chicago Health Alliance for Metropolitan Chicago)

Southwest Community Congress Health Committee

One of the doctors at Holy Cross Hospital was Dr. Nancy Streitmatter working as a Cardiologist. She was a non-Catholic but very interested in the bible and spiritual growth. Dr. Nancy and Sister Juline had numerous meaningful discussions over tea. Sister Juline became Dr. Nancy's first spiritual director and introduced her to the Sisters of St. Casimir. Eventually, Dr. Nancy converted to Catholicism and became Sister Nancy, a Sister of St. Casimir.

In addition to her responsibilities at Holy Cross Hospital, Sister Juline, in 1992, helped organize a project that sent surplus medical equipment to Lithuania, transported by the not-for-profit organization Mercy Lift. She visited all 13 receiving hospitals in Lithuania, only to find out that the equipment was more desperately needed than she initially thought. She then developed a network of medical product salespeople who helped her collect donated supplies from other Chicago area hospitals.

Moving from the beloved Motherhouse to Franciscan Village in Lemont was challenging for all the Sisters. Sister Juline found a way to continue to serve, not as a nurse, but as an assistant to Sister Bernadette Marie, the coordinator at Our Lady of Victory Convent assisted living community. They were blessings for each other.

Even though the scars of her early years often weighed heavily upon her, she found much comfort and joy in her spiritual life with her God and all of God's creation. Her prized rose gardens, a tree, a little bird, a cute puppy, and helping someone get better brought a winning smile to her face. And it was a winning smile when her "Cubs" were victorious.

Eventually, Sister Juline's health made it necessary for her to move to skilled care at Mother Theresa Home. Her simple repeated prayer became "My God, my home," and on October 4, 2025, God called her home. Sister Juline is finally at rest with God!







*Sr. Mary Eva Revas and Sr. Juline  
Master of Science in Nursing St. Louis University 1990*



1968



*Sr. Juline at De Paul Hospital  
School of Nursing St. Louis, Missouri  
June 1976*



*60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Sr. Juline with Holy Cross Hospital friends.*



*60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 2021 with Sister Bernadette Marie*



# At Journey's End — Eternal Days Beginning

Sister Sylvia Puchoras, SSC

JULY 1, 1941 – NOVEMBER 7, 2025



Sister Sylvia was born on July 1, 1941, on the far south side of Chicago, in the Roseland neighborhood to Walter James and Ann Petreikis Puchoras. She had three sisters; the late Barbara, (James Parker), Dolores Roberts, and Mary (Richard) Mikolainis, 10 nieces and nephews, as well as several grandnieces and grandnephews.

Sister Sylvia belonged to All Saints' Parish and attended the parish elementary school, where the Sisters of St. Casimir taught her. She continued her high school education at St. Louis Academy for Girls in Roseland, graduating on June 3, 1959.

She entered the community as a postulant on September 8, 1959, and began her life as a Sister of St. Casimir, making her first profession on August 15, 1962. She celebrated her Silver Jubilee in 1987, Golden Jubilee in 2012, and Diamond Jubilee in 2022.

Sister Sylvia earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, DePaul University (Chicago) 1970 and a Master's in (Reading) Education, Loyola University (Chicago) 1976.

Sister Sylvia's 63 years of faithful service as a Sister of St. Casimir began as a primary teacher in elementary school. From 1962 to 1977, she taught at Nativity BVM, Immaculate Conception, and Saints Peter and Paul in Chicago; St. Norbert in Northbrook, IL; and St. Joan of Arc in Aberdeen, MD. From 1977 to 2002, she served as principal of St. Mary/Our Lady of Peace School in Darien, IL.

Sister Sylvia's memory remains in the hearts and minds of the faculty who worked with her at Our Lady of Peace for 25 years, and several of them were eager to share their memories.

*Our success at Our Lady of Peace School was a tribute to Sister Sylvia's hard work, leadership, vision, and dedication. She had a knack for hiring excellent teachers and nurturing their talent within the team. She set goals for staff and evaluated how well these goals were achieved. She could motivate and guide professional growth. As our principal, she shaped the conditions for students and staff to learn and succeed. Above all, she fostered a collaborative environment where we felt OLP was like family. Sister Sylvia's guidance and inspiration were the sources of our school's success.* (Cathy Didio)

*It was an honor for me to serve as a faculty member at Our Lady of Peace School. Our faculty was professional and dedicated. Under the leadership of Sr. Sylvia, our school ran like a well-oiled*

*machine. Sr. Sylvia always made sure that our textbooks were up-to-date and that we teachers were informed about current trends in education. She encouraged us to attend professional workshops and kept a well-stocked magazine rack of current professional periodicals. Sr. Sylvia had vision. Our Lady of Peace School had one of the first state-of-the-art computer labs in the area, built alongside a professionally designed art room. Our building was always clean and well-maintained; it was a pleasure to spend my days there. I will always be grateful to Sr. Sylvia for hiring me because I have wonderful memories of teaching at Our Lady of Peace School.* (Mary Calamino)

*I loved being part of Our Lady of Peace School, and I am grateful that Sister Sylvia allowed me to be a part of this special learning community. Sister Sylvia had her serious, get-down-to-business self at school, but also some lighter moments, like leading a Halloween parade in full costume every year with students, faculty, and staff for the benefit of parents and grandparents who were enjoying this once-a-year event! (Former faculty members at Our Lady of Peace)*

On her 60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee, Sister Sylvia shared: "How grateful I am to our loving God who has gifted me with 60 years in His service. God has blessed me throughout these years with many faithful, wonderful Sisters within our community, a loving family, and special friends and coworkers who worked alongside me for 25 wonderful years when I served as principal of Our Lady of Peace School in Darien, IL. Our holy foundress, Mother Maria Kaupas, had modeled the way of faithful service for our congregation, and for that I remain deeply grateful."

Life continued for Sister Sylvia after Our Lady of Peace. She moved to Maria High School Convent in Chicago for several years as the local superior, then to the Motherhouse, before the big move to Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL, where she moved into independent living, then to assisted living. One of the nurses mentioned, "I miss her beautiful smile!" when she moved from assisted living to skilled care at Mother Theresa Home.

While in skilled care, a music therapist from hospice often came to her room to play instrumental music and sing along with it. Sister Sylvia joined in singing when she could. When a group of Sisters gathered around Sister Sylvia one evening to pray prayers for the dying, the music therapist came to visit her and provide music. Sister Sylvia could not sing, but the Sisters in the room did – a peaceful moment before Sister Sylvia went to sleep. Not long after, on November 7, God did call her home, and Sister Sylvia was at rest with her God.







*25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 1987. At center in white: Sr. Kathleen Smith, Sr. Joyce Ridick, Sr. Sylvia Puchoras.*



*60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 2022*



*60<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 2022*



*1962-1967*



*1970*



*Maria High School Convent 2010. From left: Sr. Theresa Bernadette, Sr. Georgine, Sr. Sylvia, Sr. Clement, Sr. Lucille Ann, Sr. Immacula.*



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### *Save the date!*

Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.  
Mother Maria Mass  
Praying for the Beatification of Mother Maria Kaupas  
at St. Casimir Center Chapel  
2601 W. Marquette Road  
Chicago, IL 60629

### *Last Mass in the Motherhouse Chapel*

Saturday, August 29, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.  
Founders Day celebrating the 119<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of the Sisters of St. Casimir and Praying for the  
Beatification of Mother Maria Kaupas  
St. Casimir Center Chapel  
2601 W. Marquette Road  
Chicago, IL 60629

