

Serving the Dear Neighbor



NEWS FROM MEDAILLE: BATON ROUGE, NEW ORLEANS, CROOKSTON, MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL & CINCINNATI

Ministry of *Compassion*

NOLA Grannies Offer Comfort & Kindness to Refugees

Sisters often speak about forming “multipliers,” or others we can partner with to serve the *dear neighbors* in our communities more effectively and in greater numbers. In New Orleans, Sisters Barbara Hughes, Frances Duos and Janine Beniger, and many others, have done just that.

They have partnered with the NOLA Grannies, a group that began in the spring of 2018 in response to the zero tolerance policy around asylum seekers, migrants and refugees at our southern border. The movement first began in New York with a group of outraged grannies.

As they watched news reports of children being separated from parents and the inhumane conditions they endured, they decided they could no longer remain still or silent.

They coordinated a “Granny Caravan” that traveled from New York to McAllen, TX, so that they could speak out and help in any way they could. About 10 grannies from New Orleans joined them.

Their experience was profound. They learned that once the people in detention (who were seeking legal asylum but were instead imprisoned) are released, they are dropped off at a bus station, often with only the clothes on their backs and a ticket to their sponsor city to await their asylum hearings. Their destinations are often hundreds, if not thousands of miles away, and they are given virtually no provisions.

The NOLA Grannies wanted to help by providing basic necessities as they travel through New Orleans. They set up a program at the local Greyhound Bus Terminal to distribute care kits, which they assemble and fill with non-perishable food, toiletries, blankets, diapers and other items. Sister Janine confirms that most arrive with very little. “Their faces show fatigue,



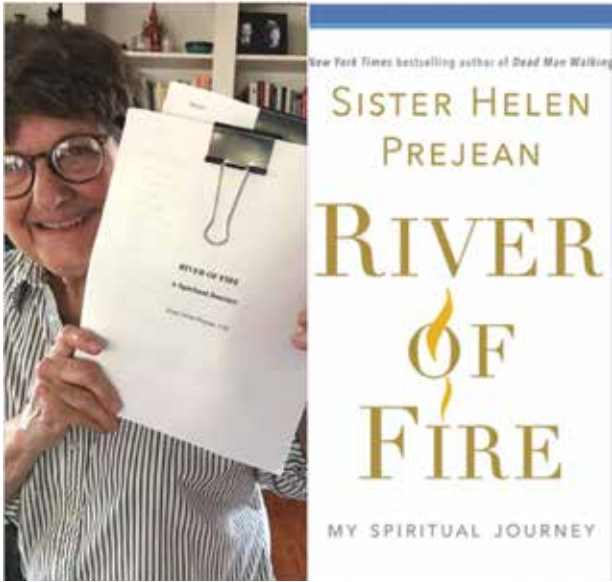
In purple (l to r) are Sisters Frances Duos, Janine Beniger and Barbara Hughes. In white are four of the founding NOLA Grannies (l to r), Jean Ewing, Joyce Thomas, Cynthia Sheridan and Maggie Tidwell.

fear and somberness, which softens as they encounter any gesture of kindness,” she said. “We want them to know that in our nation, there are people who care.” Similar groups have sprung up around the country.

Twice a day, seven days a week, a group of 3-5 grannies meet buses to offer these simple comforts. A Spanish-speaking granny is usually among them to reassure the travelers and answer their many questions. “In addition to food and toiletries, we offer small toys and stuffed animals to the children, and totes to the adults to carry their few belongings,” said volunteer Annette Broussard. “I see the gratitude when I hand a child a toy or give a mother a blanket or diapers for her baby. Better yet, I actually FEEL the gratitude when someone gives me a spontaneous hug to thank me for caring.”

“Our offering might seem small in comparison to the gravity of their plight, yet this is such a compelling ministry,” said Sister Janine. “I feel touched, privileged and challenged in their presence, and the devotion of the NOLA Grannies inspires me deeply.” ●

To learn more, visit the NOLA Grannies Facebook page, or email nolagrannies@gmail.com.



Sister Helen Prejean's New Book Set For Release

Sister Helen Prejean calls her third book, *River of Fire*, “the prequel to *Dead Man Walking*.” In this revelatory, intimate memoir, the nation’s foremost leader in efforts to abolish the death penalty shares the story of her growth as a spiritual leader, speaks out about the challenges of the Catholic Church, and shows that joy and religion are not mutually exclusive. Although widely known for her work as an activist nun, less is known about her spiritual journey from praying to God to solve the world’s problems to engaging in working to transform societal injustices. *River of Fire* will be released August 13 and will be available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Sister Helen is currently making appearances across the country to talk, answer questions, and sign books. To learn more, visit sisterhelen.org ●

Cancer Justice Network Brings Justice to Healthcare

The Cancer Justice Network in Cincinnati, a recipient of a grant from the Congregation of St. Joseph, seeks to bring justice to the inequities in healthcare by providing support and resources to vulnerable populations who are afflicted with cancer or other illnesses. They assist those without access to quality healthcare including senior citizens, the disabled and poor and homeless persons by matching them with needed services such as transportation, childcare and screenings. Volunteers then accompany patients to treatment and doctor appointments to help them navigate the system. At right, Steve Sunderland, the Director of the Cancer Justice Network, with Sister Jeannie Masterson. “The Cancer Justice Network helps level the playing field for those who are sick and without resources,” said Sister Jeannie. “Cincinnati is the cancer capital of Ohio so there are many under represented people here who need help.” To learn more or find out how you can help, visit cancerjusticenetwork.org ●



Breaking Free Observes May Day

On May 1st, members of Breaking Free, a group run by survivors of human trafficking in St. Paul, MN, drove to Duluth for a May Day observance recognizing Native American women (and men) who have been trafficked. Breaking Free helps those still trapped in the life break the cycle of abuse. Among them was our own Sister Doreen Charest (second from left). Native Americans and other indigenous populations around the world make up a disproportionate number of those trafficked overall, according to the United Nations. All in attendance prayed and sang, then marched to a nearby bridge where they threw carnations in the harbor in remembrance of the victims. To learn more, visit breakingfree.net ●

Earth Day Service Project

On Saturday, April 13th, sisters, associates and friends of the Congregation in Baton Rouge participated in service projects in honor of Earth Day. Each project began with a heartfelt prayer, then everyone pitched in and worked together to beautify their communities.

Hundred Oaks Landscaping

Gathered in service at the Sisters' Residence at Hundred Oaks were many volunteers ready to get their hands dirty! They potted plants, pruned roses and planted a new garden with herbs and flowers. "The feeling among us was communal and joyful as we worked to increase the beauty of the sisters' yard and gardens," said CSJ Associate Debbie Gelpi. "We feel like we expressed our love of the sisters and Mother Earth in a small but meaningful way."

Community Garden

In the Valley Park area, volunteers helped start a community garden. "We built raised beds and planted vegetables and herbs, including tomatoes, bell peppers, collard greens, green onions, oregano, thyme, and more," said CSJ Associate Vicki LaPlace. "Our Valley Park neighbors are looking forward to learning to care for and harvest the crops."

A self-directed neighborhood clean up was also suggested as an option for anyone who could not attend the above events. Our spring day of service was a success thanks to participation by so many. We are ever grateful to all who came and helped! ●



The Plight of the Monarch

Did you know that 1 out of every 3 bites of food you eat is there because of pollinators like the Monarch Butterfly? These creatures are as necessary to the food chain as they are beautiful, but sadly, they are in trouble. Their numbers are down 90% of what they were in 1992, and the milkweed plant population, which is the only source of food for the Monarch caterpillar, is also down 90%. These plants are rapidly disappearing due to land development and the widespread spraying of weed killer. Sister Mildred "Sissy" Guillot,

who passed away in November (see page 6), knew this and left us a living legacy in the milkweed she planted at Hundred Oaks which bloomed this spring. Sisters, associates and staff from centers across the congregation have also taken up the torch and become "Monarch champions," planting their own milkweed habitats. Sister Mildred was ahead of her time in helping these endangered and beautiful creatures and caring for creation.

To learn more about Monarchs and how you can help, visit SaveOurMonarchs.org.

Jubilee 2019



Sister Mary Urban Aranyos, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Joanne Marie Johnson, CSJ

(Sister Mary Clarence)

60 Years



Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Judi Keehnen, CSJ

(Sister Joan Elizabeth)

60 Years



Sister Doris Vigneaux, CSJ

(Sister Mary Alfred)

70 Years



Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ

(Sister Joseph Eugene)

60 Years



Sister Maria Hill, CSJ

(Sister Maria Goretti)

60 Years



Sister Miriam Mire, CSJ

60 Years

Yearlong 150th Anniversary Celebration Wraps Up in Baton Rouge

On April 27, several of our sisters in Baton Rouge attended St. Joseph's Academy's annual Gala. Billed as "the party that happens once every 150 years," the event was the culmination of the yearlong 150th anniversary celebration of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Baton Rouge and sponsored ministry, Saint Joseph's Academy (SJA).

After the nearly 1,400 guests were welcomed, Mission Advancement Associate Director Sister Joan Laplace, SJA President Jan Rhorer Breen and Principal Stacia Andricain began the evening by leading a prayer.

In attendance were Sisters Sandra Blanchard, Judith Brun, Dianne Fanguy, Janet Fleischhacker, Janet Franklin, Joan Hartlaub, Adele Lambert, Joan Laplace, Margaret Maggio, Evelyn Mee, Johanne Pedersen, Kathleen Pittman, Theresa Pitruzzello, Janet Roesner, Cynthia Sabathier, Anna Schellhaas, Lucy Silvio and Adelaide Williamson.

Other notable guests included Congressman Garrett Graves; Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards; the Most Reverend Michael Duca, Bishop of Baton Rouge; Bishop Emeritus Robert Muench; and Cokie Roberts, political commentator for ABC News and National Public Radio, syndicated columnist and author.

During the evening, past SJA principals and presidents were recognized for their contributions including Sisters Joan Laplace, Judith Brun and Adele Lambert. A video that included the history of the sisters and the founding of SJA was also shown.

We thank St. Joseph's Academy for this special evening and recognition, and for joining us in celebration this past year. ●



From left, Sister Joan Laplace, SJA President Jan Rhorer Breen, First Lady Donna Edwards, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, honored guest Cokie Roberts, Gala chairwoman Suzie Touns Adler and SJA Principal Stacia Andricain.



Sister Julie Sheatzley, CSJ
(Sister Maris Stella)

60 Years



Sister Gracelyn Soignet, CSJ
(Sister Bonaventure)

60 Years



Sister Julie Kraemer, CSJ
(Sister Julie Marie)

25 Years

Congratulations...

...to these and all 50 sisters who are celebrating Jubilees around the congregation this year!

To view their biographies, visit us at csjoseph.org, and click on "Connect With Us."

In Memoriam...



Sister Maria Rabalais, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on June 22, 2019, after celebrating 76 years of religious life.



Sister Mildred Guillot, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 22, 2018, after celebrating 75 years of religious life.



Sister Carolyn Brady, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on May 21, 2019, after celebrating 70 years of religious life.



Sister Jane Aucoin, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 2, 2018, after celebrating 74 years of religious life.



Sister Bertrand Lieux, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on April 9, 2019, after celebrating 71 years of religious life.



Sister Patricia Corbett, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on August 29, 2018, after celebrating 64 years of religious life.



Sister Rose Mary Toenyan, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on January 8, 2019, after celebrating 63 years of religious life.



Sister Mary William Matthews, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on August 20, 2018, after celebrating 66 years of religious life.



Sister Patricia Brandner, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 24, 2018, after celebrating 74 years of religious life.

*We Remember
and Celebrate
the lives of all our sisters who
passed away this year.*

Legacy of Caring

The legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph that began with six women in LePuy, France more than 360 years ago continues today because of support from donors and friends like you. Your faithful prayers and generous financial gifts help ensure that our legacy of caring continues to touch the lives of countless individuals and families each year.

We are grateful for our annual donors, Circle of Friends members, and our Heritage Society members who have remembered the Sisters and the Congregation of St. Joseph in your will and estate plans. Our mission and vision are enriched through your commitment.

You Can Help

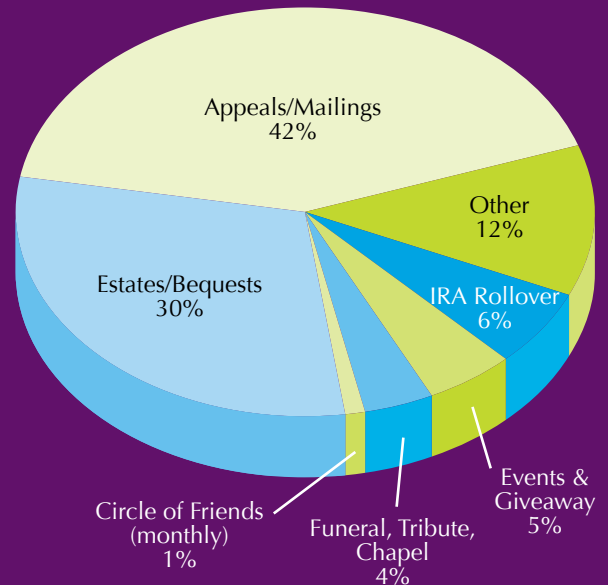
- > Use the enclosed envelope or make a gift online at csjoseph.org/make-a-gift
- > Make monthly gifts and become a member of our **Circle of Friends**
- > Make a legacy gift through your will or estate and join our **Heritage Society**

For more information:

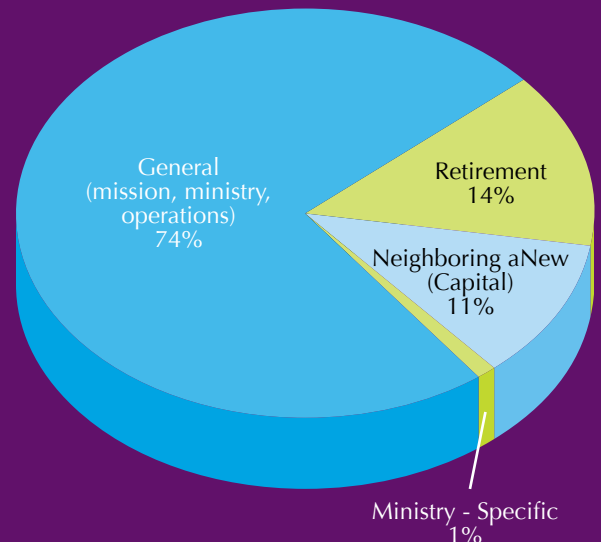
Pat Milenius, Director of Advancement
pmilenius@csjoseph.org or 216.252.0440

Annual Giving Report

Revenue Sources



Donor Designated Uses



*This reporting documents the sources and designated uses of charitable donations received by the Congregation of St. Joseph in the 2018 fiscal year. This includes gifts received that are designated to our sponsored ministries. Gifts sent directly to our ministries are not included here.

We rely on the generous support of our benefactors and openly share how gifts received on behalf of the sisters are used.



3134 Hundred Oaks Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808-3288

Spotlight Photo



Sisters Janet Roesener and Chris Pologa (CSJ Carondelet) enjoy a 4th of July picnic at our Hundred Oaks center in Baton Rouge.

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Congregation of St. Joseph Heritage Society

The **Heritage Society** was founded in order to gratefully recognize friends who have generously included the Congregation of St. Joseph in their estate plans. Your gift to us through your will or revocable trust, life insurance policy, IRA, charitable gift annuity, or charitable remainder trust enrolls you as a member of our *Congregation of St. Joseph Heritage Society*.

To learn more about our Heritage Society and how to join, contact Pat Milenius at 216.252.0440, or email her at pmilenius@csjoseph.org.