



Our Times

Newsletter of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius

It seems that everywhere we turn today we encounter the words "the future," and the question of what it holds in store for all of us. Whatever our regard for the topic, it remains one we all need to consider and act upon.

In 2015, Pope Francis published a timely encyclical entitled *Laudato Si'*--On Care for Our Common Home. He addresses topics like pollution and climate change, the loss of biodiversity, global inequality and the human roots of the ecological crises. In his introduction to the encyclical, Pope Francis refers to his patron's "Song to Creation," which begins with the words, "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us..." The Pope focuses on two key issues: the necessity to preserve the earth and our obligation to care for those who are vulnerable. He emphasizes the fact that we are not "consumers, masters and exploiters" but individuals who are to maintain the glories of the universe and see to it that all share in its bounty.

The Holy Father's concern for those who are vulnerable has been part of the communal mission of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius since our founding 113 years ago. Whether it was the children in our schools, the elderly in our health care facilities, the parishioners we celebrated with in Church or the poor in the areas in which we lived, we have invested our talents, energy and resources in ministries and programs that address the needs of people as we see them.

It is hard to imagine that we must be reminded to care for all the beauties of the universe. God has given us a gift of immeasurable value! How can we neglect its preservation when it comes at the hands of a generous Lord who has only the best interests of His children at heart? As part of a community of Sisters who have a

Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* Action Plan

Putting Intercessions into Action

by Sister Bernadette Marie, SS.C.M.



Following an early Spring rain, Sister Michael Ann came upon a brilliant rainbow encircling Villa Sacred Heart. Breathtaking beauty!

mission to the wider universe, we are "not in it alone," but have a responsibility as stewards to those with whom we share the entire world.

We have taken the need to preserve the Lord's universe seriously. Each day at prayer, the Sisters remember a special intention pertaining to important issues in our world. Two intentions that focus on our call to preserve the earth are:

Lord of Creation, you have made us responsible for the care of the earth and space. Teach us to conserve earth's resources so that all your children may share in the bounty of your created blessings.

and

Lord God, Creator and Author of Life, you have given us a world beautiful and fruitful beyond our comprehension.

Help us to be faithful and responsible stewards who continually praise and thank you for your marvelously created world.



Earth Day 2022 saw the planting of two new trees: one on the Villa grounds (Left) and one at Maria Joseph Manor.

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Long before the congregation signed on to Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* Action Platform, (see Sister Barbara Sable's message on page 3), the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius have valued simple living, the preservation of the environment and the faithful stewardship of the many blessings we have been given. In local communities and at the Motherhouse we have always worked to preserve and wisely use that which we have, plant trees and flowers to enhance the beauty already present, and recycle as much as possible. The installation of energy-efficient LED lights and motion-sensitive corridor lights help to save electricity. Cardboard, paper, plastics, bottles and cans are recycled diligently. Everyone helps contribute to the "stuff" recycled at the Festival Flea Market!

Efforts at saving the planet on a wider scale include the Sisters' own involvement in influencing public officials to endorse eco-friendly laws and to pass legislation designed to ensure clean air and water for the future. Additionally, the congregation has for decades invested only in socially responsible investments. By supporting only companies that are environmentally-conscious and which pass additional screens, we endeavor to "put our money where our mouth is." Supporting solar and wind energy development through investing, we strive to seek out companies that are attentive to the need for developing alternatives to fossil fuels. We have strenuously protested the practice of fracking.

May the Lord of Creation continue to bless our efforts--and yours, too--and hear our prayers for a future that praises God through our sister, Mother Earth.



Top: Sister Irene Marie carefully prunes the willow trees in early Spring to provide pussy willows for our chapels and two local churches for Palm Sunday.

Above: Very tall and very old trees on the grounds sometimes fall victim to wind sheer or lightning and need to be replaced, as did this massive tulip tree in May of 2018. Sister Barbara Sable is dwarfed by the roots. Along with another tulip tree equally as tall, the trees were sold for their wood and replaced with saplings.

Left: On days when the weather cooperates, Sister Jana is happy to be able to pedal to work at Maria Joseph Continuing Care Community where she is Pastoral Visitor at the Meadows.

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from the General Superior
by Sister Barbara Sable, SS.C.M.

“Behold, I make all things new!” (Rev 21:5)



We, Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, have recently issued a Congregational statement in solidarity with Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* document, and his request to join communities of faith all over the world, in issuing a pledge to join the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform. The Sisters of Saints

Cyril and Methodius and our Associates have inherited from our Founder and our earliest Sisters, religious traditions which draw us to care for the earth and earth’s people. For more than a century the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius have made every place where we serve a place of beauty and healing.

As a Religious Community, we have begun a seven-year journey with Pope Francis towards an ecology that protects the earth, and sustains those who share our common home on Earth. In making this pledge and beginning this journey, we commit to living more simply, responsibly, and sustainably as we work in collaboration with others for the dignity

of life and the care of all creation. Pope Francis’ 7-year plan to realize the 7 goals of the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform includes:

- *Response to the Cry of the Earth*
- *Response to the Cry of the Poor*
- *Ecological Economics*
- *Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles*
- *Ecological Education*
- *Ecological Spirituality*
- *Community Engagement and Participatory Action.*

This beautiful season of Spring is a good time to consider the new life and growth associated with living by the tenets of *Laudato Si’*. Often in Spring we think about ways that we can live more in oneness with nature; for many, this is also finding

new ways to simplify our lives and downsize our possessions. We need to remember, however, that even if we simplify our lives and give away many of our possessions to the poor, the task is unfinished unless we also simplify our hearts. How can this be done? By consciously and purposefully moving toward a place of peace, by truly relying on God who can help us not only to simplify our lives, but to lighten our hearts and spirits; by sharing what we have with those in need. I invite you all to join with Pope Francis, and with us, in this journey of more intentionally responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Sister Barbara Sable

Danville Servant Leaders in Person



On Sunday, October 24, 2021, the nineteenth annual Servant Leadership Awards were held in the Basilica of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Danville. Of the 27 students honorees, 25 were able to be present, masked but in person! The towel each received was an encouragement to continue serving as Jesus did. This invitation was reinforced by the two Lifetime Achievement in Servant Leadership awardees who were also present: Denise Toczylousky who was singled out for her work in Eldercare at Maria Joseph, and Rabbi Daniel Swartz, an authority on Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’*, who was recognized for his efforts in Ecumenism. The awards for Education and Evangelization were presented to Rev. Ray Carey and Sister Canice, SS.C.M., respectively at later dates.



Top: It was a joy to honor so many sincere and selfless young Christians!

Above: A towel is awarded each servant leader to assist in washing the feet of those to whom God sends them.

Far left: Sister Barbara Sable is proud to stand with Rabbi Swartz and Denise Toczylousky.

Left: First the certificate and then the towel. Sister Madonna does the draping.

Two Times to Feed the Hungry

Since the last *Our Times*, the Sisters and Associates have twice been able to provide carry-away dinners for those who drive by Trinity Lutheran Church on a Saturday in Danville. On October 30, 2021, the Sisters prepared the bags and distributed them from under a tent to stay dry (**Right and below right**).

Considerably drier but still cold, the April 2, 2022, distribution (**Below**) also served over 70 dinners to those who came for them. An ecumenical exercise of charity, the Danville Jubilee Kitchen provides volunteer organizations an opportunity to sign up to share with the poor September through June.



Many Intentions for Which to Pray

People driving down Railroad Street in October, December and March may have noticed Sisters praying on the Academy building steps in less than comfortable conditions. The services, which were streamed live on the SS.C.M. Facebook page, address timely needs like the environment (**Below: October's prayer which merited a rainbow**) and prayer for peace in the Ukraine (**Right: March's prayer with winds to animate the blue and yellow streamers**). The streamers found their way into the Basilica (**Lower right**) to be a reminder to continue to pray for an end to the war in the Ukraine. May God grant them peace!



On Friday, April 8, 2022, amidst the Russian invasion of Ukraine, SS.C.M. Associate Chuck Pollock, his wife and daughter (**Far right**) gifted the Sisters with a flag from the Ukraine. It was placed next to the Peace Pole at the main entrance to the Motherhouse during a prayer service for peace and an end to the war (**Right and far right**). The rain was a slight inconvenience compared to the pain of those for whom we prayed.



St. Cyril Preschool and Kindergarten
Never a Dull Moment for Children



From October through April, the St. Cyril Preschool and Kindergarten students have kept up a steady pace of learning through classes, activities and performances.

On November 13, the exciting and profitable Basket Bonanza sent Sister Carol Ann home a winner (Left). It was fueled by snacks sold by Sisters Barbara Sable and Jeanne Ambre, with help from Diana Dombrowski (Far left).



- Sister Michaellette accompanies the children singing a song of Thanksgiving (Above far left).
- Sister Donna Marie directed all the students in the annual Christmas Pageant (Far left, above center and above) on December 12 in the Basilica.
- A grand celebration of surviving 100 masked school days (Left center) was held on January 28.
- A budding student artist displays her Picasso-inspired portrait (Left).
- Pay for Play was held on February 16 (Below center), raising \$3000 for the Eos Therapeutic Riding Center for special needs children and adults.



Doesn't everyone want to masquerade as a leprechaun on St. Patrick's Day?



It's difficult holding back the excitement before the signal to bound onto the grass to find "hidden" Easter eggs.

The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor.

Psalm 34



The St. Francis Center at St. Helena Island in South Carolina continues to serve the surrounding community and keeps the Sisters whose mission it is to do so as busy as they can possibly be! Sisters Canice, Marcine and Agnes Marie, with dedicated volunteers, have regularly scheduled food distributions, deliveries to the St. Helena Island Senior Center, and weekly Bags-on-Wheels delivered to homes to provide nourishment to hundreds of families. Additionally, special projects like Make-a-Wish and seasonal distributions of food, clothing, toys, and other gifts bring the needy to the doors and send them home satisfied. Assistance for living expenses and health care is given, as well as much needed home repairs, restoration and additions. We are grateful for all those who help support this sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius!



From the top and left to right:

- The Bluffton Four: Sisters Pamela Smith, Canice, Agnes Marie and Marcine, prepare the Make-a-Wish bags for distribution.
- Volunteers prepare a spread to welcome Grandparents in search of Christmas gifts.
- In November, members of the Junior National Honor Society of Lady's Island Middle School and their Principal Dr. Brown presented the 2,000 non-perishable items they collected for the Center to Sisters Carol Marie and Marcine.
- Mission accomplished: happy children!
- Dressing for the occasion is half the fun. Sister Canice and Mary Ann Campbell are ready for Christmas giving.
- Lit Wits, the SS.C.M. Associates' Book Club in Bluffton collected \$800 to help the St. Francis Center carry out its mission.
- A selection of hats are on hand to assure that peoples' heads stay warm in the winter.



Something to keep in mind the next time you donate to a food bank:

What are the people who frequent food banks wishing to find?

- Boxes of Mac and Cheese mix require milk and butter. Boxed milk is a treasure.
- A can opener is useful for opening the cans without pop tops.
- Oil is a luxury, but needed for the often-donated Rice-a-Roni.
- Spices or salt and pepper bring a smile, as do tea bags and coffee. Sugar and flour are treats.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables donated by farmers and grocery stores are welcome.
- Seeds are good in spring and summer.
- Tuna and crackers make a good lunch.
- Peanut butter and jelly are plentiful, but sandwich bread is not.
- Hamburger helper is hopeless without hamburger.
- Cake mix and frosting make a birthday special.
- Everybody loves Stove Top stuffing.
- Dishwashing detergent is always appreciated.



Harvest-Inspired Industry

An abundant crop of apples and peaches inspired Sister Susan Marie, at Maria Hall for cancer treatments, to rally the troops to pick apples (Left with Sister Carmen), pare them (Below left with Sisters Beverly, Agnes, Angela and Ann Joseph) and bake (Below with Sister Anne Renée). Starting with applesauce, apple butter, pies and baked apples, Sister Susan Marie has since taken to experimenting with many recipes for breads and rolls, coffee cakes and cookies. Rejoice with us that Sister Susan Marie's good days are good for all of us!



St. Thérèse Will Move to Elysburg

A long-time shrine on the grounds of Villa Sacred Heart has found a new purpose and will be moved when the time is right. The statue of St. Thérèse of Lisieux on the north lawn of the Villa will take up residence in All Saints Cemetery by the graves of the Carmelite Sisters of Danville, formerly of Elysburg. The plan is to repair and refurbish the statue, make a cement stand for it and relocate it. It will draw the attention of visitors to the cemetery to the place where the bodies of St. Thérèse's Sisters are resting peacefully.

Above: At St. Columba School in Bloomsburg, PA, Second Grade teacher Sister Lydia asked her students to work with their parents to create a poster illustrating the value of a Catholic education for Catholic Schools Week, January 30-February 5. The results are in!

Below: The Leadership Teams of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Sisters of Saint Casimir and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters from Scranton met in person in Danville (and virtually) on November 11 to reinforce our relationship as "cousins" and explore ways to collaborate and assist each other.



Sisters Michael Ann, Angela Pikus, Patricia Boyd and Barbara Sable stand with the SS.C.M. Sisters' gift to the Carmelites.

So Many Holidays Since September!

With some sporadic relief from the pandemic, the activities of the holidays picked up somewhat in Danville and in the missions.

On October 4, the Feast of St. Francis, Father Jerry Heintzelman blessed animals at the Meadows Community Center. First in line was Maggie Mae, carried by Sister Sara (**Below left**).

Christmas presents donated by the Sisters for people at the State Hospital are bagged for delivery by Sister Seton Marie (**Below right**), while out in Chicago, Sister Deborah Marie fills a cart with toys purchased by the community for local poor children at the request of St. Benedict's African Catholic Church (**Right**).



In December, Sister Pamela Smith was part of "An Evening in the Upstate with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston." Later aired on TV, the filming took place at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Greenville, SC. (**Right**)



In Crown Point, IN, parishioners of St. Mary's Church and Sister Joanne Marie collected and gave away 400 bags of Christmas gifts and food for needy families in the parish and beyond (**Far right**).



On the north lawn of Maria Hall, the annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the East End Fire Company made many children happy on Holy Saturday (**Above right**).

After Mass on Easter morning, Father Jerry, with Sister Jana's assistance, blesses the traditional Easter foods with holy water (**Right**).

The lady in red (**Far right**) is new Catholic Dawn O'Brien, a longtime Villa employee who was baptized, confirmed and received first Eucharist at St. Joseph Church on Holy Saturday. Sr. Seton Marie was her sponsor.



In Memory of

Sister
Elizabeth Ann
Matonak,
SS.C.M.



Born:
February 22, 1936
Professed:
August 6, 1957
Went Home to God:
March 6, 2022

Elizabeth Ann Matonak was one of four children born to Andrew and Elizabeth Matonak in East Vandergrift, PA. Growing up, Elizabeth attended public schools and got to know the Sisters in religious education classes on Saturdays. When the Sisters returned to Holy Trinity School in the 1950's, Elizabeth Ann's knowledge and spirituality were broadened by an active Sodality for high school girls. A bus trip to Danville to visit the Novitiate, arranged by Sodality Moderator Sister Joan, captured her spirit when she saw the joy of the novices and postulants.

The fact that Elizabeth Ann's mother had wanted to

be a Sister but could not obtain her own mother's blessing, sometimes made Elizabeth Ann feel like God's second choice. But God's designs are flawless, and Elizabeth Ann entered the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius in 1954, and became Sister Miriam Pius at her reception in 1955.

After profession and even before she began her dietetic studies at Marywood, Sister Miriam Pius jump-started her ministry at St. Cyril Academy in Danville, PA, where she continued for almost 7 years. Later she was assigned to Maria Joseph Manor where she served as dietary supervisor for 25 years. An excellent cook and baker, Sister delighted in making holidays and jubilees special with phenomenal cakes!

In the 1970s, she decided to reclaim her baptismal name and from then on was known in the Danville area and in the Congregation as Sister Elizabeth Ann Matonak.

One of Sister Elizabeth Ann's major accomplishments was fulfilling her dream and serving as one of the development consultants for the building of Emmanuel Center and Nazareth. When the facilities were completed, Emmanuel Center in 2001 and Nazareth in 2003, she and her dear friend and co-conspirator, Sister Marguerite Hruby, not only saw their dreams come true, but they became Administrators of both facilities. They were happy to offer new services to others and to manage the beautiful facilities that later became home to them.

On March 6, 2022, when Jesus came and called Sister Elizabeth Ann to the heavenly banquet, she must have run to the banquet hall, and put on an apron so that she could be of service to others as she had done all her life. Most likely, Jesus said, "Not this time Elizabeth Ann; this time you will be served."

A Decade at NRVC



Pictured above in the middle of the action, Sister Deborah Marie Borneman is right where she has been for the last 10 years. As the Director of Mission Intergration for the National Religious Vocation Conference, Sr. Debbie creates and gives programs, presentations and conferences designed to encourage and help religious communities promote vocations and identify potential members. Sr. Debbie's enthusiasm and competence are well known and her efforts greatly appreciated. To let Sr. Debbie know just how much she is valued, a multi-member tribute was posted on YouTube for this milestone in her career at NRVC. Watch it on: https://youtu.be/PGbHnA_cVTo. Take a look to see how proud we are to share this wonderful SS.C.M. Sister with the Church and the world!

*Scranton and Harrisburg Dioceses
Jubilees Finally Celebrated*



The pandemic caused some serious postponements in celebrating the Jubilees of Sisters. Sister Catherine Ann Morris (Left) was able to celebrate her 60 years of religious profession with the other Sister celebrants in the Scranton Diocese on November 11, 2021. Days later, on November 20, the Harrisburg Diocese hosted a Mass and dinner for the Sister Jubilarians of 2020 and 2021. Bishop Ronald Gainer was happy to finally pose (Lower left) with Sisters Loretta Marie and Irene Marie who celebrated 50 years of profession in 2020 and Sister Jean Marie, 50 years professed in 2021. The dinner proved worth waiting for (Below).



SSCM at QMHR

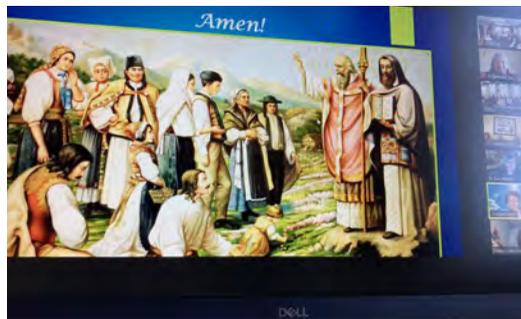
In December, the first annual Christmas Bazaar held by Queen of the Most Holy Rosary parish in Elysburg, PA, saw two tables representing the SS.C.M.'s. Sisters Denise Marie and Brigid (Right) sold all the baked goods they brought, while Sisters Jeanne Ambre and Barbara Sable (Below) offered original artwork suitable for inspiring Christmas gifts.



On Sunday, February 13, in anticipation of the feast day of our community patrons, Saints Cyril and Methodius, a Zoom call prayer service brought all of the Sisters together virtually. Thanks to the overwhelming kindness of our benefactors and two grants, the new iPads we recently received enabled us to "see" each other and extend more than an auditory wish for a happy feast day. You've got to love the advances in technology and our generous benefactors!

February 14, 2022

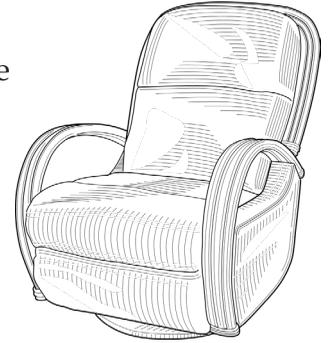
Celebrating the Feast



When We Wish

We would like to purchase new chairs for the Sisters at the Motherhouse and at Maria Hall who are **not** in Personal Care. The bedroom chairs for the independent Sisters at

Maria Hall came with the building (which opened in 1971). The furniture at the Motherhouse



is likely even older! We will try for grants, but if anyone would like to contribute to the cause, we would be most grateful and happy to hold you in all the prayers we will pray sitting in the new chairs!

You Are Invited to Leave a Legacy

With a gift through your will, you can support the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius and ensure that our mission of witnessing to, proclaiming and building the Kingdom of God will continue into the future.

An example of bequest wording:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, a not-for-profit organization located in Danville PA, the sum of \$___ (or ___% of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate) for the unrestricted use and general purposes of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

It is a good idea to let your heirs know about the charities to which you are donating.

If you would like more information about giving to the Community in your will, please contact:

Sister Barbara Sable, SS.C.M.
General Superior
570-275-3581 ext 300
barbarasable@hotmail.com



70 Years



Sister Rita Polchin

Jubilee 2022

The love of God
has been
poured
into our
hearts
through
the
Holy Spirit
dwelling
within us.



Romans 5:5

55 Years



Sister Anne Renée
Pennino



50 Years



Sister Seton Marie
Connolly



Sister Barbara Sable

25 Years



Sister Deborah Marie
Borneman



Sister Maria Jana
Poláková

You are my witnesses.



Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius
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Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Spring 2022



Mission: *In the name of Jesus we teach and heal.*
 Spirituality: *Christ centered and Mary-modeled.*
 Motto: *Thy Kingdom Come!*



Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius

We are delighted to be able to invite everyone to the Summer Festival this year! Our two years of Covid cancellation at an end, we have made some changes that we hope will make your participation more enjoyable. Please come to celebrate this happy event with us!



Save the Date!

***Saturday, July 9, '22**

- Fun ◦ Food Trucks ◦ Baked Goods ◦ Flea Market ◦ Bingo ◦ Religious Articles ◦ Books ◦
- Sisters' Art ◦ Furniture Sale ◦ Silent Auction ◦ Basilica Mass for Sunday at 5:00 pm ◦



10:30 am - 5:00 pm
Villa Sacred Heart
Danville, Pennsylvania

