



# Our Times

Newsletter of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius

## When in Religious Life: Bloom Where Planted

by Sister M. Philothea, SS.C.M.

“God puts you where God needs you.” That’s what I say to myself when my phone rings at 2 a.m. because a Resident has fallen and needs to go to the emergency room. Greeting the EMT’s who arrive and giving a synopsis of the Resident’s health as they move through the lobby is just one of the unseen but important parts of my ministry. And ministry it is. Looking after the most vulnerable, seeing that their needs are met, is not something I dreamed of when I was younger. In fact, I had no plans other than becoming a Sister. Fortunately, God knew what God wanted, and guided me through 20+ years teaching (mostly French) in three schools in two states, then into School Administration – again three schools, two states.

When my last principal decided my position was no longer needed, I transitioned into administration in the Community as Building Administrator at the Motherhouse. There I recognized an approaching need for a Personal Care Home Administrator at Maria Hall, and took the State-required 100-hour training for certification. Eventually I moved to Maria Hall as Building Administrator and then Personal Care Home Administrator, ministering to my Sisters and to Sisters from two other Communities. As Administrator of a State-licensed facility, I oversee adherence to regulations, including ongoing training for staff and me, and many aspects of Resident life. My years working with young people taught me to be patient (most of the time), aware of what’s going on, and to keep moving my buttons (in order to keep my cool), particularly when a Resident does not like a regulation.

Even though most of the Sisters are older than I, they need what I can help give them: food, shelter, a safe place, help with activities we take for granted, relief from pain. Didn’t Jesus tell us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the imprisoned? I’ve learned that prison can be a weakening body, or one in pain, or one just lacking energy. Yes, administration is a ministry.



### What’s Inside?

Sister Barbara Sable .....	3	St. Francis Center.....	6	Sr. Jacqueline.....	9
Danville Servant Leaders.....	3	Sr. Pamela Smith .....	6	Other events.....	9-10
Holidays in Pictures.....	4	Mini-Pilgrimage.....	7	We Wish; Legacy.....	10
Feasts and Rituals.....	5	Kindergarten Pizza.....	7	2024 Jubilarians.....	11
		Uvalde TX; Sr. Marcine.....	8	Sunset Lane Hospice...12	

*Above left:* For Sister Philothea, keeping ahead of what needs to be done involves competency with the computer as much as working with the needs and wants of the Sisters in Personal Care. *Above:* Another layer of Administration is helping to keep Nursing and Housekeeping staff members on the same wavelength.

Because the Residents have come from responsible positions, some having been in charge here at Maria Hall, it can be difficult for them to admit they need help. One evening I was summoned to a Resident who had fallen and hit her head. She was conscious, but did not want to go to the emergency room (our protocol: a head injury requires a hospital visit). When I arrived at her room and told her that she needed to go to the hospital, she grudgingly acquiesced – because the Administrator told her so. With her in the emergency room, waiting for test results, I pulled out my phone to notify her responsible party. Looking at her face, now turning rainbow colors from the fall, I took a photo and sent it, with the caption “in the e.r.” A picture is worth 1,000 words. Fortunately, it was only a bump with no other injuries, and she returned home. Administration is a ministry.

No story would be complete without some mention of COVID and its effect on the Residents. Isolation, limited movement, no access to the Eucharist – these were the most unsettling restrictions. However, among the blessings was my increased awareness of the Residents’ feelings, demonstrated by the Prayer Service I composed, in which each of the quarantined Residents was mentioned by name followed by the refrain “we think of you and pray for you.” Even more memorable was the encounter when I took Communion to a Resident who was limited to her room but not ill, who said, “Welcome, Jesus, and bless the one who brought you.”

That is what I do here at Maria Hall – bring Jesus to all I meet. At the same time, I see Him in their faces, hear Him in their voices, and recognize Him in their pain. God has put all of us where God needs us.

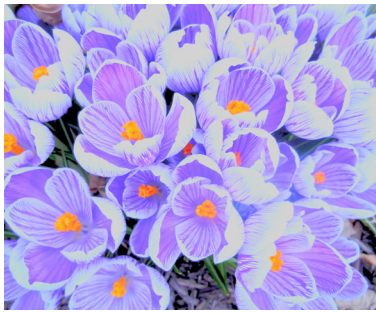


*Left: The annual Float into Spring treat makes everyone grateful for warmer temperatures, longer days, ice cream and soda!  
 Top: Sister Philothea and Todd Reibsome frequently need to put their heads together to solve building maintenance problems.  
 Above: Never far from the RCG (Regulatory Compliance Guide), Sister Philothea and Melanie Bartlett, Director of Resident Care, need to know how Pennsylvania expects Personal Care to function.*

*Our Times* is published twice a year by the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Villa Sacred Heart, 1002 Railroad Street, Danville PA 17821  
 Phone: 570-275-3581; Mission Advancement Office: ext 153; Development Office: ext 101  
 See a pdf of *Our Times* at [www.sscm.org](http://www.sscm.org)

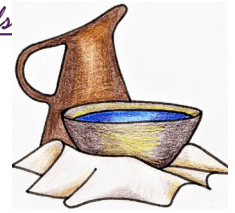
*Acknowledgements*  
 With gratitude to those who contributed articles, photographs, advice and suggestions, especially SS.C.M. Sisters Michael Ann, Barbara Sable, Philothea, Carol Ann, Pamela Smith, Suzanne Duzen and Bernadette Marie.  
 Graphics and Layout: Sister Jeanne Ambre, SS.C.M.

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



*Danville Servant Leadership Awards*

**The Annual Search for Those Who Serve Like Jesus**



On the afternoon of Sunday, October 29, the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius honored 20 high school Juniors and Seniors during the 2023 Servant Leadership Awards ceremony in the Basilica in Danville. The Servant Leadership Award recognizes outstanding teens who are joyful witnesses, compassionate proclaimers, and enthusiastic builders of the Kingdom of God.

This beautiful season of Spring and Easter is a wonderful time to consider the new life and growth all around us. Many of us tried to work on Lenten resolutions to prepare us to live more fully the joy of Easter. It seems that now is a good time to consider that this is the moment when you realize that despite what your life has been up until now, and regardless of anything you have done in the past, what matters most is what you do next.

Sometimes the challenges around us can feel huge, with our only satisfaction in knowing that I have “planted a seed” that the next person or generation may further cultivate. This idea is clearly set forth in Genesis 17 when we hear about the promise made to Abram where God makes a promise of a covenant to someday be fulfilled, and Abram believed! At times it might seem to be that all we can hold onto is the promise that our work toward justice, or peace or the integrity of creation will someday be realized by our descendants. But we should also remember that we are also the descendants of those who came before us, and the Lord’s covenant is being realized now, daily, in us. We work toward witnessing to, proclaiming and building God’s Kingdom and we believe God’s promise. We each plant seeds, and we each can see other workers’ seeds bear fruit. We are reminded that in Genesis, “God saw that it was good.” Whenever small works of justice and peace, of kindness and generosity, of service beyond what is required are achieved, God’s promise is further fulfilled. Let us reflect on promises that have already been completed in our own lives and give thanks for all those who came before us to allow us to realize our own goals of building God’s Kingdom.

*Sister Barbara Sable*

**Right:** At the reception following the Servant Leader program, young siblings are given words of encouragement to also do as Jesus did



Nominated by their Pastors, Principals, Youth Ministers and our Sisters, they are one of God’s promises for a better future!

Following the Servant Leadership presentations, the Sisters presented the 2023 Father Matthew Jankola Lifetime Servant Leadership Awards. The recipients were: Sister Maria Theresa Hronec, SS.C.M. for Ecumenism; Sister Suzanne Duzen, SS.C.M. for Education; Dorothy Grimm for Care for the Earth and the Poor; Reverend Andrew Stahmer for Evangelization; and Vicki James and Cindy Hornberger for Elder Care. The example of these servant leaders is an inspiration to all of us. In their remarks to those present, they described the joy that comes with living a life focused on service and the Gospel.



**Left:** After their towels and pitchers were received, the Lifetime Servant Leaders who were present stood

with Sister Barbara Sable for a photo. From left to right, they are: Sister Maria Theresa, Sister Suzanne Duzen, Dorothy Grimm, and Father Andrew Stahmer’s secretary, who received the award in his name. Fr. Andrew was ill and not able to attend, but was able to address the young Servant Leaders using his secretary’s phone. Fr. Stahmer is not one to pass up an opportunity to congratulate young people who live the Gospel and serve others with love!

# Holidays in Review

Since the Fall 2023 *Our Times*, we have lived through multiple holidays, several of which warranted donning costumes, giving presents and/or creating ambiance for the celebrations. Our community photographers took many colorful pictures which deserve to be seen and admired. Please enjoy the collection!

**Right and far right:** Saints, cartoon characters and movie personalities find their way to the annual Sisters' Halloween party.  
**Below:** The Sisters' costumes can't hold a candle to the St. Cyril Preschool and Kindergarten princesses and characters who parade to Maria Hall to show off their Halloween costumes.  
**Below center:** For Dawn Orzechowski, the Employee Christmas party is a very good lunch and a great reason to dress up.  
**Below right:** Mrs. Claus (aka Sister Seton Marie) stands in for Santa every Christmas morning, making the rounds at Maria Hall breakfast tables with gifts for Sisters who were good!



**Above:** At Emmanuel Center, Sister Virginia Dewan enjoys an after-Easter Sunday Mass visit from the Easter Bunny,  
**Above center:** The Sisters at Villa Sacred Heart make it possible for State Hospital chaplain Sister Seton Marie to grant the Christmas wishes of each of the residents there.  
**Above right:** This year's Preschool and Kindergarten Pay for Play fund-raiser benefitted a favorite place, the Montour Preserve.  
**Right:** In advance of Christmas, Santa makes an appearance at the PSK Santa Express, ready to listen to the children's wish lists.



## Then There Are the Holy Days

In the course of the Liturgical Year, we Sisters mark celebrations of many days and the programs that make them meaningful. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, Epiphany to Ash Wednesday, through Lent to Holy Week and Easter: November to April produces many photographable moments. A sampling is presented here.

**Far left:** Sr. Nancy Iampietro, CPS, receives a Thank You gift from Sr. Carol Ann following her Spiritual Center presentation on "Opening Advent Doors" in the Maria Hall theater.

**Left:** For Sr. Nancy's return visit in March for a Lenten Day of Recollection, the Maria Hall stage depicted the tears of Jesus.

**Below left:** On December 22, Administrators and Staff at Maria Joseph CCC created an outdoor Nativity, with live animals and carolling for all those brave enough to weather the cold.

**Below:** In the Basilica, Father Devine celebrates the Christmas Mass During the Night for those Sisters and friends who came.



**Above:** At Epiphany, it's Fr. Valentine's joy to bless Maria Hall and all those gathered for the ritual and breakfast.



**Left and above:** First came the Vigil Mass to bless the new fire and then on Easter, the blessing of the food for breakfast. Fr. Jerry's nephew Jimmy provided Father's transportation.

**Above far left:** At the closing of Eucharistic Devotions on February 6, Fr. James Fukes, OFM, blesses those gathered with Jesus.

**Above center left:** Sr. Mary Kate reads from St. Paul at the service for Christian Unity at Maria Hall.

**Center right:** Sr. Brigid and all the Sisters file forward to receive Fr. Valentine's blessing of throats on the feast of St. Blase.

**Above:** On Ash Wednesday, to begin the season of Lent, Sr. Regina Park, OCD, receives her ashes from Sr. Carol Therese at Maria Hall.

## *Charity Never Takes Time Off*

The SSCM Sisters in South Carolina are in perpetual motion, accepting the generosity of people who want to help the poor, and passing along the kindness to those who come to accept what they offer. This constant dance of receiving and giving makes the world a better place to be and most certainly pleases God. The smiles on the faces of those who benefit from the exchange tells it all.

**Above:** Every child deserves a Christmas that will be remembered with joy!

**Right:** The Easter Bunny delivers gifts in advance of the feast that celebrates Jesus' rising from the dead.

**Far Right** In January, the Friends of Callawassie Island, SC, donated \$5,000 to the St. Francis Center for the Food Pantry.

**Below:** Sister Canice makes sure that no one goes home empty-handed.



**Left and above:** At the conclusion of their respective sabbatical experiences, Sisters Joanne Marie and Catherine Ann Morris detoured to SC to add their hands to the work being done. They especially enjoyed the Resale Shop.

### *Sister Pamela Smith*

## *Interreligiously*

While her fellow Sisters are ministering to the Poor, Sister Pamela Smith is traversing the Diocese of Charleston (all of SC) sharing friendship and working with people of all religions. With understanding and in cooperation with people of good will, Sister Pamela works to achieve racial justice, unity, mutual respect, fair lending, an end to the death penalty, and any number of causes that promote the common good. It's all about being present and speaking out for justice with those who also hope to make a difference.





## *Blessed Be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar*

In this year in which the Church is focusing on the incredible gift of the Eucharist, the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius chose Sunday, April 14, to welcome people to the Villa grounds for Eucharistic Adoration and a mini-pilgrimage. Beginning at Maria Hall, the service included silent adoration, Scripture readings and the recitation of the rosary's Eucharistic mysteries to process from chapel to Basilica by way of three outdoor shrines: the Pieta, Assumption Court and the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The beautiful day made the pilgrimage a joy, as did the realization of the profound mystery that drew us all together.

**Top right and center:** Fr. Andrew Hvozdovic and Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB, of the Slovak Catholic Federation, led the program in the Maria Hall chapel and drew the congregation out of doors with the first Eucharistic mystery: Bread from Heaven.

**Top left:** The second mystery, Miraculous Catch of Fish, was prayed on the way to the Pieta, and the third mystery, Multiplication of the Loaves, echoed while processing from the Pieta to Assumption court.

**Center:** Following prayers at Assumption Court, the fourth mystery, The Last Supper, accompanied the procession to the shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

**Above left:** The fifth mystery, the Road to Emmaus, brought the procession into the Basilica for Evening Prayer and Benediction.

**Left:** The mini-pilgrimage on Sunday set the tone for the Monday meeting of the Slovak Catholic Federation which ended with a Mass in the Basilica and lunch in the Motherhouse dining room. How we do love when people visit!



At the St. Cyril Kindergarten, a long-standing tradition exists: just as soon as all the Kindergarteners can name and locate all 50 states, Teacher Betsy Finn and her husband Trevor throw a pizza party for them, delivered by fire truck and concluding with a walk through the Washington Fire Company truck!



March 25, 2024





*Leadership Meetings in Texas*

**For the Healing of Uvalde TX**

On Friday, March 8, the SSCM Leadership Team had the opportunity to spend the day in Uvalde, Texas. A friend of Sister Susan Pontz, Father Matthew DeLeon, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Uvalde, invited the Leadership Team to spend a day in this small town of 16,000 people that endured a massive school shooting on May 24, 2022, when a very troubled 28-year-old shot and killed nineteen fourth graders and two teachers in the local public school.

Father Matthew took the Leadership Team to lunch at Sacred Heart School where they met with the teachers and students and were treated to a rousing rendition of the school song and their motto, "All for Jesus." Following lunch, Father Matthew led the Sisters to the now-closed school where they prayed, and to the memorials and murals of the victims on the sides of Uvalde's downtown buildings.

Then, there were visits to the St. Henry Family Project site, and meetings with a school counselor and the head of the Uvalde Chamber of Commerce. After helping to lead the parish Stations of the Cross, the Sisters were invited to the Knights of Columbus Lenten fish dinner. The Sisters left Uvalde with a feeling of sadness, but with a realization that this was a town that had suffered greatly, but whose people are holding on to their faith with great strength and courage. Indeed, they were "All for Jesus!"



**Top:** Father Matthew stands in the memorial set up at the school.  
**Above:** On tour were: **l to r:** Sisters: Jeanne Ambre, Pamela Smith, Linda Marie, Carol Ann, Susan Pontz; Father Matthew and Deacon Man Nguyen; Sisters: Barbara Sable and Michael Ann.  
**Right:** Sacred Heart School students sing with gusto and even answer with smiles for the camera to "All for Jesus!"

*Sister M. Marcine, S.S.C.M.*

**Religious Woman of the Year**

On the weekend of March 15-17, 2024, the South Carolina Council of Catholic Women held their yearly conference in Columbia, SC. During the conference, Sister Marcine Klocko was honored with the Religious Woman of the Year award. Sister Marcine served for decades in South Carolina as a teacher, assistant principal, and for the past 11 years, as Co-Director of the St. Francis Center at St. Helena Island. There she was engaged in home repair projects that provided safe and accessible homes that improved the quality of life for many needy elders, veterans and persons with disabilities. Sister Barbara Sable joined the Sisters in Columbia for this special occasion.

**Top left:** Present and accounted for in South Carolina.  
**Left:** Sister Marcine has to listen to the list of good works that made her the deserving recipient of the SCCCW award for Religious Woman of the Year.



**Top:** And there were roses!  
**Above:** As a convention speaker, Sr. Pamela Smith gave one of the keynote talks on the theme: Women of Faith Working for Peace and Justice.





In Memory of  
Sister M.  
Jacqueline  
Ziobro, SS.C.M.

Born:  
November 24, 1930  
Professed:  
August 9, 1951  
Went Home to God:  
March 30, 2024

Sister M. Jacqueline Ziobro, SS.C.M., died at Emmanuel Hospice on Holy Saturday. She was born in Dupont, PA, to Mary Stupak and Edward Ziobro. Dolores Rose Ziobro had 3 siblings, Mary, Edward and Gloria. She attended St. John the Baptist School in Pittston where the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius taught.

After graduating from Pittston High School in June 1948, she entered the SSCM's on September 8, and was professed on August 9, 1951. Her first recollection of wanting to be a Sister came in the second grade. She recalled holding on to her teacher's Rosary beads during recess. By the time she was in eighth grade she participated in the choir and accompanied her teacher to religious education classes in Laflin, PA, where she assisted the teacher by listening to the children as they recited their prayers.

Sister Jacqueline received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Education from Marywood University in Scranton, PA. Sister taught kindergarten through eighth grade, and also served as a Math and Reading Tutor and Librarian. Her teaching took her to Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Indiana, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. Her greatest joy was preparing students for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. As part of her ministry, Sister Jacqueline also guided the altar servers, lectors and school patrols. She treasured her years in Chicago and Bluffton SC.

Sister Jacqueline was grateful for the mentors and models the Lord provided for her in her formative years. Sister Jacqueline attributed her daily reliance on prayer to her family and Community members. She is especially grateful to her mother for teaching her devotion to the Blessed Mother. Sister also learned to recognize crosses as blessings and often said that spending time in prayer enabled her to draw the strength that she needed. Sister Jacqueline's life was a testimony to being grateful for all God's gifts, and her Community is grateful for the gift Sister Jacqueline was to us.



*Left: During Catholic Schools Week at St. Columba School in Bloomsburg, a yoga demonstration for the students is provided to help to foster a calm atmosphere.*

*Below: As Youth Group Leader at St. Columba's, Sr. Suzanne (and her puppet Lily) invites the Maria Hall Sisters to join the young singers in Christmas carols. Bottom left: On Palm Sunday, Sr. Suzanne directed the St. Columba Youth Group enacting the Way of the Cross for Our Time at St. Columba Church—to make Jesus' passion real through the cry of the poor, marginalized and suffering.*



*At the end of February, Sr. Deborah Borneman participated in the Catholic Partnership Summit, to discuss young adult leadership in the Church. She is pictured here with Archbishop Charles Thompson of Indianapolis.*



*World Day of Prayer for the Sick in Feb. brought Harrisburg Bishop Timothy Senior to Geisinger Medical Center for a Mass. Following the reception, he made a visit to Father Heintzelman and then to the Basilica of Saints Cyril and Methodius.*

In late October 2023 and recently in early March 2024, Sr. Seton Marie and Marianne Gursky (right) rallied the Sisters and local Associates to take our turn providing a meal for those who come to the Jubilee Kitchen held at Danville's Trinity Lutheran Church on Saturdays. For several pandemic years, the meal was drive-by take-out, but thankfully, it has now moved back inside where DJ Walt Gursky (right) provides the musical sound track for the hot meal served joyfully by the Sisters and Associates (below, left and right).



Having become a tradition, the East End Fire Company chose Holy Saturday to hold their annual Easter Egg hunt at Villa Sacred Heart. Construction concerns moved the hunt to the orchard this year--but all the eggs were found!



**Left:** In late February, the Maria Hall Sisters enjoyed a visit from Aria and her handler, Vicki Housner. Aria is a Security K9 with Geisinger Medical Center Security Services.

**Above:** On March 19, the Administrators and staff of Maria Joseph were invited to have their hands blessed for their sharing in the mission and ministry of MJCCC. March 18-22 was Mission Week when each day reflected one of the core values of compassionate care, respect, hospitality, love and service--with activities to match.

## When We Wish



We are grateful for those who contributed to the fund to purchase golf carts for easier transportation of the Maria Hall Sisters on the Villa Sacred Heart grounds. Those funds, together with a grant from SOAR (Support Our Aging Religious), will enable us to add new wheels to our fleet!

As you can see from page 12, a new Hospice unit has been added to Emmanuel Center at Maria Joseph CCC. One of the earliest residents was our own Sister Jacqueline. We are slowly trying to make the dedicated rooms in this wing visitor-friendly with comfortable chairs and other furniture. Any assistance that you can offer for us to beautify these 11 rooms, already equipped with beds, will be greatly appreciated by us and by the families and friends of those who choose to spend their last days at Emmanuel Center's Sunset Lane. Many thanks!

### 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](mailto:barbarasable@hotmail.com)

# 2024 Jubilarians



Sister Susan Polchin  
75 Years



Sister Irene Rose Kmetz  
70 Years



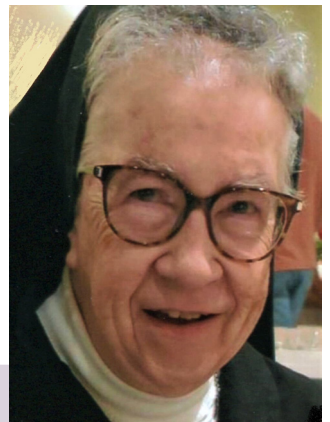
Sister Maria Theresa  
Hronec  
65 Years



Sister M. Joseph  
Therese  
65 Years



Sister M.  
Philothea  
60 Years



Sister M. Thomas  
More  
60 Years



Sister Mary Beth Makuch  
55 Years



Sister Suzanne Duzen  
55 Years



Sister M. Sara  
55 Years



Sister Michael Ann  
55 Years



Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius  
 Villa Sacred Heart  
 1002 Railroad Street  
 Danville PA 17821

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 Danville, PA  
 Permit No. 43

Spring  
 2024



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



## Sunset Lane Hospice at MJCCC

On February 1, 2024, the Sunset Lane Hospice unit was blessed and opened at Emmanuel Center in Danville. In answer to the great need for a comfortable home-like environment for hospice patients and their families, this new addition to the Maria Joseph Continuing Care Community is an important part of the SSCM mission and ministry of caring for the sick and elderly. Working with several local Hospice providers, the Emmanuel staff attends to those in eleven private suites with additional space for visiting families and friends. We are "Serving Others with a Compassionate Heart."



*Above: Father Charles, MJ Chaplain, circles the dining area with holy water.*  
*Far left: The bed corner of one of the suites.*  
*Center left top: At the reception following the blessing, Ted Spotts and Dawn Orzewowski are happy to serve the guests.*  
*Center left bottom: Spaces to sit comfortably and process are available for visiting family and friends.*  
*Left: Sister Barbara Sable led Father Charles to each of the rooms for the blessing.*

# Save the Date: July 13, 2024

Do not miss the SSCM **Summer Festival** in Danville PA - 10:30 am to 5:00 pm  
 Fun, Food, Games, Flea Market, Baked Goods--and Mass for Sunday