

Serving the Dear Neighbor

NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Blessing the Workers Mirabeau Water Garden

On May 1st, St. Joseph the Worker Day, sisters gathered on the site of the Mirabeau Water Garden project in New Orleans to bless the workers and view the progress being made. They were joined by city officials and other project collaborators. The project, which is over ten years in the making, is transforming the site of the sisters' former provincial house into a beautiful multi-purpose garden, park, and storm water management system. When completed, the water garden will help protect neighbors' properties from flooding during heavy rains by holding and diverting water away from community sewers. When not at work, the land will serve as a beautiful green space for all to enjoy. Phase one of the project, the storm management system, is slated to be completed next year, with phase two, the park and garden, following in 2026. ●



Above, Sisters Joan Laplace and Cynthia Sabathier lead the blessing.

Below, clockwise from left, Congregational Leadership Team member, Sister Kathy Brazda gives opening remarks; Sisters and other attendees; Architect David Waggonner, who has championed the project since the beginning, talks with one of the workers; Sister Pat Bergen offers prayers and closing remarks; Sister Kathleen Babin greets a friend; Sister Pat Bergen with Vincent Smith, Director of Capital Projects for the City of New Orleans.





Helen Prejean Documentary Premieres at Tribeca Film Festival

On June 5th, *Rebel Nun*, the new documentary about Sister Helen Prejean and her work to end the death penalty, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City. Sister Helen, along with several of our sisters, attended the premiere.

The film, by director Dominic Sivyer, follows Sister Helen's journey to become one of the leading advocates of abolishing the death penalty in the United States. Starting with her upbringing in Baton Rouge and decision to join the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1957, the film goes on to detail how Sister Helen first began corresponding with death row inmates, which led her to begin serving as their spiritual advisor, and witnessing the executions of many.

In an interview with Huffpost, Sister Helen said, "The thing about the death penalty is that it's not like somebody dying in a hospital. It's the only time in our criminal justice system where the state actually imitates the crime to impose a punishment. We don't burn people's houses when they're arrested for arson, but we're going to kill you because you've killed. We're imitating the worst possible human behavior to determine a punishment."

In the same interview, the film's director said, "I think she's a true example of how you've got to keep fighting for what you believe in, no matter where you are in life. To me, that's hugely inspirational." Wider release dates for the film have not yet been announced.

Sister Helen is currently writing her next book, *Beneath Our Dignity*, about Louisiana death row inmate Manual Ortiz. Past books include *The Death of Innocents*, *River of Fire*, and *Dead Man Walking*. ●



From top, Sister Helen Prejean on the red carpet with friend, actress Susan Sarandon, who portrayed her in the 1995 Academy Award winning film, *Dead Man Walking*. Sister Helen gets ready for the film to start. Sister Kathy Brazda, Congregational Leadership Team member, and Sister Helen talk with the film's director, Dominic Sivyer.

To learn more, visit [SisterHelen.org](https://www.sisterhelen.org)

ASSOCIATE NEWS



In April, the Integral Ecology Associate Circle in Baton Rouge welcomed associates, sisters, and guests to a day of contemplation and discussion entitled, “Love Letters from the Earth.” The day included prayer, a contemplative walk, a presentation led by Associate JoDale Ales (left), and discussion around what others are doing to care for the Earth, and what we can do. From left are Associates JoDale Ales, Marla Silverberg, Ann Bertsch, Brenda Babin (Associate from Houma), Cherry Riggs, Debbie Morrill, and Linda Thompson.



In May, associates in New Orleans volunteered at the Second Harvest Food Bank. From left are Associates Merle Harris, Jane Ciolino, Carolyn Johnson, Michelle St. Onge, Rhonda Doucette, and Kim Hypolite.



In February, associates attended an Ignatian Lenten Retreat at The Cenacle on the Lake, in Metairie, LA. The retreat was offered by New Orleans associates around the theme “Springtime of Our Souls.”

IN MEMORIAM

We Remember, We Celebrate, We Believe



Sister Anne Marie Meridier, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on April 8, 2024, after 66 years of religious life.



Sister Maria Hill, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on December 16, 2023 after 67 years of religious life.



Sister Dorothy LeBlanc, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on December 3, 2023 after 80 years of religious life.



Sister Elaine Dufresne, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on November 10, 2023 after 75 years of religious life.

IN THE COMMUNITY

This year, **People Program** in New Orleans, which was founded by Sister Alice Marie MacMurdo in 1974, is celebrating its 50th Anniversary! On March 24th, many of our sisters, associates, and representatives from CSJ Ministries helped them celebrate at an Anniversary Gala held in the ballroom at the University of New Orleans. People Program, a member of our Mission Network, offers fitness, arts, and intellectual programming to seniors and creative ways to ensure they continue to enjoy community, learning, and staying active.



In April, students from **Catholic High School**, an all boys college preparatory school run by the United States Province of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Baton Rouge, came to help clean up and replant flower beds around the Hundred Oaks center. Sister Joan Laplace and Brother Bob Croteau, who both reside at Hundred Oaks, are seen at left with the students. Thank you to all these young men who donated their time and energy to help!

Earlier this year, our sisters in Baton Rouge, along with their house mates, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, had the opportunity to visit and tour the recently opened **Great River Road Museum** in Darrow, LA. The exhibits, and artifacts on display at the museum offer visitors a glimpse into history of, and what life was like along, the mighty Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and how the area helped create the unique culture that is Louisiana.



In March, the **Board of CSJ Ministries** met at St. Joseph's Academy (SJA) in Baton Rouge. Sister Judith Minear led the Board in prayer and formation, followed by work in strategic planning. Sisters Kathy Brazda and Sue Torgersen provided a Congregational Leadership Team update, and Jan Breen, President of SJA, and student ambassadors led the Board on a tour of the Academy.



As part of **Catholic Schools Week**, our sisters in Baton Rouge, along with their house mates, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, were invited to share lunch and visit with students at St. Joseph's Academy. At left with students are Sisters Evelyn Mee and Cynthia Sabathier. With students at right are Sisters Anna Schellhaas and Julie Kraemer, and Brother Bob Croteau.



We congratulate the **Class of 2024** who recently graduated from our beloved St. Joseph's Academy! As you go forth into the next chapter of your journey, know that our sisters are praying for you now and always!

Jubilee

2024

The following sisters from our founding community of Medaille are celebrating Jubilee this year. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister's entrance into religious life.



Sister Caroline Benken, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Anita Germain, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Dehra Elliot, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Judi Keehnen, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Rita Lambert, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Ruth Kettman, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Doris Vigneaux, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Judith Brun, CSJ

60 Years

To view biographies of these sisters and all our sisters celebrating Jubilee from across the congregation this year, visit CSJoseph.org/Jubilarians



Sister Frances Duos, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Illeana Fernandez, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Mary Ann Sullivan, CSJ

60 Years

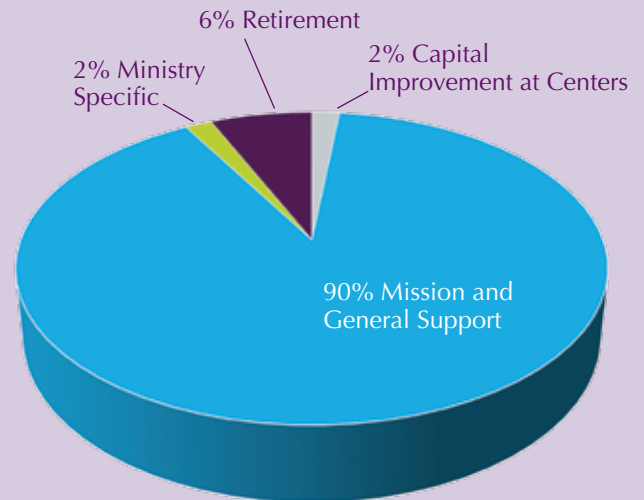


Sister Celeste Cotter, CSJ

25 Years

Bless You!

We are so very grateful for your kind gifts of financial support. Your kindness helps care for our retired and infirm sisters, continue our ministries, and fosters our mission as we live and work so *that all may be one*. Here is how we used your contributions for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023:



Ways to Deepen Your Support

- Direct a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA to “Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph,” EIN No: 83-0481134.
- Consider a charitable gift annuity (CGA). For gifts of \$10,000 or more, you receive tax advantages and a lifetime stream of income payments – often at above market rates.

Single Life Rates

American Council on Gift Annuities 1.1.2024

Age	Rate	Annual Income \$10,000 Annuity
60	5.20%	\$520
70	6.30%	\$630
80	8.10%	\$810
90	10.10%	\$1,010

To Learn More, contact Melissa Haley O’Leary, Director of Development at moleary@csjoseph.org or **216-688-3474**

The Congregation of St. Joseph cannot give you financial or tax advice, so please consult with your financial advisor before making any final decisions.



3430 Rocky River Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44111

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit No. 2280

Spotlight Photo



Sister Evelyn Mee in Baton Rouge enjoys a visit from Annabelle, the unofficial therapy dog brought in by Coordinator of Community Life Kristy Roubique.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email communications@csjoseph.org.

BEYOND THE HABIT

The podcast that moves beyond everyday assumptions of what it means to be Catholic.

Season 4 Out Now!

Season 5 Coming Soon!

Listen at

BeyondTheHabitPod.com

or wherever you get your podcasts



Hosted by Sisters
Erin McDonald, CSJ
and Colleen Gibson, SSJ