

# Serving the Dear Neighbor

## NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

### A Milestone Anniversary!

#### Celebrating 375 Years of Service and Presence

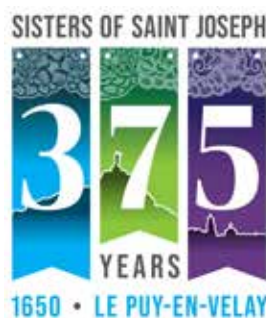
This year, the Congregation of St. Joseph joins with other communities of Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide in celebrating the 375th anniversary of our founding!



Art by Sister Mary Elizabeth Nelsen

In 1650, six ordinary women who shared a common desire to grow in their love of God and serve the unmet needs of the people around them, began meeting in a small kitchen in Le Puy-en-Velay, France. Under the patronage of St. Joseph and the spiritual guidance of Father Jean-Pierre Medaille, SJ, they went out into the city and among the people to minister to the poor and vulnerable whom they called their

*dear neighbors*. This was not common as most women religious of the time were cloistered and remained behind convent walls. They wore widows black in order to move about the city unaccompanied, and supported themselves by making lace. These first six sisters are represented by the six dots along the top of the logo along with lace and the skyline of Le Puy visible in the background.



From these humble beginnings, the order grew under the leadership of Mother St. John Fontbonne (left), later expanding to the U.S. and La Grange Park, and communities all over the world. Just as these first pioneering women did in 1650, Sisters of St. Joseph continue to respond to the unmet and critical needs of the world and the people around us. Our mission – to love God and neighbor without distinction – is at the heart of all we do. ●



< Mother Stanislaus Leary who founded the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange Park in 1899.



> Mother Alexine Gosselin who became Superior after Mother Stanislaus's death in 1900.



< Sister Juliana Labrecque teaches typing at Nazareth Academy circa 1950s.



> Sister Agnes Zaroski teaches at Our Lady of Bethlehem Academy in La Grange Park circa 1960s.



< Sisters Marianne Race and Jackie Schmitz (seated) with students at Nazareth Academy circa 1980s.



^ Musician and music teacher, Sister Mary Ricardo DiSanto.

> Sister Margaret Halligan in 2010 at the St. Barbara Food Pantry in Brookfield which she founded and served as director of for 34 years.



< Sisters Kathy Sherman, Pat Bergen, and others distribute meals to migrants and asylum seekers in Chicago in 2023.



^ Sister Terry Middendorf, academic dean at Nazareth Academy, with students in 2012.

To learn more, visit us at [CSJoseph.org](https://CSJoseph.org)



## IN THE COMMUNITY



Each year, sisters who are involved in peace and justice ministry invite young people who are interested in learning more about this type of work, to travel to the United Nations in New York with them to attend various justice related conferences. This February, Sister Mary Jo Curtsinger attended the United Nations Social Development Commission Civil Society Forum with two young adults from West Virginia, Gregory Robertson and Justice Hudson. This gathering allows civil society organizations to discuss social development issues and provides time with other Sisters of St. Joseph engaged in justice work. Left are Sisters Barbara Bozak, UN NGO Representative and Sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry - West Hartford, Joan Atkinson, Sister of St. Joseph of Canada, Mary Jo Curtsinger Congregation of St. Joseph, and Sue Wilson, Sister of St. Joseph of Canada, at the UN. Right, Gregory Robertson, Sister Mary Jo, and Justice Hudson with the iconic flags outside of the UN Headquarters. ●

Sister Kathy Brazda, a member of our leadership team, with the Most Reverend Robert G. Casey at his installment as Archbishop of Cincinnati on April 3. Having served in the Archdiocese of Chicago for many years, Archbishop Casey is a longtime friend and supporter of the Congregation and is also an associate. He and Sister Kathy, along with Sister Carol Crepeau, founded Taller de José in Chicago, which serves the Latino population. We offer our sincerest congratulations to Archbishop Casey on his new appointment. He will be missed in Chicago! ●



On May 4th, Mwila Mulumbi, head of the Africa Church Advocacy Programme for Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) in London, visited the La Grange Park center where she spoke with about 30 sisters, associates, and partners in mission about her work. During her talk, she addressed critical questions about poverty, inequality, and power in relation to inclusive development. ●



## SERVING THE DEAR NEIGHBOR



In March, sisters, associates, and students from Nazareth Academy once again gathered at Joseph House to make blankets, which are then gifted to patients at Loyola Medical Center. From left are Sister Julie Cannon, CSJ Associate Linda Bronersky, and Sister Rosemary LaFlaur. ●



In April, sisters and associates in La Grange Park sorted used crayons by color for SCARCE, a local award-winning nonprofit focused on environmental education and sustainability. The crayons will be melted down and repurposed into something new. ●



On March 24, Sisters Nina Rodriguez, Rita Ann Teichman, Mary Jo Curtsinger, Cathey DeSantis, and Jackie Schmitz joined with Cardinals, Bishops, and civic and interfaith leaders in El Paso, TX, at the Aquí Estamos (Here We Are) March and Vigil. Our sisters attended to support, stand in solidarity with, and pray for all our immigrant brothers and sisters and those seeking legal asylum from violence and persecution in their home countries. ●



On February 19, the congregation hosted a summit entitled *Navigating Ministry in Times of Transition* at our center in La Grange Park. This gathering brought together a diverse group of individuals representing organizations in the Chicago area that we minister and partner with. Participants engaged in community building, resource sharing, and spiritual and communal care for one another. A highlight was the keynote address by Michael N. Okińczyc-Cruz (right), co-founder of the Coalition for Spiritual & Public Leadership in Chicago. We look forward to hosting more conversations and opportunities for collaboration in the future. ●

# Jubilee 2025

The following sisters are celebrating Jubilee this year in La Grange Park. Jubilee is the anniversary of a sister's entrance into religious life.



Sister Janet  
Bolger, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Dorothy  
Randall, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Mary Lou  
Sterling, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Mary  
Southard, CSJ

70 Years

## *Congratulations*

to all our sisters celebrating Jubilee across the Congregation!

To view sister biographies, visit

**[CSJoseph.org/jubilarians](https://CSJoseph.org/jubilarians)**

## IN MEMORIAM †



Sister Barbara Lord, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on July 5, 2024  
after 72 years of religious life.

*We celebrate the lives of all our sisters who have passed away.*

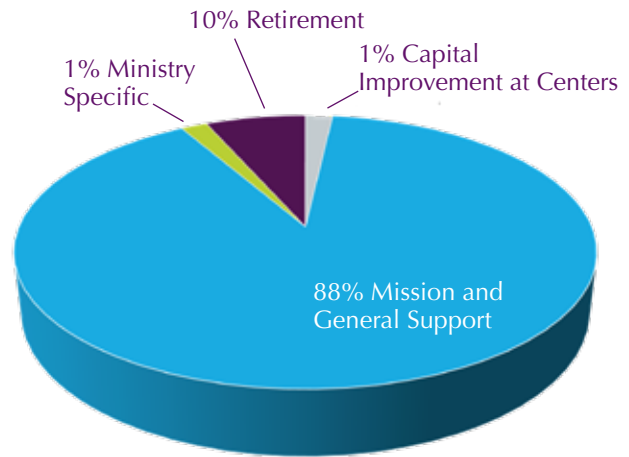


# THANK YOU!

## Dear supporters...

We are so very grateful to and for you and all that you do to support our sisters and mission of sharing God's inclusive love. We are awed and blessed by your continued generosity and love!

Here is how we used your charitable contributions from July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024:



## Other ways to support us...

### ● Become a Sustaining Donor

If you would like to stop writing checks, save time and resources, and enjoy the affordability and convenience of giving through an automatic, electronic monthly gift, join our Circle of Friends monthly giving program.

### ● Leave a Legacy of Love

By becoming a legacy donor, you can continue partnering with us in our mission of unifying love and service even after your lifetime and potentially reduce your current or future tax burden. Here are a few ways that you can include the congregation in your legacy of love:

- Include CSJ in your will or trust
- Name CSJ as an account beneficiary
- Invest in a CSJ charitable gift annuity (CGA) that will provide you with tax benefits and guaranteed income for life
- Establish a donor advised fund (DAF)

### ● Make a Charitable Distribution from your IRA

If you must take RMDs (required minimum distributions) from your IRA, but don't need the income and don't want to pay taxes on it, you can ask your plan administrator to use all or part of your RMD to support the congregation through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).



*We have found our spiritual home with the Congregation of St. Joseph. They have welcomed and shared so much with us. And now we likewise share with them.*

- Joel and Betty Chraska,  
Monthly donors



*Even though my contribution is small, I'm happy to be able to participate in this way with the sisters as they care for the 'dear neighbor.'*

- Vi Powers, Legacy Donor

### To Learn More:

Contact Melissa Haley O'Leary, Director of Development, at [moleary@csjoseph.org](mailto:moleary@csjoseph.org) or 216.688.3474.

### Important Note:

When planning your gift, please use our legal name, Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, EIN: 83-0481134.

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



# Ministry of the Arts

A digital resource for art and music  
created by our sisters.



Artwork by Sisters Mary  
Southard, Frankie Dutil,  
Marie Benzing, and  
Carrie Vall

Visit us at

**MinistryoftheArts.org**

to browse and request digital art,  
music, poetry, blessings, and more!

For more information, email  
**mota@csjoseph.org.**

## Taller de José

On April 27th, Taller de José welcomed guests to its annual Builder's Day Celebration brunch at Crystal Sky Banquets in McCook, IL. The Congregation of St. Joseph was the Architect Sponsor of the event. Taller De José is an agency that offers companionship and personal attention to people who have difficulty finding their way in a complex social services system.

In attendance were many sisters and other partners in mission to support Taller de José and their work of connecting the predominantly Spanish-speaking immigrant community in and around Chicago to health, legal, and social services. The fundraiser supports the free services provided by Taller de José.

Chicago has a large Hispanic population, many of whom have sought services from Taller de José. To date, the ministry has helped more than 10,000 neighbors overcome obstacles, including 1,300 this past year alone. Founded by the Congregation of St. Joseph, Taller de José is a member of the CSJ Mission Network. ●

To learn more, visit [TallerdeJose.org](http://TallerdeJose.org)



*Seated from left are Sisters Sue Torgersen, Julie Cannon, Carol Crepeau, and Terry Middendorf. Standing from left are Sisters Kathy Sherman, Kathy Brazda, Pat Bergen, Sallie Latkovich, Chris March, Celeste Cotter, and Mary Jo Curtsinger.*



## Nazareth Academy



Earlier this year, sisters and students from Nazareth Academy gathered for a prayer service to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, which ran from January 26 - February 1. Pictured with students above are, from left, Sisters Kathy Sherman, Celeste Cotter, Terry Middendorf, Marianne Race, and Chris March.



On St. Joseph's Day (March 19th), Nazareth Academy dedicated the Institutional Advancement Hall to Sister Ethel Vaca, who graduated from the academy in 1945 and dedicated almost 30 years to the school. She served in a number of different capacities including as teacher, assistant principal, principal, and alumni director. She also founded the development department. Attending the dedication were, from left, Sisters Jackie Schmitz, Mary Jo Curtsinger, Marianne Race, Terry Middendorf, Carol Crepeau, Pat Bergen, Kathy Sherman, and Celeste Cotter. We are so grateful for this lovely tribute to Sister Ethel and to the congregation!

Several sisters also attended Nazareth Academy's annual NazBash fundraiser on February 22 where they were recognized for the 125th anniversary of their founding in La Grange Park. ●

## The Well Spirituality Center Celebrates 25 Years in the Community

The Well Spirituality Center kicked off its 25th Anniversary celebration year in February with a Birthday Bash event held at our La Grange Park center. The event was attended by sisters, associates, staff, donors, and friends, and was filled with fellowship, music, food, and fun. Please join us in congratulating The Well on this significant milestone in their history!



### Join Us at The Well!

The Well Spirituality Center welcomes you to join us for a variety of programming designed to feed your mind, body, and spirit, including:

- Retreats (in-person, at-home, and commuter)
- Spiritual Direction and Spiritual Community Programs
- Guest Speakers
- Therapeutic and Healing Sessions
- Art Programs

To learn more or to register, contact us at 708.482.5048 or [thewell@csjoseph.org](mailto:thewell@csjoseph.org), or visit our website below:

**CSJTheWell.org**



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## Spotlight Photo



*Drum roll please! Sister Julie Cannon picks the winner of the annual CSJ Giveaway drawing in April, as Sister Mary Jo Curtsinger looks on.*

*If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please email [communications@csjoseph.org](mailto:communications@csjoseph.org).*

# We invite you!

to join us in a truly unique living experience.

If you are looking for a licensed assisted living residence in a warm and friendly community environment for yourself or a loved one, we invite you to consider joining us at Joseph House!

Our residents enjoy:

- Modern, comfortable suites
- Beautiful grounds and walking paths
- Life enrichment and wellness programs
- Volunteer service opportunities
- Mass and prayer offerings

For more information or to schedule a tour, contact **Angela Lawler** at **708.482.1224**, or [alawler@csjoseph.org](mailto:alawler@csjoseph.org).

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

