

A Milestone Anniversary!

Celebrating 375 Years of Service and Presence

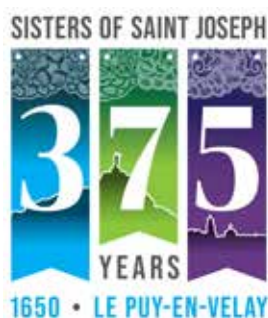
This year, the Congregation of St. Joseph joins with other communities of Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide in celebrating the 375th anniversary of our founding!



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 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 Eulalie Thamet, 1st Provincial Superior of Bourg in the U.S. at Bay St. Louis.

> Sister Mary John Hotard teaches a woodworking shop class at St. Joseph Academy, now known as McNicholas High School, in 1950.



< A sister at the front desk of The Fontbonne in Cincinnati.



^ Sisters at St. Joan of Arc in Minneapolis.



< Sisters play basketball at the Provincial House on Mirabeau Ave. in New Orleans in 1958.



< Sisters celebrate their 100th anniversary in Cincinnati in 1993.



> Sister Dianne Fanguy with children in Nicaragua in 2013, where she ministered for many years.



< Former staff member Jan Martino and Sister Janine Beniger outside People Program in New Orleans in 2018. People Program in a member of the congregation's Mission Network.



< Sisters and associates collected items needed by those affected by hurricanes in 2021.

MIRABEAU WATER GARDEN PROJECT

From 1950 to 2005, the provincial house on Mirabeau Avenue in New Orleans was the heart of the Medaille sisters presence in Louisiana and beyond. The campus featured the motherhouse, an infirmary, a junior college for novice members, a Montessori school for youth, and a senior activity center. After training at Mirabeau, sisters served communities throughout Louisiana, as well as in Mississippi, Minnesota, and Ohio.

In 2005, the provincial house was heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina, and in 2008, it was damaged again by a lightning strike and fire. Afterwards, the sisters made the difficult decision to raze the building. The property remained empty and unused for many years while the sisters explored and prayed for a way to utilize the property that served both their mission and the people of New Orleans.

Over a decade ago, sisters met New Orleans architect David Waggonner of Waggonner and Ball Architects, who is a global expert in natural water management. He dreamed of creating a water garden that could manage flood waters and serve as a model for working with nature to control flooding. The sisters shared his dream and through a collaborative effort between the congregation, Waggonner and Ball Architects, and the City of New Orleans, phase one of the Mirabeau Water Garden is scheduled for completion later this year!

Once operational, the Mirabeau Water Garden will help mitigate flooding and potential loss of property for the people and City of New Orleans. Developing this sacred land for use in this way bears witness to our mission and to our commitment to care for God's creation and one another without distinction. ●



Sisters of St. Joseph Provincial House and Novitiate in 1955.



Sisters Joan Laplace and Cynthia Sabathier bless the workers during a ground breaking ceremony in 2024.



Sister Pat Bergen and congregation staff member Ed Sutoris during a site visit in February, 2025.



The construction site in May, 2025. The City of New Orleans can be seen in the background.

Photo credit: Bryan B. Smith

ASSOCIATE NEWS



In March, Kascha Sanor, Director of Social & Environmental Justice for the congregation, gathered with sisters and associates in New Orleans to share congregational updates which were followed by small group conversation and plenty of time for Q and A.



On May 5th, sisters and associates in Baton Rouge enjoyed a contemplative walk in the woods followed by dinner and conversation. Left, Associates stop to chat; Center, Sister Frances Duos; Right, Sister Adelaide Williamson.

IN MEMORIAM



Sister Janice Miller CSJ

Entered into eternal life on
May 20, 2025, after
74 years of religious life.



Sister Judith Keehnen, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on
December 17, 2024 after
65 years of religious life.



Sister Rita Lambert, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on
November 7, 2024 after
75 years of religious life.

IN THE COMMUNITY

On March 23rd, sisters, associates, and staff celebrated People Program in New Orleans at its annual Gala. People Program is an educational non-profit that provides seniors with creative ways to enjoy community, learning, and staying active. CSJ Associate and recently retired staffer, Jan Martino (far right in yellow), was recognized for her work at the event.



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 and is a member of our Mission Network. We offer our sincerest congratulations to Archbishop Casey on his new appointment and wish him the best of luck in Cincinnati!

In May, staff member Melissa Haley O'Leary (left) and Sister Mary Ann Sullivan (center) visited with Steve Sunderland who leads Cancer Justice Network, a nonprofit that provides health information, screenings, navigators, and transportation to assist marginalized people in Cincinnati - the poor, unhoused, refugees and others - to access and obtain medical care. The Congregation partners with Cancer Justice Network through our Generous Promise Grant Fund.



In April, Sister Helen Prejean headed north to speak to a packed room at St. John of the Cross Parish in Western Springs, IL. The theme of her talk was the evolution of Catholic teaching on the death penalty, and how the catechism has changed over the years. Sister Helen is renowned globally for her advocacy against the death penalty. The talk was sponsored by The Well Spirituality Center, a member of the congregation's Mission Network. Sister Helen is pictured here with staff of The Well.

ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY



On March 19, sisters in Baton Rouge joined students, faculty, and staff at St. Joseph's Academy to celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph. From left are Sisters Dianne Fanguy, Adelaide Williamson, Kathleen Babin, Julie Kraemer, Adele Lambert, Annie Ramagos, Barbara Hughes, Evelyn Mee, Lucy Silvio, and Joan Laplace.

In February, Catholic High School cheerleaders, which includes students from St. Joseph's Academy, visited, played games and brought snacks to enjoy with the sisters and brothers in Baton Rouge. We are always grateful to spend time with the students!



We congratulate the Class of 2025 who recently graduated from 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!



In May, St. Joseph's Academy students visited our center in Baton Rouge to help out in a variety of ways. The students painted the porch rocking chairs a beautiful blue color and offered computer assistance to our sisters. We are so grateful for these wonderful students!

Jubilee

2025

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 Kathleen Babin, CSJ

80 Years



Sister Evelyn Mee, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Anna Schellhaas, CSJ

80 Years



Sister Anne Bergin, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Joan Hartlaub, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Dianne Fanguy, CSJ

65 Years



Sister Doreen Charest, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Diane Poynot, CSJ

60 Years



Sister Carol Gonsoulin, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Barbara Kaufmann, CSJ

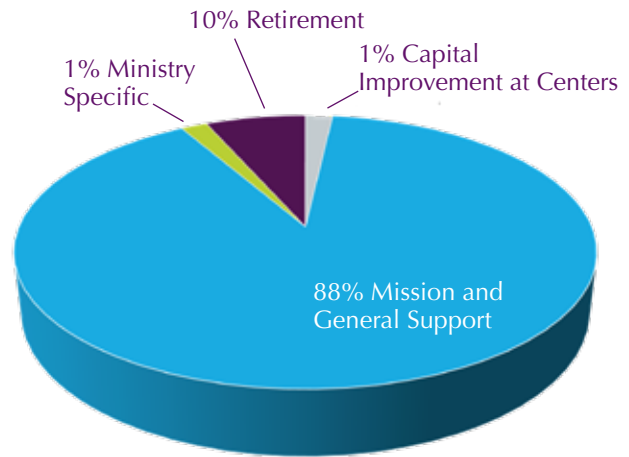
60 Years

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 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.



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Spotlight Photo



Sister Irene Regan with Trooper, a therapy alpaca who visited our Wichita center where she resides. Sister Irene is a native of Crookston, Minnesota, and ministered there for many years.

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

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everyday assumptions of what
it means to be Catholic.

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Season 7 Coming Soon!

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