

# Serving the Dear Neighbor

NEWS FROM THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

## Meeting Pope Leo

In April, Sister Kathy Brazda traveled to Rome as part of the presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious along with Sisters Vicky Larson and Deb Sciano, and Executive Director Carol Zinn. During their time at the Vatican, they met with several dicasteries and were blessed to have a private audience with Pope Leo where they discussed everything from immigration to religious life. Before their meeting, they presented the native Chicagoan with several gifts including CD's of Sister Kathy Sherman's music, a Chicago Blackhawks hockey puck, and a personalized Chicago White Sox jersey.

"It was truly a privilege to meet with Pope Leo during our visit to the Vatican," said Sister Kathy. "A deep listener, he wanted to know about consecrated women serving in the Church, and we shared a deep concern about the plight of immigrants in our country." Sister Kathy described their conversation as free flowing, discussing everything from the current state of the nation and world, to the call to synodality, to working to end polarization in the Church and country. "We also thanked him for his leadership and the appointment of new Bishops in the U.S.," said Sister Kathy. "We were so grateful for the opportunity to meet with him and it gave all of us such hope for the Church and world." ●



## Standing With Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters

Since November of last year, our sisters have joined other Catholics, clergy, and faith leaders in an effort to offer the Eucharist and spiritual care to our neighbors, friends, fellow parishioners, and people of God being held at the Broadview Detention Center in Chicago. Early attempts were denied so Masses known as *Misa Popular* or *Peoples Mass* were held in the parking lot outside the facility (see photos right). The Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership (CSPL), of which the Congregation of St. Joseph is a proud supporter and member, was the convener for the Masses and multiple other gatherings for public witness.

On Ash Wednesday, our sisters again participated in an outdoor Mass and prayer vigil that was led by Cardinal Blase Cupich and attended by relatives of those who have been detained or deported. Several of our sisters assisted in administering ashes including Sister Jackie Schmitz (seen below, right).

Then in April, after a lengthy court battle, a judge ruled that clergy members would be permitted to enter the Broadview Detention Center to offer Communion and spiritual care to detainees during Holy Week. On Holy Saturday, Sister Carol Crepeau seen below entered the facility along with Deacon Maximino Montalvo, Pastor Juan Pablo Herrera and Fr. Dennis Berry. The order also allows people to pray outside the facility. ●



## IN THE COMMUNITY



In April, Sisters Kathy Sherman, Mary Jo Curtsinger, and Pat Bergen (seated) were invited to attend a meeting of Old St. Patrick's Church youth group to talk about who religious sisters are and what they do. The sisters were glad to join the group to talk about their life, mission, and charism, and to answer the students' lively questions! ●



On April 24, sisters attended, "A Beacon of Light in Darkness," at DePaul University to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Illinois abolishing the death penalty. Also attending was Sister Helen Prejean who donated her personal archives to the university in 2011. Pope Leo delivered a recorded video address for the occasion. At left are Sisters Marianne Race, Pat Bergen, Carol Crepeau, Helen Prejean, Jackie Schmitz, Kathy Brazda, Kathy Sherman, and Mary Jo Curtsinger. At right are Sister Helen with former Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, who originally signed the legislation into law. ●



In March, Father Greg Boyle and members of Homeboy Industries joined The Well Spirituality Center for a reflection on his book, "Cherished Belongings". Over 400 people were in attendance including students from several high schools in the Chicago area. ●

# Jubilee

## 2026

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 Patricia  
Borchardt, CSJ

75 Years



Sister Jeanne  
Oursler, CSJ

70 Years



Sister Evelyn  
Sommers, CSJ

70 Years

## Congratulations

to all our sisters celebrating Jubilee  
across the Congregation!

To view sister biographies,  
visit: [CSJoseph.org](http://CSJoseph.org)

## In Memoriam



Sister Marybeth McDermott, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on  
October 18th, 2025 after  
74 years of religious life.



Sister Henrietta Hibbs, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on  
September 17th, 2025 after  
83 years of religious life.



Sister Grace Sbrissa, CSJ

Entered into eternal life on  
June 23rd, 2025, after  
67 years of religious life.

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



## Assembly 2026

In April, sisters, associates, staff, and partners in mission from around the congregation gathered in person at the La Grange Park center and over Zoom for our annual assembly. Participants heard updates and presentations by our leadership team, department heads, and various committees on the ongoing work of the congregation. ●



*Above: Sisters Rosemary LaFlaur, Pat Murphy, Lois O'Malley and Judy Sikorski.*

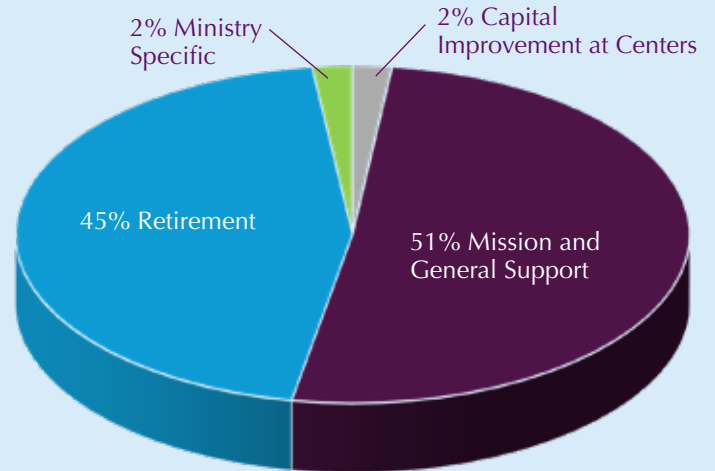
*Left: Sisters Pat Bergen and Joellen Sbrissa.*

*Bottom: Sisters, associates, and staff at one table during small group discussion.*



## Thank You!

Your gifts of support are a blessing! Thank you for partnering with us in mission and helping us provide for our retired sisters. Here is how we used your charitable contributions July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025:



## Other Ways to Give

### ● Qualified Charitable Distribution

Did you know that you can direct unneeded required minimum distributions (RMDs) to us through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA? If you don't need the income, or the taxes it may incur, ask your advisor about a QCD.

### ● Donor Advised Fund

If you have a donor advised fund (DAF), please consider including us in your grant recommendations this year. We welcome DAF gifts!

### ● Leave a Legacy of Love

You can continue to partner with us in our mission of unifying love and service even after your lifetime by including the congregation in your plans. A planned gift may also reduce your estate taxes. Request our Legacy of Love brochure today.

**To Learn More**, contact Melissa Haley O'Leary at [moleary@csjoseph.org](mailto:moleary@csjoseph.org) or 216-688-3474

*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, music, poetry and more 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 26th, Taller de José welcomed guests that included many of our sisters to its annual Builder's Day Celebration brunch at Crystal Sky Banquets in McCook. The Congregation of St. Joseph was proud to be 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.

The day began with a Mass followed by brunch, program, and award presentations. 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.

Chicago has a large Hispanic population, many of whom have sought services from Taller de José since its founding in 2008. To date, the ministry has helped more than 10,000 neighbors overcome obstacles. 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)



*Clockwise from left: Sister Kathy Brazda, co-founder of Taller de José; Sisters Pat Bergen and Carol Crepeau, co-founder of Taller de José; Sisters Marianne Race, Terry Middendorf, and Chris March.*

## Nazareth Academy



In March, four sisters took part in a panel discussion on immigration with students at Nazareth Academy. Sisters Marianne Race, Pat Bergen, Jackie Schmitz, and Kathy Sherman, who have all served at the U.S./Mexico border, spoke about their personal experiences there with migrants and refugees, and the need for education and compassion around this sensitive topic. The panel was part of a collaborative effort between our three sponsored high schools – Nazareth Academy, Saint Joseph Academy in Cleveland and St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge to bring the topic of immigration to the forefront during Lent. ●



In March, sisters served as guest teachers at Nazareth Academy for lessons on World Languages, Theology, and Art, and led Gospel Service reflections in Alexine Chapel. With students are Sisters Kathy Sherman and Mary Southard (top row) and the whole group below. ●

## The Well Spirituality Center CommUNITY Event and Fundraiser

On April 19th, over 170 guests joined sisters, associates and staff at Joseph House for The Well Spirituality Center’s CommUNITY celebration and fundraiser. After Liturgy, guests enjoyed brunch and an auction. Nazareth Academy students helped out during the event. It was a day of fellowship, community, and connection along with some good old fashioned fun!



*Clockwise from top, attendees of The Well’s CommUNITY celebration; Luke Sullivan, Executive Director of The Well with Sister Frankie Dutil; Kay McKeen of School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education (SCARCE) and Shelby Boblick, a program facilitator at The Well, who were honored for their work during Mass.*

### 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 Community Programs
- Guest Speakers
- Therapeutic and Healing Sessions
- Art Programs

To learn more or register, visit us at [CSJTheWell.org](http://CSJTheWell.org) or call 708.482.5048.



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## Spotlight Photo



*Drum roll please! Sister Mary Jo Curtsinger picks a winner of our annual Giveaway drawing surrounded by other sisters at Joseph House.*

*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 **Annie Guinane** at **708.482.1279**, or [aguinane@csjinitatives.org](mailto:aguinane@csjinitatives.org).

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

