This year of celebrations has been an enriching experience for the Sisters of the Holy Spirit as well as for so very many people who have participated in these events. The celebration of one hundred years of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Sisters cannot but cause one to bow low before Almighty God for the wonders produced throughout this long period of time. It is the graciousness of God who prompted the founding of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, and it is God who has inspired, assisted and maintained the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in which the Sisters have been engaged throughout their history. We pray that God will continue to bless the Sisters and to help them to help others in making Jesus known and loved through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Celebrations Give Praise to God

Cathedral Event Highlights the 100th Anniversary of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit

A slight chill in the air met the warmth of St. Paul’s Cathedral on April 14, 2013, as friends and families gathered on the third Sunday of Easter to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. As the assembly sang out in jubilation, “I Know that My Redeemer Lives”, the Sisters processed into the Cathedral.

Sister Grace Fabich, General Superior, welcomed the vast assembly of the faithful to the Eucharistic Liturgy and celebration. Among the guests were many priests, deacons, seminarians, and Sisters from other religious communities. His Eminence, Adam Cardinal Maida, a great friend of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, was in attendance, and the Most Rev. David A. Zubik, bishop of Pittsburgh, was the Celebrant of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Following the homily, given by Bishop Zubik in which he thanked the Sisters for their service during the past 100 years in the diocese, the Sisters renewed their vows. Bishop Zubik presented Sister Grace Fabich with a framed photo of Pope Francis. At the end of Mass, the Sisters processed out as the closing hymn, “The Spirit Sends us Forth to Serve”, was sung. A lovely dessert reception followed the ceremony.

Sister Cindy Ann Kibler, a member of the centennial committee, had orchestrated the cathedral event in which she was assisted by committee members. In addition, Paul Marcucci took numerous photos of the event, and he and his wife Ann presented the Sisters with gorgeous corsages which were worn throughout the ceremony.

One week later, an article appeared in a Sunday bulletin. Rev. Richard Jones, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Coraopolis, PA, had written an article for his parishioners, some of which is duplicated here with his permission.

Father Rich’s Reflection

“Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song.” – Psalm 100:2

On Sunday, April 14, 2013, at 6:00 pm, along with 50 priests, I attended the Centennial Celebration of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, held at St. Paul Cathedral in Oakland. For the past 100 years (1913-2013), the congregation, founded by Archbishop John Francis Regis Canevin, has graced the Church of Pittsburgh, Ohio, West Virginia and Virginia through the indomitable spirit and unrelenting courage of these sisters.

The bishop highlighted 3 specific realities that are powerful teaching lessons that the Sisters of the Holy Spirit have inspired in serving others. We can learn from these realities in our lives:

1. Their indomitable spirit of courage. In the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, it states that those first Christians met with much opposition, persecution, suffering and struggle in proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ, and the powerful works wrought through that name. Like the early Christians, the sisters displayed much courage.

And it was through that unstoppable courage, determination, and faith that their foundress, Mother Josephine Finatowicz, who converted from Orthodox to Catholicism (much to the disdain of her own father), came to the United States from Russia to begin what is known today as the Sisters of the Holy Spirit of Pittsburgh. These dedicated and faithful sisters, through the corridors of time, have stayed true to the course of their mission, to manifest in their apostolates, through spiritual enrichment, education, health care, pastoral care, and Christian formation, which have borne the fruits of the Holy Spirit in this local Church. St. Paul reminds us that the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)

2. The sisters were never afraid, never gun-shy, never embarrassed about singing the praises of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Source of our hope; the Lamb slain, whether singing His praises in our own diocese, or nearby dioceses, from the beginning of their singing and praising in the morning and throughout the day. They are not unlike the first Christian witness and martyr, Deacon Stephen, a man filled with grace and power of the Holy Spirit, who worked great wonders and signs among the people. He powerfully evangelized, as he was focused attentively and lovingly on Jesus. Even while hostile enemies sought his life, he radiated heavenly joy. This man, Stephen would never stop. (Acts 6:57) And like Stephen, we are to be equally full of the Holy Spirit, to never stop serving, sacrificing, loving, praising, and sharing the Risen Jesus. Many times through these 100 years, we have asked the sisters to appeal to God on our behalf. We can ‘take it to the bank’ that they have never let us down, as they plead for God’s light in our darkness.

3. The sisters continue to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is proclaimed to this day. That “Yes! Jesus is risen from the dead”, along with Simon Peter’s triple “Yes!”, we answer that intimate question, “Do you love me?” (John 21) For the ultimate end of our life, is loving service to God, to reveal Jesus’ face, to be His hands, feet and heart, time and time again, whether for the young school student, the confused teenager, the displaced immigrant, or the forgotten elderly. Through their countless sacrifices, on behalf of the most vulnerable among us, they have responded joyfully. This great milestone not only marks the passage of time in history, but the incredible enduring commitment of consecrated women, through the Holy Spirit, who continually bear the love of Jesus Christ in breathtaking ways, for the Gospel’s sake. Would that we all believed in Jesus’ Resurrection with such zeal.

I was drawn to this Centennial Celebration, as in the neighborhood where I grew up in Greentree, the Sisters of the Holy Spirit ran Marian Manor Nursing Home. It was there that I volunteered as an altar server for the Mass, whether for the likes of Fr Stephen Burdis, Fr Tom McKenna, or Fr John D. Fording; would help serve the Mass, whether at 6:45 am and at 7:15 am I would help serve the Mass, whether for the likes of Fr Stephen Burdis, Fr Tom McKenna, or Fr John D. Fording; it was always a joy.

All my siblings received their first jobs as teenagers there. The welcoming spirit of the sisters left an indelible mark on our Christian formation. Mom served as the president of the Marian Manor Guild, while my brothers and sisters worked in the kitchen preparing food or serving as a busboy; in the greenhouse tending flowers; on the floors ministering to the patients; waxing the floors in the hallways; firing up the trash in the incinerator and cutting the grass on the tractor. We had reverential fear and respect for the Administrator, Sr Mary Berchmans, who was called home to God this past July, 2012 at the age of 95. We took pride in our service to Marian Manor, as it became like a second home to us.

As I celebrate my 25th Silver Anniversary, I thank God for the seeds that the Sisters of the Holy Spirit planted in my heart and in the hearts of my family. I will never forget that daily mantra of Sr Berchmans, “Richard, how is your prayer life going?” She never tired of asking that question, even though my answer was not always up to snuff. She would say, “When your prayer life is in order, it all comes together.” Thank you, sisters, for teaching us what it means to have courage, to sing God’s praises and to say, “Yes!” to loving Jesus and His people, as we continue to grow in holiness.

Sister Donna Smith plays piano at reception.
Sister Norma Rodriguez, SHS, parish visitor, meets with neighbor.

A Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), Sister Norma Rodriguez, who ministers to an aging population in the Bloomfield/Lawrenceville area of Pittsburgh, knows how important it is to take time for one's self in order to be at one's best in caring for another. Since October, 2012, Sister Norma has presented a four-part series titled “Revitalization Seminars for Caregivers and Volunteers” throughout the Pittsburgh area. This series was sponsored by Gateway Hospice in McCandless Township and continued through March, 2013, with Compassionate Care, another hospice program and with Senior Bridge, a private company with which she is still employed.

Sister Norma Rodriguez, SHS, parish visitor, meets with neighbor.

Sister's presentations are intended to encourage those who care for others and to remind them to take time to care for their own wellbeing. Sister knows, from experience, what it means to care for the elderly. She was ministering at Marian Manor Nursing Home in Pittsburgh when her parents became gravely ill. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Sister Norma was able to transfer her parents to Marian Manor when they were no longer able to care for themselves. Sister considers it a real blessing to have been able to minister to them throughout their last days. It is her hope that her talks have provided, and continue to provide some inspiration and help to those who give so generously of themselves for the welfare of others.

A special celebration of the 100th anniversary was held at Marian Manor on May 25th for the Sisters in residence at the Manor who had been unable to attend the Cathedral event. A beautiful prayer service in the Manor's chapel was followed by much celebrating in the dining room.

A Certifed Nurse Assistant (CNA), Sister Norma Rodriguez, who ministers to an aging population in the Bloomfield/Lawrenceville area of Pittsburgh, knows how important it is to take time for one's self in order to be at one's best in caring for another. Since October, 2012, Sister Norma has presented a four-part series titled “Revitalization Seminars for Caregivers and Volunteers” throughout the Pittsburgh area. This series was sponsored by Gateway Hospice in McCandless Township and continued through March, 2013, with Compassionate Care, another hospice program and with Senior Bridge, a private company with which she is still employed.

Centennial Celebration at Marian Manor

A special celebration of the 100th anniversary was held at Marian Manor on May 25th for the Sisters in residence at the Manor who had been unable to attend the Cathedral event. A beautiful prayer service in the Manor's chapel was followed by much celebrating in the dining room.

Sisters in chapel for prayer service.

Sisters Mary Richard Mehelich and Dorothy Strelinski.

Sister Janelle Banko and Sister M. Edward Kudla at dessert table.

Sister Mary Anne Ulrich serves her delicious cookies.

Sister Norma Rodriguez, SHS, parish visitor, meets with neighbor.
Celebrating our Jubilarians

Sister M. Edward Kudla
SHS – 75th Jubilarian

Holy Cross Parish in Glassport, PA, was home to many of our Sisters. Agnes Panto Kudla and Jacob Kudla, also made Glassport their home where they raised a lovely faith-filled family. One of their daughters, Josephine, entered the Sisters of the Holy Ghost where she took the name, Sister M. Edward.

In reflecting on her vocation, Sister Edward recalled that devotion to the Holy Spirit was implanted in her life at an early age by her pastor, Rev. Raymond Gorski. She said he was a very holy man, and he spoke often about the Holy Spirit. She went on to say, “As a sister of the Holy Spirit, I feel privileged to promote devotion to the Holy Spirit and to help others to become aware of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.” She further recalled that although it was a big sacrifice to leave home and her loving family to enter the convent, her call to serve God was very strong. She said, “I couldn’t refuse to answer the call.”

Sister Edward’s 75 years in religious life were spent mainly as a teacher in the dioceses of Pittsburgh, Greensburg, and Youngstown. A graduate of Duquesne University, she was well prepared for the field of education. In some of the schools where she ministered, she was also the principal and local superior of the Sisters with whom she served. Her education ministry was interrupted when she was asked to serve as the director of novices for the community. Following that assignment, she returned to the schools. Even when she retired from teaching, she continued to tutor students and to assist the Sisters in preparing meals and doing chores in the convent.

Recently she stated, “I have always wanted to care for others; my life in community has allowed me to do this. I loved teaching the school children. It is my prayer life that has been such a big part of all this.”

Sister Edward is well known for her gentle and kind disposition. Now in retirement at Marian Manor Nursing Home, a position she held for fifteen years. She later became the filing secretary at the Motherhouse until her retirement in 2001. Sister Esther spent the first nine years in retirement at the Motherhouse. She now resides at Marian Manor Nursing Home where she had once served so well. She still holds that a religious vocation is a worthy life to consider.

We congratulate and thank Sister Esther for her seventy-five years of ministry as a Sister of the Holy Spirit. We wish her many more years of prayer.

A graduate of Duquesne University, she was engaged in education for thirty-two years, serving as teacher, principal, organist, and superior in parishes in Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1973 she became the medical records technician for Marian Manor Nursing Home, a position she held for fifteen years. She now resides at Marian Manor Nursing Home where she had once served so well. She still holds that a religious vocation is a worthy life to consider.

We congratulate and thank Sister Esther for her seventy-five years of ministry as a Sister of the Holy Spirit. We wish her many more years of praying for the people in her life. God bless you, Sister Esther!

Sister Esther at work in her office.

Sr. M. Esther Serafin
SHS – 75th Jubilarian

Baptized Mary Serafin, the daughter of Mary Siembieda Serafin and Martin Serafin, she would take the name Sister Esther when she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. A native of Oil City, PA, Mary entered from Assumption parish. Her loving parents supported her decision to enter the community; after all, they had already permitted another daughter to precede her in entering the Sisters of the Holy Ghost. She would later recall, laughingly, that the Sisters went to her home to recruit her since her older sister, the late Sister Martina, had already entered the community.

Although she was a sibling of Sister Martina, who would later become a General Superior of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit, Sister Esther never sought any special favors. In fact, even to this day, Sister Esther has maintained an unassuming presence. She has always been totally dedicated to her assignments, and they have been many and diverse.

We congratulate and thank Sister Esther in earlier days.
St. Maria Goretti Parish Honors Sisters

On May 26, the new pastor, Rev. Regis Farmer, hosted the Sisters for a special Mass at the former Immaculate Conception Parish where the Sisters have ministered since 1954. The Bloomfield Citizens Council presented the Sisters with a plaque in honor of their service to the Bloomfield community.

In July of 2012, Immaculate Conception Parish had been joined with two other local churches to form a new St. Maria Goretti Parish. This new parish hosted a lovely reception which was followed by a dinner for the Sisters. Many Sisters of the Holy Spirit attended, and Father Regis presented each Sister with a gift.

Former Chaplain Dies

For sixteen years, the Most Rev. Anthony G. Bosco, bishop emeritus of the Greensburg Diocese, served as the chaplain of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. It was a time when Holy Ghost High School and Grade School were flourishing, and the Bishop Boyle Home for aged women also occupied part of the Motherhouse campus. Bishop Bosco, although active in the downtown office in the Pittsburgh Diocesan building, still found time to minister to these groups and to the Sisters. His day began with the celebration of Mass in the Motherhouse chapel, and then he was off to his other duties.

Weekends were a special time when his mother, Teresa Bosco, spent the weekend at his residence. Mrs. Bosco was dearly loved by the Sisters, and Sunday evenings were special for her and for a group of Sisters who had their card games going amid much laughter.

Although the Sisters were proud that Bishop Bosco had been appointed Bishop of Greensburg, they were sad to have the bishop and his mother leave Pittsburgh and their home with them for they had become part of the Sisters’ family. During his tenure at the Motherhouse, the Sisters were always pleased to have Bishop Bosco’s family visit. The Bosco children, the boys and girls of Bishop Bosco’s brothers, especially brought much joy to the Sisters; it was a delight to watch the children grow during those sixteen years.

After seventeen years of outstanding and innovative leadership as bishop of Greensburg, Bishop Bosco died peacefully in his home. A funeral Mass was celebrated July 10 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral in Greensburg. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia was the main celebrant. He was joined by many Pennsylvania bishops and priests. Although July 10th was a very rainy day, many participants filled the cathedral for his funeral Mass that day. They included the bishop’s family and many friends and associates, their devotion to the bishop was quite evident.

Sisters Receive Awards

We congratulate these two very generous Sisters who seek to carry on the mission of Jesus.

Sister Christina Marie Janusek

It was 2008 when Marian Manor Nursing Home became a part of the Vincentian Collaborative System. Four years later, the President and CEO Ray Washburn introduced the “St. Vincent and St. Louise Award” to the board of directors. This award is given two times each year to a small group of employees who have demonstrated something significant which pertains to the healthcare ministry.

Sister Christina Marie Janusek, Director of the Pastoral Care Department, was a recipient of the award last Fall. She was recognized for continually exceeding standards.

Sister Theresa Margaret Bealer

Each year, the diocese of Pittsburgh awards the “Manifesting the Kingdom Award” to laywomen, laymen, and to consecrated women and men “who demonstrate the presence of Jesus in their lives and have participated in an exceptional service to the Church reflected in so many different ways in the lives, ministry and work of those who receive it.”

Sister Theresa Margaret Bealer was nominated by her community to receive the award this January which was presented to her by Diocesan Bishop David A. Zubik. For the past four years, Sister Theresa Margaret has ministered to the poor and homebound of the Bloomfield, Garfield, and Lawrenceville areas of Pittsburgh. Sister can be seen climbing the hills and navigating the streets, in all kinds of weather, as she visits the homes of those who need a wide variety of assistance. Sister also assists at the “Meals on Wheels” center several times a week. Like Sister Christina Marie, Sr. Theresa Margaret also helps out at the Food Bank center each month.
Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of the Holy Spirit of Pittsburgh, declare our mission is to be joy-filled disciples of Jesus, prophetically witnessing to the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, aware of our call to work for the transformation of society into a Gospel community, reconciled with God and with one another.

Is God calling you to religious life? Would you like to join us in our work of Love and Joy?

Contact Sisters of the Holy Spirit - Vocations Office
5246 Clarwin Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229  412-931-1917

Sister Patricia Eleanor Myers, SHS | srpatty@verizon.net
Sister Mary Anne Ulrich, SHS | srmaryanne@verizon.net

Please visit our new website at sistersoftheholyspirit.com