



Spirit Echoings

God's Love is Everlasting

In a letter dated April 3, 1900, our foundress Mother Josephine wrote:

“With our whole soul we desire and seek, for the greater glory of God, to serve humanity, to work for their good and benefit. This constitutes alone the joy of our holy vocation.”

Since 1913 when our community, originally named Sisters of the Holy Ghost was canonically erected by Bishop John Francis Regis Canevin, and until now, when following Vatican II our name was changed to Sisters of the Holy Spirit, our Sisters have striven to live the dream of Mother Josephine.



As we move on in the midst of today's challenges, we continue to strive with the assistance of the Holy Spirit to be faithful to our call, and we trust in the everlasting love of God for us and for all of you.

from Sister Diane



Sister Diane Smith, SHS
General Superior

Finding Hope and Joy

This is a time of transition for many religious communities in our area and across our country. For us, we began looking seriously at our buildings in 2005. We knew we needed to do something. We pursued a number of possibilities with never finding the right solution for us. We were always conscious that any decision would have an impact on the Martina Spiritual Renewal Center.

We are truly at the threshold of a new time in the history of our Community. Our Motherhouse was built in 1921 soon after we moved to Pittsburgh from Donora. Moving from that convent with all the memories and all that has been so familiar for so many years could be a sad time. And yet, there is joy and hope as we adjust to our new surroundings and new routines.

What is JOY?

Although everything is “not in place” yet in our new home, and we need to find new ways of “doing things,” and the flow of each day may not be upbeat and happy, we experience that quiet inner peace that lasts. It is the settled assurance that God is in control and God will bring good from every circumstance when we are open to God’s Holy Spirit in our lives.

What is HOPE?

In Romans (8:24-25) St. Paul wrote:

“For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.”

While we will be setting goals and plans for our future, hope is opening ourselves to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, to be surprised by God and rely upon God’s promise of new life.

**We pray that the Holy Spirit fill
your heart with deep hope and joy.**

Let us continue to pray for one another.

New Administration Installed

Every four years our Sisters gather to elect from among our membership those who will serve in leadership in the community. Since we are a diocesan congregation, the diocesan bishop or his representative officiates at the election of the General Superior. This year Bishop David Zubik oversaw the election of Sister Diane Smith as General Superior. Two days later Sisters Janelle Banko, Donna Smith, Mary John Cook, and Patricia Eleanor Myers were elected General Councilors.

The new administration was installed and assumed its responsibilities on July 10. Bishop William J. Waltersheid, chaplain to our Sisters, presided at the installation. At this time it was announced that Sister Donna Smith would serve as Assistant General Superior.



Front row - Sister Diane, Bishop Waltersheid, Sister Donna, Back row - Sister Mary John, Sister Janelle, Sister Patricia Eleanor

Bishop Zubik blesses Sister Diane following her election.



Long History Invites Changes and Challenges

When Barbara Timofieff Finatowicz became a Roman Catholic in Russia in the late 1800's, she didn't know that her response to God would take her to found a community that would encounter many changes and difficulties and eventually find its way to Pittsburgh, PA.

The first American group began in Michigan, continued to Donora, PA, and, at the advice of Bishop Hugh C. Boyle, settled in the North Hills area of Pittsburgh which the Sisters referred to as "West View".

The former Allen Estate housed the young community until the Motherhouse on Clarwin Avenue was built in 1926. A later addition completed the building in 1942.



Mother Josephine

The Allen Estate had become a home for elderly women, and an archway joined that building with the new convent which enabled the Sisters to continue to house and care for more women. The new Motherhouse also became the site of Holy Ghost Academy, a high school for girls, and also a primary school for children.



Sisters of the Holy Ghost



Allen estate at left; 1926 Motherhouse



Motherhouse



Crucifix atop altar in Motherhouse chapel before renovations

A Motherhouse is an important feature in the life of a religious congregation. It is a place where the members gather to live and to pray and to receive their formation to live a consecrated life within the Catholic Church according to the vision of the founder and/or foundress. In our case and as an apostolic group, our purpose for service and for being a congregation is addressed, and education for each ministry is provided for.

Throughout our history, outreach to people in need has formed the focus of our ministries. Young and old alike have received assistance. Sisters provided help during the flu epidemic of 1917-1918, taught children of Polish immigrants and assisted other communities by providing our Sisters to teach in their schools.



In addition to having provided Sisters to teach and minister in many schools in Pittsburgh, Greensburg, and Ohio, the Sisters also assumed the administration of and the building of a new Kings Daughters Hospital in Martinsburg, WVA , built Marian Manor Nursing Home in the Marian Year in 1955, served at St. Joseph's Protectory for Homeless Boys which was located in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, and transformed our Holy Ghost High School into the Martina Spiritual Renewal Center. Following the war in Vietnam our community assisted Vietnamese, Cambodian, Ameriasians and Hmong immigrants.

Sisters who served at Kings Daughters Hospital

continued on next page

Long History Invites Changes and Challenges continued

In 2007 our Sisters opened our Motherhouse to provide temporary housing for a group of refugees from Somalia in Africa, and in 2008 our Sisters also shared our home with immigrants from Uzbekistan and from Burundi, Africa for several months until they were able to move into homes of their own.



Sisters in
garden with
refugees

Declining membership over the past several years prompted the community to study the feasibility of continuing to remain in the Motherhouse that had been our home since 1926. After some attempts to sell it proved useless, the decision was made to demolish it and to build a new and smaller one.

The Sisters moved into the new building in July. We trust that God, who is ever faithful, will continue to lead us in ways that will advance the mission entrusted to us.

To find more of our history, the Spirit Echoings Spring 2012 edition (*Journey of 100 Years*) can be downloaded at: sistersoftheholyspirit.com.

2022
Motherhouse



Events Celebrate Consecrated Life

Saints Martha and Mary Parish, Saint Catherine of Sweden Church in Allison Park, will be the site of a celebration of consecrated life. Bishop William J. Waltersheid will celebrate the 11:30 Mass on Sunday, October 9. At this time those consecrated religious in our diocese who are celebrating jubilees will also be honored.

Every year on the day our community celebrates the feast days of all of our Sisters, we also hold a special remembrance for our jubilarians. This year they are: Sister Mary John Cook and Sister Marie Fabish who are celebrating 65 years as Sisters of the Holy Spirit; and Sister Eleanor Giuliani and Sister Mary Lou Witkowski, 70 years.

While these Sisters have ministered in a variety of settings, together they have given a total of two hundred and seventy years of service to the People of God. They have been generous and faithful to their commitments and have served humbly, never seeking any

special recognition. For them, we are grateful to our good God Who has prompted and empowered them to fulfill their ministries. While we honor our Sisters, we especially give praise to God who enables all that is good.



Sister Mary Lou and Sister Eleanor



Sister Marie Fabich



Sister Mary John Cook

Lions Club International Invites and Welcomes Sister

On March 8, 2022, Sister Mary John Cook was welcomed as a new member of the Bloomfield Lawrenceville Lions club. Previously when Sister was the principal of Saint Maria Goretti School until its closing, Sister had her students participate in Peace projects which were sponsored by the local Lions Club. Quite a few of those students gained special recognition and awards because of their outstanding art projects which depicted Peace. Lions

Club International is one of the largest service organizations in the world with 1.4 million members in 200 countries. Their causes serve in five areas of need that present challenges to humanity: Diabetes, Vision, Hunger, Environment, and Childhood Cancer. Sister Mary John was involved in their recent project whereby this local group collected and sent a very large truckload of food and supplies to Ukraine.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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S I S T E R S O F T H E H O L Y S P I R I T



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General Superior

Sister Donna Smith, SHS
Assistant General Superior

Sister Janelle Banko, SHS
General Councilor

Sister Mary John Cook, SHS
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Sister Patricia Eleanor Myers, SHS
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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
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Please visit our website at sistersoftheholyspirit.com.

