



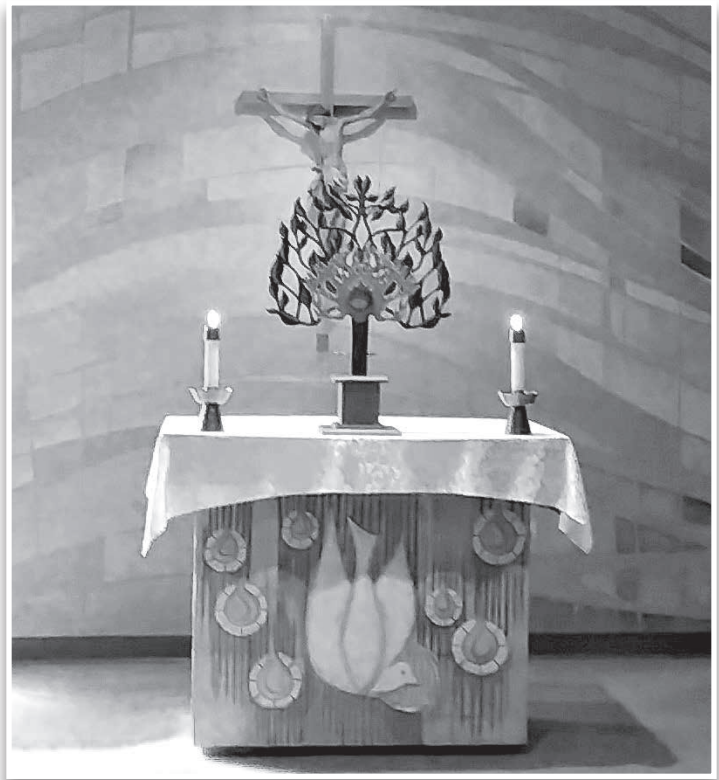
Spirit Echoings

Come, Holy Spirit

In the last issue of Spirit Echoings, Sister Diane Smith, General Superior, spoke about Hope and Joy in this time of transition in relation to the need for a new Motherhouse and all that would entail. We are encouraged by the invitation to enter into more deeply the Life in the Spirit.

One prayer in the intercessions in Christian Prayer for Friday evening of the second week of Easter is: "You make all things new, and command us to wait and watch for your kingdom - grant that the more we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the more we may seek to better this present world. Lord, establish your kingdom in the world."

In his encyclical, Laudato Si, Pope Francis praises God for all creation, and he encourages us to prepare for a better future. In a closing prayer at the end of that document, he prays,



"O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of Justice, peace, love and beauty. Praise be to you! Amen."

Come, Holy Spirit. Renew the face of the earth.

from Sister Diane



Sister Diane Smith, SHS
General Superior

A Reflection for Pentecost

Alleluia, we are in the season of Easter! The new growth in nature is a reminder of God's promise of new life for each one of us and for our community. Do I really believe that God loves me so much that a new life awaits me? What are my fears that prevent God's new life from flourishing within me?

When the soil is hard and crusted, the spring rains cannot soak in. How open am I to let God's love and mercy fill my entire being? Think of the tiny dry seed, just tossed about, seemingly worthless. However, with good soil, adequate sunlight and sufficient water, the seed will become the plant it is destined to be. How can I be that glimmer of hope and love for those whom I encounter each day? Will my presence bring new life to the other person?

*Come, Holy Spirit, come
and renew the face of the
earth. Renew me, renew us
for the greater honor and
glory of Jesus Christ.*

We have recently seen the destruction caused by strong winds. Wind is a symbol of the breath of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. The Spirit hovered over creation in the Book of Genesis. The Spirit overshadowed Mary at the Annunciation. On the day of Pentecost a sound like a violent wind filled the house where the disciples were gathered. Am I open to the Spirit's working in my life? It may be in a simple inspiration from something I read or heard. It may be something which seemed just "coincidence" but was surely the Spirit's gentle whisper. Am I willing to be surprised by God? When we allow the Holy Spirit to break into our lives, things change, we change.

At Pentecost there appeared tongues as fire upon those gathered there. Fire can be devastating as in forest fires or people losing their homes by fire. Fire is also necessary to warm our homes in winter and cook our food. Fire is another symbol of the Holy Spirit. Am I willing to ask the Holy Spirit to ignite a new fire within me, to set me ablaze as his witness?

The Holy Spirit rarely comes to us as strongly as it did on that first Pentecost. Our experiences are more of the quiet nudges and inspirations which transform us to be the persons God has called each of us to be.

New Website In Progress

Realizing that our website had seen little to no activity for quite a long time, it was decided to refresh it by starting over.

To date, **Our History** line has been corrected and updated, but the rest of the website still has to be completed. The most active part, however, of the site is our *Facebook* page which Sister Cynthia Wessel has very actively and creatively begun developing

Throughout Holy Week she posted beautiful reflections and accompanying photos, and she continues to provide interesting articles and pictures. There one can find many photos of our old and new existing Motherhouses and articles of recent events.



Sister
Cynthia
Wessel

We invite all to **"Follow Us"** and open the page and enjoy. It can be found on our web page: **sistersoftheholyspirit.**

Mailing List Updates

We have been reviewing our **Spirit Echoings** mailing list, and we realize that copies are going to some people who no longer live at the addresses we have.

If this copy of Spirit Echoings has not reached its intended recipient, please inform us and we will remove this name from our mailing list.

You may either drop a note to:
Sr Marita Juras
5246 Clarwin Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15229
or email her at
lamjuras@aol.com

Thank you.

serving in creative ways

Sisters Active

Though two schools where our Sisters had ministered closed, the Sisters have been creative in serving in a variety of ways.

Sister Mary John Cook, former principal of Saint Maria Goretti School in Bloomfield, enjoys tutoring. Well known for her excellent math skills, Sister John meets individually with three different students throughout the week at the end of their school days.

Sister Mary John has also been active in the Lions Club International. As a result of many planning meetings, at Christmas and at Easter, she assisted in putting together food baskets for many people throughout the Bloomfield region.



Sister
Cynthia
Wessel



Sister Mary
John Cook

She is also part of a prayer line group that prays for elected leaders. Her contact is a member of Congress for whom she prays. In addition to that, every two weeks she joins Sister Norma Rodriguez and Sister Marita Juras as they lead a Bible study group with some adults in Bloomfield.

Sister Cynthia Wessel had previously served as principal of St. Agnes School in West Mifflin. Sister is now a volunteer at Jefferson Hospital where she provides Spiritual Care for the Palliative Patient.

Twice a week she spends three to five hours visiting patients and talking and praying with them. She also meets with their families. If a need is made known to her, she speaks to the nurses in charge, always seeking to be supportive of the patients and their families.





Students with Sister Patricia Eleanor Myers

Sister Cynthia was recently honored for 100 hours of service in the hospital since December 31 of 2022; however, since she began this ministry in April of 2022, she has logged in 230 hours. Needless to say, she also spends many hours developing our *Facebook* page for our Website.

Sister Janelle Banko continues to teach at St. Therese School in Munhall. Sr. Janelle and Sr. Cynthia both reside at St. Agnes Convent in West Mifflin. Throughout Lent, they both assisted at the Fish Fries for St. Thomas the Apostle Parish at the St. Agnes worship site.



Sister Janelle Banko

Sister Patricia Eleanor Myers continues her ministry as Pastoral Associate at St. Gregory Parish in Zelienople and at St. Ferdinand and Holy Redeemer parishes. In addition to her many duties in that role, she has also substitute taught at St. Gregory's parish school and also at North Catholic High School.

During the recent National Catholic Sisters Week, Sister Patricia spoke to a group of 600 students at North Catholic High School. In her talk she presented information about the life of a religious Sister.

Painting by
Sister Mary
Richard
Mehelich

And The Good News Is...

So many times, after hearing the evening news, I find myself thinking, "And now the **good** news is..."

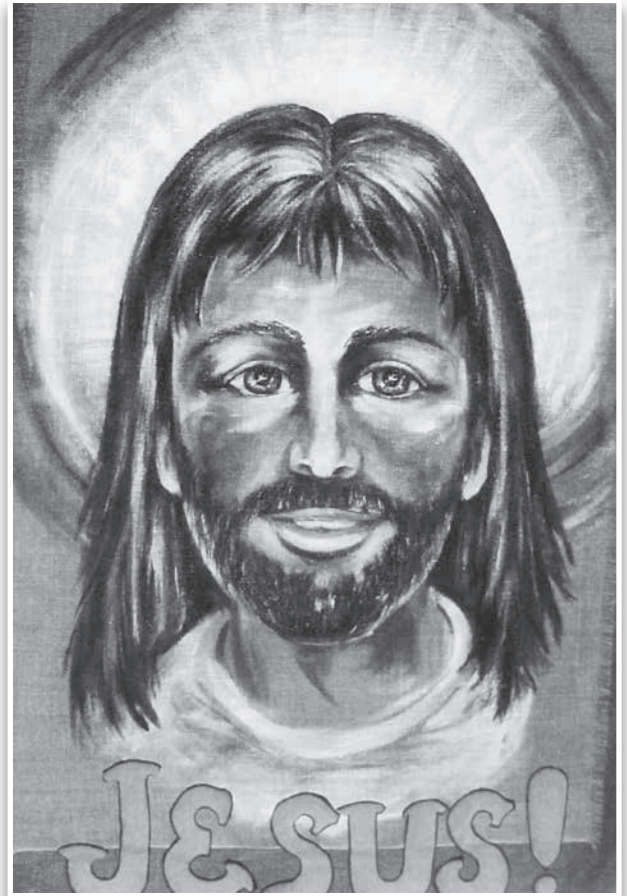
One of the best pieces of news of which I am reminded is the promise of Jesus:

*"I will be with you
until the end of time."*

(Mt. 28:20)

Another, in the fourteenth chapter of John, concerns the sending of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who plants the teachings of Jesus deep in our hearts where they can be rooted and produce good fruit. It is the Holy Spirit who prompts us to hope, even when there may not seem to be any reason to hope, and who reminds us of the great love God has for each one of us. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who remains with us and who initiates and cultivates our relationship with God and who helps us in our relationships with others.



In His life here on earth, Jesus introduced people to his *Abba*, His *Daddy* as the term fondly translates. This revolutionary approach to God took quite a bit of courage on the part of Jesus. However, Jesus never backed down from His way of introducing the people of His time (and all of us) to His heavenly Father. The kind of loving relationship that Jesus had with His Father He extended to all people of all times.

For many years I had known the meaning of *Abba*. However, I was never really moved by that knowledge until twenty years ago when I had the privilege of visiting the Holy Land.

One day we found ourselves climbing Mt. Tabor, which is really quite a long trek. The day was hot and sunny, and the hills were filled with families and backpackers from the kibbutzim. When we arrived about midway to the top of the mountain, our group leader announced that we would stop and have Mass. While everything was being readied by several people, I continued to enjoy the sights. All of a sudden, my reverie was interrupted by the sound of little running feet and of a tiny child's voice crying, "Abba! Abba! Abba!" ("Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!") A little Jewish child, perhaps no older than age three, was running and crying out for its father. Needless to say, I got chills (always my way of reacting to something that affects me) as I, for the first time in my life, was being touched by an understanding of the *Abba* of Jesus.

At that moment I realized that this was how Jesus had told the people to call God; this was the way He had invited them to cry out to His Father in their need. The relationship to which He had invited them and us is that of a child to its loving father, to His Father, the Father of Jesus. And Jesus continued to speak in this way, even though He must have known that what His continuing to teach as He did would cost Him.



St. Maria Goretti chapel window

The fourteenth chapter of John speaks some more good news that is quite fitting as we await the great feast of Pentecost: "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

HAPPY PENTECOST!

This article by Sister Marita Juras is a reprint of a 1994 article in **Spirit Echoings**.

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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
5246 Clarwin Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229 412-931-1917

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