



**Sisters of Charity
of Our Lady
Mother of the Church**

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WINDS OF CHARITY

A publication of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of the Church

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Winter 2020

Cast your care upon the Lord; He will sustain you. (Ps. 55:23)

You tell us of the persistent and ravaging effects of COVID-19 on your lives, on your families. And the hearts, thoughts and prayers of all the Sisters of Charity go out to you.

So many of you have lost loved ones: spouses, parents, siblings, children — some not even being able to say good-bye. You call us so that we can pray with you during the funeral services.

For some, entire households ill with the virus. Still others, financial distress: “My husband is still out of work; we are living off credit cards and lines of credit.” “My daughter’s restaurant might have to close.” “I have to find a new place to live, but nothing’s available that I can afford. I am still out of work.” “I have never done this before—now I have to ask for help with food.”

These are just some of the many heart-breaking stories we hear every day when we answer the phone in the Development Office. How privileged we are to be able to walk with you as you struggle with devastation, loss, and a very uncertain future. Know that the Sisters of Charity are right there with you, sustaining you with our prayers.

The Sisters of Charity have not been spared the relentless impact of this virus. At this writing, a number of our Sisters at the Motherhouse have fallen ill. Through the goodness of God, some have recovered completely; others are improving slowly, but we are hopeful for their full recovery.



***Sister Marie Lucette and all our
Sister-nurses are very busy caring for
our Sisters with the COVID virus and
keeping safe all the other Sisters.***

The Motherhouse is home to 41 Sisters. It is here where our infirm and elder Sisters reside. Therefore you can imagine how vigilant we are in doing all we can to keep them safe. We pray daily and earnestly to Saint Joseph for the protection of all our Sisters, and for you.

Cont. on p. 2

You are invited!

It's not too soon to mark your calendars. We had to cancel our Gratitude Luncheon in 2020 because of the pandemic, but we are looking forward to seeing you in 2021.

October 2, 2021 11:00am

Annual Family Blessing Mass of Thanksgiving and Gratitude Luncheon to honor you and thank you for all you make possible.

Holy Family Motherhouse, Baltic, CT

On October 10, 2020, our Family Blessing Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated, however. If you have not already done so, you can view it on our website: www.sistersofcharity.com. In his homily, the celebrant, a graduate of one of the schools of the Sisters of Charity, told you:



“Today, at this Mass, we are united with you in prayer as a family. We offer this Mass in thanksgiving to God and we invite you to join us in thanking Him who has given you the means to share your faith through your support of the Sisters. They in turn thank God for the opportunity to share the faith through their various apostolates.” The video recording concludes with a view of the beautiful restoration of the Motherhouse Chapel that you made possible. As promised, the **Golden Jubilee Book of Gratitude** is in its place of honor, next to the plaque listing the names of those who, like you, gave generously so that this Chapel could be erected in 1940. We remember you, and them, with prayerful gratitude.

From p. 1

So often we hear: “We’re living through times we never could have imagined.” That is true, but we do not lose hope. We are a people of hope because we have a God who tells us repeatedly in His Word, the Scriptures, that He is our refuge and our strength, that He loves us and cares for us. The Psalms, in particular, speak to our hearts of this loving God, and they give us the words to express our deepest emotions.

Psalm 46: ***God is our refuge and our strength; an ever-present help in distress; therefore we fear not, though the earth be shaken and the mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.... The Lord of hosts is with us.***

Psalm 27: ***The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom (or what, even a pandemic!) should I fear?***

Psalm 55: ***Cast your care on the Lord; He will sustain you. He will never let you stumble.***

In this time of pandemic, we Sisters of Charity turn to God’s Word to find hope and strength. We invite you to do the same. Know that no matter what happens to you or your loved ones, now or in the future, you are in God’s hands. He loves you and will never forsake you. Cast your care upon Him. He is your refuge and your strength.

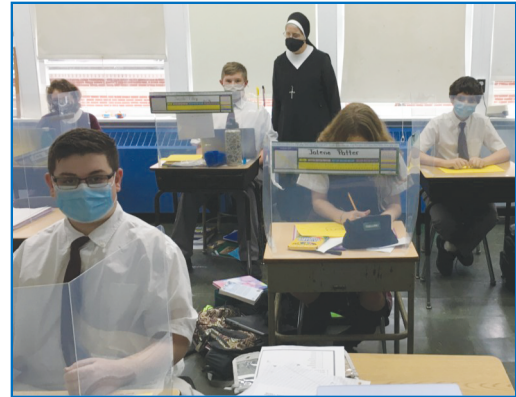
Cast your care

on the Lord.

He cares for you.

One of our local television stations has as its slogan for the pandemic: “We are all in this together.” Yes, that’s it. Each of us trying to make sense of this “new normal” of living in a pandemic world as we reach out to others. In our ministries, the Sisters of Charity are doing just that—helping those we serve to navigate these very unsettling times.

Education: With the opening of the new school year, our Sisters returned to an entirely different academic world. Classes are now divided into groups called cohorts, each cohort consisting of two classes. The students remain in their cohort throughout the day. Each student’s desk is protected with a threefold clear shield and students must always remain distant from each other. These and many other restrictions are the “new normal” in our schools. The Sisters are seeing considerable levels of anxiety and depression among some of the students, and their parents, although some are adjusting quite well. Sister Loreto shares: “I often need to lend a listening ear to both parents and students. They talk about their anxiety and fears about COVID, their struggles with the pandemic. The students need to be assured that they are loved and safe. When they have in-person learning, what a joy to see them laughing, running and playing at recess. They are now greatly challenged, but it will strengthen them to become strong, resilient adults.”



Sister Loreto with her cohort. She finds it difficult not to be able to interact more personally with her students.

In our **Healthcare Facilities** we are working hard to keep our residents safe. The restrictions are taking their toll, however. Health guidelines keep them confined to their rooms and without visitors. They were without Holy Mass and the Eucharist for six months—March to October—not even being able to visit the Chapel. What a great day it was when, once again, Holy Mass could be celebrated and they were able to receive Our Eucharistic Lord, although in rotating groups of only 10 at a time.

Our **Food Pantry** ministry is needed now more than ever. We are seeing increased numbers and desperate situations. Sheri, a single Mom of two young children, says our Food Pantry is a “life-saver” for her. When she came for assistance, she had only a box of cereal in her cupboards. Because of the generosity of our donors, the Food Pantry was able to help her re-stock her shelves. Sheri’s youngest child has serious health issues and only one lung. This time of COVID is particularly stressful for her as she struggles to keep him safe and to put food on the table for her little family. It is a relief for her to know that she can come to our Food Pantry.



Sheri and her children making sure their masks are in place before entering our Food Pantry.

Health protocols require that our **Homeless Shelter** operate at a lower capacity. But that does not change the need. People are still knocking on our doors, precisely because of the pandemic. The staff is committed, brave, but careful. Thanks to some generous donors and staff creativity, those who come to our doors, if not able to stay in the shelter, are provided with alternative housing, while the staff continues to work with them to find an apartment. At this writing, the Shelter has had only one person test positive for COVID. She was immediately quarantined and never became ill.

You provide for our young Sisters.

In these days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many things are uncertain, but one thing is certain: God still calls souls to union with Him. This invitation looks different for each soul. For some, it comes in the form of a call to the consecrated life. This journey, like much of life, is often circuitous; but when a soul responds as did Mary, the Mother of the Lord, in a humble and whole-hearted “Let it be done according to Your word”, the path reaches its goal in what is called Perpetual Profession. In a public ceremony, the one called offers a total gift of self to the One who gives Himself in unconditional, uncompromising love.

On August 19, the Chapel at Holy Family Motherhouse in Baltic, CT was the place of this wondrous moment for two young women, invited by Jesus to a life of religious consecration as Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of the Church. During the celebration of Holy Mass, Sister Marie Alexandria Smith, from Roscoe, Illinois, professed Perpetual Vows of Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience, and a fourth vow: to dedicate

herself to the works of Charity as lived by the Sisters of Charity.

For the past six years Sister Alexandria has been in the formation program of the Sisters of Charity, deepening her knowledge of the Faith, learning the meaning of the vows, studying the history and customs of the Congregation, while opening her soul to profound prayer so as to grow in union with her Divine Bridegroom. She has also been pursuing academic studies, preparing herself for ministry. Sister met the Sisters of Charity in Janesville, Wisconsin where she worked at Saint Elizabeth Home, a healthcare apostolate of our Congregation

Sister Veronica Rose Martens, a native of Tolland, CT, was a student at the local University when she discerned the voice of God inviting her to a life of total self-surrender. She joined the Sisters of Charity in 2017. By her profession of vows for one year, also on August 19, a requisite step toward Perpetual Profession, Sister continues her formation, awaiting the day of her total and irrevocable commitment to God in love. *Cont. on p. 5 →*

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Sister Alexandria received a lighted candle, symbolizing the light she must now carry out into the world.



After professing her vows, Sister Veronica Rose received a ring, blessed by the celebrant, symbol of her fidelity to her Lord.



We always give thanks to God...

Thank You!

Later that day, two other young women in the formation program progressed to the next step toward their total consecration to God.

Sister Mary Sophia Cawley received the habit of the Sisters of Charity and was admitted into the novitiate — two years of intensive spiritual formation. In this first year she is a canonical novice, which means that her main concern will be a deepening of her prayer life, growth in the knowledge of Christ and the Church, and an understanding of the Rule and Directives of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity. As it is a year of exclusive focus of the heart on God and learning to live the consecrated life, she will not pursue academic studies or take part in the ministries of the Congregation.

Sister Philip Reynette Tamani was admitted to the second year of the novitiate program. As an apostolic novice she will now pursue academic studies and take part in the ministries of the Congregation, while continuing her spiritual formation.

The Sisters of Charity rejoice in the faithful response of these four Sisters and we ask the prayers of all our friends and benefactors for their perseverance in grace.

As we lift up our hearts to God in profound gratitude for the gift of these four young women to our Congregation and to the Church, we also give thanks for YOU, Dear Friends, for your faithfulness to the Sisters of Charity. Your generosity makes possible the spiritual and professional formation of our young Sisters, preparing them to carry on the ministries entrusted to our Congregation at its foundation. You are a gift to the Sisters of Charity.



Mother Joan Clare (r.) assists Sister Sophia with some final adjustments of her veil and habit before the ceremony.



Above: Sister Philip Reynette now an apostolic novice. She will receive the cross and ring next year when she professes her vows. Below: Prior to their own celebration, Sisters Philip Reynette and Sophia (l.to r.), with Mother Joan Clare, provide entertainment at the reception for Sisters Alexandria and Veronica Rose.



...for your goodness to us.

*Stay
safe
and
take
care
of
each
other.*

Your team behind the scenes...

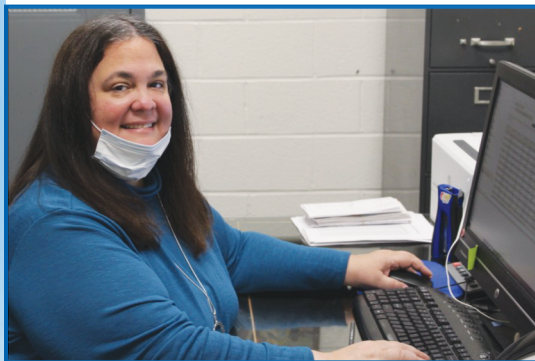
Meet the team that takes care of your needs as you journey with the Sisters of Charity. For each of these wonderful people, their work in the Development Office is a ministry, a work of loving service to you who so faithfully and generously support the Sisters of Charity. In addition to the jobs listed below, their most important work is to pray for you and support you in whatever way they can. As COVID-19 continues to bear down upon us, keeping our team safe is our first priority. They divide their work hours between home and office. However, please know that we are making every effort to answer your calls and respond to your needs in a timely manner.



The letters you receive, the weekly reflections of the *Divine Dialogue of God with the Soul*, come to you from the pen—and the heart—of **Mother Marie Julie (above)**. She, along with all the Sisters of Charity, are grateful that you are a part of our family. She enjoys writing to you and hearing from you.



Mother Mary David (above), our Development Director, oversees all operations and keeps the staff moving in the right direction. Every morning, she and Mother Marie Julie take the time to light the candles you request at Our Lady's Shrine and pray for your intentions.



In every edition of our Newsletter, **Margaret Cuccinello**, Director of Planned Giving, reminds you of the importance of having your estate plans in order. Do you need help? Don't hesitate to reach out to her.



Sister Christopher wears many hats, but her principal duty is to prepare for mailing the thank-you letters that Mother Marie Julie writes to you. For Sister, this is a sacred duty because she knows that your goodness and generosity make our mission possible.

...working for you!

Jackie Johnson assists with getting the thank-you letters out to you. She is also a part of the team that opens the mail. She is grateful for your generosity to the Sisters.



When you call the Development Office, chances are you will be speaking with **Sister Faustina**. For her, it is a privilege to speak with you, hear your stories and your concerns.



The orders you place on line for prayer books or items from our gift shop are processed, packaged and prepared for mailing to you by **Neyda Araoz (right)**. Neyda enjoys her work because she knows these prayer books are helping you or your loved ones find peace of mind and grow in your relationship with Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. She wants you to know that she is delighted that you, like her, are a part of the family of the Sisters of Charity.



Larry Cardinal does data entry. That means he makes sure your information is entered correctly into our computer files. He thanks you for choosing to support the Sisters of Charity.



Mother Mary Jude is editor of our newsletter, *Winds of Charity*. Each edition brings you up to date with news of the Sisters of Charity—your family.

We
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God
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From Margaret Cuccinello to You.

This has been quite a year, wouldn't you agree? A friend recently sent me a message that read, "October was the longest month of my life!" It certainly felt like that to me.

This isn't my typical gift planning article. I beg your indulgence while I get personal for a moment. My family lost our anchor in May due to Covid-19 – my Mom, Connie. Mom told my brother, sister and me time and again that all she ever wanted to be was a mother. We had the best mother anyone could want. She loved us equally and unconditionally. So although it seemed to us to be a beautiful sign, it was heartbreaking that she went home to God the night before Mother's Day. The most difficult part of Mom's illness for us is that we were not allowed to be with her.



But God sent us an angel—Lauren, one of the nurses who took care of her. She took the time to meet with us on her one day off from work so that we could give her our Mom's Mother's Day cards and gifts. She did that and much more. She decorated her room and read her our cards. She updated us on Mom's condition all day and night. She was with her when she passed away. She told us Mom died with her rosary in her hands. It's hard to put into words what it was like to have this angel there. She has since become family to us.

Mom loved us to the very end. She told us that she was going to fight Covid-19 for us, that we shouldn't be afraid because she wasn't afraid. She knew that God loved her and was with her. She had a strong faith and a special devotion to Our Blessed Mother. She always told us that she was praying for us, offering her rosary for us and encouraging us to rely on Jesus during times of difficulty. We've relied on our faith during these last few months as we struggle to come to terms with living without her. Even though she left us suddenly, we



were comforted knowing that we were aware of her end-of-life decisions and estate plans. Her affairs were in order. There was no need for any debate. This was a HUGE help to us.

During this pandemic, I know many of you have been thinking about making a will, revising your will, and/or getting your financial affairs in order. This does not surprise me. I've spoken with many of you over these last few months. You want to continue to support

our ministries even during these uncertain economic times. Given the present crisis, if end-of-life decision-making and estate planning is on your mind, don't hesitate to let us know how we can be of assistance. We are here for you. I encourage you to visit the Planned Giving section of our new website at <https://www.sistersofcharity.com/planned-giving>. It will be updated regularly with information about gift planning. Enjoy exploring! May God bless you and our Blessed Mother hold you close to her heart.

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