



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

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**Inside This
Issue:**

...for the Sisters...	2
....with the Sisters...	3
...through the Sisters...	4
...we thank you!	5
You are our heroes!	6
We are...	7
your prayer warriors!	8

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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 2021

For all you do...

We were so hoping to see you in October at our annual Family Blessing Mass and Gratitude Luncheon. We delayed making the decision to cancel until the last minute, hoping and praying that COVID19 would be behind us and we would be able to gather once again. But, that was not to be. We missed you. We were, however, able to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, live-streamed from our Motherhouse Chapel. If you were not able to tune in, below is an excerpt from Mother Marie Julie's welcome message, a message for you as well. We don't want you to miss it.

"So much of our interaction: our encounters with families, the sick, the residents in our long term care settings, the teachers and students in our schools, those who are homeless and those who are hungry, those we meet in church and in the marketplace, those with whom we speak on social media and the telephone - so many of these wonderful people in our ministries are touched through your prayers for them and through your gifts.

Today's Holy Mass is our way of reaching out to you to thank you, and to ask the blessings of God upon you and upon your loved ones.

We know that all we do is done

in cooperation with God, but we know, too, that you stand beside us as we feed and clothe, comfort and heal, listen and advise, laugh and cry, and pray with thousands of people every year. You are part of every moment of our ministries. Our senior Sisters feel your kindness, too, as well as our young Sisters still in formation.

You have also contributed so generously to help us renovate, renew and restore important areas of our Motherhouse. For all of this we extend to you our most sincere gratitude.

At this Mass we pray that God will pour out His blessings on you at every moment, in every way you need to be blessed. May He soon see fit to bring us together once again, here at the Motherhouse, without fear of illness or exposure to the virus. May He hasten that day for you and for us. Know that we love you and we thank you. God bless you."



(l. to r.) Sisters Gabriel, Elizabeth, Rafael and all the Sisters missed seeing you at the Mass and Gratitude Luncheon again this year. We hope to see you next year.

From the eldest to the youngest

*You
care
for
the
Sisters
from
the eldest
to the
youngest.
Thank
You!*

Sister Bernadette, our eldest Sister, never ceases to let us know how grateful she is to you, our benefactors, for making sure she and all our elder Sisters get the care they need. You help them in so many ways, too many to count. You provide for their medical needs. You assist with co-pays for their dental and medical necessities. You make it possible for lay professional staff to join our team of Sister-nurses in providing them with round-the-clock professional care.

Our elder Sisters are dear to us. They are our powerhouse of prayer. After a life poured out in loving service to others, their ministry now is praying and, for many, suffering. You are dear to them. They pray for you daily. They are your prayer warriors! ❧



Sister Bernadette, our eldest Sister, gives a warm welcome to Sister Celeste, our youngest.



Our Sisters “in between”, those active in ministry—teachers, nurses, those who care for the poor and marginalized—all of us thank you for your generous and faithful support. Some of us work in ministries which are not able to offer a salary. You provide for our needs. Thank you! ❧

(l. to r): Sister Monica Mary, Sister Mary Sarah, and Mother Katherine, with residents of St. Elizabeth Manor, showing off a Thanksgiving decoration the residents made.

Our young Sisters, too, thank you for your goodness. You provide for their professional and spiritual formation. Many of the young women who come to us heard the call to give their lives to the Lord right out of high school or at some point during their college years. We must then provide them with the professional preparation they need to be effective in ministry. Sister Celeste (*photo far left*), our youngest postulant, joined our family in September. She will begin her university studies after two years of intensive spiritual formation.



Sister Alexandria and Sister Veronica Rose (*l. to r.*) are students at the local university. Sister Alexandria is preparing to be a Math teacher and Sister Veronica Rose, a social worker. ***For all you do for the Sisters—from the eldest to the youngest—we thank you!*** ❧

...for the Sisters...

With the Sisters you are impacting the lives of young women from Ethiopia to Baltic, CT, the small town where our school is located.

The Academy of the Holy Family, an all-girls' high school, owned, operated and staffed by the Sisters of Charity, has been true to its mission since its founding in 1874: to prepare girls to become faith-filled, professional young women, making their mark in society. Our graduates have been accepted at institutions of higher learning from Community Colleges to Harvard University. They presently serve in politics, medicine, research, academics, business - to name just a few of the areas where they are making a difference.

Always striving to be on the cutting edge of educational advancements, this year the administration and Board invited Mr. Henry Fiore, Jr. to join our team as principal of the school. Together with Sister Rafael, assistant principal, the administrative team, and the highly qualified faculty already in place, Mr. Fiore is bringing the school to the next level of academic excellence. "My primary goal," he says, "is to continue to grow the school population and provide for our students solid academic standards and a firm faith foundation."



Mr. Fiore works closely with the administrative team, (l. to r.) Mother Mark, Sister Rafael and Sister Kateri, to keep the Academy on the cutting edge of academic excellence.

Since joining our team in July, Mr. Fiore has been actively planning for the future - greater improvement in key areas that make for an effective Catholic school: Mission/Catholic Identity, Leadership, Academic Excellence and Operational Vitality. He continues: "My administrative team, faculty, staff and School Board have been working hard on updating the strategic plan in all aspects of our school. We are mission driven and high-achievement oriented with a definite vision for the future." The halls of the Academy are ringing with excitement and energy as the entire school community comes together to implement this vision.

Your financial and prayerful support makes all this possible. The operational vitality of AHF depends on charitable donations. Tuition alone does not cover the true per-pupil cost, especially given the increasing need each year for financial aid. ***Through your faithful generosity, you, with the Sisters and leaders like Mr. Fiore, are impacting the lives of young people in ways that you might not have imagined. You are providing opportunities for growth for our students that they otherwise would not be able to experience.***



"Thank You" from us and all the other Academy students.

...with the Sisters...

With the Sisters, you are impacting the lives of young women in ways that you might never have imagined.

You are reaching out to those in need

*Thank
you
for
helping
us
be
"Courage
in
the face
of
COVID."*

Bitter. Angry. Disrespectful. Foul-mouthed. Irresponsible. Uncooperative. Always ready for an argument— or even a fight. That is how Jacquana describes herself as the person she was when she came to Holy Family Home and Shelter. When she left the Shelter, 15 long months later, to finally move into an apartment of her own and get on with her life, both she and the staff saw a different person. She left the Shelter with more than an apartment. She left with a new lease on life, a positive attitude and skills to face the challenges of life.

The patience and tough-love of the staff, always shown with kindness, is what turned things around for Jacquana. She says: "The Shelter staff taught me to be responsible, to take charge of my life, to have a positive attitude regardless of the difficulties. They taught me to respect myself and others. I learned a lot about myself during my time here and I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have lived here. Now I am ready to move on with my life."



Sister Lucette touching base with Jacquana before she left for her apartment. She followed the "Path to Success" that the Shelter staff marked out for her. "I have received much," she said, "I want to give back."

Jacquana's stay in the Shelter was unusually long, primarily because of COVID and its effects. COVID interrupted the lives of all of us. The marginalized, already struggling under the weight of many challenges, felt its ruthless effects more severely than many of us. Holy Family Home and Shelter was at the forefront providing support and aid with courage, creativity and consistency to those at risk of being homeless. We temporarily adjusted our mission of serving only families to include single women at risk of living in their cars or in tents. We negotiated with families (and their landlords) to take in family members, providing a stipend for them to cover their own expenses. These and many more creative initiatives we undertook with courage and determination to keep the homeless safe during the time of COVID. In October, the local Chamber of Commerce awarded the Shelter a certificate of Recognition for "Courage in the Face of COVID."



In our more than 30 years of sheltering the homeless, ***through the Sisters and the dedicated staff at Holy Family Home and Shelter, you have made and continue to make a world of difference in the lives of hundreds of people like Jacquana.*** Thank you for standing with us in this very important ministry.

...through the Sisters...

Here's what you accomplished

When the Sisters of Charity came to America from Holland 148 years ago, the main portion of what is now our Motherhouse was already here. It was a no-frills hotel purchased by the pastor of the parish church for the Sisters who would come to serve the needs of the people of this area. The building has seen many changes since then, but the basic structure remains.

Much has been done over the years to remedy things in need of replacement or repair, but, as Mother Mary David, Superior of the Motherhouse community here in Baltic often says: *"This house has good bones."* All the contractors

who have worked with us agree.

In spite of the "good bones", though, there is always a need for important repairs. Through your faithful and gracious generosity, you have helped us keep "flesh" on these "good bones." ***Last year alone, 2021, these are just some of the things you helped us accomplish:***

- Remove and replace damaged slate on our Chapel roof
- Replace the roof of the main section of our Motherhouse—a job more difficult than the workers anticipated.
- Repair and re-pave the parking lot of St. Michael Center, the gymnasium-auditorium of our High School, built in 1981. The many potholes that developed over the years made it increasingly hazardous for both cars and pedestrians. We thought of you with gratitude as we watched the complicated process of leveling the parking lot to make it safe and beautiful once again.
- Restoration of the cupola. You already know the story. It badly needed to be rebuilt, secured, and repainted. The Angelus bell now safely rings across the village and the cupola stands beautiful and secure - a testimony to your generosity.

- Changed / replaced / repaired hot water tanks and boilers in various wings of the school and Motherhouse.

None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for helping us keep "flesh" on these good, but old "bones" of our Motherhouse. We love these hallowed halls. So much good has happened here in the past: Sisters have served the poor, cared for infants during World War I, fed the survivors of hurricanes and taught generations of young women. And much good continues to happen here, even to this day—148 years later. ***Thank you for making it all possible.***

...we thank you!



Above: cupola & bell tower before the restoration.

Below: restored cupola & bell tower atop the new roof.



***Thank
you
for
helping
us keep
"flesh"
on the
good
"bones"
of our
Mother-
house.***

*Peace
of soul!
That is
our
prayer
for you.
We
invite
you
to visit
our
virtual
Votive
Shrine.*

Your very own online chapel

Designed just for you! *Pacis Animae*—our new virtual votive candle shrine located on the website of the Sisters of Charity. Have you had the chance to “stop in for a visit”? The chapel has been and continues to be a source of strength and comfort to many since its launching in October. See for yourself!

With two simple steps you will get to the chapel:

- Visit our website at www.sistersofcharity.com.
- Click on the “Light a Candle” button on the main image of the screen.

You can also go directly to the Pacis Animae Votive Shrine:

Enter the web address directly: www.sistersofcharity.com/votive-candles

Pacis Animae—Latin for peace of soul. That is our prayer for you. That you always have peace of soul, no matter the struggles or difficulties that come your way. In our *Pacis Animae* shrine, when you light a candle, the Sisters of Charity will pray for you and your intentions. Virtual candles will “burn” for seven days in the chapel of the saint of your choice. We have chosen the saints most noted for assisting with the concerns you share with us when you have called our Development Office.

Below is a screenshot of what you will see when you “arrive” at the



homepage of the shrine. If you don't see your favorite saint here, not to worry. We will be adding more chapels in the future. In the meantime, you can still light a candle in the chapel of the saint dearest to you – regardless of the intention. Visit our shrine, light a candle and say a prayer. Your intentions are sent to us. Know that the Sisters of Charity will be praying with you because ... ***you are our heroes!***

You are our heroes!

My Grandma's soups

What is your giving recipe? As a child, one of my favorite memories of my beloved grandmother was her delicious homemade soups. They were famous: Tortellini, Pasta Fagioli, Escarole. She made every kind of soup imaginable. The contents were dictated by which fresh produce was available that day in the vegetable market.

All of her recipes had one thing in common: "a little of this, a little of that." That was Grandma's favorite answer to my repeated questions, "but what exactly is in the soup?" When I was grown, I asked her for her recipes so that I could begin to carry on the tradition of her soup making. Well, if you have an Italian grandmother, you know that no recipes are written down! So, instead, she offered to show me how to make her soups. Our cooking lessons will stay with me for a lifetime. With infinite patience she taught me the joy of cooking.

Diversifying your gift-giving is a bit like my Grandma's soup, in that a well-thought out strategy will contain "a little of this, a little of that." But, unlike my Grandma, a "recipe" written down can provide you and your family with the satisfaction of knowing that your intentions and the legacy that you wish to leave behind will come to fruition.

In my last article to you, we featured gifts from Donor Advised Funds. Since then, I have received many questions about this gift giving vehicle. I thought I'd take this opportunity to offer a little refresher as you plan your gifts for this year in support of the mission and ministries of the Sisters of Charity.

Let me help you formulate your gift-giving recipe. As always, I am available by phone or email to answer your questions. We've added a nice feature on our website called Live Chat. When you visit our website at sistersofcharity.com and come to our Planned Giving page, a live chat bubble will appear. You can then immediately connect with me for support or information via this chat window, during our business hours.

As I write to you it is a crisp, cool day in Connecticut. In fact, the Weather Service is predicting a Nor'easter! I think I'll make one of my Grandma's soups for dinner.

(How does a DAF work? See p.8)



Margaret Cuccinello, Director of Planned Giving, can help you formulate your gift-giving recipe and, perhaps, even share a recipe for a great bowl of soup! She would love to hear from you.

*What is
your
giving
recipe?
Or ...
how
about
your
favorite
soup
recipe?*

We are...

*To leave
a legacy
is
to make
a mark
on the
world
that
cannot
be erased.
-Maya
Angelou*

How does a DAF work?





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