

# Weavings

Women making a difference, woven in faith

Summer 2018

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DOMINICAN SISTERS *of* SPARKILL

The Magazine of  
Dominican Convent of  
Our Lady of the Rosary  
Sparkill, NY

## SUMMER 2018

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PRESIDENT

Sister Irene Ellis, OP  
Sister Eileen Gannon, OP  
Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP  
Sister Margaret Palliser, OP

### Mission Advancement

Karen Ellis  
DIRECTOR  
kellis@sparkill.org

Bernadette Donohue  
MISSION ADVANCEMENT  
ASSOCIATE  
bdonohue@sparkill.org

Dominican Convent of  
Our Lady of the Rosary  
175 Route 340  
Sparkill, NY 10976  
T. 845.359.4173  
www.sparkill.org



PRESIDENT/CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Patrick M. O'Brien

VICE PRESIDENT/  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
Elizabeth Martin Solsburg

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Lynne Hsu

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Dominican Sisters of Sparkill proudly  
announce their participation in the  
AmazonSmile Program.

## *From the president ...*

### Dear Friends,

As friends of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, you have become part of many happy memories for our Sisters; and not just summer, but year-round memories. Your generosity this year has helped us to provide some very needed care for our most senior and frail members.

Through your generosity we have been able to upgrade a very old shower room to ADA-compliant standards. Our Sisters have enjoyed a larger, more open space for coming together for meetings and socialization. These are just a few of the many ways your donations have made a difference in the lives of our Sisters.

Your care and thoughtfulness have also enabled us to reach out to the young students in Pakistan who attend our schools; you have made it possible for them to receive proper nutrition as well as school supplies. Your contributions have helped to provide support for a summer camp for young children at the East Side Heart and Home Family Center in East St. Louis, Illinois. Here they have an opportunity to attend enrichment programs in music and the arts. Your contributions have also helped to fund a religious study program, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Formation Program, for students in Big Sandy, Box Elder, and Rocky Boy, Montana. These are just a few of the ways in which your generosity has supported the mission of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

Yes, you are a vital part of our mission! We will always remember you in our daily communal prayers. Thank you for being a partner with us!

God bless each of you!

Sincerely,

Sister Mary Murray, OP



**SISTER MARY MURRAY, OP**  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill President

*"Thank you for being  
a partner with us!"*

*Threads of wisdom and grace ...*

## Love changes everything

A few days ago, someone reminded me of a song that was quite popular in the early 1990s, Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Love Changes Everything." As I thought about the song, I was struck by how well its title captures one of the great truths about love. Love transforms.

Love brings new life. A person who loves me awakens new life in me. When I am loved by someone, part of me comes alive that was not alive before. I become more than I had been. And isn't that what those who knew Jesus experienced?

I had a dear friend who truly loved me into being a better person. Whenever I was with her, I felt more alive, more loving, more hopeful, more joyful, more peaceful. When she was no longer physically present in my life, I had to choose to accept the responsibility of nurturing that part of myself to keep it alive and well; otherwise, that more loving, hopeful part of me would have slowly died.

God's love works like that, too. Through Jesus, God's love has changed everything—and we are continually invited to nurture that gift of love, to become more than we have been!

*"I felt more alive, more loving, more hopeful, more joyful, more peaceful."*



**SISTER MARGARET PALLISER, OP**

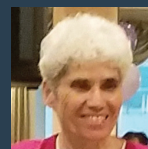
Sister Margaret has a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and is a member of the leadership team at Sparkill.

## NOTEWORTHY SISTERS



**SISTER EILEEN GANNON, OP**

On May 11, 2018, Sister Eileen Gannon was honored by St. Helena/Monsignor Scanlan High School at their 2018 Hall of Fame Awards Dinner with the *St. Helena Award*. The *St. Helena Award* recognizes distinguished service to the high school and its alumni association. Sister Eileen received this award for the impact she's had on so many students during her 12-year teaching career at St. Helena/Monsignor Scanlan High School, during which she was also responsible for the annual school play and Christmas concert, as well as running retreats and student trips. We congratulate Sister Eileen on this wonderful recognition!



**SISTER CECILIA LA PIETRA, OP**

Sister Cecilia La Pietra received the *2018 Woman of Achievement Award* from the Rockland County American Association of University Women (AAUW) in recognition of her work with immigrants and non-native English speakers at One to One Learning. She joins 39 previous distinguished recipients of the award. Sister Cecilia received it at the Association's annual dinner on May 15, 2018. We congratulate Sister Cecilia on this honor and thank her for her service to the immigrant community.



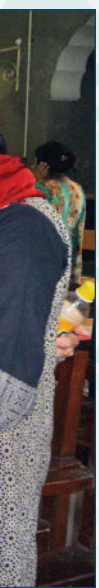
# *The Pakistan Mission:*

SIXTY YEARS OF GRACE, 1958-2018

BY SISTER MARY E. DUNNING, OP

In 1956, on behalf of the Sparkill Dominicans, Mother Kevin Sullivan accepted the invitation of the Dominican friars to work with them in their new mission in Pakistan. When Mother Kevin asked for volunteers, two hundred Sisters responded. Eight volunteers were assigned in 1957 to begin studying Urdu, the Pakistani language, to receive training sessions in meeting basic health care needs, and to take a Fordham University course in missiology. On September 12, 1958, the pioneer Sisters, under the leadership of Sister Purissima Reilly, departed by ship for Karachi, Pakistan.

Inspired by the words of the Gospel, “Go therefore and teach all nations,” the Sisters went to Pakistan convinced that their mission was not to proselytize, but to live a simple, prayerful, compassionate life which bore witness to their being followers of Christ.





*Sisters newly arrived in Pakistan faced formidable challenges—learning a new language [and] adapting to a previously unknown culture...*

Sisters newly arrived in Pakistan faced formidable challenges—learning a new language, adapting to a previously unknown culture with unfamiliar customs and food, and becoming acclimated to the extreme heat of Pakistan from May to October. Sisters whose experience had been in U.S Catholic parishes and schools, were now working in an Islamic country with Christians who were a small minority, less than 2% of the population. But their zeal for their mission, the support they received from the community, and God's grace helped them to accomplish remarkable deeds for the People of God, the Church of Pakistan.

During their first decade in Pakistan, the Sisters established ministries that flourished in later decades and continued to serve both Christians and Muslims. Bahawalpur's Dominican Convent School started with fewer than 70 students in primary grades. Today 1,352 girls and boys, both Muslim and Christian, are enrolled in classes from primary school to 12th grade. The government has recognized Dominican Convent School for its significant academic achievements. The tuition paid by these students helps to support Dominican Study Center, an Urdu Christian school that

serves children whose parents cannot afford to pay fees. To make it possible for girls who lived in outlying districts to attend school, the Sisters opened hostels in Bahawalpur and Loreto, a Christian village in the Thal Desert, northwest of Bahawalpur. *Ibn-E-Mariam* (Son of Mary) School in Loreto has also grown ten-fold since its founding, and in later years Dominican Primary School was established in Multan.

Emergency and basic health needs of the people were served in medical dispensaries staffed by the Sisters in Loreto and Fatimapur. In response to needs expressed by the people, the Sisters started adult education—catechetical, sewing, typing, and English classes—with an emphasis on developing lay leadership. The Sisters knew that one day they would no longer be in Pakistan, and they resolved to work toward a future church of Pakistan that would be led by the native people of that land. That vision of the future has now become a reality. Catechists, members of religious communities, priests, and bishops of Pakistan are now almost all native-born Pakistani women and men.

The American Sisters' 1970 report to the congregation expresses well their shared convictions about their missionary efforts:



*We are there as missionaries to leave eventually. We are there now as witnesses of hope to a Christian and Muslim community. We are a sign of the contradiction of the times and for the life to come ... Hopefully we are helping to create a Christian community. Human life and Christian life are inseparable and for this reason we cannot be looking to the future and at the same time be unconcerned for the needs of now. We must join in the never-ending struggle for peace, for dignity, for human rights, for good education, for adequate medical facilities, for love, for hope. We do this not in the hope of any earthly gain or reward but rather with the firm conviction that we are helping to bring human beings to a fuller participation in the life of the Resurrected Christ.*

Beginning in 1981 the Sisters became deeply involved in the work of the Pastoral Institute in Multan. There they have taught courses and given retreats for young women and men religious from many communities, worked with ecumenical groups devoted to deepening understanding between Christians and Muslims, and organized programs for seminarians,



catechists, and adult faith leaders from parishes throughout the Multan Diocese and beyond. They have become vocal advocates for human rights protesting unjust treatment of Christians and other religious minorities.

In October 1966, a novitiate was opened for native Pakistani women who desired to become members of the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary, the Sparkill Dominicans. At present there are sixteen professed Sisters, three novices, and two postulants (first-year candidates). Sister Maureen O'Toole who has been in Pakistan since 1969 is the only American sister. Considerable attention has been devoted over the years to formation work with young candidates who are the congregation's future in Pakistan. They will be taking on large responsibilities if they are to carry on the work begun by their predecessors. Periodically the Pakistani Sisters visit the United States to learn more about the community here and to meet the Sisters.

In his eloquent reflection on what it means to be a Dominican missionary in Pakistan, the late Father Chrysostom McVey, OP, wrote:

*We seek to be a community that embodies the hurts of those who suffer because they are far from the powerful; the hurts of the sweeper, of women, of the bonded laborer. Though it is not easy ... we seek to be powerless, vulnerable and compassionate because we believe this is what it means to be a gospel person and a Dominican in Pakistan. We seek to go where we are useful: to 'the desert' where no one wants to go; to 'the periphery' with the marginalized and those far removed from the centers of power; to 'the frontier' welcoming the new, the different, 'the other.'*

The Pakistan mission has brought untold riches to the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary. Sisters who have served there have described the experience as some of the best years of their lives, and magnificent women born in Pakistan have become part of us, bringing all their gifts to the challenging enterprise of building the reign of God. Truly God has blessed us, and we pray daily for the blessing of peace for all our Sisters and brothers in Pakistan.

# 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

## *Teeing up "fore" the Sisters*

On Monday, June 18, a bright and sunny day (and rather hot!) greeted 100 golfers and supporters of the Sisters who gathered for the Dominican Sisters' 21st Annual Golf Tournament at Patriot Hills Golf Course in Stony Point. Among the beautiful hills, the golfers enjoyed a mouthwatering BBQ before proceeding to the challenging 18-hole course. The fun that day also included the inaugural Putting Contest. That evening, the golfers, their guests, generous sponsors, and the Sisters feasted on a delicious dinner at the Patriot Hills Dining Room, followed by the presentation of prizes and the annual 50/50 raffle. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to everyone who helped to make this outing such a success!



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Carvel Coffee Mugs and Coasters/Water Bottles  
Diane Farley - Specialty Gift Baskets  
Dick's Sporting Goods, Brian Hagerman  
Gift Certificates & Discount Coupons  
Ed Grzesiak - Sport Basket  
FLIK Lifestyles - Bags, Pens and Bottled Water  
Holiday Inn Orangeburg - 1 Night with Hot Breakfast  
Hilton Pearl River - 1 Night for 2 on a Friday  
Joan Reilly - Wine Glasses  
John Manos/Jon Manos Golf - Golf Lessons  
Levity Live, Palisades Mall - 4 Tickets  
Lifetime Fitness, Montvale NJ - 1 week Complimentary  
Luigi's, Pearl River - \$25 Gift Certificate  
Madison Sports Inc., Don Lipeles - Sports Memorabilia  
New York Giants Football - Poster  
Patriot Hills Golf Course - Complimentary Foursome  
Puma Insurance - Mets Tickets, September  
Ridgewood Savings Bank, Paul Fitzpatrick - Golf Balls  
Schweizer and Dykstra Florist - Floral Arrangement  
Tom Murray - Eagles Concert Tickets on 10/17/2018  
Tom McMenamin - Jack Daniels  
Vineyard Vines - Men's Tie

### Many Thanks to our Sisters that provided prizes:

Sister Joan Beairsto  
Sister Helen Robert Boyd  
Sister Pat Cody  
Sister Maureen and Sister Pat Conway  
Sister Amelia DeMarco  
Sister Ann Eigenbauer  
Sister Margaret Flaherty  
Sister Nora Healey  
Sister Lorraine LaRocca  
Sister Kathy Logan, In memory of her mother Cecilia  
Sister Barbara Mueller  
Sister Eileen Naughton  
Sister Pat Niblock  
Sister Eileen Reilly  
Sister Maryanne Summa

### TOURNAMENT PRIZES

Culhane's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration  
Moritz Funeral Home  
Victor Piacentile

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Dave Fusco and Gina Kelly at Patriots Hills Golf Course

Our 2018 Golf Committee Members for their time and efforts to make this tournament a success.

Our Sponsors and Golfers for your continued support all these 21 years!

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for your prayers and support. You are *Women Making a Difference* in the lives of people throughout the world!





# Ministry Grants in 2018 & Our Partners in Mission

Our donors continue to make a difference around the world. Thank You!

## The Damietta Cross-Cultural Center | Siena College, Loudonville, NY

- Funding to stage a play which seeks to dispel myths about the struggles of refugees, people of color, and those of faith traditions other than Christianity during the Center's Islam Awareness Week

## Days for Girls Project | Sparkill, NY

- Support for an ongoing, collaborative project where the Sisters, St. Francis of Assisi Church parishioners, and students from Albertus Magnus High School and St. Thomas Aquinas College create feminine hygiene kits for girls in Kenya

## Dowling Gardens | Sparkill, NY

- Aid to support the efforts of the residents of this facility, who are a frail, elderly population, to create an environment that enables them to maintain their independence

## Emmaus House | Ocean Grove, NJ (two grants)

- Funding to create a retreat program for women who have been victims of human trafficking
- A grant to improve the kitchen and dining facilities which will enable the ministry of providing women with retreats that support spiritual growth and healing to continue

## Dominican Study Center | Bahawalpur, Pakistan

- A project enabling 15 children of the Marwari Hindu Tribe—who belong to the marginalized, oppressed, and laborer Hindu community—to attend school by providing them with tuition, room, board, uniforms, and school supplies

## Sister Thea Bowman Center for Women | Siena College, Loudonville, NY

- A grant supporting a program that funds on-site student research into how poverty, violence, motherhood, migration, and education impact the lives of women in Cuernavaca, Mexico.



## THE INAUGURAL DR. J.T. VINCENT LOU LECTURE

*The Dr. J.T. Vincent Lou lectures are made possible because of a generous gift from Dr. York and Noelle Chynn that enables the Sisters to offer educational forums on social justice topics at Dominican Convent.*

# THE NEW FACES OF HOLINESS TODAY

Our lecture series kicked off on Wednesday, April 25 with Robert Ellsberg, “The New Faces of Holiness Today.” An audience of more than 125 guests were treated to a 90-minute presentation on the lives of two modern saints, Dorothy Day and Oscar Romero. Robert Ellsberg is the publisher of Orbis books and author of several award-winning books. A former managing editor of the *Catholic Worker*, he has devoted much of his life to promoting the legacy of Dorothy Day.

Ellsberg met Dorothy Day at the age of nineteen. Longing to dedicate himself to a larger and more meaningful purpose, he had taken leave from college and made his way to the *Catholic Worker* headquarters in New York City. He had planned to stay only a few months, but remained for five years. As it turned out, they were the last five years of Day’s life. Ellsberg was appointed by the Archdiocese of New York to serve on the historical commission preparing Day’s cause for sainthood.

For those unfamiliar with these inspirational individuals, Dorothy Day was an American journalist, social activist, and Catholic convert. Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez was a prelate of the Catholic Church in El Salvador. As the Archbishop of San Salvador, he spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations, and torture. In 1980, Romero was assassinated while offering Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence. The Vatican recently approved the canonization of Archbishop Oscar Romero.



Robert Ellsberg speaks about “The New Faces of Holiness Today”

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT  
LECTURE ON SEPTEMBER 25 WITH:**

**Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, PhD**

*Internationally-renowned theologian*

“Is God’s Charity Broad Enough for Bears?”

An exploration of action for ecojustice as an intrinsic part of Christian faith



# St. Agnes Alumni

## Their Heroic History, and the Alumni Association Annual Picnic



Each year on a Saturday morning in August, a group of men join the Sisters for Mass in Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel. Afterwards, they travel to a nearby Hudson River town for a picnic. In doing so, they retrace a path that many of the men marched as they left to serve their country during World War II and the Korean War. These men are the “St. Agnes Alumni” and the annual picnic is the St. Agnes Alumni Annual Reunion.

*In 1902, a new, beautiful St. Agnes Home became the home for more than 500 boys who for various reasons had no family with whom to live.*

As early as 1882, the Sisters began caring for abandoned children. In 1884, 25 boys came to live in a remodeled farmhouse on the grounds of the Sisters’ new convent in Sparkill, New York. Their population of children quickly grew to 300. In 1902, a new, beautiful St. Agnes Home became the residence of more than 500 boys who for various reasons had no family with whom to live. The Sisters began the boys’ education very early and made sure that each boy either attended high school or received technical education. Many St Agnes Boys joined the armed services.

During World War II, two St. Agnes boys met by accident at Guadalcanal. On this remote Pacific battlefield island, Master Sgt. Carl Trezini and Jim Faulk, a marine captain, decided to build a gymnasium at Sparkill. An alumni association was formed and the “St. Agnes Boys” who had served nobly all over the world

contributed generously toward construction of the gym, which was dedicated as a memorial to the St. Agnes Alumni who had lost their lives in World War II or the Korea War.

In 2017, more than 70 St. Agnes Alumni and their families celebrated their lifelong friendships and their deep bond with the Sisters over a delicious BBQ lunch.

ST. AGNES ALUMNI, PLEASE JOIN US FOR:

**The 2018 St. Agnes Alumni Association Picnic  
Saturday, August 18th**

10:30 a.m. for breakfast at Piermont Pavilion  
11:00 a.m. Mass at Sparkill, followed by a picnic  
at Piermont Pavilion

BY SISTER MAUREEN FOY, OP



## ST. AGNES ALUMNUS DECLARED VENERABLE BY POPE FRANCIS:

Brother Norbert McAuliffe lived Christian virtues in a heroic way

On November 18, 1895, following the death of their parents, McAuliffe brothers, William (age 11) and John (age 9), arrived at St. Agnes Home for Children in Sparkill. The boys joined in the rhythm of life at St. Agnes and, as the saying goes, they “grew in wisdom, age, and grace.”



*He became known for his charity, patience, and humility, and for the fatherly care he showed toward the Brothers in their illnesses.*

When Sacred Heart Brother Stanislaus came to speak with the boys about a religious vocation to the brotherhood, John followed his heart and answered God’s call to a religious vocation. He joined the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, a community that focused on missionary work. He was given the name Brother Norbert and made his

first vows in 1903. He had great success in his studies at Loyola University in New Orleans. The Brothers always credited his scholarly achievements, his spiritual growth, and his athletic ability to his years at St. Agnes Home.

Brother Norbert’s desire to be a missionary was realized when he arrived in Uganda in 1931 and established their first mission in Gulu. He became known for his charity, patience, and humility, and for the fatherly care he showed toward the Brothers in their illnesses. It was the community’s routine that the Brothers would rest after the noon meal.

But Brother Norbert spent his “hour of rest” in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

Deeply devoted to the Blessed Mother, he made frequent visits to the chapel for the recitation of the rosary as he had been taught when he lived at St. Agnes. The African people called him *Dano Ma Lego* which has two translations: “the man who prays” or “the man who walks with God.” Brother Norbert spent most of his religious life in Uganda where he died in 1959.

The Dominican Sisters were delighted when Brother Martin Hilton, the Superior General of the Sacred Heart Brothers, called them to share the wonderful news that on May 19, 2018, Brother Norbert McAuliffe had been declared venerable by Pope Francis, the first major step in the sainthood process.

**BY SISTER MAUREEN FOY, OP**



# We are all here together

on this Earth ... and the people said AMEN!

Recently, our congregation has been studying racism. One thought stuck with me: While the larger issue seems beyond me, there are small things I can do to dismantle racism. It was then that I began to think about the St. Charles AME Zion Church, an African-American church right here in Sparkill.

A lunch invitation to the pastor, Rev. Brandon McLaughlin, who is new to Sparkill, new to his ministry, and very new to nuns and convents, was met with excitement and an immediate “yes” to participate in planning a peace prayer service together.

Amidst the planning, another Sister and I attended a Sunday Service at St. Charles. What a joy it was to pray with the parishioners and to feel so at home. During the service, I personally invited them to our Peace Prayer and shared how I felt, “We are on this earth, living in the same small town, at the same time. We all long for the Peace of God in our hearts, in our families, and in our world.” And the people said AMEN.

In January, so many people from the Zion Church came to the Peace Prayer! We prayed and sang and hugged and God smiled. We shared our love of God and neighbor. In the closing blessing, Rev. Brandon prayed that

the peace so alive in us would spill out into our community and into our world. And again, the people said AMEN!

In the months that have passed, the Sisters have kept this connection alive by visiting the Zion Church and praying with Rev. Brandon to see where God directs us, together.

**BY SISTER BRIDGET KINIRY, OP**

*“We prayed and sang and hugged and God smiled. We shared our love of God and neighbor.”*



# A NEW COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

Two congregations of women religious based in Rockland County, New York, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine, formally entered a Covenant Relationship on June 7, 2018. This relationship is a commitment and a promise between the two religious institutes to face the future together, as one institute completes its journey and the other assists in that completion.

In planning for their future, the members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine determined that due to their demographics they needed assistance with governance and the management of the day-to-day and future affairs of their members and ministries. In a process that began years ago, the Sisters sought out a partner congregation to work with them in these areas of leadership and administration.

The Christian Doctrine and Sparkill Congregations were a strong fit for this relationship due to: similar founding missions (both working with immigrants, particularly women and children, in New York City), locations in close geographic proximity, and long-standing relationships among many of their sisters.

The Covenant Relationship is not a merger or a union of the two congregations. Each Congregation remains separate, preserving its unique identity, community membership, and culture.

The beginning of this special relationship was marked with a liturgy on Thursday morning, June 7th, at Dominican Convent's Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel. During the celebration the presidents of the two congregations signed the Covenant Relationship documentation amidst Sisters, Associates, and friends.

Three Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine will work as a team with Sparkill's President, Sister Mary Murray, in their new leadership structure. "My Congregation is very grateful to the Dominican Sisters of



Sparkill for being willing to enter into this relationship with us," said Sister Veronica Mendez. "They are a concrete sign of God's providence! Our Sisters are hoping to continue doing ministry until the Lord calls us. Meanwhile we know the Dominican Sisters will carry out our legacy when we are no longer here."

"We feel very blessed to be entering into this new relationship of support for the Sisters of Christian Doctrine as they face the challenges of their future," Sister Mary Murray shared. "Our friendship as two religious congregations of Sisters will deepen and will strengthen each one of us so that our life and work as Catholic Sisters serving others will continue to address the needs of our times."

Top photo: **Sister Mary Murray and Sister Veronica Mendez signing the Covenant Relationship decretum.**

Middle photo : **The leaderships of the two congregations.**

Bottom photo : **The Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine.**



DOMINICAN CONVENT  
OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY  
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175 ROUTE 340  
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*Please Save the Date*

# *Sparks of Light*

*2018 Awards Dinner*  
*Dominican Sisters of Sparkill*

*A celebration benefitting the Sisters  
in honor of those whose lives embody our mission.*

*Tuesday evening, October 30, 2018*  
*The Rockleigh – Rockleigh, New Jersey*