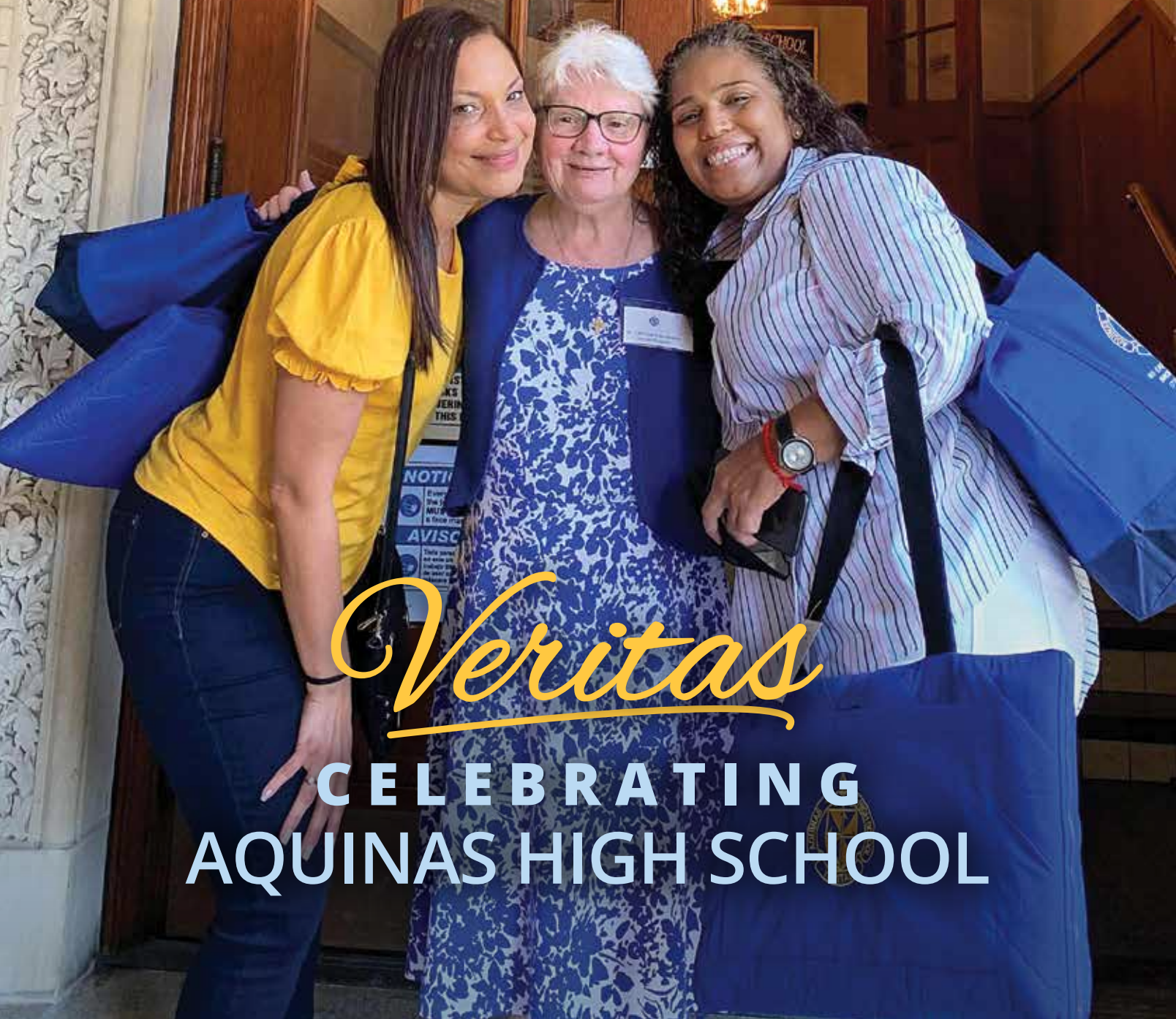


DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL

Weavings

Women making a difference

SUMMER 2021



Veritas

**CELEBRATING
AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL**

SUMMER 2021

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- Sister Irene Ellis, OP
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On Cover

Two successful Aquinas
alumnae with Sister Catherine
Rose Quigley, OP.



Dominican Sisters of Sparkill
proudly participate in the
AmazonSmile Program.

From the president ...

Dear Friends,

What a year we have gone through! Though we are not entirely out of the pandemic, we are grateful that the vaccines we have received are helping to control the spread of the virus. This is good news for sure! But in the aftermath of this past year, healing and getting back to some kind normal living is still a long way off. We even have a new phrase to describe some of the changed reality we are experiencing—the “new normal.”

The heroes of this year have certainly been our healthcare professionals and the essential workers who have come in to work each day despite risks to their own health. Our gratitude to each of them will be in our hearts forever.

Other heroes in my mind are each of you who, despite your own worries and struggles, have been supporting us with your prayers and donations throughout this year. My personal gratitude extends to each one of you. It is my hope that this edition of *Weavings* will be a way of thanking you and keeping you informed about our life and mission as a congregation.

Sadly, this year we have had to close our beloved Aquinas High School in the Bronx after 98 years of extraordinary educational ministry to young women. The story of this wonderful school is highlighted in this issue. We continue to be active in our ministries of education, pastoral care, adult senior living residences, and services to immigrants. I hope that this edition of *Weavings* will help to tell our story as a community of Sisters who continue to be of service to many people in different locations and programs both here in this country and in Pakistan.

As always, you are remembered in our daily communal and personal prayers!

Gratefully,

Sister Mary



SISTER MARY MURRAY, OP
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill President

Thank you!
**Gratitude and thanks
for your donations
and prayers**



To donate, visit www.sparkill.org
and click “Make a Donation”



A photo or an experience?

Many years ago I chaperoned a school trip to Spain for twenty high school girls. It was quite an experience!

The young women loved to stay up very late every night. Of course, this meant that they were usually sound asleep on the tour bus during the guide's explanations about the wonderful places we were visiting. When we arrived at each historic site or museum, the girls would wake up, leap off the bus, and spend the allotted time snapping dozens of photos of everything they could. Back at school the following week, the students brought the freshly developed (pre-digital!) photographs to me—to find out what it was they had taken pictures of. They had the photos, but they didn't have the experience!

THREADS OF WISDOM AND GRACE ...



I remembered all this recently when I was thinking about the gift that the rosary has been for me during this year of pandemic. In my youth when I prayed the rosary, I approached each mystery as a kind of “photo” from the life of Christ and his mother—something to be looked at from the outside and pondered—but never as something that was reflected in my own experience.

As I navigated the challenges of life in this past year, however, I realized that the mysteries of the rosary are also a kind of “window” into my own life. Pondering such familiar scenes as the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, I recognized that I too have known times of confusion, suffering, and fear—as well as the energy of those moments when God's grace was clearly evident in my life. Each time I connect my own experience with the mysteries I am praying, the rosary reveals anew its power and beauty.



SISTER MARGARET PALLISER, OP

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

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

SISTER URSULA JOYCE, OP was honored by the Rockland County Office for the Aging with the Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen Award on May 18, 2021. Sister Ursula's impact within Rockland County is evidenced by her extraordinary involvement in community affairs. She has served as a founding board member and past president of United Hospice of Rockland, a member of St. Thomas Aquinas College's Board of Trustees, a founding board member of the Center for Safety and Change (formerly Rockland Family Shelter), a member of the Rockland County Commission on Human Rights, a board member of Home Aides of Rockland, chair of the Rockland County Child Care Coalition, chair of the board of Albertus Magnus High School, and vice-president of the school board of the Sparkill Union Free School District. Sister Ursula Joyce is also the founding Executive Director of Thorpe Village and Dowling Gardens, two senior residential communities begun by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

(Pictured right) **Sister Ursula Joyce, OP** with **Ed Day, Rockland County Executive** and **Tina Cardoza-Izquierdo, Director of the Rockland County Office for the Aging**.



Veritas

CELEBRATING AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

*Aquinas High School — educating and inspiring young women for a lifetime of faith,
learning, and compassionate action for a more just world.*

BY SISTER BEATRICE MCMAHON, RSHM
SISTER CATHERINE ROSE QUIGLEY, OP
SISTER MARGARET RYAN, OP



Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a grain of wheat.

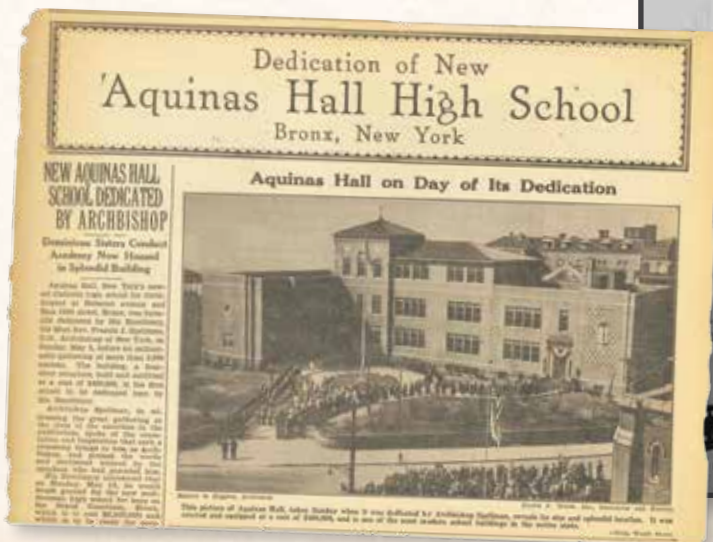
In the early 1900s, the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary planted a seed with the purchase of the Grote Estate property in Bronx, New York. The estate, with a Victorian mansion and a three-story frame house, encompassed an entire city block — East 182nd to 183rd Street from Belmont to Cambreleng Avenues. In February 1900, the Dominican Sisters opened a day academy for the children of St. Martin of Tours Parish in the frame house; it remained a school for younger children until the early 1920s.

With vision and courage, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill converted the academy into a two-year business school, providing opportunities for young women with minimal access to high school education. *The seed that was planted was taking root.* In September 1923, thirty young women were welcomed into Aquinas Hall by Sister Mary Joseph Cullum and three other Dominican Sisters. Enrollment grew and a three-story brick building was erected on the Cambreleng side of the Grote Estate.

In the early 1930s Dominican Sisters made application to the University of the State of New York Regents for approval of a secondary school—a full, four-year high school program. Sister Mary Concepta Blake was appointed principal in 1936 during the period of negotiation with the Board of Regents. She was a visionary educator who elevated the school to full stature. Her commitment and wisdom brought about educational excellence and growth over a period of three decades.



The Grote Estate 1900



Sister Mary Concepta Blake

Affiliation with the Board of Regents of NYS was challenging and demanding; requirements included a library, gymnasium, spacious classrooms—all this following the Great Depression. Women making a difference—Dominican Sisters—leaders with tremendous faith in God took a mortgage of a quarter million dollars on the property, demolished the historic mansion, and commenced construction of a new school building. In 1939, Aquinas was able to welcome 438 students to a first-class, one-of-a-kind, fully equipped, high school with 20 new classrooms, gym-auditorium combination, science labs, music and art rooms, two cafeterias, and a modern secretarial practice room.

A convent of 42 rooms followed in 1947 for the growing number of Dominican Sisters needed for a student body that had reached 800 in number. Expansion continued and an extension to the school provided ten additional classrooms in 1952. The harmonious unity of the new wings was an architectural accomplishment of splendid proportions and its beauty is evident to this day.

Full enrollment continued throughout the 1950s into the social changes of the 1960s. Having faithfully served for over 30 years, Sister Concepta passed the torch to Sister Marie Kennedy, appointed principal in 1968. With her previous experience as Dean at St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sister Marie strengthened collegiality and co-responsibility within academic departments and appointed chairpersons to collaborate with her. Space was allocated for the expansion of the guidance department to address not only the educational issues but also the social needs of students.



The beautiful Aquinas Convent became home for the many Sisters who staffed the high school.



(Right) Sister Marie Kennedy



*Memories from
the past.*

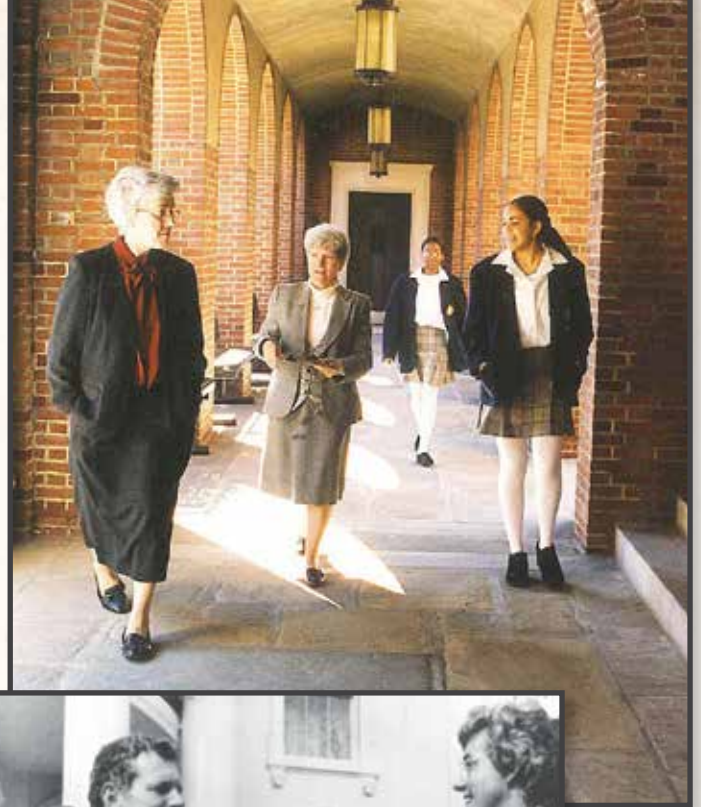


Sister Margaret Ryan

The seed that was planted continued to grow. With social change at a peak in 1974, Sister Margaret Ryan was selected to serve as principal. As an Aquinas alumna and teacher, proud of her heritage, she accepted the responsibility to administer a well-known and established school and proceeded to take it to the level of national recognition.

Accreditation by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges was achieved at a time of urban flight, particularly from the South Bronx. Aquinas remained a beacon of hope, an oasis of learning with visionary leadership in an environment of dignity and respect for all. While the school continued to grow the strength of its course offerings and spiritual opportunities for students, some tangible enhancements were also made. Computers replaced typewriters and learning space was adapted. Building maintenance and improvements were signs of extraordinary commitment to educational excellence. Not surprisingly, Aquinas was one of the first high schools in New York City to be named by the United States Department of Education an Exemplary School of Excellence in 1985. *The seed had come to light!*

Commitment to excellence continued throughout the '90s, evidenced in the construction of state-of-the-art science labs, the computerized library's being granted "Electronic Doorway" status by New York State, and the "wiring" of the entire school building to provide internet and database access in school. Additional Advanced Placement courses were introduced; college scholarships and grants reached record heights. The Glee Club performed on *The Today Show*. Student sponsorship increased, making attendance at Aquinas



possible for more financially needy applicants. The first fully endowed scholarship was established, and others followed. The 75th Anniversary celebrated the past, acknowledged the present and envisioned a future filled with hope. Aquinas was featured as an Outstanding American School in a *U.S. News and World Report* cover story.

Excellence builds upon excellence. In 2000, Aquinas was nationally recognized as a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. Mindful of the growth of the school, stewardship of resources, commitment of sponsors, alumnae, benefactors and friends of Aquinas, the Executive Team of the Dominican Sisters approved a new model of administration with the appointment of Sister Margaret Ryan as president and the promotion of Sister Catherine Rose Quigley, also an Aquinas alumna, from assistant principal to principal.



Sister Mary Concepta Blake, OP
1936-1968



Sister Marie Kennedy, OP
1968-1974



Sister Margaret Ryan, OP
1974-2000



Sister Catherine Rose Quigley, OP
2000 - Present

Principals of Aquinas High School

The seed planted in 1923 was in full flower. In 2002, First Lady Laura Bush visited Aquinas on the first anniversary of 9/11, finding hope for the healing of America in the prayer and action of youth. In 2004, Aquinas received the largest-ever pledge for complete renovation of the science labs. Academic success continued to soar as graduates achieved stellar annual totals in college scholarships and grants, exceeding \$24 million in 2012.

Extra-curricular activities earned recognition. The Aquinas basketball team brought victory to the school by winning not only the Archdiocese of New York championship, but also the NYS Federation of High Schools' Division B first place. The decades-long impact of the AHS basketball team on the spirit of the school was renewed!

On the 90th Anniversary of Aquinas, rising stars celebrated the community, culture, and history of excellence in a spectacular performance of the musical, *In the Heights*. Reunions were occasions for remembrance of so many formative experiences—Glee Club, Operettas, Christmas Concert, Spring Shows, Sports, Student Council, Retreats, Ring Day, Prom, Orchestra—where skills and talents, team spirit and fair play, all needed for life's challenges, had been fostered...*The fruit of the seed could now be savored...*



Laura Bush reflecting on the first anniversary of 9/11 with students

“Academic success continued to soar as graduates achieved stellar annual totals in college scholarships and grants, exceeding \$24 million in 2012.”



(Above) NYC Federation of High Schools, Division B Girls Basketball, 1st place





*"In the Heights"
performance*



Glee Club



Aquinas Orchestra



Marching in Columbus Day parade

"To all those who contributed to the mission of education at Aquinas—teachers, sponsors, parents, friends, colleagues and all stakeholders—Thank You!"

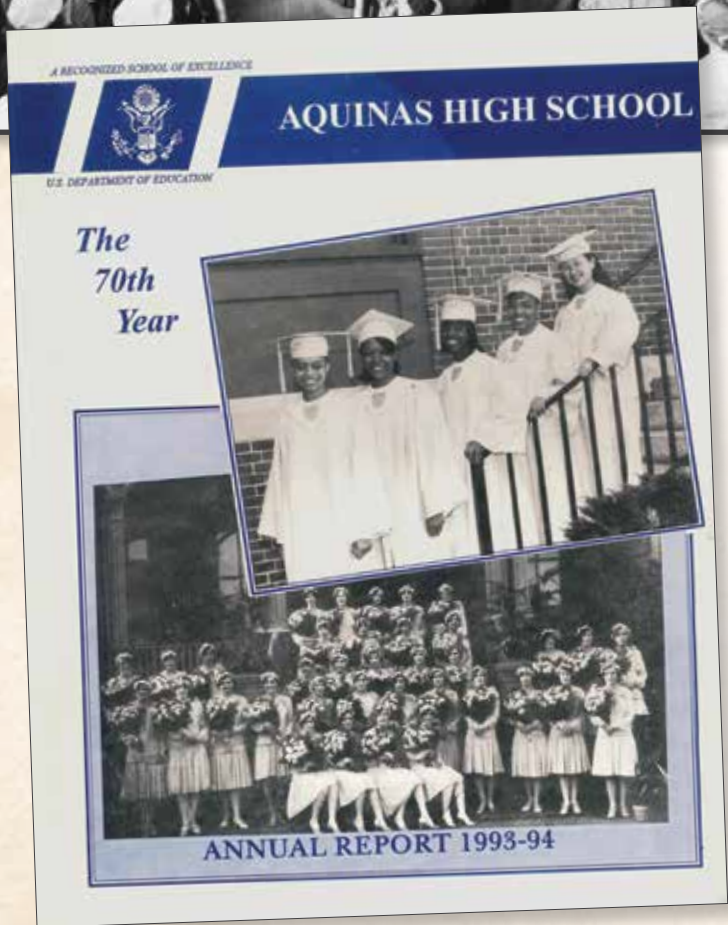
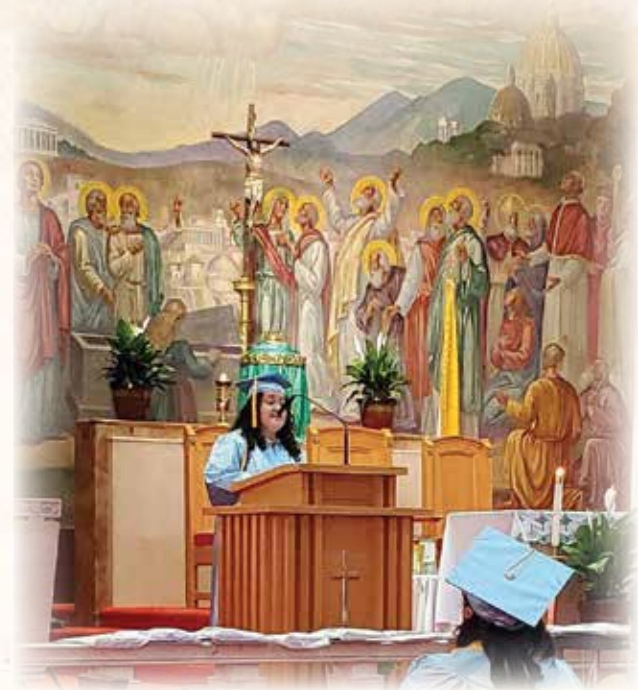
...and perhaps the beginning of a new season could be perceived. As the new millennium witnessed continuing academic progress at Aquinas, it was also witnessing changes in inner city Catholic education. Many Catholic elementary feeder schools had closed, and, at the same time, free charter high schools were opening. As a result, Aquinas's enrollment declined. The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill initiated a study that resulted in a strategic plan which brought about curricular improvements, marketing strategies, and new development efforts. Alas, the changes were not able to reverse the inevitable consequences of the enrollment challenges. With the support of the school board and a devoted and gifted faculty, the principal Mark Shultz presided over the final two years of Aquinas High School, providing a quality educational experience to a smaller student body while raising the funds needed to ensure that students would be able transfer to another Catholic high school upon the closing of Aquinas in June 2021. *To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.*

Aquinas will continue to be appreciated by the wider community for the tremendous difference it has made. We recognize all those who joined the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in their mission of education at Aquinas—sisters from other religious congregations, lay women and men who chose to teach at Aquinas, empowering countless young women to excellence. They have left an indelible imprint on the lives of those they taught throughout the decades. To all those who contributed to the mission of education at Aquinas—teachers, sponsors, parents, friends, colleagues and all stakeholders—Thank You!



Aquinas provided generations of women with an intellectual and spiritual grounding that prepared them for great success.





Almost 100 years of Aquinas history will continue as her Alumnae live the Aquinas motto—*Veritas*—in a variety of professions, and in places near and far. Their witness is shaping a more just world where all are loved, cherished, and respected as each person grows into the person God intended.

As to that plot of ground in the Bronx where a seed was planted in 1923, with its present beautiful building of rounded wing and cloistered walkway, may it be fertile ground for new seeds!

Moving forward in faith, we trust that the work begun by God will continue as the precious “oasis” that was Aquinas brings forth new ministries of faith, hope, love and life in the Bronx.

*True daughters of Aquinas
and Mary's Blue and Gold...
Great St. Thomas, guide us,
as for the Truth we stand,
and may it ever flourish
throughout our glorious Land.*

*- Excerpts from the Aquinas High
School Alma Mater*



In tribute to AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL

My "love affair" with Aquinas High School began long before my freshman year. An oasis in the heart of the Belmont district of the Bronx, Aquinas was the backdrop for all our family photos.

From the playground across the street, I had a bird's eye view of Aquinas' exterior, with many Sisters walking between the convent and school. I loved its physical architecture: the beautiful Mediterranean structure with tiled roofs and a cloistered walkway. Carvings of doves, flowers, and saints adorned stone columns. Two enormous black marble orbs on either side of the gated entrance opened to a circular "campus" with a tall white flagpole. The arched windows of the Loggia atop the convent intrigued me.

The "love affair" became reality in 1958. The best years were beginning as I was on the inside now. Four years of knowledge, nurturing, and joy passed all too quickly. My senior year was packed with hard work and much fun. Walking away was difficult. Yet remaining with me was a heart full of gratitude, the "spirit," and wonderful memories!

The years pass. Then in 1989, Sister Margaret Ryan asked if I would consider joining the school's newly formed development council. After the first meeting

with the team, Sister Margaret, Sister Bea McMahon, and Pat O'Rourke, my "love affair" was rekindled. Countless remarkable accomplishments continually rained down upon Aquinas.

Decades passed and suddenly I was attending Aquinas' final school board meeting on May 6, 2021. Aquinas would now become a treasured memory. There is a time for everything, and now giving back to the beautiful "oasis" for all the goodness and pleasures it gave has not ended; rather, it has taken a turn.

Let us never forget that the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill are the unsung heroes of Aquinas High School's 98 stellar years of existence. The Sisters created a true community of faith and learning. They instilled *Veritas* in all of us. They deserve accolades from every student and friend who walked the hallowed halls of Aquinas.

*Thank you and God bless you, Sisters!
Stephanie Carpentieri, Class of 1962*



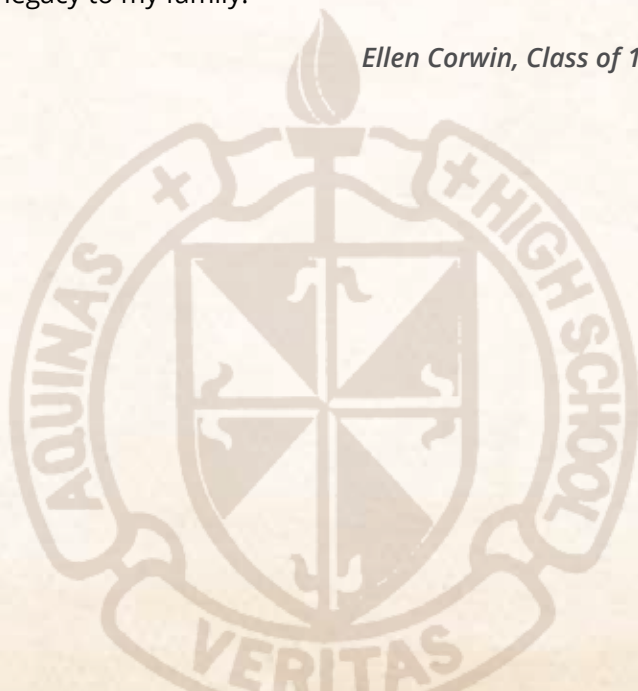
When I reflect upon the many gifts that Aquinas High School has given to me, I see that my adult life has been formed by my experience with the Sisters.

During my four years on the beautiful Bronx campus, the Sisters instilled in me, in all of us, a curiosity for learning that could never be taught by a textbook. We learned from them that education is a lifelong journey. They empowered us and gave us the confidence we needed to explore the opportunities that life would present us.

I can still name all the Sisters who taught me and the books that each of them had me read. The Sisters gave us an eclectic collection of books to read, ranging from Shakespeare to Gertrude Stein. My love of learning continues to this day. I am a voracious reader, belong to two book clubs, and just finished a course at NYU on James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

For almost 100 years, Aquinas has given thousands of women opportunities that they would never have had. The Sisters gave every young woman who walked through the stone gates an opportunity to know that there is much that is yet to be explored after graduation. I am sad that Aquinas is closing because it is a loss to future generations. But I carry within me the many gifts that I developed at Aquinas. I share those gifts with my friends and am passing on that legacy to my family.

Ellen Corwin, Class of 1974



In tribute to

SISTER MARGARET RYAN

For 21 years, I worked at Aquinas High School with the most amazing women, above all Sister Margaret Ryan.

Sister Margaret's vision was always to see the present with an eye or ear to what the future could hold for faculty and students. Of her many talents, one particularly strong gift was her ability to identify a person's gifts and how best to use them. We often said, "Be careful! If you tell her you like to swim, you will be the new swim club moderator."

In addition to the tradition of a rigorous curriculum, Sister Margaret created numerous new clubs and established service requirements. As a result, we saw our alumnae go into government, law, medicine, and one alumna studied for the Anglican priesthood. Members of the theater club found themselves starring in movies, while others had their plays performed on Broadway.

Aquinities became teachers and put into practice what they experienced as students. Many, many graduates created families where their parenting was inspired by their education.

I am certain that everyone in the Aquinas community joins me in saying that we are grateful to Sister Margaret Ryan for the inspiration and opportunities that she gave to her colleagues, students, and alumnae.

*Anne Marie Iozzo
Aquinas religion teacher, retired*



Sister Margaret driving hard to the basket!

As a junior at Aquinas, I had a very close friend who was a member of the choir which was under the direction of Mr. Roman. She was a wonderful singer, and we lived in the same neighborhood. My friend expressed to me that she was lonely traveling home after practice. I offered to stay and wait for her after school so we could travel together.

I would wait for her in the classroom opposite from the rehearsal room and work on my homework. One afternoon, Sister Margaret Ryan came in and asked why I was still there. I explained the situation and she immediately suggested that I join the choir. I told Sister Ryan that I could not sing. She responded that everyone could sing. She said that it was a matter of breathing and loving the words in the song. She asked me to give it a try, which I did. She came to my audition and upon completion of my tryout, she commented that it was wonderful and left the room.

Needless to say, Sister Ryan never came back to the classroom in which I had waited for my friend, nor did she suggest that anyone else could sing! My voice remained as it had always been. I loved her all the more for her unflinching support.

*Maureen Crehan
Class of 1979*



(Left to Right) Sister Margaret Ryan and Sister Grace Anne Hogan

In remembering my high school years at Aquinas, Sister Margaret Ryan is front and center. She was a mentor and role model as well as a teacher who was tirelessly committed to encouraging and empowering girls to grow into strong, confident women.

Aquinas was able to serve its community during many years of extremely challenging times for Catholics schools thanks to its strong leadership with Sister Margaret as a teacher, principal, and president. Sister Margaret's devotion and love for Aquinas was a true gift to countless students who walked through the halls.

I am sincerely grateful for my long-time connection to Aquinas and feel truly blessed to have had Sister Margaret as a teacher and dear friend.

Thank you, Sister Margaret Ryan, and God bless you.

Cathy Duffy Heller, Class of 1974



Albertus Magnus High School in Bardonia, NY

HIGH SCHOOLS WITH A *higher purpose*



St. Edmund Preparatory High School in Brooklyn, NY



BY SISTER NORA DOODY, OP



High school is a pivotal time in a teenager's life. From 1901 to this present day, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have been involved in the ministry of secondary education, providing environments that have fostered the development of the whole person, preparing them with educational opportunities and a love of Jesus Christ and his Church.

The mission statement from **Holy Trinity High School in Hicksville, New York**, founded jointly in 1966 with the Sparkill Dominicans and the Sisters of Mercy, speaks of the commitment that the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have brought to their ministry of high school education:

“It is the mission of Holy Trinity High School to be a living witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a community of faith, hope, and love. We seek to educate the whole person: mind, heart, soul, and body, and to motivate all students in the pursuit of truth and academic excellence, preparing them for future educational opportunities and service to the Church and to the world.”

The Sisters' ministry in high school education began in Missouri with the founding of **Holy Rosary High School** in 1901 in the small rural town of Monroe City. Following closely, **St. Mark the Evangelist High**

its highest enrollment in 91 years. The Sister Jeanne Margaret Stoltz Learning Commons is the school's hub for research and technology. (Our Sister Jeanne Margaret was the last Sparkill Dominican to leave St. Dominic, upon her retirement in 2009.)

Aquinas High School has been a beacon of hope in the Bronx for 98 years. (See page 4.)

As the world rejoiced at the end of World War II in 1945, the Congregation remodeled Holy Rosary Convent in Manhattan, transforming it from a childcare home for girls into a secondary school. They established **Thorpe Secretarial School**, named to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of our foundress, Mother Catherine Antoninus Thorpe. For 25 years, young girls flourished in an environment where they strived to excel. Companies would seek out Thorpe graduates

TO EVERYTHING
there is a season...



Holy Rosary High School in Monroe City, MO
1901-1966



Thorpe Secretarial School in Manhattan, NY
1946-1971



St. Mark the Evangelist High School in St. Louis, MO
1909-1975



Rosary Academy in Sparkill, NY
1964-1981



Albertus Magnus High School in Bardonia, NY



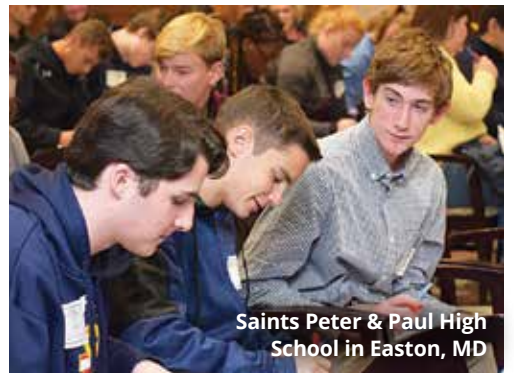
Monsignor Scanlan High School in Bronx, NY



St. Edmund Preparatory High School in Brooklyn, NY



St. Dominic High School in O'Fallon, MO



Saints Peter & Paul High School in Easton, MD

for employment; they were known to be competent, diligent, and ethical workers. Our Sisters also started and then, for over fifty years, staffed **St. Edmund Preparatory High School in Brooklyn** which began as a two-year commercial high school. Today, as it nears its 90th anniversary in 2022, St. Edmund Preparatory High School continues in the spirit of the Sparkill Dominicans, providing a rigorous, faith-based education that inspires its graduates to live meaningful, purposeful lives.

In 1949, it was the dream of Monsignor Arthur J. Scanlan, pastor of St. Helena Parish in the Bronx, to educate all the students from kindergarten to grade 12 in the newly built region known as Parkchester. Staffed by our Sisters, the high school became the largest parish secondary school in New York City. The Commercial

“... continues in the spirit of the Sparkill Dominicans, providing a rigorous, faith-based education that inspires its graduates to live meaningful, purposeful lives.”

High School also fulfilled a need in offering a two-year diploma to those who were preparing for immediate entry into the business world. In 1972, the name of the high school was changed to **Monsignor Scanlan High School** in honor of its founder. Scanlan continues as a co-educational prep school with high academic standards that honors traditional Christian values and the dignity of all peoples.



Albertus Magnus High School in Bardonia, NY



St. Edmund Preparatory High School in Brooklyn, NY

“Students receive an education known for its academic excellence and are encouraged to live the four pillars of the Dominican tradition: Prayer, Study, Community, and Service.”



Albertus Magnus High School in Bardonia, NY



Monsignor Scanlan High School in Bronx, NY



Saints Peter & Paul High School in Easton, MD

In 1958, **Saints Peter & Paul High School** was established to satisfy the needs of a growing Catholic community on the Eastern shore of Maryland. Four Sparkill Dominicans journeyed to Easton to open the high school. Although our Sisters have been gone from the school for many years, during Catholic Schools Week each year the parents there gratefully recognize the Sparkill Dominicans as the founders of their school. Saints Peter & Paul High School continues to carry on the Sisters’ legacy by empowering their students in a faith-based environment rich in the Catholic tradition, where they grow into young adults who think critically, creatively, and globally.

Finally, in 1957 and in 1964, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill responded to the request by Francis Cardinal Spellman who asked the Congregation to provide greater educational opportunities for the young people in Rockland County. Our Sisters built and founded both a co-educational prep school, **Albertus Magnus High School in Bardonia**, and a girls’ high school, **Rosary Academy in Sparkill**, which closed in 1981.

Today, Albertus Magnus students receive an education known for its academic excellence and are encouraged to live the four pillars of the Dominican tradition: Prayer, Study, Community, and Service. The Campus Ministry program, under the direction of our Sister Nancy Richter, provides countless opportunities for the Albertus community to deepen their faith through the Eucharist, prayer, retreats, and service.

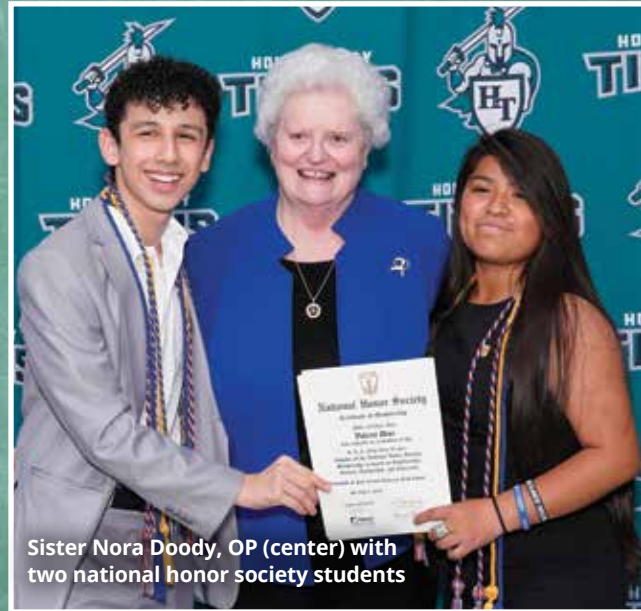
For 120 years, our Sisters have shaped the lives of young men and women by educating them in the Catholic high schools that they helped create. The growth of our students’ faith, intertwined with a rigorous education, has given them a special, sacramental understanding of the world. Our graduates have entered every imaginable profession, among them, health care, government, and business. In their own way, each has made the world a more just place. We are so proud of them.

Contributors: Sisters Elizabeth McAleavey, Ann Eigenbauer, and Joan Correia

Reflection

As I complete 43 years of teaching English at Holy Trinity High School in Hicksville, New York, I look back with so much gratitude. I have been privileged to work with extraordinary teachers, and I have also had the honor of teaching some of the best and brightest students who have gone on to extraordinary careers. I am especially proud of the many former students who have joined the teaching profession as English teachers!

Sister Nora Doody, OP



Sister Nora Doody, OP (center) with two national honor society students

Sister Nora in classroom of Holy Trinity High School in Hicksville, NY



75th

Sister Jeanine Nolan
Sister Elizabeth David Scannell

70th

Sister Catherine Kinsella
Sister Margaret Patricia McDermott
Sister Elizabeth Therese Hurteau
Sister Eileen Loftus
Sister Margaret Breslin
Sister Carolyn Brambilla

65th

Sister Maureen Foy
Sister Mary Dunning
Sister Eileen Barrow
Sister Claire MacDonald
Sister Natalie DeNatale
Sister Agnes Bernard Waugh
Sister Elizabeth Slenker
Sister Catherine O'Leary
Sister Margaret McPartland
Sister Helen Robert Boyd
Sister Jeannine DeClue
Sister Carol Kopff
Sister Marilyn Dunn

60th

Sister Judith Brady
Sister Mary Margaret Grey
Sister Rose Edwin Pfannebecker
Sister Ann Gregory Bischof
Sister Margaret McGirl
Sister Nora Doody
Sister Kathleen O'Connor
Sister Eileen Sullivan
Sister Eileen Cunningham
Sister Mary Jo Heman
Sister Patricia Broderick
Sister Catherine McKillop
Sister Catherine Rose Quigley

JUBILARIANS 2021



(left to right) Sister Elizabeth Scannell, OP and Sister Jeanine Nolan, OP

CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR
ANNIVERSARIES



WE TOOK THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED...

to Pakistan!

Sunset in Pakistan



SISTER JOAN CORREIA, OP

When I saw the pictures of our two newest postulants, Alishba and Maria, I began to think about our congregation's journey over the last 60+ years of ministry in Pakistan. As Robert Frost wrote,

**“Two roads diverged in a wood, and [we]—
[We] took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.**

Our congregation's decision in 1956 to answer the Dominican Fathers' call to minister in Pakistan has touched all our lives in Sparkill, as well as many lives in Pakistan. The founding Sisters who have gone to their eternal reward would be so pleased to see how our Pakistani Sisters have continued

to grow in their faith, expanding the mission with the true spirit of Sparkill Dominicans. The new postulants' joy is so evident, as is their care for one another and for the people they serve. So many children and young women, Christian and Muslim, are receiving a quality education because of the work of our Pakistani Sisters!

Our Pakistani community has become very knowledgeable about technology, and they use that knowledge to share their lives and ministry with us. Years ago, one had to book a call (far in advance!) from Pakistan to the United States. Now, the Sisters call us on *What's App*, where we can see and talk with them at any time!

In early May, when we celebrated the 145th anniversary of our congregation's founding, we received this message from Sister Nusrat Lewis, our Pakistan Regional:

May God continue to grant us many blessings and the same spirit of discipleship as our Foundress. We send a great tribute to all our missionary sisters who took the courageous step to sow the seeds of faith, hope, love, and dedicated service in Pakistan. May we live our lives by following their footsteps.

The bond between us stretches across the globe, growing stronger each day through our shared prayer and love for each other.



Our Pakistan Community with Bishop Benny Mario Travas

We Bless Each Other

Sister Sheila's ministry with the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri

SISTER SHEILA BRENNAN, OP

After thirty years as a teacher and administrator in elementary schools, I served as registrar at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis. While there, I was able to take classes in the Master of Arts in Pastoral Care program. At the same time, I was living with and caring for my elderly mother. This is when I realized that most homebound Catholics receive little attention from their parishes.

As part of my studies, I designed a program for parishes to organize younger retired parishioners to serve their homebound neighbors. Eventually, I was invited to work with the Sisters of Loretto at their retirement residence in St. Louis. In 2017, I began working for the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood as the leader of their Holistic Life Team. My job description has expanded over time. As Community Life Director and local coordinator, I work with a pastoral care person, a registered nurse, and a personal care assistant. We strive to develop an environment that maximizes the quality of life for the Sisters, which includes celebrations of holy days, holidays, and community feast days.

Our nurse and personal care assistant keep us informed about the Sisters' health and physical needs, while the pastoral care counselor and I design programs around



cultural and spiritual interests. Before the “COVID Year,” we held book discussions, Advent and Lenten days of reflection, and occasional video programs on cultural or spiritual development. We also created an in-house winter retreat for the Sisters.

One special activity that I have done with the Sisters who reside in the skilled care area is a preparation for the Sunday liturgy. We gather in the chapel for a *lectio divina* session with the Sunday readings. We slowly read the scripture, pause for silent reflection, and then discuss what within the reading drew our attention. Sometimes, just one word attracts us. Then we ask ourselves: “What do the words spur us to do?” The Sisters and I feel that this preparation helps us to participate in and appreciate the Sunday liturgy more fully. During our COVID isolation we have not been able to gather, but I have been able to share thoughts on the readings by sending written reflections to the Sisters. We have just been given permission to visit the Sisters living in the skilled care area. I hope to resume our Scripture discussions soon.



"We gather in the chapel for a lection divina session with the Sunday readings. We slowly read the scripture, pause for silent reflection, and then discuss what within the reading drew our attention. Sometimes, just one word attracts us. Then we ask ourselves: 'What do the words spur us to do?'"



During our COVID isolation only our nurse was allowed to visit the Sisters in person, so the rest of us went to the phones. We made daily calls to each sister just to chat and see how they were coping. Eventually, the pastoral care counselor and I used the closed-circuit TV in the chapel to lead a reflection on one of the Scripture readings from the day's Mass. Following a guided reflection on the reading, we shared our own thoughts. This really felt strange at first because we were alone in the chapel and had no idea if anyone was watching or listening. We were encouraged when we received notes from Sisters thanking us for our reflections. Now after 15 months of isolation, we are beginning to be free to visit the Sisters, but we will continue the TV sessions because of the positive feedback we receive.

I feel very blessed to be able to do this ministry. I am confident that God led me to it and has given me the stamina to keep doing it. I am always telling the Sisters that it is my pleasure to be with them. We bless each other.





(Left to right) Sister Mary Murray, Sister Helen Boyd, Sister Christine Ferrar, Clarence Williams, Sharon Martini, and Yesenia Kopperman

FACING FORWARD
with trust
 BY SERVING VULNERABLE
 POPULATIONS

While winter and the coronavirus pandemic confined our Sisters to our Motherhouse, convents, and homes, our isolation did not hamper our commitment to help those who are suffering. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the hardships faced by those already marginalized by poverty, lost jobs, and illness. We investigated ways in which Sisters and Associates in both Rockland County and St. Louis could address the needs of these vulnerable populations. We identified food shortage as the most urgent need at this time. A committee was formed, Zoom meetings began, and the Hunger Project was launched. In April, our Sisters in Rockland raised over \$4,000 to purchase grocery gift cards which the Sisters' ministry, "One to One Learning," distributed to struggling, immigrant families.

Next, our Sisters conducted a food drive. After gathering more than 1,550 pounds of dried and canned goods, they worked with Sharon Martini, the director of Home Delivered Meals, to have the food distributed to pantries by the Rockland Community Against Hunger. Always seeking ways to serve and have fun at the same time, our Sisters launched their



food drive with an ice cream social and sang parodies of songs. *Meet Me in St. Louis* transformed into *Meet Me at the Shop Rite*.

In St. Louis, our Sisters and Associates prepared beautiful fruit baskets for the elderly and bravely delivered them in the middle of a snowstorm; they also created a gift basket for a discouraged, hospitalized mother and her fragile, premature baby.

Sister Helen Robert Boyd and Sister Christine Ferrar lead the efforts of the Sisters in Rockland County while Sister Jeannine DeClue "zooms" into meetings from St. Louis. As the entire Community continues to be guided by the words of our Direction Statement, committee members strategize, imaginatively and meaningfully, how to help those that suffer.

"Facing forward, we trust that God will transform us into disciples, challenging us to a radical living of the gospel."

— from our Chapter 2016 Direction Statement



PHOTO BY NIKAY/GETTY IMAGES

Ministry Grants in 2021

Our Partners in Mission

We are pleased to have awarded the following grants for the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

The Best Kept Secret | *Thorpe Village & Dowling Gardens, Sparkill, New York*

This grant award will help fragile, low-income seniors and their struggling families to find affordable, attentive residential care.

Center for Social Justice and Equity
St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, New York

Funds awarded through this grant will be used to develop an educational, cocurricular, and public outreach center that ties together a variety of disciplinary units, including the undergraduate and graduate MPA-Criminal Justice Programs.

Women's Circle | *East Side Heart & Home Family Center, East St. Louis, Illinois*

This grant will help provide tools for the empowerment of women — from dependence to interdependence.

Children's Garden | *Marydell Faith and Life Center, Nyack, New York*

Grant funds for this program will provide children with nature experiences and teach appreciation for the ecological systems supporting life on the plant.

Proyecto Faro/Project Lighthouse
Stony Point, New York

The award will help immigrant-led organizing efforts to galvanize support and action among Rockland County residents for projects to support immigrants in need.

Our donors continue to make a difference around the world.

Thank You!



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OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
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