

DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL

# Weavings

*Women making a difference*

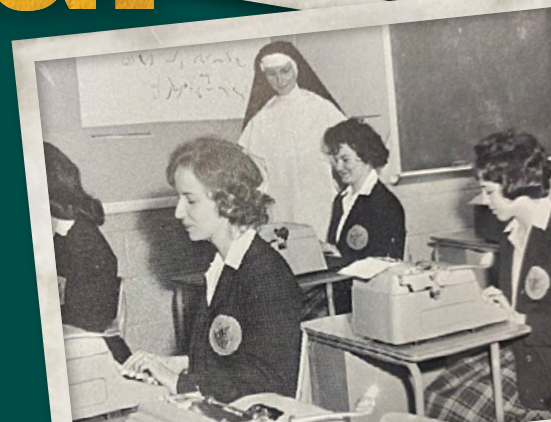
SUMMER 2022



*Celebrating 65 years of*

# Educational EXCELLENCE

*at Albertus Magnus  
High School*



The Magazine of the  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

Dominican Convent of  
Our Lady of the Rosary  
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Sparkill, NY 10976  
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## SUMMER 2022

### Leadership Team

Sister Irene Ellis, OP  
**PRIORRESS**

Sister Marie Peter Buckley, OP  
Sister Aileen Donovan, OP  
Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP  
Sister Nancy Richter, OP  
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EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Lynne Hsu  
**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

### On Cover

Three graduates at the 2022 Albertus Magnus High School commencement ceremony continue the legacy of excellence with earlier students pictured in black and white photos.



Dominican Sisters of Sparkill  
proudly participate in the  
AmazonSmile Program.

## From the prioress ...

Dear Friends,

As I write my first letter to you, I am so pleased to be able to greet you on behalf of our Sisters and Associates. Since becoming Prioress\* of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill on August 1, I am learning every day the many ways our congregation is blessed by your prayers and generous support. We are truly blessed!

At our recent Chapter meeting of 2022, our congregation affirmed our direction for the next four years with willingness to embrace change, because we realize that God is always calling us to new life. Together we will face forward, committed to the pursuit of truth and Gospel justice as we live in faithfulness to our mission to proclaim the reign of God through ministry for justice and reverence for all creation.

In this issue of *Weavings*, you will read some of the ways our Sisters have lived this mission in our ministries of education at Albertus Magnus High School (Bardonia, NY), Holy Rosary School (Monroe City, MO), and One to One Learning (Upper Nyack, NY), as well as in our outreach to assist the refugees fleeing Ukraine.

I am looking forward to our journey together, responding by prayer and action to the needs of our world. Thank you for your faithful witness to the Gospel message of love, compassion, justice, and peace.

With great gratitude,

Sister Irene

\*You may have noticed my title "Prioress." Our congregation's change from "President" to "Prioress" reflects a long tradition within our Dominican Family.



**SISTER IRENE ELLIS, OP**  
Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

*Read more about the  
Dominican Sisters' newly  
elected Leadership  
Team, page 13.*



To donate, visit [sparkill.org](http://sparkill.org) and click "Donate."

**Gratitude and thanks for your donations and prayers.**

THREADS OF WISDOM  
AND GRACE ...

A visit becomes  
a gift!

For the Amish community, a wedding ceremony marks the start of a new family. Accordingly, the entire community is invested in helping the new couple succeed.

Following the ceremony, the young couple moves into the home of the bride's family. Over the course of the fall and winter months, the newlyweds visit the relatives and friends who were guests at the wedding, spending several days or more with each. During these visits, the various hosts share their wisdom with the new husband and wife, teaching them any special skills they may have in carpentry, cooking, sewing, etc. — surely a more lasting wedding gift than a set of towels or kitchen utensils! In the springtime, the newlyweds move out of the bride's family home to set up their own household, more prepared for their new life together because of the generous "gifts" they have received during their months of visiting with their guests.

I sometimes wonder what Mary learned from Elizabeth during her visit (Luke 1). What did Elizabeth teach Mary? As we celebrate Mary's Assumption into heaven, let us ask Mary to "visit" us with *her* wisdom as we strive to serve God here on earth.

**SISTER MARGARET PALLISER, OP**

Sister Margaret earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and is the director of the congregation's Office of Dominican Life.



A word of  
gratitude

Special thanks to all of you who have supported and continue to promote the Mission and efforts of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. It has been a great joy and honor to serve as President these past 12 years. I am grateful for the selfless servant leadership of the past Executive Team: Sister Irene Ellis, Sister Eileen Gannon, Sister Grace Anne Hogan, and Sister Margaret Palliser. Your generosity and encouragement, especially during the recent years of the pandemic have been a true inspiration to me.

I am looking forward to supporting our newly elected Prioress, Sister Irene Ellis, and the Leadership Team of Sister Mary Peter Buckley, Sister Aileen Donovan, Sister Grace Anne Hogan, and Sister Nancy Richter as together we Dominican Sisters continue to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit. We are in great hands with these very talented and compassionate leaders.

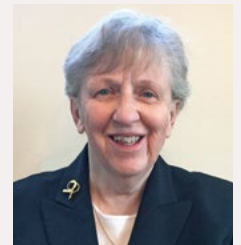
As donors and friends, we each have unique gifts to give to others. As Dominicans, our lives are shared freely with all those who seek truth and justice through prayer, dialogue, and actions of integrity. We are so grateful for your prayers and generous support.

May God's love always be with you.

*Sister Mary*

**SISTER MARY MURRAY, OP**

Former president of Dominican Sisters of Sparkill



# 65 years OF SOARING with the Falcons

BY CAROL CONKLIN-SPILLANE,

Class of 1976. Carol has been the the Chair of the Albertus Magnus Board of Directors since 2019.

On March 31, 2022, the Albertus Magnus High School community gathered for the school's 65th Anniversary Gala Celebration. It was an exceptional evening filled with gratitude, camaraderie, and pride. Treasured memories were shared and deserving honorees acknowledged for their significant contributions to the school. It was a beautiful tribute to the past and a pledge to all that lies ahead.



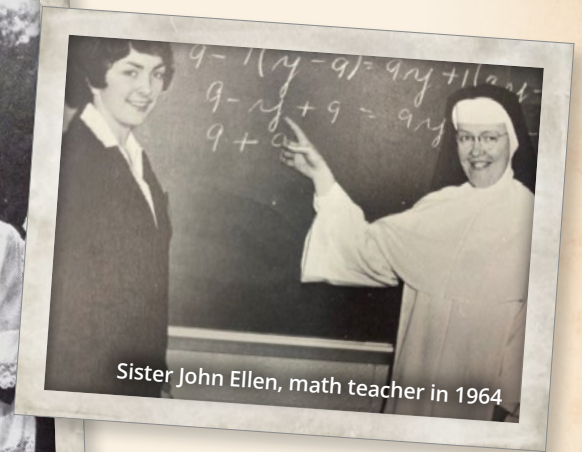
The heart of the ongoing celebration during this milestone year is remembering all the Dominican Sisters who have served Albertus along the way with grace and distinction. We especially honor those founding Sisters who accepted the challenge of building and operating a coeducational Catholic high school to serve children and families of Rockland County, along with the countless Sisters, faculty, staff, the administrators,

board members, and benefactors who have contributed to providing quality Catholic education to thousands of young people over the past 65 years.





On July 15, 1957, His Excellency, Bishop Joseph Flannelly and Rev. Mother M. Kevin turned the first spadefuls of earth for Albertus Magnus.



Sister John Ellen, math teacher in 1964

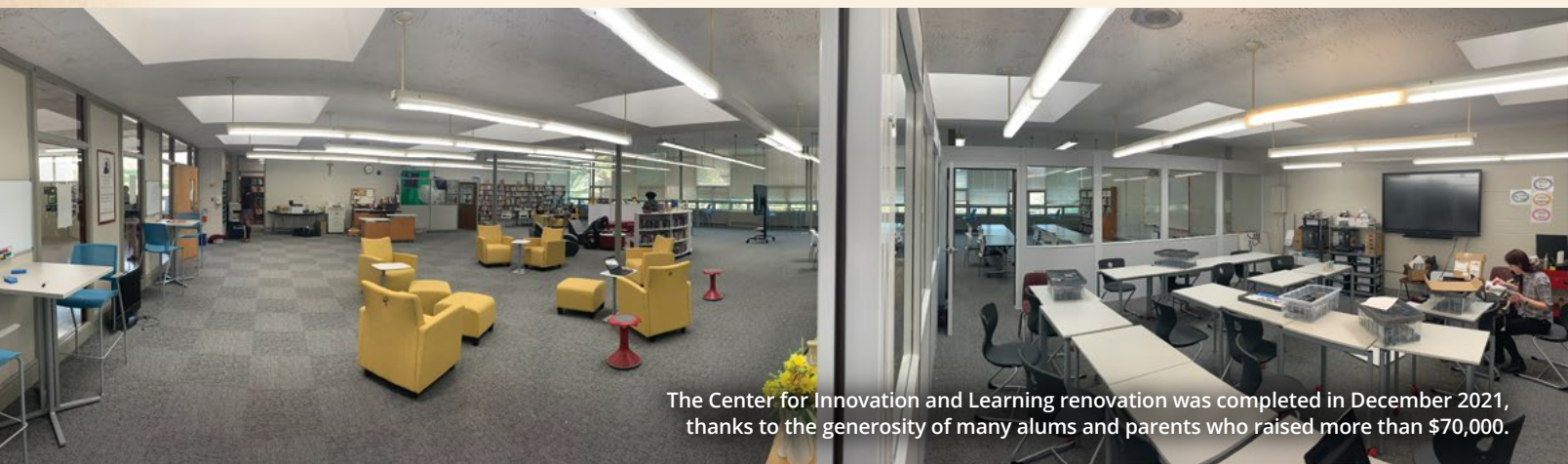
*The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill thoughtfully developed a college preparatory school that prepares its graduates to excel and achieve.*



Sister Nancy Richter speaks with students

As the sponsor and trustees of Albertus Magnus High School for over half a century, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill thoughtfully developed a college preparatory school that prepares its graduates to excel and achieve. In recent years they have been hard at work carefully planning for the legacy of this school to thrive for many years to come. The Sisters share their commitment and responsibility for the formation of the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of the students with a talented Board of Directors that serves on behalf of the trustees to help steward the mission upon which the school was built into the future. The Directors provide vision and direction, generously committing their time, talent, and treasure to strengthen all aspects of the school's operations.

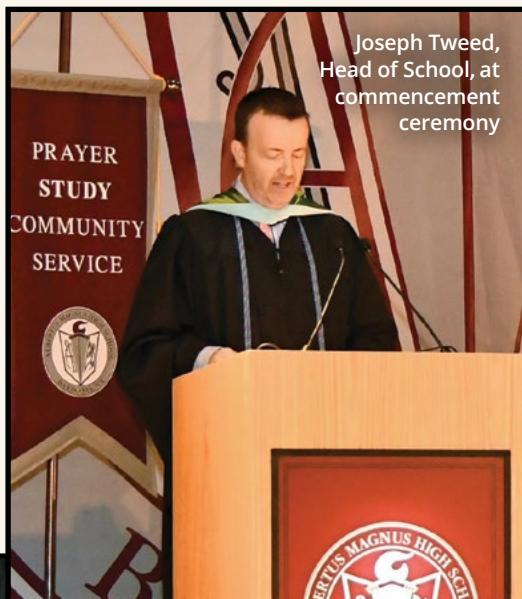
Leadership matters. Joseph Tweed, the energetic and knowledgeable Head of School, who along with Assistant Head of School Christopher Power, is charged with directing the team responsible for transforming the vision into action, leading learning, and creating a culture of success for students, teachers, and staff. Together, the Board and the School Leadership Team are actively leading the effort to build and nurture the network of all members of the extended school community to sustain the family connection that is the hallmark of Albertus. Ultimately, it is in the classrooms and in the halls, on the fields and on the courts, on the stage and at student activities where learning comes to life for students. They not only learn how to do things, but how to reflect on what is worth doing and



The Center for Innovation and Learning renovation was completed in December 2021, thanks to the generosity of many alums and parents who raised more than \$70,000.

why. This is where the shared experience of being a Falcon provides the lessons of a lifetime delivered by a dedicated faculty and staff at Albertus.

The Strategic Plan launched in 2021 frames a vision for the future through a set of aspirational goals and action plans designed to focus on growth and continuous improvement to ensure Albertus Magnus continues to distinguish itself as an institution of quality and integrity. It reaffirms Albertus as a place dedicated to cultivating and promoting academic excellence in an environment immersed in Gospel values, integrating this commitment seamlessly into all aspects of teaching and learning and school life.



Joseph Tweed,  
Head of School, at  
commencement  
ceremony

*“Albertus...  
a place dedicated  
to cultivating  
and promoting  
academic  
excellence in an  
environment  
immersed in  
Gospel values...”*



The future success of Albertus is being built upon the pursuit of ambitious, strategic goals where a vibrant community of faithful scholars will emerge — poised and prepared to lead, serve, and inspire the world they will inherit.

It is indeed an exciting time to be part of the Albertus Magnus School community. Celebrating an anniversary milestone has provided us with an opportunity to reflect on the many ways Albertus has fulfilled its mission... and has provided us with a plan for its vibrant future. Success going forward will depend upon old and new partners alike joining us in imagining the future through the lens of a dynamic high school well equipped to respond to emerging societal and personal challenges in real time, anchored in the timeless light of Christ who is “the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).”

Veritas is “to seek truth with a deep awareness and concern for the whole person with relentless honesty and integrity.” This is the mission upon which Albertus is founded — this is what it means to be educated in the Dominican tradition. The call to “seek academic excellence and show respect for the dignity of each person” is now more important than ever; humanity needs that which we have to offer. Through our collective efforts, we are making our world a better place, one Falcon at a time.



Strengthened with faith, proud traditions, and a comprehensive strategic plan for continuous growth and improvement, Albertus is well poised to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Thanks to the foresight and unwavering commitment of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, we can look forward to all the good work that many hands will do together to further the mission of Albertus Magnus High School for many years to come.

*Happy 65th anniversary to  
Albertus Magnus High School!  
St. Albert the Great, pray for us.*



# The Miracle on Locust Street

## A HOLY ROSARY LEGEND, SISTER

*On June 12, 2022, 400 people gathered in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Monroe City, Missouri, for a joyous celebration and tribute to Sister Suzanne (Sue) Walker on the occasion of her retirement as principal of Holy Rosary School. A wonderful dinner was provided by families from the two parishes served by the school: Holy Rosary and St. Stephen's. Many Sister Sue fans made heartfelt presentations and shared happy memories and good wishes as part of the program; it seemed as if everyone had a story to tell about how Sister Sue had touched their life.*

With 12 years as a student, 9 years as a teacher, and 38 years as principal at Holy Rosary School, Sister Sue broke many records. Holy Rosary School also broke records with 121 years of Sparkill Dominican Sisters serving as Principal. Under the leadership of Sister Sue, an abundance of support from alumni, families, parishioners, and the local community paved the way for a totally new school facility to be built in 2016! In this day and age, building and paying for a new Catholic school is really amazing and possibly miraculous; thus, the "Miracle on Locust Street." Many event guests had "Hands Raised" as those who were taught by Sister Sue or were in school during the 38 years she served as principal. Likely more hands could have been raised if they also included those who attended school with Sister Sue.

*With 12 years as a student, 9 years as a teacher, and 38 years as principal at Holy Rosary School, Sister Sue broke many records.*



Sister Sue Walker, OP



Longtime friend and colleague Sister Mary Ann Burr, OP shares a light moment.



"Hands Up" for those taught by or who had Sister Sue for their principal



# SUZANNE WALKER RETIRES



Sister Sue's Sparkill Dominican family joined in the celebration.



Sister Sue with SUV gift from Holy Rosary and St. Stephen Parishes.



Many children express their love for Sister Sue at church.

In attendance at the celebration were eight of Sister Sue's nine siblings. Nine Dominican Sisters were also present; Sisters Mary Ann Buhr and Paulette Patritti spoke of the rich history of the Dominicans of Sparkill and Holy Rosary School. Parishioners from both St. Stephen and Holy Rosary Parishes donated money to purchase a new car for Sister Sue to use. The Holy Rosary School Gym was dedicated as the Sister Sue Walker Gym and Auditorium. The pastor, Father Greg Oligschlaeger, joined the parish and school community to show their appreciation for Sister Sue's presence in their lives and her leadership and integrity at Holy Rosary School.

Sister Sue is leaving behind a school that is in great shape. The building is brand new. More importantly, by her good example and faith, she leaves the legacy of a vibrant, faith-based community. Her own commitment to knowing Christ and helping others to know Christ has permeated Holy Rosary School. "We have such wonderful, faith-filled laypeople," she said. "The Good Lord has a plan, and we just have to listen and follow it." Sister Sue is looking forward to hearing about the next chapter of the "Miracle on Locust Street" in her retirement (as well as having more time for fishing and contemplation!).



Sister Sue and her siblings gather for a photo.

# TEEING UP *FORE* THE SISTERS



On May 23, golfers returned to the New York Country Club in New Hempstead, New York, for our 25th Annual Golf Tournament. It was a memorable event that gathered 125 golfers on the links while enjoying the breathtaking views of New York City. The beautiful prize baskets had been displayed in the Motherhouse prior to the tournament so that the Sisters could participate in the raffles even though they didn't attend the event out of an abundance of caution for their continued good health.

That evening, the golfers, their guests, and our generous sponsors feasted on a delicious dinner at the Club's ballroom, followed by the presentation of prizes and the annual 50/50 Raffle.

We congratulate all the winners and extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who helped to make this outing such an extra special success for our 25th year.

The proceeds from the golf tournament for which they are most grateful, benefit the mission and ministries of the Dominican Sisters.



Dominican Sisters  
*of Sparkill*



PHOTO BY BRANKO JOVANOVIC/DREAMSTIME



# 2022 GOLF TOURNAMENT

**EVENT CHAIR:**  
Ed Morrissey

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Carl Ferraro  
Diane and Gerry Farley  
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Ed Grzesiak  
William Hansen, CPA,  
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Frances Mauro  
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Renee & Roy Morrisette  
Tom Murray  
New York Country Club

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Our 2022 Golf Committee for their time and efforts
- The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for your prayers and support
- Our Dominican Sisters who donated gift cards

# CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ANNIVERSARIES

## 75th

Sister Patricia Connolly  
Sister Mary Elizabeth Dunne

## 70th

Sister Margaret Carey  
Sister Anne Foley  
Sister Nora Healey  
Sister Joan Beairsto  
Sister Ursula Joyce  
Sister Mary Brinn  
Sister Joan Martin  
Sister Diane Kane  
Sister Rose Mary Bira

## 65th

Sister Lesley Block  
Sister Theresa Docherty  
Sister Margaret Mary O'Doherty  
Sister Catherine Valentine  
Sister Amelia DeMarco  
Sister Margaret Gannon

## 65th continued...

Sister Genevieve Marie Dorrian  
Sister Eileen Monnelly  
Sister Jude Miriam DePalma  
Sister Muriel Cooney  
Sister Pauline Blandina  
Sister Maureen Conway  
Sister Jeanne Deas  
Sister Virginia Chiambalero  
Sister Eileen Gannon  
Sister Margaret Stadelman

## 60th

Sister Rosemary Sullivan  
Sister Mary Elizabeth Mooney  
Sister Elizabeth Ehlers  
Sister Sheila Bowen  
Sister Constance Bauer  
Sister Margaret Theresa Oettinger  
Sister Mary Theresa Dempsey

## 25th

Sister Noreen William



(left to right) Sister Patricia Connolly and Sister Mary Elizabeth Dunne

## SPOTLIGHT ON SISTERS



■ Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan and Rev. Arthur Mastrolia congratulate Sister Stephen Gerard Miick, OP, who was honored with the St. Dominic Legacy Award at the Rockland Region Catholic School Breakfast.



■ Sister Margaret Palliser (left) and Sister Eileen Cunningham are inducted into the St. Thomas Aquinas Hall of Fame on April 1, 2022. Our sisters truly embody STAC's motto: *Illuminaire Mentem Per Veritatem* "To Enlighten the mind through Truth."

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT



### The Higgins & Cotter Court

*In memory of their beloved families*

■ Located outside the doors of the Community Room this is a peaceful space to relax and contemplate at Dominican Convent. This meditative area was made possible by the generous donations of the Higgins and Cotter families.

# Chapter 2022

## A NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM AND DIRECTION STATEMENT

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill met in General Chapter in two sessions. During the Chapter of Elections in April, the delegates elected a new Leadership Team for the congregation: Sister Irene Ellis, OP, *Prioress*; Sister Marie Peter Buckley, OP, *Councilor*; Sister Aileen Donovan, OP, *Councilor*; Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP, *Councilor*; and Sister Nancy Richter, OP, *Councilor*. They began their four-year term on August 1, 2022.

The title “Prioress” will now be used for the congregation’s canonical leader instead of “President.” This title reflects a long-standing tradition within the Dominican Order and is a return to the title used within the Sparkill congregation in its earliest years.

At the conclusion of the Chapter of Affairs on June 15, the Sisters approved a Direction Statement as a guiding document for the next four years as they live their mission into the future. They focused on Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si* and its message that the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor are one. The Sisters renewed their commitment to strengthen the bonds of their shared life through prayer and contemplation, honest dialogue, and to care for one another as they serve a world in desperate need of healing and renewing, peace and compassion. “Faithful to our Dominican charism, we remain committed to the pursuit of truth in order to face and address the injustice of racism, war, exploitation of women and children, exclusion of migrants, and all other threats to peace.”



Sister Irene Ellis, OP,  
**Prioress**



Sister Marie Peter Buckley, OP,  
**Councilor**



Sister Aileen Donovan, OP,  
**Councilor**



Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP,  
**Councilor**



Sister Nancy Richter, OP,  
**Councilor**

# One to One Learning

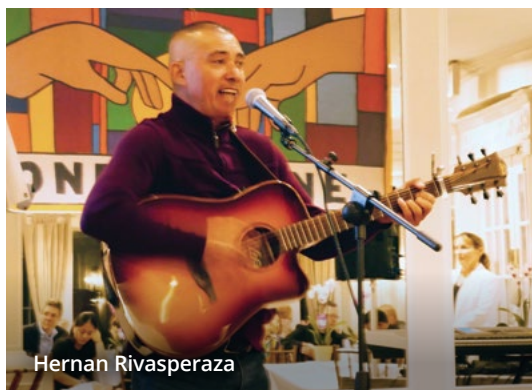
*Celebrates 25 years  
of empowering and uniting*

BY JEANNE SHARY, OP

*Friday, May 13, 2022, One to One Learning, Inc., a sponsored ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, celebrated 25 extraordinary years of service to immigrants in Rockland County. One to One Learning provides English classes and other supportive services for immigrants to empower them to reach their full potential and to lead meaningful lives in the communities in which they live and work.*



Sister Cecilia LaPietra receiving the Albertus Magnus High School Founders Award from Joseph Tweed, Head of School.



Hernan Rivasperaza

As seen in the anniversary video produced by John Borst, One to One Learning has grown considerably from humble beginnings of a small group of Sisters teaching English to Haitian employees in Dominican Convent. Very soon, the rapidly increasing number of students desiring to learn English called for more teachers.

***“Language empowers,  
language unites.”***

children’s playgroup. Graduates became faithful alumni supporting the program and support grew among the wider Rockland County community.

The 2022 Hands of Hope Gala, held at Nyack Seaport, brought together the close-knit community of supporters, alumni, teachers, board members, Sisters, and friends. One to One Learning is founded on the ideals of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and the vision and commitment of Sister Cecilia LaPietra. In the 19th century, Sparkill’s founder, Mother Alice Mary Thorpe, dedicated her life to helping destitute immigrants in New York City’s slums.

The One to One circle expanded as volunteer tutors contributed their services, enabling One to One to enhance the program by including computer literacy, high school equivalency preparation, citizenship education, and a

From the beginning, Sister Cecilia focused on building relationships with each person and creating opportunities to develop community for the whole group. As the program evolved, services such as legal counseling, information on jobs, housing, and emergency providers of food and clothing were provided.

Generous contributions of staff, volunteers, donors, and students supply the dynamic energy which drives the growth of this ministry. One to One Learning exemplifies their motto, “Language empowers, language unites.”



Parishioners of St. Francis Assisi in West Nyack, NY

The real miracle is that so much more than teaching English happens at One to One. The program engenders a family atmosphere where no one is a stranger, and everyone is connected and cared for. Immigrants are able to learn English and volunteers are able to create meaningful connections. The One to One community is a beautiful tapestry of people working together in harmony. All who are involved have been positively affected by their time together.

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants. One to One students and teachers get to know each other, and suspicions about “strangers” disappear. This point is well illustrated by the words of a retired physician Robert Timbergen, MD, and One to One volunteer teacher who spoke about his change in attitude towards immigrants after he began working with them.

*“I have a different perspective on immigration laws than I would have had if I had not met these Hispanic immigrants. I’m very conservative politically, but I am very opposed to the conservative outlook on immigration in this country. My students were hardworking, diligent, and truly desired to learn English. I think programs like this are just wonderful. I think they are good for immigrants and good for the country.” (Journal News, June 29, 2007)*

*“It is hard to believe that 25 years have passed. I met Sister Cecilia and Sister Nancy in 1999. Throughout these 25 years, so many good things have happened. I thank God for Sister Cecilia, Sister Nancy, the Board members, and the whole team that has helped her to continue this mission. One to One Learning has helped so many people in different ways. Some people are beginners, others are continuing their education, and some are learning how to pass their citizenship exam. I am so grateful to have been a part of One to One Learning. God Bless you all.”*

**MARLENI LEMUS**, Alumna of One to One Learning

*“The many pictures reminded me of the teachers whose presence has so enriched the lives of our students and their families. There were pictures of classes and community building activities. At the Gala, there were four tables of Alumni, attesting to the mission that language empowers; language unites. I am grateful for the support of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, benefactors, family, and Board members without whom this ministry could not thrive. I pray that what has been and what is now, will continue into the future.”*

**SISTER CECILIA LAPIETRA, OP**, Executive Director, One to One Learning

*“When I think about One to One Learning, I think about how helpful it is to people and feel grateful to God for always being there for us. Thanks to One to One Learning, a lot of people gained their citizenship, better jobs, and more opportunities. Thank you, Sister Cecilia, Sister Nancy, and the whole team for these amazing 25 years.”*

**ALEX AGUILAR**, Alumnus of One to One Learning



Many friends and alumni were in attendance at the Hands of Hope gala.

# WE HAVE FAMILY IN

# Ukraine

BY SISTERS EILEEN GANNON, OP,  
AND JEANNE SHARY, OP

The tragedy that is Ukraine appears on our televisions each night and in our newspapers every day. We are touched and saddened and wonder what to do. After much prayer, Sisters Valorie Lordi and Bernadette Nonnon made a connection with Sister Margaret Mayce, International Coordinator of Dominican Sisters International Confederation. Sister Margaret contacted the Dominican Sisters of Blessed Imelda of Slovakia who are near the border of Ukraine and asked if a visit would be a benefit to the Sisters and the refugees they welcome.

Sisters Valorie and Bernadette contacted the Sisters and arrangements were made for them to visit. They brought with them cards created by children in St. John Chrysostom School in the Bronx and funds raised by the students at St. John's, Albertus Magnus High School, our Sisters, associates, friends, family, and parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, West Nyack, New York. The Sisters in Siena Hall Infirmary made special prayer cards. All are praying every day for peace.

Sisters Patricia and Adriana met Sisters Valorie and Bernadette at the Budapest airport before driving three hours to their convent in Košice, Slovakia. They were so happy that Dominican Sisters from the U.S. cared enough to come to be in solidarity, to show their support. Women and children have been forced to flee as their homes have been destroyed. Families have become separated; children have become orphans. According to news reports, approximately 90 percent of the refugees are women and children; husbands, fathers and sons have remained



Sister Justina Kosturova, OP and Sister Valorie Lordi, OP

behind to fight for their freedom. Once again all, but especially those who are poor, are experiencing trauma, loss, inexpressible grief — the inevitable outcomes of war. Days were full; the experience was powerful and enriching. Sisters welcomed refugees, some of whom are staying in the convent. They help support the Red Star Refugee center where their students volunteer daily.

Sister Justina Kosturova, OP, on the leadership team of the Dominican Congregation of Blessed Imelda, writes:

*In these days, we have had a very powerful and enriching experience with Sister Valorie and Sister Bernadette. Together we went on our little mission in Ukraine in Mukachevo, and we visited several centers where we*



The Sisters visit with Bishop Luchko, OP of the Diocese of Mukachevo, Ukraine.





Sister Lydia Timkova, OP and Sister Bernadette Nonnon, OP

*“...we experienced the greatness of the Dominican family in the world. We are grateful for this visit.”*



*brought humanitarian aid and spent some time with children who are in difficult situations. First, we visited Kolchino, where 19 families with young children from Donbass are staying (about 50 people in total) and have nowhere to return. The next day we visited the children’s home in*

In 2020, the worldwide Dominican order focused the December Month for Peace on Ukraine. During this month, it became obvious that the people of Ukraine were worried about a Russian invasion. And now they are living through it.

We are growing in our understanding of our membership in the worldwide international Order of Preachers. Dominicans are present in over 100 countries in the world, some of which are the most economically poor, and politically dangerous. We are called to recognize not only our membership in our Sparkill congregation, but also in the Dominican global community.

*Svaliava, where they brought about 35 children from the Kyiv region. Then we were in a centre in Mukachevo, where about 80 children from families in crisis, who were brought from Dnipro, are accommodated. On the last day, we took humanitarian aid to the volunteer centre, from where the aid is distributed to the east of Ukraine. Thanks to Sister Lydia, who works in Ukraine, we gained precious contacts. Thanks to Sister Edita, who has the courage to cross the border with humanitarian aid, we were able to make this journey.*

Our Sisters visited with Bishop Mykola Luchko, OP, who was so grateful to receive the handwritten cards and notes from the students at St. John Chrysostom. He promised to deliver them to the children as well as to bring them to Rome on his next visit. Sisters Valorie and Bernadette were able to present to the Sisters a treasured statue of St. Dominic created by Sparkill Dominican, Sister Rose Marie Morris, as a gift from our congregation to theirs.



Sister Justina says it best. “Thanks to Sisters Valorie and Bernadette, we experienced the greatness of the Dominican family in the world. We are very grateful for this visit. The courage and adventurousness of Sisters Valorie and Bernadette are very inspiring to us.”



We know we have family in Ukraine, and we will continue to pray with and support them. Developing a personal connection brings the tragedy home. Sisters Valorie and Bernadette’s visit makes the sense of family and situation more real. Having seen with our own eyes what these Sisters see everyday troubles us enough to stand with our Sisters and the people of Ukraine through prayer and action.



Photo credit: iStockphoto.com/Photo by J. P. ...

# Ministry Grants in 2022

## *Our Partners in Mission*

The following grants were approved by our congregational leadership for 2022-2023. Our donors continue to make a difference around the world and here in the USA. Thank you!

### ■ Technology for Early Childhood Program

This grant will assist in the purchase of Chromebooks for kindergarten, first and second grade students. The devices will help to facilitate the testing process and use of online educational resources for the students at St. John Chrysostom School, Bronx, New York.

### ■ On the Road to Wellness and Recovery

Students from St. Catherine’s Academy, Grades 9-10, will participate in a program called Aim High which will respond to the need for healing and begin to work toward health and wellness following the years of the COVID pandemic. This community in the Bronx has some of the poorest neighborhoods in the country and has experienced very high numbers for loss of life and income during these years.

### ■ Direct Assistance to Families

This grant will provide financial assistance to the Women’s Circle, one of the primary programs of the East Side Heart and Home Family Center in East St. Louis, Illinois. The grant will help to alleviate stress and emotional tensions caused by the inability to meet financial demands and foster lifestyle changes that support greater self-sufficiency.

### ■ Education and Human Development

This grant will serve Dominican Middle School, located in a remote area of Multan, Pakistan. It aims to continue the mission begun by the Dominican Sisters in Sparkill when it opened in 1984 as a day care centre and later developed into a primary school. The parents of the students are hardworking day laborers, many who have suffered greatly and lost jobs during the pandemic. This grant will allow for the education of students who would otherwise be unable to attend school.

### ■ Skills Immersion Program

The STAC Skills Immersion Program at St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, New York, is a multi-day, interactive, professional development program designed to help students launch their careers. The grant provides resources to address the needs of STAC students.

### ■ Stories of Hope

Therapy dogs are trained to work with the sick, the challenged and those with special needs. The presence of these dogs brings hope to the hospitalized population, from non-verbal children to the elderly. The grant will help to create a series of books which will enable these populations to experience a continued joy beyond the actual visits of therapy dogs in St. Louis, MO.

### ■ Formation Education

This grant will allow our Dominican Sisters in Pakistan to continue providing for the training of young girls interested in the Dominican way of life. Currently there are 2 postulants, 3 novices and 7 junior professed studying to be Dominican Sisters.

### ■ Dowling Gardens

Dowling Gardens, an independent-living residential community for senior citizens in Sparkill, New York, experienced a decrease in occupancy due in part to COVID. To help Dowling Gardens respond to the challenges of tenant retention and decreased occupancy, this grant will provide for staff development, emergency funds for tenant needs, and funding of the special events that make Dowling Gardens a warm and welcome place to live.

# How the Dominican Sisters influenced my life

BY JIM SALERNO | ST. BRENDAN'S SCHOOL, CLASS OF '79

My twin brother Joe and I, attended St. Brendan's Parochial School in The Bronx from 1971-1979. Our initial interaction was in the first grade with Sister Stephen Gerard who showed us that everything would be okay. We then went on to Sisters Anastasia Marie, Catherine Edward, Marion, Joan Marie, Michael Marie (my favorite), Eunice, Virginia Brodowski, Mary Joyce (who brought music and joy to the school), and the infamous Mary McLaughlin. Over those years the school was led by Sisters Theresa Gerard, Cecilia Ann Flynn, and Rita Farrell. Sister Cajetan helped in the front office and Sister Henrietta was our librarian. Occasionally Sister Margaret Rita would substitute (a special treat), and Sister Jean Ann was a guidance counselor. Sister Catherine Naughton did parish outreach. My ability to remember of all these Sisters speaks for itself on how they have influenced my life.

These Sisters not only educated us in many different subjects, but they taught us so much about our faith. They prepared us for our sacraments, Mass etiquette, as well as our high school entrance exams. They provided us with such a solid foundation that we were able to go on to high school with confidence and with a strong knowledge of our faith, which remained with many of us until this day. A building with a weak foundation will not last but one with a solid foundation will last forever. What the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill gave their students was a

solid foundation in education, faith, life, and example. They are true role models for all of us and dedicated to their vocation.

I was always impressed by and had an enormous amount of respect for, the Sisters. We were fortunate to not only be students but also neighbors, as we lived across the street from the convent. I can still picture the green station wagon backing out of the driveway as we played in the middle of 207th street. We were also altar boys, so between all the above we saw the Sisters often. My favorite teacher was Sister Mary Casey (Michael Marie). I was blessed to become friends with her and remained in touch with her until her unfortunate passing. She kept me up to date on how all of the other Sisters were doing. This also allowed me to visit both Bardonia Convent and Dominican Convent of Our lady of the Rosary (Sparkill) over the years, which I always considered a special treat. Sparkill is a special place with very special people. I learned this at a young age, as Sister Mary Joyce would bring students there every December to have a small Christmas concert for the elder and infirmed Sisters (I had the role of Santa Claus). Sister Mary Joyce is now living at Sparkill along with many other Sisters in her community. She and so many others both need and deserve such a fine place to spend their golden years.

I am blessed to have met many other Sisters over the years that never taught



*"I would like to thank and honor all the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill that have had such an influence on my life."*

at St. Brendan's, one is Sister Peggy Scarano. Sister Peggy previously did development for Sparkill and now does the same for SOAR. What Sister Peggy and I have discussed often is the importance of supporting our aging and infirmed Sisters, after all they have done for so many of us. Many alumni get so involved in their high schools and colleges that they forget about those special women religious that provide our foundations for life — in parochial school! My hope is that anyone reading this will reach out to Mission Advancement and consider a donation (possibly in honor of your favorite teacher), or better yet ask about including the Sisters in your estate planning. I cannot think of a much better cause.

I would like to end by thanking and honoring all the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill (past and present) that have had such an influence on my life, especially Sister Mary Casey, and those that I am so fortunate to remain friends with. May God Bless and keep them. Hope to see you all soon at Sparkill!

*If you'd like to make a gift or donation to the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, please contact Bernadette Donohue at Mission Advancement: [bdonohue@sparkill.org](mailto:bdonohue@sparkill.org), 845-359-4172.* 19



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