DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL

Weavings

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Women making a difference

WINTER 2022



Dominican Sisters of Sparkill answer the call to assist immigrants and refugees in the United States

The Magazine of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

WINTER 2022

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On Cover

Sister Margaret Mary O'Doherty, OP, with the children in her Catechesis of the Good Shepherd class. See p. 15.



Dominican Sisters of Sparkill proudly participate in the AmazonSmile Program.



From the president ...

Dear Friends,

As we live through another variant of the COVID-19 virus, I am struck by what I would call a heaviness or a pall over our lives. So many of us have experienced grief and loss related to this pandemic. We keep wondering, *Is this the last variant?* I could go on about how very tough these past years have been, and to some extent it is helpful to lament the times in which we find ourselves.



SISTER MARY MURRAY, OP Dominican Sisters of Sparkill President

In our lament, however, we also try to see the good that abounds as well. We certainly live in hope that

things will be better soon. We hope that our frontline health care workers and those who risk their own health to care for others will be safe from harm.

Hope comes for me in the form of seeing so many good people reaching out to help others. In this Winter edition of *Weavings*, our annual Honor Roll spotlights you, our faithful and loyal supporters. Each person listed fills me with hope and gratitude and reminds me of the generosity of love that your support offers to us.

You will learn about the trip four of our Sisters made to San Antonio, Texas, in October to help assist newly arrived refugees from Afghan, families who have suffered greatly and need much support as they begin a new life in this country.

Another story shines a light on a hope-filled ministry one of our Sisters is doing in conjunction with Marydell Faith and Life Center in Nyack, New York. Young children are learning about the good news of the Gospel through a program called *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*.

Our Associates again sponsored a wonderful event in Dominican Convent: their annual Pajama/Book Drive for children living in shelters here in Rockland County.

There are many other signs of hope I could share with you about everyday goodness and kindness and giving, but I am going to end by mentioning our *Sparks of Light* celebration last November. Thanks to the work of many fine contributors, it was a very enjoyable and successful virtual gala — certainly a first for us.

Yes, there is much reason for hope and each of you is a big reason for our continuing to believe and trust that good prevails even in the midst of hard times.

God's love always be with you! May this truly be a happy new year!

Sister Mary

To donate, visit **sparkill.org** and click **"Donate."** *Gratitude and thanks for your donations and prayers.*

We're in this together!

A friend of mine from Germany came from a large Catholic family for whom full participation in the life of the Church was always a high priority. They attended Mass together on Sundays as well as on dozens of other special feast days. And every Saturday afternoon the children made the 15-minute walk to their parish church for weekly confession "so that their souls would be sparkling clean for Mass on Sunday."

But my friend and her siblings also did something else on those Saturday afternoon pilgrimages. As they walked to the church, they carefully "divided up"

THREADS OF WISDOM AND GRACE ...

their sins among the group. Wanting to make sure that no one had too many sins to confess, they split them up in equal parts. That way, no one would look too bad — and they would all receive about the same allotment of "penance" for their sins!

While we may chuckle at the logic behind their rather unorthodox "examination of conscience," the children actually understood something quite profound. As Christians, we really *are* in this together. What we do affects the whole. One person's sin weakens the Body of Christ; we all share in the consequences of that sin. Lent is a good time for us to recommit to healing

those shared wounds that our sins have caused. Together let us work to repair our world!

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.



SPOTLIGHT ON SISTERS



Happy birthday!
 December 6,
 2021, SISTER LOIS
 LIEKWEG, OP,
 turned 105 years
 young.

On Saturday, November 20, SISTER JEANNE SHARY, OP, Class of 1981, was inducted into the Albertus Magnus High School Hall of Fame.



MILESTONE



■ We congratulate **KAREN ELLIS** on her retirement in January after six years as Director of Mission Advancement for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. We are grateful for her leadership and her generous sharing of her many gifts during her tenure. We shall miss her and wish her every blessing!

24th ANNUAL

GOLF TOURNAMENT September 13, 2021

NEW YORK COUNTRY CLUB NEW HEMPSTEAD, NY (Rockland County)

TEEING UP *Fore* the sisters

In September 2021, we returned to New York Country Club for our 24th annual golf tournament. Breathtaking views of Manhattan caused the participants to pause and appreciate the beauty of the course in New Hempstead. Golfers practiced social distancing as they played the challenging 18-hole course. That evening, the golfers, their guests, and our generous sponsors sat on the Country Club's veranda and feasted on a delicious dinner. Drawings for the prize baskets and 50/50 raffle winners followed.

Out of an abundance of caution for their continued good health, the decision was made that the Sisters would not be present at the event itself; however, they were delighted to be able to view the prize baskets which were displayed in the Motherhouse prior to the tournament. The Sisters were so happy to participate by purchasing raffle tickets and prize basket chances.





We pray that the pandemic will soon be over so that the Sisters will be able to visit with the golfers at our 25th annual tournament on <u>May 23, 2022</u>! (See back cover for more information.)

We congratulate all the winners and extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who helped make this outing such a magnificent success, especially in light of the challenges that COVID-19 presented.



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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Our 2021 Golf Committee for their time and efforts
The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill for your prayers and support
Our Dominican Sisters who donated gift cards

A spark of divine light is within each of us! – Pope Francis

Four "Sparks of Light" in Our World!

SPARKS

LIGHT

On November 11, the Dominican Sisters presented the 2021 Veritas Award to four extraordinary individuals. Throughout their lives, each of them has embodied the mission of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and has wonderfully modeled the ideals and values held by the Congregation. Louis Shapiro, President and CEO of Hospital for Special Surgery, and Boniface and Alison Zaino accepted the Veritas Awards during a quiet ceremony at the Columbus Citizens Foundation. In recognition for her decades of work with Sister Una McCormack, Dr. Mary Ann Quaranta was honored posthumously. While the event was held virtually because of the pandemic, our brilliant master of ceremonies, Joseph Ripp, helped more than 125 people celebrate online via Zoom.

Pope Francis has said that everyone has a divine spark within them. The Veritas Award is presented to individuals whose divine spark lights the world in a special way. You can watch a video of the ceremony on our new website: https://sparkill.org/sparkill-event/sparks-of-lightgala-2021/. This year, the focus of our video was on some of the ways the Sisters live out their commitment to Gospel justice.





Boniface and Alison Zaino.



Honorees

Louis Shapiro, Boniface & Alison Zaino, and Dr. Mary Ann Quaranta (posthumously)

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View the digital journal, honorees' biographies, and *Veritas* Award information at <u>sparkill.org</u>.

ALL COME BEARING

BY SISTER KATHLEEN KANE, OP

In late October 2021, Catholic Charities of San Antonio (CCOSA) sent out a request for Religious Sisters to volunteer for at least two weeks to assist with the influx of Afghan refugees arriving in San Antonio, Texas. The refugees were members of Afghan security forces who had been working with the American Military. The men and some family members with visas had travelled for months from Kabul or Kandahar to Italy or Germany, then to Qatar, and from there to a military base in the U.S. and finally to San Antonio.

Sisters from many congregations were able to respond to this request, including four Sparkill Dominicans, Sisters Jeannine DeClue and Martha Jaegers from St. Louis, Catherine Patrice from New Jersey, and me (from Montana). We were there for periods of two weeks between October 29 and November 20. Housing for the volunteers was provided by the Sisters of Divine Providence in their convent at Lakeside.

Volunteers were assigned to various duties. My assignment included greeting new arrivals at a hotel, setting up a used clothing room, helping to distribute food, and demonstrating how to use microwaves, washers, and dryers. After processing paperwork for the refugees, CCOSA personnel relocated individuals or families to apartments, Airbnbs, or mobile homes. Volunteers delivered bedding, kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies, and groceries to those who transitioned from the hotel into rentals. Staff members assisted the men with employment options. Children were enrolled immediately in school, and adults were encouraged to attend language classes.

One evening, another Sister and I delivered groceries to a young refugee couple. The husband spoke a few words of English and invited us to visit. Since they had no furniture, we sat on the floor and tried to converse while his wife boiled water for green tea. Despite the language difficulties,

we had an enjoyable visit. Eventually, they indicated that it was their prayer time, so we thanked them for their hospitality. My only concern was whether or not I would be able to stand after sitting uncomfortably for over an hour on the floor, but fortunately "Kane was able."

The most memorable part of my two weeks was conversing with Afghans about their food, faith, and families. Men frequently stopped by to share pictures of their wives, children, or parents. Widows and children grieved for friends and family they left behind or those lost in the war. All were hoping for a better future.

On the wall in my office in Montana, I have a poster from National Migration Week 1995. It is a picture of a beautiful quilt with faces of migrants and refugees from around the world. Beneath the quilt are the words: All come bearing gifts. Every newcomer adds color, beauty and strength to the fabric of our society.



widening the pegs of my tent

BY SISTER MARTHA MARIE JAEGERS, OP

My experience of volunteering with Catholic Charities of San Antonio was truly one of "widening the pegs of my tent." Beginning with the blessing given us before we left St. Louis, we felt your presence, prayer, and support every day.

Thank you! God must have enjoyed surprising us all along the way! How else to explain having sunset all the way to San Antonio?

How else to explain the royal greeting and gracious hospitality of the Sisters of Divine Providence in whose convent we stayed? Their friendliness and interest proved that age is no barrier to lively ministry.

How else to explain the spontaneous, unsolicited offer of her "extra" van from a woman we had just met? Without that van we would never have been able to help shop for the supplies needed to set up apartments for the refugees — food and all the basics for kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. We would not have been able to deliver gift cards to various apartments, in one of which a man proudly showed us the medal of honor he had received while working with our troops in Afghanistan. How else to explain the gift of our being able to witness the courage and resilience of the Afghan people despite their anxiety about everything being new and the constant worry for those left behind? The patience and helpfulness to each other of grown men who sat like schoolboys during translated orientation sessions?

Nor would we have been able to load and take to the recycling facility the mountain of cardboard packing from the 100+ donated, unassembled chairs that the volunteers had put together.

The social workers and staff at Catholic Charities deserve so much credit. They are a friendly, hardworking group of very dedicated men and women who themselves come from a wide variety of nationalities and backgrounds. They put in many hours, above and beyond, day after day, to serve the constant flow of families from Afghanistan in addition to their regular clientele.

Other Sisters who volunteered added so many "flavors" to each day, as they originally came from Korea, California and Philadelphia, Vietnam, the Congo, the Philippines. There was so much energy, good organization, helpfulness, initiative, and humor. I often heard echoes of the themes of our own Chapter Prayer: "the call of Gospel justice," "those from other walks of life and other faith traditions," and "in solidarity with Earth and the poor of Earth."

Now when I pray "OUR Father in heaven," there are many more of US included. My tent has been wonderfully expanded, and I have been greatly blessed! Thank you to all whose prayers and donations made this journey and ministry possible!





YOUR PRAYERS HEARD AND answered...

BY SISTER JEANNINE DECLUE, OP

The call came from a letter from LCWR looking for more volunteers to help with the resettling of Afghan families in San Antonio. The call to assist in refugee resettlement had come before, but I had not been able to respond because of other responsibilities. Perhaps like you, when I was not able to give inperson help, I gave myself to praying for those who answered the call. This time, I was able to respond with a "Yes" — and all the challenges of this call were swept away by your prayers.

I did not want to go alone. That prayer was answered when I heard that three other Sparkill Dominicans wanted to go to San Antonio — such an abundant overflowing response to prayer. Once at Our Lady of the Lake University and the Convent of the Sisters of Divine Providence, we settled into two lovely rooms in the Convent with Sisters Gloria Ann Fiedler and Debra Fuchs as our gracious hosts.

More abundant grace. Our first day at Catholic Charities found us in a warehouse sorting clothing and building chairs under the direction of Rey, a volunteer who invited us to lunch at her house, took us to visit with Afghan families in various apartments, and then donated her car for the two weeks so we could get to and from work sites — your prayers, pure and powerful, gave us grateful hearts.

We met Angie and Frank, two volunteers who sorted through the donations to Catholic Charities and helped us know what the Afghan families would find useful and in sizes that would fit. They also took us to the hotel where Afghan families were staying until they could move into an apartment. We took Walmart by storm, filling four carts with everything these families would need to sleep and live in an apartment, including three shopping carts of nourishing foods. My prayers were joined with yours as we waited 40 minutes just to check out, and another hour to find the apartment and deliver everything.

I felt your prayers during orientation meetings as interpreters explained the process with each new group. I prayed with you as we served breakfast and lunch and tended to the needs of those living in the hotel. I watched as Afghan teens helped with translating and families

helped each other. Visiting with the Afghan men, we learned that they were brave soldiers who had wanted to defend their land and families from terrorists. They were proud to be part of a dream shared with American soldiers. There was such a bond of mission and trust among them.

We met shy and trusting Afghan women who always looked to our need for water or tea. We met the children — quiet, shy, obedient, helpful, resourceful. Above all,





they were children who knew they were loved by their parents. We met learned men, leaders, who now had nothing; they were totally dependent on each other and on the American caseworkers who were achieving great results in an overwhelming task. I learned the value of body language (especially a smile, a wave, a handshake), while learning three important words: *salem* ("hello"), *emza* ("sign this"), and *manana* ("thank you") — all made possible because you were at home praying for us.

We were so privileged to be part of something that was happening all over the United States — Afghan men separated from their wives and children, and families left behind in peril, deliberately sought by the Taliban in revenge for those who escaped. We were volunteers from different religious communities and different nationalities and races: Vietnamese, Korean, African, Mexican, Iraqi, Egyptian, Polish, Filipino, and American — a vision of the Universal Christ made visible by your prayers. We ate together, played together, worked together, and prayed together.

My experience in San Antonio was a grace and a blessing, and I give thanks to you. Your prayers were heard and answered — and I will never forget the power of your prayers. Now let us pray that we Americans will learn from our new Afghan friends. May my reflection fill you with hope.





BY CATHERINE PATRICE MORGAN, OP

Afghan refugees, gathered in San Antonio, have come here with little more than the shirts on their backs. Most have been ripped away from their home, their culture, and their friends — especially their circle of supportive women. If given a choice, would they have taken the first step? Prior to this journey, life may have been hard or easy, but it was the way of life they knew. Fearfully fleeing violence and uncertainty, they came with the hope of being able to start a new life!

After a grueling journey, there was time at the camp at the military base, then a move to the hotel (for no more than three months), followed by a move to an apartment — an *empty* apartment. Catholic Charities has taken on the monumental task of helping to resettle these refugees. Settling families in their new apartments and seeing how little they have was quite an eye-opener for me. With everything they have been through, their spirits seem to be quite good.

There was an Afghan flag in one apartment. As I pointed to it and smiled, acknowledging that this was their flag, the gentleman who was the head of the household went to the bedroom and came back carrying what looked like a folder for a diploma. When he opened it, the top of the paper was written in Pashto and the bottom part in English. With great pride he showed us how he had been commended by the American forces for what he had done to help. The look of pride on his face was a beautiful thing to see. As I reflected on it, my prayer was that the welcome he received here in the United States would live up to the hope that was in his eyes, the trust that appeared to be in his heart. One morning we were gathered in the lobby of the Catholic Charities office in San Antonio, with many people milling around. There was a woman sitting with an infant on her lap. When I saw the baby, I approached with a smile, a look of joy on my face. Her husband stepped up and identified himself as

her husband, not possessively, but with caring pride. Almost immediately, three more small children who had been playing outside came into the lobby to join us. I looked at the mother, and what will always stay with me was the lack of affect on her face, completely blank, staring. The child, while held safely on her lap, seemed like a dead weight — not because she didn't care, but because she was so traumatized by her whole experience. This mother has left a lasting mark upon my mind and my heart. I felt like she summed up the difficulties that all these refugees have faced making an escape, leaving everything behind, desperate to get away safely. We may not see it outwardly, but I am sure it is deep in their hearts and memories. I will continue to pray for her.

There is so much that these families will need to learn. The men may go out and find a job, but the women will be home with the four, five, six, seven, and sometimes eight children, all about a year and a half to two years apart. They are confronted with an electric stove, washing machine, vacuum, and microwave — all things we take for granted, simple time-saving devices. I am sure they will adjust quite quickly and learn how to use all these devices, but right now there is so much for them to cope with.



The Sisters who responded to this call to be of service came from all over the United States. Some, like Sister Kathleen, met the refugees as they settled into the hotel, some having shopped copiously for supplies for the apartments. I am not sure Walmart has ever seen the shopping that was done to outfit apartments from the ground up. Others, like Sister Martha and Sister Jeannine, sorted, sorted, and sorted clothing and other donations that had been dropped off by many generous people. I found myself doing data entry. This very basic task was essential to moving along each case so that the refugees could be resettled. I was in awe of the workers at Catholic Charities, amazed and not sure how they manage to get anything done. As soon as a set of forms is completed, or almost complete, another new or more updated form is sent over from the government and they have to start out all over again. Sometimes the forms needed to be handwritten, sometimes they could be completed on a computer, but it's a constant stream of information that needs to

be put into the right folder, for the right family so they may continue their journey toward independence.

Catholic Charities is offering support for every step the new arrivals need to take, even though they are very short staffed! To their credit, Catholic Charities has hired bilingual Muslim refugees to join their regular staff members dedicated to this task.

What a blessing this encounter with the Afghan refugees has been for me. Since returning home I am acutely conscious of my many blessings. When faced with a problem or difficulty, I realize I have the ability to straighten things out — with no language or cultural barriers.

The next part of their journey may be more difficult than leaving their homeland — trying to raise their large families. They have no idea how much it costs to raise a child here! Please keep them in your prayers!

"If you could see the journey whole you might never undertake it might never dared the first step that propels you from the place you have known toward the place you know not."

– Jan Richardson, from "For Those Who Have Far to Travel: An Epiphany Blessing," Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons (2016), 67.

KENNETH D. DALY, NINTH PRESIDENT OF St. Thomas Aquinas College

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS





In 1952, under the leadership of Mother Mary Beatrice Murphy, OP, the Sparkill Dominicans

founded St. Thomas Aquinas College (STAC) on an expanse of land adjacent to their Motherhouse in Sparkill, New York. This past November, Kenneth D. Daly officially became STAC's ninth President during a beautiful inauguration ceremony in the Sisters' 107-yearold Sacred Heart Chapel.

President Daly and his wife Laurie processed into the Chapel with representatives from Academia, STAC's faculty and leadership, alumni, and civic leaders. In his remarks, President Daly highlighted the College's Dominican heritage and his vision for the future:

"I am honored to build upon the legacy of our founding Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and my predecessors and to now lead the College into the future. The importance of a college education is greater now than ever, and we are committed to providing access to affordable education to change the lives of our students."

On their way back to the STAC campus following the ceremony, President Daly and his guests processed through the grounds and passed by the Motherhouse where they were greeted by dozens of Sisters, many of whom were STAC alumnae and/or former professors.

Daly was selected as STAC's ninth president because of the mission-focused style of leadership he has demonstrated during his

three-decade career in the field of clean energy, his years of public service helping communities and young people in and around New York, and his devotion to higher education as an adjunct professor and chair or member of numerous college boards.



The community of St. Thomas Aquinas College continues to recognize its Dominican heritage and the contributions of the Dominican Sisters to its legacy of service and achievement. On November 19, the College presented **Sister Nancy Richter, OP**, with STAC's prestigious Founders Award.

"God with us here"

BY SISTER MARGARET MARY O'DOHERTY, OP

It was Christmas Eve morning, and the children were so excited when Sister Veronica Mendez, RCD, and I arrived with their Christmas gifts from the Sisters, but they were even more excited about God's gift of one and a half inches of snow. This was a phenomenon they had never experienced in their home country of Ecuador. These children from the sixteen immigrant families we have been helping this past year kept singing their "Thank You Song" for the gift of snow! It was a beautiful blessing to be with God's poor on the great feast of Jesus' birth. We gathered again on December 28 for our celebration of Jesus' royal visitors, the three Kings. In our prayers, I asked the children, "Quien es Jesus?" There was silence for a long time as they gazed at the manager. Finally, one of the children said, "Dios con nostros aqui" (*God with us here*). After our prayer, we went to see the





life size nativity set on the Marydell grounds and

they proceeded to climb on the camels on the way to the manger. Children open our eyes to God's presence within us. "Emmanuel!"

What a privilege it is to work with people who continue to experience suffering, poverty, discrimination, and injustice but still know God's love! I am very grateful for all the help that people have given us so that we can continue to bring food, clothing, and furniture — and God's love — to these recent immigrants to Rockland County.

Pajamas For God's Little Ones

BY ASSOCIATES CAROL DAVIDE, DIANE DUNNE, AND ELLEN O'SULLIVAN

The Pajama Program was founded in 2001 by Genevieve Piturro, a NYC marketing executive. One night, while reading to children waiting for foster care placement in New York City, Genevieve asked the children to put on their pajamas and then she would read them a story. That's when a child asked her: "What are pajamas?" That question changed the course of her life and touched the lives of a multitude of children in shelters nationwide.

Determined to make change, Genevieve began collecting pajamas from her family and friends and delivered them to the children herself. Her initiative grew into a nationwide effort. The mission of the program is to promote and support a comforting bedtime routine and healthy sleep for all children to help them thrive.

Learning about this tremendous outreach program was inspirational. The core values of the Pajama Program are very much in line with our own values as Sparkill Dominican Associates: integrity, equity, shared community, sustainable impact, and thoughtful leadership. Recognizing the connection between the cry of the poor and the cry of Earth, we feel compelled to work to make a difference by promoting Gospel justice and defending human rights, and this program gave us a way to help the most vulnerable among us: children.

Our Associates and Sisters joined in the efforts of the Pajama Program four years ago. Not deterred by the pandemic, our signature 'red playpen' has continued to appear in the gathering space of the Chapel in Dominican Convent in Sparkill each October and November. Without hesitation, the word goes out to friends, family, and students. Donations of pajamas, books, and cash gifts are dropped off or sent in by mail. The playpen fills again and again!



This year, Associates and Sisters packed and delivered bins of pajamas and storybooks, all tied up with ribbons, to Spring Valley Head Start — 256 sets of pajamas and books in total! The Head Start staff was thrilled to see us and look forward to welcoming us again next year. The need is ever present.

Since its beginning, the nationwide Pajama Program has provided over 7 million cozy pajamas and inspiring storybooks to children who are experiencing challenges beyond their control. Under the watchful eye of our congregation's founder Alice Mary Thorpe, our Pajama and Book Program is one way we continue her mission of reaching out to meet the needs of all God's children.

We look forward to next year's Pajama Program challenge as we reflect on and pray for those who most need a touch of God's tender love and compassion in this time of uncertainty and change in our world. We thank God for the honor to serve and support God's most precious gifts to the world.



DR. J.T. VINCENT LOU LECTURE

The Dr. J.T. Vincent Lou Lectures are made possible by a generous gift that enables the Sparkill Dominicans to offer educational opportunities on social justice topics. Dr. Lou shared the Sisters' deep commitment to social justice; these lectures, given in his memory, perpetuate Dr. Lou's legacy as a great humanitarian.

YOUR KINGDOM IS BUILT ON TRUTH AND JUSTICE

"Truthing" as a way of doing justice

BY SISTER JEANNINE DECLUE, OP

In the scripture passage John 18:38, Pilate asks Jesus, "What is truth?"

In the recent Dr. J.T. Vincent Lou Lecture "God's Kingdom is Built on Truth and Justice," Dr. Ann Garrido helped us to understand how important truth is as we strive to create a just society. We cannot and will not create a just society without trust, and we are not able to trust when we live in a culture of lies and half-truths. Truth restores justice! Truth means you have your mind aligned with reality.

As part of our human condition, we read and study and explore what is real. We don't always see the big picture, but we strive to understand what *really is* — rather than how we, in our limitations, may perceive it to be. To know and understand



the fullness and truth of any situation — or even the fullness and true being of any one person — is always an ongoing effort. We are called to make choices on the best and fullest knowledge of reality, and that reality

is always changing; thus, our knowledge is always needing to expand. This effort at seeking the truth is a perfect example of how we are all connected. We need each other's knowledge to help us see the fullness of truth.

Today, we often find ourselves living in a state of confusion and distrust. Our doubts have grown so strong that, instead of helping us by leading us to examine our experience to discover truth, Picture in your mind the Disney character Pinocchio whose nose grew longer each time he spoke an untruth. I wonder what Pinocchio's nose looks like today. If only it were as easy as watching one's nose when pursuing truth. We would only have to ask ourselves, "What about my own nose?"

our doubts are bringing about division. Like Pilate, we no longer seem to understand what truth is. Jesus taught like no one else in his time; when he was teaching, he deliberately used the word "Amen," a Hebrew word which means "truly." We need to recover truth, the only value that can sustain our search for justice. Doing truth is our witness of hope to others.

Veritas ("Truth") has been our Dominican motto for over 800 years. We Sparkill Dominican Sisters are striving to build a just community among ourselves and with everyone we encounter. We seek to be in relationship beyond our differences. Our prayer is that the truth we seek will transform us. We invite all to become part of this great mission to build the kingdom of truth and peace.

You may view Dr. Garrido's presentation on our website: sparkill.org/events/lectures/

Awaluable Life Lessons"

BY JOSEPH STRAINING ST. HELENA'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL, CLASS OF '59

According to the signers of the Declaration of Independence, "All men/women are created equal." While I agree with this statement, I have learned from first-hand experience that some people are "more equal" than others — not because of divine right, but because of their fortunate circumstances.

To be born in the greatest country in the world, the USA, is a real blessing. To be the child of loving, caring, educated parents is a real blessing. To be born in a geographical area which has clean water and abundant resources is a real blessing. To grow up in an area where there are medical facilities that are staffed with excellent professionals and the latest medical technologies is a real blessing. To grow up in a safe environment with access to a school system staffed by dedicated teachers who care about the education and development of each child is a very special blessing and to have excellent teachers who are extensions of the educational and religious values taught in our homes is a true blessing. To have parents and teachers working toward a child's complete development is truly a difference maker. How blessed are those who have access to many of these benefits which contribute to a solid foundation upon which all our futures depend. For children, to be pointed in a direction that will facilitate personal success is an invaluable "head start." To be this prepared for one's future, limited only by the quality of our own effort, is indeed a cornerstone of the foundation upon which our lives are built.



My parents decided to send my brother and me to St. Helena's Grammar School in the Bronx, New York. Our teachers were the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, New York. They were a group of dedicated, intelligent, resilient, disciplined women unrivaled by any group I've ever known. They had unique names such as Sister Mary Richard Daley (our Principal), Sister Aquinata Kelly, Sister Boniface Farrell, Sister Joan Patricia Hearns, Sister Purissima Reilly, and (my favorite!) Sister Rose Patrice Sasso. They wore a unique uniform, a black and white "habit" with a most uncomfortablelooking wrap-around head covering. (I do not know how this uniform came to be, but the "designer" surely had terror in mind when designing it!)

My brother and I quickly discovered these women were no-nonsense and very purposeful. They could scare you with a stare, encourage you with a compliment, comfort you with a kind word, or motivate



you with an interesting anecdote. In hindsight, I realized that it took this unique skill set to manage a classroom of 70+ children with unharnessed energy. Their voices provided all the discipline that their students needed. These uniquely skilled individuals went about their tasks like experienced architects, knowing full well what they were building. Without stifling our individuality, yet holding us accountable, they molded each of us to become the best person we could be. The Sisters' kindness was felt by each of us; we knew they wanted the best for us.

In time, we learned these extraordinary teachers were not just interested in our minds — they were also concerned with our souls. In addition to the three "R's," our teachers prepared us to receive the Sacraments, i.e., Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation. Leading by example, our Sisters did all of this while expecting us to attain the high standards they set. We were even prepared for the (parental) evening question: "What did you learn in school today?"

Over the years, a question I have asked myself many times is: "Where would I be today without this Dominican experience?" While I cannot know the answer to this question, I can say that my future formal education, high school and college, would have been a lot more challenging without this thorough preparation. My attitude, approach to life, and Catholic faith development, initiated by my parents and reinforced by our Sisters, guided me for the next sixty years.

My personal and business success would not have happened without the loving guidance I received during my formative years. I'm most grateful, fortunate, and blessed to have been under the guiding eyes of the Sparkill Dominicans.

Unfortunately, I can't go back and hug all my Dominican teachers, but I am fortunate to be able to express my gratitude to the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, especially (my friend) Sister Rose Patrice, who is as sharp and loving today as she was 63 years ago. Without her dedicated life of service, and that of her fellow Sisters, my life would surely have been vastly different. On behalf of the many lives they have touched, I am including them in my estate plans. I am grateful for these invaluable lessons.



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We remember our Dominican Sisters who entered eternal life during 2021.



Sister Jean Thomas McHenry, OP February 14, 2021



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Sister Patricia Mary Walsh, OP October 9, 2021

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September 20, 2021



Sister Janet Vietor, OP April 22, 2021



Sister Mary Hourigan, OP

October 11, 2021



Sister Maureen Massett, OP June 18, 2021

Sister Sheila O'Regan, OP

Sister Maureen O'Toole, OP

September 5, 2021

July 30, 2021



Sister Julia Marie Cody, OP November 14, 2021



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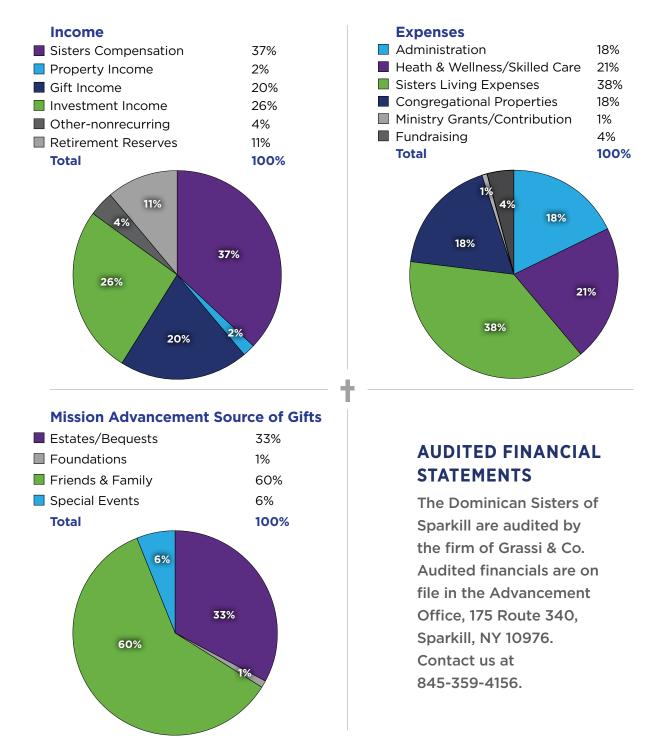
Sister Jeanine Nolan, OP December 26, 2021

To make a donation to honor a Sister and her legacy, please visit <u>sparkill.org</u> or call Mission Advancement at 845-359-4156.

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