

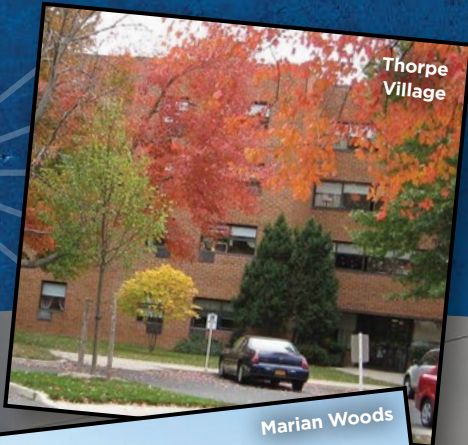
DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SPARKILL

# Weavings

Women making a difference

WINTER 2023

DOMINICAN CONVENT  
OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY



Providing Shelter  
Compassion

and  
Community

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The Magazine of the  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

Dominican Convent of  
Our Lady of the Rosary  
Office of Communications  
and Mission Advancement  
175 Route 340  
Sparkill, NY 10976  
845.359.4179 | [sparkill.org](http://sparkill.org)

## WINTER 2023

### 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  
**COUNCILORS**

### Mission Advancement

David L. Coppola  
**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND MISSION ADVANCEMENT**  
[dcoppola@sparkill.org](mailto:dcoppola@sparkill.org)

Bernadette Donohue  
**MISSION ADVANCEMENT  
ASSOCIATE**  
[bdonohue@sparkill.org](mailto:bdonohue@sparkill.org)

Patti McCallion  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/  
DATABASE COORDINATOR**  
[pmccallion@sparkill.org](mailto:pmccallion@sparkill.org)

Sister Jeanne Shary, OP  
**COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**  
[jshary@sparkill.org](mailto:jshary@sparkill.org)

### Volunteers

Sister Virginia Chiambalero, OP  
Sister Helen Regina Durso, OP  
Sister Mary Shea, OP  
Sister Margaret Strychalski, OP



Elizabeth Martin Solsburg  
**PRESIDENT/CHIEF  
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Lynne Hsu  
**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

### On Cover

Some locations in which the  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill have  
created welcoming communities.

## From the Prioress ...

Dear Friends,

We hope and pray that you and your loved ones are safe and well. As this Annual Report comes to you, we have much for which to be grateful—especially you, and all those who support us as partners, collaborators, friends, and donors.

We are also grateful that with your prayers and support our Mission continues to be vital and necessary in a world that needs healing. We remain willing and ready to embrace the Spirit of truth and change through our ministry of preaching truth, seeking justice, and advocating respect for all of God's creation.

In this issue of *Weavings*, we highlight the ways our Sisters and Associates continue to live the Mission by fostering compassionate and inclusive community—an experience of home—where shared life, stories, and faith celebrate the sacred weave of relationships we share. By doing small things together with great love and patience, the Reign of God continues to be fostered in our time.

Thank you for your faithful support and encouragement of Gospel love and please consider helping us again to promote our Mission:

- Continue to pray for our ministries and the creation of a more just world;
- Make a contribution with a one-time gift, a recurring pledge, or a tax-free donation from your IRA;
- Participate in and promote our programs, events, and publications;
- Designate the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill as your charity for employer matching; or
- Name the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill as a beneficiary of your estate.

With great gratitude for your support of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in our efforts to make a positive difference,

Sister Irene Ellis, OP  
Prioress



Dominican Sisters  
of Sparkill



SISTER IRENE ELLIS, OP  
Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill

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

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

# I have a choice...



ILLUSTRATION BY PROKSH/GETTY IMAGES

This morning I caught a glimpse of myself in a mirror. The rather grim expression on my face made me think of that wonderful line attributed to Saint Augustine (354-430): “A Christian should be an *Alleluia* from head to toe.” I am quite sure that no one would have recognized me as a *bona fide* Christian witness to the resurrection this morning! My “alleluia” looked more like a “ho-hum” — or even worse, a “good grief!”

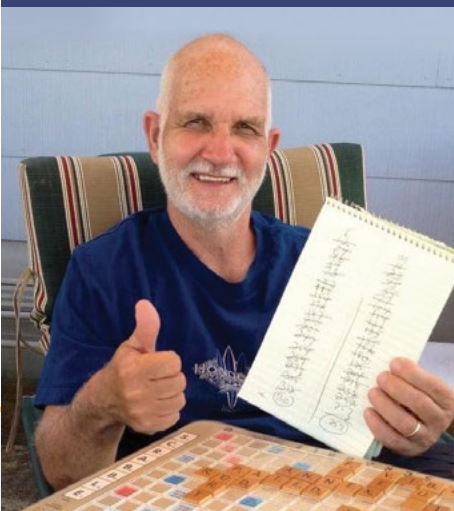
Unfortunately, I’m not usually alone in my failure to radiate the joy and peace of Christ. One has only to look around a typical parish community during Mass. If the way that we look when we are singing (mumbling!) the gospel acclamation is any barometer, our communal “alleluia” could certainly benefit from a multivitamin or two!

This Lent, I hope to focus on my own witness to the Easter message. If home is where the heart is, what does *my* heart convey to those around me as I seek to be a preacher of the gospel with those around me? Am I really convinced that Christ has triumphed over sin and death? How do I let the joy of that conviction pervade my whole being so that I might be a beacon of peace and hope for others? I have a real choice to make: shall I be a “ho-hum,” a “good grief” or an “alleluia” for the persons I meet today?



## 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.



**Edward Joseph Grzesiak, Jr.**, of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, passed away on December 10, 2022, after three years of bravely battling cancer.

To know Ed was to know that he loved the game of golf, and he played every opportunity he got — even chipping in the backyard. He was an active member of St. Anne’s Church in Fair Lawn, a Knight of Columbus, and a Cornerstone Retreat brother for over 20 years.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

For many years, Ed was an enthusiastic member of the annual golf committee for the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. His volunteer work with us was extraordinary, and his presence will be greatly missed.

Hit ‘Em Long And Straight and  
May The Fores Be With You!

# SECOND ANNUAL CYCLING FOR PEACE

September 17, 2022, was a beautiful day at Rockland Lake State Park for a fun day of biking, walking, goodie bags, and refreshments!

The second annual “Cycling for Peace” event was a great success! Together with students, good friends, and sponsors, funds were raised to support the local, national, and international ministries of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. Through their endeavors in the United States and Pakistan, the Sisters promote the common good and achieve a more peaceful and just world through education, compassionate health care, dignified housing for seniors, pastoral services, environmental sustainability, and safe drinking water efforts.

Some participants were not able to physically attend, so they participated by cycling at home, in their neighborhood, or even at their local gym. In anticipation of the “Cycling for Peace” event, some of the Sisters at Dominican Convent engaged in a pre-event activity that they named “Walk and Wheel,” and trekked several laps in their wheelchairs around the balcony of Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel.

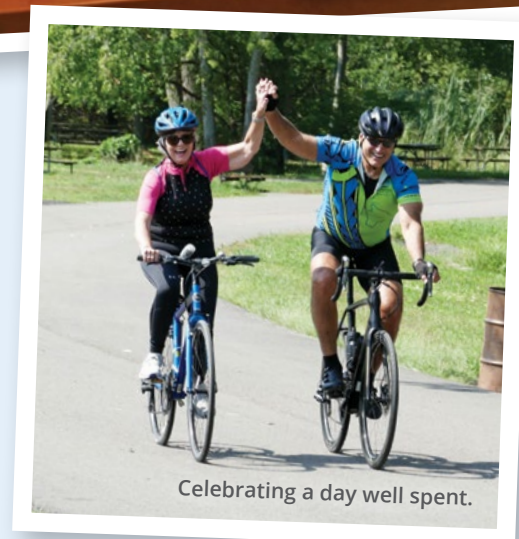
A few riders and walkers went leisurely around the lake’s 3-mile loop, while others labored for six, twelve, and even 40 miles! Friends, family, and sponsors supported participants through direct contributions and through the personal web pages the riders had set up.



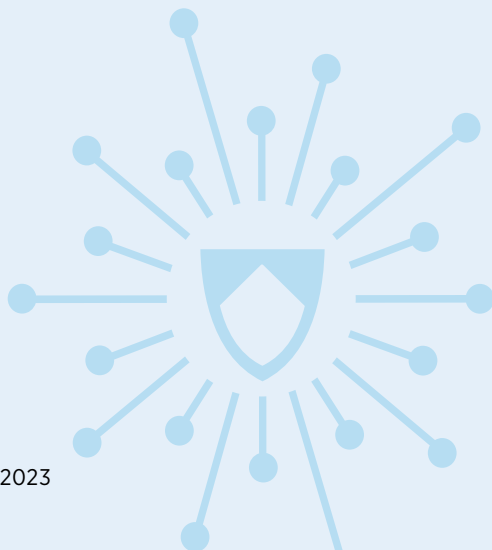
Sister Pat Hogan, OP and Sister Diane McSherry, OP enjoying the day with Associate Bob O’Neill



Sisters on the balcony of Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel



Celebrating a day well spent.







## Thank you to our local sponsors and supporters!

*Together, we are truly making a difference*

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# Help WILL BE GIVEN

MRS. JESSICA WEBBER

8th-grade teacher and alumna

You have a home at St. John's, a safe place while you are here. Even when you leave, you can come back as I did. You can do your service hours here, you can work here, you can help here, you can be part of the community.

The Dominican Sisters have been my model. So many of them helped me when I was growing up, helped me in high school, helped me get through college, and then helped me to become a good teacher. Even now as an 8th-grade teacher, I look back on Sister Eileen Guinan's notes and follow her guides. I try to follow the example I have been given. And the same way they planted seeds in me, I endeavor to plant seeds in young people.

Even as an adult, if you need help, you know to go and ask Sister Mary Elizabeth. Recently, a young man in college needed to type a term paper. Sister said, "Sure come on in, type your paper." They know they can come here, and help will be given.



## St. John Chrysostom School

*in the Bronx* integrates the four Dominican pillars of study, prayer, community, and service benefiting students, the Church, and the community at large. Principal Sister Mary Elizabeth Mooney, teachers, and staff are committed to ensuring a family atmosphere where students are supported and are taught to give back to their community.

Sister Mary Elizabeth noted, "Although the students attend school and live in the poorest congressional district in the United States (District 16), we teach them to go beyond themselves and to share what little they have with those less fortunate."

This philosophy is reflected in the many service projects at St. John's such as a recent winter coat drive by the second grade for distribution to neighbors in need (specifically recent immigrants from Mexico who do not have winter clothes);

food drives for Catholic Charities to provide to food pantries; collecting toiletries for Siena House to distribute to the homeless; and hosting the annual Christmas event for retired Sisters and clergy that included transportation, a student performance, and lunch.

The children's efforts also stretch beyond their local neighborhood. They have raised funds for and sent cards to children in Ukraine which the Sparkill Sisters visited as well as supported those affected by floods in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. In addition, they contribute regularly to the Dominican Sisters' Haiti Fund to assist a children's

camp, the building of homes and wells, and the establishment of microloans for the people there.

Sister Mary Elizabeth spoke about the monthly *Dress Down* fundraising days, which are held for various causes. The children help to pick the cause which makes them "more aware of the many things going on in our world."

The Sparkill spirit is deeply rooted at St. John's. Hundreds of Sisters have passed on the Dominican heritage of study, prayer, community, and service from the opening bell in 1914 until the present—several spending many years in ministry there. Alumni have also returned to the school either to teach, volunteer, or support the program as parents. Currently, Sisters Mary Elizabeth Mooney, Valorie Lordi (school nurse), and Louise Mileski (pre-k consultant) continue the legacy of the Sparkill Dominicans at St. John Chrysostom School.



Sister Mary Elizabeth Money, OP speaks with students.



# Christmas PARTY

I felt excited when some members of the Albertus Magnus High School Preaching Team told me that they wanted to do something special for children at Christmas. I thought that Sister Margie's Saturday morning religion class would be the perfect group for whom the Albertus Magnus students could plan a Christmas party.

The students' enthusiasm for this project was contagious! It was fun to listen to their ideas for the party and to watch them organize the event. My heart was filled as I watched the Albertus students interact with the children—playing games, singing Christmas songs, and helping the kids assemble their new toys. Everyone left the party with a feeling of Christmas joy! The Albertus students hope this party is the beginning of more things to come.

**SISTER DIANE MCSHERRY, OP**

These children brought me light as I walked into their school. I am amazed at how Sister Margie put this beautiful Saturday school together for these children and dedicated her time to bringing them closer to Jesus. I will continue to pray for each child. The Preaching Team could have not done this without the blessing of our Lord and Sister Diane. This was the best Christmas gift I have ever received.

**LILLIAN MERCADO, AMHS '23**



Students help pass out presents to children.

The Christmas party that we threw for these children truly touched me because I have been in their shoes. Although I don't remember much, I know that something like this would have mattered to me. When I was at the party, I met this young girl and she did not want to participate in the games. She was going through a lot. I began to talk with her, and she became happy. I would really like to do a Valentine's Day party.

**PRISCILLA CAMILLO, AMHS '25**

We wanted to organize a party to give gifts to those who are less fortunate and have moved to a new place. It was nice to personally interact with the children and learn more about the kids that were receiving presents from us. Being face-to-face with the children was a great learning experience and was a great time overall. The best part of the experience was seeing how well all the children got along, even though their life stories were so different. Even with some language barriers between the children, they seemed to connect just the same.

**KAILYN SCHOALES, AMHS '23**

It was a really nice experience putting on the party. It was great to see the children smile while they opened their gifts and to see how much they appreciated them.

**ANNA LEONIDO, AMHS '23**





# Mission Moments

*Pictured are photos from our various mission activities this past fall and winter.*



Sister Joan Bearisto enjoys expressing her artistic talents at a Paint and Sip event. Life Enrichment and Volunteer Coordinator Denise Rieser creates fun and engaging activities for all our Sister's benefit.



The Sisters pose with Cardinal Dolan at 65th Anniversary. Sister Pat Hogan (former teacher), Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress, Sister Diane McSherry (Alumna and present Campus Minister), Sister Ann Eigenbauer (former teacher), Sister Nancy Richter (former Campus Minister and Leadership Team member), Sister Marie Peter Buckley and Sister Aileen Donovan (Leadership Team members), Sister Jeanne Shary (Alumna)



Sisters greeted by attentive students in Pakistan.



Sisters Bernadette Nonnon and Martha Jaegers attend a public prayer for peace on the steps of College Church, St. Louis University. Sister Martha and her prayer group have been attending each Sunday evening for many years.



Sister Bernadette Nonnon and Sister Valorie Lordi visiting families in Ukraine.





Harnessing the power of Zoom, Sister Margaret Palliser, OP, facilitated the first hybrid Christmas Week retreat for our Dominican Sisters in Pakistan.



Sisters Susan Dunn and Peggy Scarano sizing things up and wrapping pajamas and books with students at St. Thomas Aquinas College for the Associates' Pajama Drive.



Sister Ann Eigenbauer welcomes St. Gregory Barbarigo School students to Sacred Heart Chapel.



Sister Susan Dunn, OP, EdD, Receives 2022 Founders Award at St. Thomas Aquinas College. "Hands Up" with Mistress of Ceremonies Cindy Hsu (Anchor, WCBS News).



Sister Margo Saich and Associate Adele Tesseman place ribbons of remembrance at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Pearl River, New York at a vigil for people killed in mass shootings.



Associate Co-Directors Diane Dunne and Ellen O'Sullivan preparing to send more than 385 pajamas and book sets to Head Start in Spring Valley, New York—an organization that provides preschool and early childhood education and special education to low-income children and their families.



# A PLACE CALLED *Home*

BY SISTER PATRICIA HOGAN, OP,  
AND FRANK CAPPADONA,  
ASSOCIATE

*The signs of the times compel us to act collaboratively, broadening our circles of relationships and entering into diverse partnerships, as we begin to see ourselves as members of a global sisterhood.*

– Sparkill Dominicans Direction Statement, 2022

The Sparkill Dominican Sisters and Associates are welcoming the strangers among us and see it as an integral part of the Gospel call! Pope Francis asks us to reach out to the margins and help those who are in need, the refugees, and the displaced. We found a cottage in Rockland County, New York, that can now be called home for a refugee family from Afghanistan!

## **Father Robert McKeon |** Pastor St. Francis of Assisi Parish, West Nyack, NY

A young former Marine and parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Damien Shea, felt compelled to help American allies fleeing from war-torn Afghanistan. He reached out to the parishes of St. Francis of Assisi, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Grace Episcopal, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, and the Reformed Temples of Rockland, to form a “heart-tank” with the goal of settling a refugee family in Rockland County. The Parish was ready to meet the need financially and through the works of mercy according to the call of Christ.

The Scriptures have truly come to life in our efforts to transform a poorly kept cottage into a warm environment: “When an alien resides with you in your land, do

not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord am your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34)

## **Damien | Volunteer**

In August 2021, the U.S. withdrew its troops from Afghanistan, and during that period, veterans who were active, on reserve duty, or no longer wearing the uniform pitched in with the evacuation efforts. I no longer wear the uniform as I was honorably discharged in 2010 from the Marine Corps but I do serve as the Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9215. Along with many others, we worked behind the scenes to help guide Afghanis with safe routes to the airport outside of the city, or to other means of safe travel out of the country.

## **Kathie | Hearts and Homes for Refugees**

In 2016, the mission of Hearts and Homes for Refugees—to resettle refugees and to inspire, educate and equip others to do the same—was created to be a local solution

to the global refugee crisis. Our vision since day one has been to tap into the goodwill in this country and so we turn to the “weavers,” volunteers and supporters from faith and civic groups, and provide them with opportunities to welcome refugees. Whether they stitch together housing, language, and employment support, assist in navigating the health care and education systems, or simply provide a helping hand in understanding the culture and practices, it is the volunteers who are making a difference in the lives of more refugees than ever.

More than twenty times the number of refugees were resettled in 2022 than in 2021, and more than half were welcomed by people like those who came together for our adopted family. Volunteers are shifting the paradigm of refugee resettlement in this country and this model of resettlement increases the capacity







Associate Frank Cappadona

and improves outcomes for our new neighbors. Everyone wins—our refugee new neighbors and the volunteers and communities that help them build new lives in safety and with hope and dignity.

### Heidi | Volunteer

This interfaith mission has brought to light the plight of so many refugees and their needs both great (immigration and health care) and small (navigating a grocery store). This family came to us with most members speaking some English and yet, they needed people with compassion to help them navigate and acclimate to a new country with all the nuances that process entails. Once our volunteers provided the family with a safe furnished home, Sister Eileen Gannon, a Dominican Sister of Sparkill, found sofas, chairs, and rugs for this family of six! In anticipation of the Afghani family's arrival, Sisters Eileen, Chris, Joan, and I spent an exciting afternoon with other volunteers cleaning windows and helping to organize the cottage.

Additional volunteers provided clothing and food (with financial

support from Hearts & Homes for Refugees, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Catholic Charities, and other local thrift stores) as well as supporting the family with ESOL classes, education, and when permitted, employment. Sister Cecilia, administrator of the One to One Literacy Learning Program, organized day and evening sessions for the family, and the Board of

Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Nyack is providing additional classes from Monday through Friday each week. Our budget and finance committee is committed to helping the family navigate full independence within the first year of arrival.

*"Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels." (Hebrews 13:2)*

Pope Francis urges countries to protect and welcome those seeking a better life with open arms. "In these tumultuous moments, in which Afghans are seeking refuge, I pray for the most vulnerable among them, I pray so that many countries welcome and protect all those seeking a new life," the pope said. He emphasized the importance of education, which many Afghan women fear the Taliban will take away. Pope Francis expressed hope that Afghans will be able to "live with dignity, in peace, in brotherhood with their neighbors."

Pope Francis has prayed for vulnerable people fleeing Afghanistan, for the internally displaced, and for the dignity and

future of young Afghans. He has asked nations across the globe to welcome and protect vulnerable Afghans who are fleeing their country as they seek a new life.

### Frank | Sparkill Associate

From Afghanistan to Mexico to California to Tennessee to New York—that is what six refugees endured from August 2021 through September 2022. All adults in the same family—a wife, husband, two sons, and two daughters—arrived at the airport with only five suitcases and a wheelchair for one of the sons who is a paraplegic. My thoughts centered on how much they must have left behind in their evacuation. How materialistically near-sighted I was! Five bags and a wheelchair were all the earthly possessions of six people. I later found out the sobering harshness of their lives when they shared that they were forced to leave behind a daughter's husband as well as five other adult children and sadly, the remains of three deceased siblings.

This Afghan family sorely wants to find employment. However, they must show that they are documented immigrants with working papers. They have not been successful in securing those documents because they are not yet gainfully employed. This is a family whose members and relatives had run a successful company and worked in finance, practiced medicine, and provided security operations. This is a family that immediately sought out a mosque where they could worship. They have spoken to groups at UNESCO and are very aware of the situation in Afghanistan, e.g., women are not permitted to be





Dominican Sisters Christine Ferrar, Joan Correia and Pat Hogan welcome families to the area.

educators and girls may not attend school beyond the sixth grade.

At times, our cohort was floundering about how we might be able to help this family. A Dominican prayer came to mind:

*“May God move within us and give us eyes to see with, ears to hear with, and hands that your work might be done.”*

I believe St. Dominic is smiling at our efforts!

### Strangers No More

This mission is all about volunteers who seek in their hearts a way to help refugees feel that we offer more than a “room at the inn,” but rather a “home” and community to which they have been welcomed.

### Bill | Volunteer

I originally signed up to help with the family with some trepidation but recognized that we have an obligation to try and assist others whenever possible. Whether it has been assisting with preparing their home, helping with groceries, or just driving the father home from English lessons, it’s been a truly uplifting experience. We’ve

been able to see them overcome some incredibly difficult challenges and begin to assimilate into life in a new country. Watching them persevere with joy and happiness helps put many of my problems and concerns into a much greater perspective and makes my journey one with theirs.

### Diane | Volunteer

I signed up to drive for groceries not knowing what to expect. Some days I feel very busy and reluctantly adjust my schedule to make time to drive. However, after being warmly welcomed with hugs, tea, and offers of food, and seeing how patiently our family navigates this new country and language, I always head home feeling positive about spending my time ‘welcoming strangers.’

The family is appreciative of all the help they are receiving. Despite the language barrier, the mother and I appear to have connected. She took a selfie with me yesterday to send to her mother in Afghanistan. I arrived one day as the family was eating lunch; I sat at the table and watched the mother, father, brother, and sisters. I did not understand a word they said but the interaction between family members could have been my family sitting and eating together. There was soft conversation, gentle teasing, and firm statements. It was a wonderful reminder of our universal similarities.

# SPARKS

Songs of joyful praise rang out in St. Dominic’s Church in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, as three of the Sparkill Sisters in formation said ‘Yes’ and took their next steps on their vocational journey of faith.

On November 26, 2022, Sister Nusrat Lewis, regional representative, received the Final Vows of Sister Philomena Victor and the First Vows of Sister Samreen Javaid and Sister Sadaf Aamir. Vicar General Yousef Sohan presided over the liturgy in a packed church. Many people participated in the festive liturgy including the Sisters, family, friends, and local parishioners. Afterward, the celebration continued in the parish center.

Sister Philomena teaches at the Dominican Convent’s Secondary School in Bahawalpur.



# SHINE IN *Pakistan*

Originally from Chak 26, she met the community in the hostel (dormitory). Quiet and thoughtful best describes Sister Philomena.

Originally from Quetta, Sister Samreen Javaid teaches religion and trains catechists at the Dominican Middle School in Multan. She is described as a joyful young woman who met the Sparkill community in the hostel.

Sister Sadaf Aamir is an office assistant at the Dominican Convent Secondary School. Reflective and serious, she met the community through her association with Sister Sumaira Patrick in Quetta.

Sister Nusrat congratulated the Sisters for taking these steps and for their generosity of service. These Sisters add much life to a thriving local community; we are grateful for each of their vocations, and each spark they bring to the whole. The Sisters, in turn, expressed their gratitude to the community for giving them support, guidance, and encouragement.

## *Reflection from Sister Sadaf Aamir*

Since my childhood, I have been interested in Religious life. I feel a strong magnetic force that holds me and

connects me to God and others. However, life is not a bed of roses and in the beginning, I found it difficult to adapt. But the Holy Spirit was always active in me, and the support of the Community helped me to adjust.

I met Sister Sumaira Patrick in Quetta. She helped me to join the Dominican Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary. I can never forget her inspiring and strengthening words, "Sadaf, we live in the mountain area, so our vocation should be as strong as mountains." During my time of postulancy and novitiate, I have experienced the guidance of the Holy Spirit through my Sisters and daily prayer. They helped me to recognize my vocation as a true Christian and a religious.

As a newly professed Sister, I feel the Spirit is renewed in me. I made my first profession on November 26, 2022. I know that now the responsibilities will be more professional, but now I feel calm, relaxed, and flexible to accept the challenges. I trust that the Lord will lead me to the right path and help me to grow in wisdom and live in perseverance.

Currently, I am helping at Dominican Convent Secondary School, which is a good opportunity



to learn new and practical things. Under the guidance of the Principal Sister Anna Bakhshi, I am learning to work efficiently with prudence. I believe that formation is an ongoing process, it gives life-like running waters. I am grateful to God for His faithfulness to me, and I cherish my vocation.







# Fruits of Contemplation

BY SISTERS AILEEN DONOVAN, OP AND EILEEN GANNON, OP

*“That they may all be one.”* (John 17:21)

An extraordinary encyclical letter from [Pope Francis on May 24, 2015, \*Laudato si\*](#), (Praise be to you O Lord) was subtitled: “On Care For Our Common Home.” Written with both resolve and hopefulness, the pope is atypically urgent in style and challenges all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action” to care for all of God’s creation because the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one.

We affirm that our planet is in terrible danger and there is a vital need for united action. Scientists warn that if we do not address especially climate and biodiversity, this planet will no longer be able to sustain the human family. Even if we disagree about the causes, we know about floods in California, droughts in parts of the world where people are without food, devastating hurricanes, forest fires that are more destructive than ever, and the largest extinction of animals since the dinosaurs.

In *Laudato si*, Pope Francis makes the case that addressing climate change is as much a matter of faith as it is of science or politics. Seven years on, the letter’s identification of the interrelatedness and unity of all life and the social structures that foster or threaten life

remain disconcertingly pressing, such as law and the common good, politics, urban planning, agricultural economics, clean water, diminishing biodiversity, and unrestrained consumerism. The Earth is holy, and it is of God. As Dominicans, we study before we act, and we act in prayer and in community, and we have an obligation to be advocates for this planet on which we live—our common home.

## *Our Common Home*

We are part of the earth, and we are all connected in every way—we even breathe each other’s breath. By working together, we can make a significant difference in protecting God’s creation and preserving humanity’s current and future survival.

One international effort in which the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill participate that promotes unified action by religious congregations is “Sowing Hope for the Planet.” Coordinated in Rome, this initiative brings together members of religious communities from across the world to examine and engage the challenges identified in *Laudato si*. Since many



religious congregations are present internationally, the opportunity to be united in our care of God's creation within diverse circumstances allows for creative and coordinated solutions. Depending on their unique situations, religious congregations have been invited to pray, examine, and respond to the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor, ecological economics, simple lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality, and community participation that focuses on our common journey.

In our Dominican Congregation at Sparkill, we have a *Laudato si* committee and we have been prioritizing the work of justice and stewardship of the earth for years. Although these efforts are not new for us, these priorities remain vital in our most recent 2022 Direction Statement. We studied and shared information such as the short video from Sister Sharon Zayac, and we asked Sister Winnifred Doherty to speak at our Chapter Meeting. From these meetings and continued study, we are developing plans for the next six years to address the challenges of climate change in ways that are simple in our own lifestyle, and in ways that are corporate as we embrace the call to Integral Ecology.

For instance, practical measures at our Motherhouse include replacing windows, expanding wildflower growth, converting to more energy-efficient lighting, and changing maintenance practices and procedures to be more recyclable and sustainable. Simultaneously, we include the needs of God's creation in our prayers as well as prayers for peace. Peace is not possible unless people are secure and have a home in which to live.

## *We Are One*

In the United States, we have access to many resources. We can turn on a faucet and get clean water. We can walk into a room and flip on a light at night. We have food to eat and food in a refrigerator. We have a home and a bed in which to safely sleep. The result is that we often forget the ways many other people struggle to live because we have direct access to these things.

In the contexts of global conflict and climate change, when people are forced to leave their homes, either we believe and act as if we are interrelated, one, and connected or not. Therefore, we have a responsibility to provide for refugees and immigrants, or not. The situation is critical all over the world as people lose their homes because our common home cannot sustain them. There are already some small island communities looking for other places to live for their entire populations. And that means the loss of biodiversity and human cultures. We care because we are one people and without our commitment to unity and compassion, unique and beautiful expressions of the Spirit will be lost.

*May we be one in  
our praise to God  
for creation and  
in our care for our  
common home.*

It has been about 60 years since we first viewed the earth from the outside. So, for us to get to a point of saying, "this beautiful, beautiful, planet" is very recent. The picture of our earth from space is probably one of the most iconic images that remind us how one with everything and everyone we are.

Chief Seattle, a Suquamish and Duwamish chief, spoke at a ceremony in 1854 marking the newly created territory of Washington with the governor, Isaac Stevens in attendance. The oldest extant record of his words is a transcript published in the *Seattle Sunday Star* in 1887 where Seattle is quoted:

*"This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected ... Our God is the same God. This earth is precious to Him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see."*

The earth is our common home. A quote from Robert Frost says, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." When some people say, "Those people are illegally entering the United States," they have forgotten the prayer of Jesus that we all may be one. They have forgotten that even the members of the Holy Family were refugees for a time. To be one is a powerful image of the Body of Christ and the Eucharist gathers us together in unity and signifies our community.



# NEW EASTSIDE CENTER IS A PLEDGE AND

# Promise

BY SISTER CAROL LEHMKUHL, OP

In 1993, the campus of Vincent Gray Alternative High School closed on 705 Summit Street in East St. Louis. This school had been a positive force in the community since 1980 by providing free, private education for students who lived on the margins of poverty in the East St. Louis area. The possibility of adding yet another abandoned building to the neighborhood seemed imminent.

However, individuals from East St. Louis and St. Louis who were previously committed to the families and neighborhood where Vincent Gray had been located, took a step in faith to conceive and create a Center that would provide a comprehensive support system with programs to serve the neighborhood and its families.



There was a time of transition as our mission was envisioned and slowly took shape. But from the beginning, it was a pledge and a promise that we would seek to provide a helpful, cheerful, loving presence for the good of all in the community.

This new Center embodies that pledge and promise fulfilled. We build in faith, not knowing what the future holds. Nonetheless, we are confident that our presence in the community will endure, and God will bless our efforts.



*"...from the beginning, it was a pledge and a promise that we would seek to provide a helpful, cheerful, loving presence for the good of all in the community."*

# SPARKILL ASSOCIATES CELEBRATE 42-YEAR

# Journey

BY YESENIA KOPPERMAN, SPARKILL ASSOCIATE

On Sunday, September 25, 2022, the Sparkill Associates celebrated their 42nd Anniversary with the commitment renewals of 12 Associates and the recognition of Associates Josephine Capone, Carol Davide, and Ellen O’Sullivan for their 40 years of dedication to the life and mission of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

Sister Irene Ellis, OP, Prioress, began the ceremony by welcoming Sisters, Associates, family, and friends to Dominican Convent, Sparkill, NY, followed by Ellen O’Sullivan, New York Associates Co-Director, who shared a glimpse into her 40 years as an Associate, “My faith grows here, especially when I question so much of our world today. I find answers here and support here. I have lifelong friends here; we share a bond that doesn’t exist anywhere else.”

The history of the Associates was shared by Sister Mary Dempsey, OP, who was one of the first Co-Directors from its inception in 1980 until 1983. Associate Frank Cappadona then read from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Romans (12:4-8), which was followed by a reflection by Associate Carol Davide: “God’s invitation to become an Associate is a gift to all

of us. It provides opportunities for lay women and men to join the vowed members in prayer, service, and presence, while still living these values within our own vocations. How supportive this has been for me and my companion Associates!”

Sister Nancy Richter, OP, began the Ritual of Commitment by inviting the following Associates to renew their commitments: Frank Cappadona, Carol Davide, Diane Dunne, Mary Ann Genito, Terese Heim, Yesenia Kopperman, Patti McCallion, Robert O’Neill, Susan O’Neill, Ellen O’Sullivan, Ellen Tambini, and Adele Tesseyman. Eight additional Associates were unable to attend and will renew



Our first 3 Associates (l-r) Peggy Gearity, Vivian Shary and Patt Kenny.



Receiving the Associate pin: Sister Barbara Paul president, welcomes one of our first St. Louis Associates, her sister Sharon Paul in 1980.

individually. They are: Rosemarie Byrnes, Josephine Capone, Stephanie Carpentieri, Linda Colandrea,

Anne Donohue, James Russell, Alice Schulman, and Patty Schulman.

After the renewal and signing of commitment documents, the ceremony concluded with the Dominican Blessing and a closing prayer by Diane Dunne, New York Associates Co-Director.

The celebration continued in the Dominican Convent dining room, with wonderful appetizers and desserts. The gathering included poignant stories and memories of the past 42 years with laughter, and some tears as those gathered remembered Associates who had died.

Sister Irene Ellis expressed a collective sentiment, “It is such a joy to celebrate the 42nd Anniversary of our Associates. The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill are so grateful, and we congratulate those Associates who have renewed their commitment to continue sharing life and mission with us.”



The Sparkill Associates celebrated their 42nd Anniversary with the commitment renewals of 12 Associates.



# Sister Margaret Mary O'Doherty, OP

*"To do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."*  
(Micah 6:8)

Eighty-seven years ago in Elmhurst, New York, Sister Margaret Mary O'Doherty, OP, learned to walk her first steps, and she has been taking brisk strides ever since. She joined the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in 1957, graduated from college, and soon after earned a master's degree in religious education. She taught in Middletown, New York, St. Louis for six years, the Bronx for nine years, and for nearly four decades at the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana where nearly 4,000 people live.

Sister Margaret's work at Rocky Boy, where she had been a pastoral assistant at St. Mary Parish allowed her to walk among the Chippewa Cree people where she participated in what she called "a great journey of discovery and beauty." Although her days were rustic (wood-burning stoves, no television or cell phones) she saw Montana as beautiful and inspirational and trusted in the Scripture, "Be not afraid, for I am with you; I will strengthen you and lift you up" (Isaiah 41:10). Her enthusiasm for life and her love for music is second only to her confidence in the goodness of others. Throughout her journey, she also saw innumerable ways



that God spoke through creation, people, and the elders, which in the Catholic tradition were echoed in the Benedictus and Magnificat that recall the covenant promise of God to Abraham and to all generations.

A special joy for Sister Margaret was introducing groups of children (4th-10th grades) to beauty by hiking up Bear's Paw Mountain in the summers to see the expansive and inspiring landscape followed by returning down the mountain to a delightful swim and picnic. As the years passed, these excursions became renowned, and children and adults of all ages would recall their transfiguration experiences and affection for Sister Margaret who reportedly walked very fast.

Whether leading the food pantry twice a week or offering classes as a drug and alcohol addiction counselor at the public school, or comforting the sick, the needy, and those near death, she saw her

calling to bring unity in the community as both spiritual and practical. She felt blessed to learn the revered prayers and rituals that connected the Native people with the Great Spirit, the Creator, and to likewise share her faith and knowledge about the Bible and Jesus with everyone. She said it was "wonderful to be able to respond to people in need and make a difference."





*Deeply transformed  
by her life experiences, Sister  
Margaret Mary continues to reach  
out to those in need around her.  
Her smile and positive attitude are  
accompanied by her energetic step  
that invites all to walk by faith.*

As the decades passed, Sister Margaret came to know the families in Rocky Boy and experienced the many events of family and communal life. Births, holy Communion celebrations, graduations, marriages, sicknesses, and deaths all became part of her. In particular, funerals were exceptional three-day events of mourning, followed by an all-day celebration and feast to which all in the community were invited. The deceased person's life was celebrated in the ripples of love and goodness that emanated from the entire community.

And through her commitment to the people in Montana, she also felt support from her Dominican Sisters back in Sparkill, New York. She said she was at home wherever she was called and affirmed that wherever there was one Dominican, all Dominicans were present. And after more than 36 years, although she had come originally to teach, she ended up discovering how to listen and learn. She came knowing how to walk but now understood more deeply the meaning of the journey of life. Although



Sister Margaret teaching Catechism of the Good Shepherd with students at Marydell Faith and Life Center.

it was heartbreaking to leave Montana after so many years, in 2020, she embraced God's call to return to the east coast. Her response was, "Here I am."

Sister Margaret remains ready to put her feet wherever her faith leads and she has joined with other Dominican Sisters serving families in refugee centers in Laredo, Texas, on the southern border of the U.S. Closer to her new home in the convent in Bardonia, New York, she has reached out to local Lenape tribes and Ecuadorian immigrants and their children. She leads a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program and collaborates with Sister Veronica Mendez, RCD, at the Marydell Faith and Life Center in Nyack, which supports educational, pastoral, and spiritual programs, such as One-to-One Learning.

Sister Margaret Mary O'Doherty believes we cannot be disinterested bystanders when it comes to working for justice, loving goodness, and being in solidarity with the poor. She insists, "We must do something!" And so, we lace up our spiritual shoes with her and stand ready for the call to humbly walk with God.



Sister Margaret and volunteers with students on hike at Hook Mountain, New York.

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# The gift of God is *eternal life*

*We remember our Dominican Sisters who entered eternal life during 2022.*



**Sister Eileen Reilly**  
*January 8, 2022*



**Sister James David McDonough**  
*August 25, 2022*



**Sister Carolyn Wolfbauer**  
*January 16, 2022*



**Sister Maurice Doody**  
*September 25, 2022*



**Sister Catherine Kinsella**  
*March 3, 2022*



**Sister Margaret Patricia McDermott**  
*November 2, 2022*



**Sister June Clare Tracy**  
*August 5, 2022*



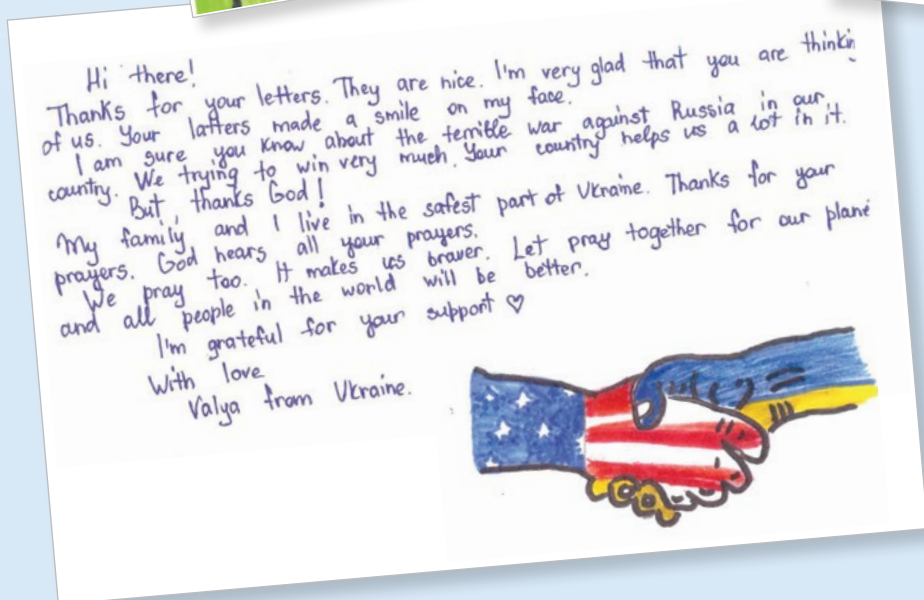
**Sister Carol Kopff**  
*December 18, 2022*

*For more information visit, [sparkill.org/in-memoriam](https://sparkill.org/in-memoriam)*

*To make a donation to honor a Sister and her legacy, please visit [sparkill.org](https://sparkill.org) or call Mission Advancement at 845-359-4156.*

# CARDS OF *thanks*

As related in the last publication of *Weavings* ("[We Have Family in Ukraine,](#)" Summer 2022), Dominican Sisters Valorie Lordi and Bernadette Nonnon visited the Dominican Sisters of Blessed Imelda of Slovakia near the border of Ukraine to offer prayers and support to those Sisters and the refugees they welcome. They brought with them cards created by children at Saint John Chrysostom School in the Bronx and funds were raised by the students at Saint John's, Albertus Magnus High School, our Sisters, associates, friends, family, and parishioners at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, West Nyack, NY. The Sisters in Siena Hall Infirmary also made special prayer cards. All continue to pray daily for peace. In December 2022, children from villages near Kharkiv, Ukraine, sent cards of thanks for the prayers and aid they received from their Dominican family in the US. Examples are shared here.





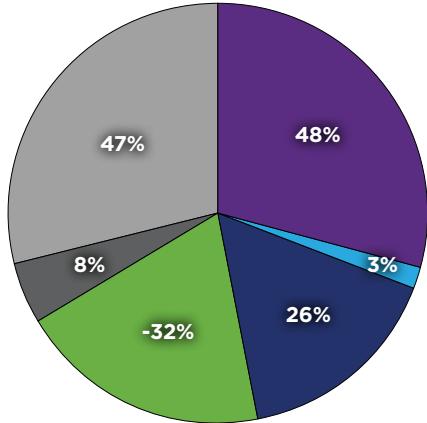
# FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2022 | September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022

Financial donations given to the Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary may be directed for use to any of four areas: Sisters' Ministries, Pakistan, Retirement, or the General Fund (which will be used as needed.) We are grateful for all contributions. **Your gifts enable us to continue to address the needs of those who suffer and to bring hope to our world.** Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary is a nonprofit, charitable, faith-based organization that is exempt from federal and state taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Revenue Code/EIN. (IRS Tax ID# 1340103)

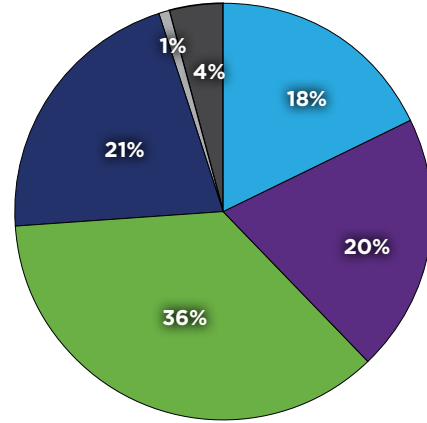
## Revenue

■ Sisters Compensation	48%
■ Property Income	3%
■ Gift Income	26%
■ Investment Income	-32%
■ Other-nonrecurring	8%
■ Retirement Reserves	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



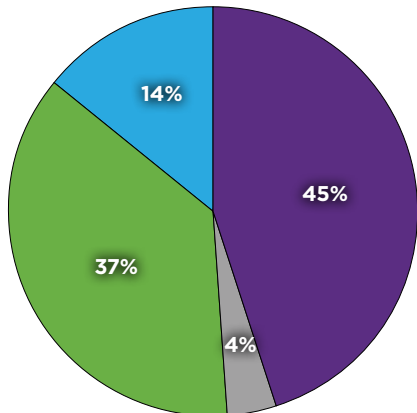
## Expenses

■ Administration	18%
■ Heath & Wellness/Skilled Care	20%
■ Sisters Living Expenses	36%
■ Congregational Properties	21%
■ Ministry Grants/Contribution	1%
■ Fundraising	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Mission Advancement Source of Gifts

■ Estates/Bequests	45%
■ Foundations	4%
■ Friends & Family	37%
■ Special Events	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Dominican Sisters of Sparkill are audited by the firm of Grassi & Co. Audited financials are on file in the Advancement Office, 175 Route 340, Sparkill, NY 10976. Contact us at 845-359-4156.



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OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY  
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*Fore, The Dominican Sisters  
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**MONDAY, MAY 22, 2023**

**NEW YORK COUNTRY CLUB  
NEW HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK**

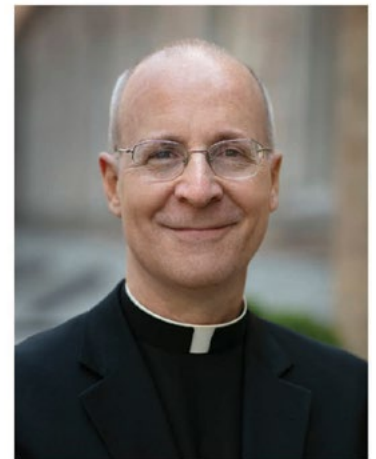


Dominican Sisters  
*of Sparkill*

*Women making a difference*



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**Father James Martin, SJ**  
*Jesuit priest, editor at large of America  
Magazine and bestselling author.*

Presents:  
Dr. J. T. Vincent Lou Lecture

**Building Bridges:  
The Gospels and LGBTQ  
Outreach**

7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023  
*Free and Open to the Public*