

Weavings

Women making a difference

WINTER 2024



Celebrating Circles of *Relationships*

*Our supporters and friends
making a difference* page 14

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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

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WINTER 2024

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2023 Sparks of Light honorees,
James Salerno, Dr. Mary Leahy
and Bob Laughlin.

Photography by CU Photos
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From the Prioress ...

Dear Friends,

We wish you and your loved ones continued
health and prosperity in 2024!

As this annual report comes to you, I want you to
know that your prayers and support have meant a
great deal to us. Your partnership and friendship
sustain us in our ministry to care for the needs of
the most vulnerable as we proclaim the Reign of
God through our lives and compassionate service.

In this issue of *Weavings*, we highlight some of the ways our Sisters and Associates
continue to live our 2022 *Direction Statement* by “broadening our circles of
relationships” in the community and in a world that needs healing and hope. We
remain committed to serving God through our ministry of preaching truth, seeking
justice, and advocating respect for all of God’s creation.

**By working together, we can cultivate opportunities for the Reign of God to
flourish in our time — We can continue to make a positive difference in the world.**

Please consider helping us again to provide our faithful service.

- Pray for our ministries and the creation of a more just world;
- Contribute a gift, a recurring pledge, or a tax-free donation from your IRA;
- Promote and participate in our programs, events, and publications;
- Name the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill as your charity for an employer match, and/or
- Name the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill as a beneficiary of your estate.

With gratitude and love,

Sister Irene Ellis, OP
Prioress



SISTER IRENE ELLIS, OP
Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Sparkill



**Dominican Sisters
of Sparkill**

To donate, visit sparkill.org and click “Donate.”

Gratitude and thanks for your donations and prayers.

A basket, a stone, and a **SURPRISE**

PHOTO BY CHANARONG PRASERTHAI/GETTY IMAGES

THREADS OF WISDOM AND GRACE ...

But imagine their surprise when I explain that I actually found it in the plate of *spaghetti alle vongole* I had ordered in a restaurant more than 35 years ago. It looked so much like a clam shell that the chef hadn't noticed it. I have kept that stone because it reminds me that I should always be prepared to be surprised!

I keep a small carved basket in my office. In it, there is a collection of stones from various places I have visited in my travels.

There is one stone that I particularly enjoy showing to visitors. If I ask them to guess where it came from, the answers are usually places like Rome, the Holy Land, Lourdes, or another place of pilgrimage. When I tell them that the stone came from Cerveteri, the site of ancient Etruscan ruins about 30 miles southeast of Rome, they are usually duly impressed.

As we move forward in our own journeys of faith, especially during our Lenten pilgrimage to the glory of Easter, we may be tempted think that we know exactly how God is working in our lives, just where to look for God, and just what to expect. But perhaps God is preparing to surprise us! Let us pray that we will stay attuned to respond to the surprise graces that God is sending our way this month. ●

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.



SPOTLIGHT

Fifty-two weeks a year, women religious stand with the poor and immigrants, teach children, fight injustice, heal the sick, share spirituality, empower women, defend the planet, promote peace, create community, and offer hope.

But for one week, March 8-14, we shine the spotlight on women religious and encourage a wide range of campaigns and events that invite all who follow Jesus to:

- expand and support their gospel witness
- grow the service networks they have seeded
- share their spirituality, charisms, and community
- encourage young women to consider a vocation to religious life
- support their pastoral, teaching and prophetic works
- and focus on the new world they call into being.



CATHOLIC SISTERS WEEK

THIRD ANNUAL CYCLING FOR PEACE

Cycling for Peace is sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill every September and invites cyclists, walkers, and runners to Rockland Lake State Park to participate and fundraise. Our retired Sisters in Siena Hall also join in the fun and raise money by having their own “Walk and Wheel” event on the Convent’s 2nd floor. Although last year we were unable to hold an in-person event due to severe weather, it was still a success raising more than \$27,000! We are truly grateful for the enthusiasm and generosity of our participants.

This annual event continues to grow and, as we plan for 2024, we look to expand the event with new games, vendors, and more food.

The money raised supports the mission and ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. The Sisters serve vulnerable populations through education, housing, health care, and pastoral services in the United States and Pakistan. ●



Sisters in Siena Hall participate in “Walk & Wheel.”



Associates Sue and Bob O’Neill and friend.



Sister Jeanne Shary, OP



On their bikes and ready to ride.



BFF's cycling together.



Aibhlinn cycling safely.



Sister Pat Hogan, OP



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to our sponsors and local supporters:

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Evelyn A. Valentino

Sister Anna Bakhshi, OP

DEWAN BAHADUR S.P. SINGHA AWARD

Since 1958, the Dominican Convent School in Bahawalpur, Pakistan has forged a tradition of academic excellence. This mission, initiated by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, has flourished under the efforts of both missionaries and our native-born Pakistani Sisters. From humble beginnings, the school currently serves more than 1,400 students in grades K-12 and offers a college level Faculty of Science (FSC) degree.

The Principals of this school have included Sisters Purissima Riely, Rose Patrice Sasso, Margaret Rita Bergin, Anne Foley, Suzanne Dolan, Sheila Mullins, Monica Lewis and Anna Bakhshi.

This past October, our Sister Anna Bakhshi was honored with the Dewan Bahadur S.P. Singha Award recognizing her outstanding leadership as Principal for the past 34 years. Mr. M. Baligh Ur. Rehman, Governor of Punjab, and former Dominican Convent School students, presented the award in Lahore at the governor's house.



Sister Anna accepted this award on behalf of all her co-workers including Sisters Zubeda (Assistant Principal), Anna Bashir, Philomena Victor, Sumaira Patrick, and Robina Nazir. Congratulations to all the Sisters and school staff on this well-deserved honor! May God continue to bless them, as they continue to provide a high-quality education at Dominican Convent School.



"The thousands of students who have graduated from Dominican Convent School since its foundation more than 65 years ago have acquired more than an academic diploma. During their school years, Muslim and Christian students were classmates and friends, learning from their experience that the growth of peaceful co-existence among people of different religions can be a positive contribution to their nation's future."

– Mary Dunning, OP, *Going to the Frontiers: the Call of Pakistan: 1958-2020, We Walk By Faith*, p. 773 ●

Dr. Soufia Farrukh

**PROFESSOR OF OPHTHALMOLOGY,
QUAIDE AZAM MEDICAL COLLEGE**

The experiences children have in early childhood shape their tender minds. It is a school that provides a fertile environment for nourishing nature's most gifted pearl of creative ideas, knowledge, and wisdom to flourish in a child. Since its genesis, I believe that Dominican Convent School has offered itself as a shell for sheltering and fostering human minds in their raw state to mature into empowered innovators, groundbreakers, and discoverers. The wheel of excellence and continual progress has been steered with values, morals, a quality education, and constant improvement in infrastructure, educational technology, teaching, and learning processes with innumerable efforts to keep the wheel on its course.

It is a moment of immense pride for me to write this message about my home—yes, my home, my life, and my source of energy. I take this brief opportunity to thank the Sisters for inviting me to relive old memories, which were some of the most beautiful years of my life. This school is the place where a piece of my heart remains.

What I admire most about Dominican Convent School is that our classmates (including Seniors and Juniors), teachers, and staff were like a family. I imagine myself walking through those gates and looking at the familiar views that filled me about four decades ago.

This nostalgic experience is difficult to express in just a few words. My heart swells remembering how I started here as a small child and became the first version of myself by the time I graduated in 1985. So much has changed over the years since I left, but the memories have never faded.

The world's best and most beautiful things cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt by the heart. Gratitude is one such prayer.

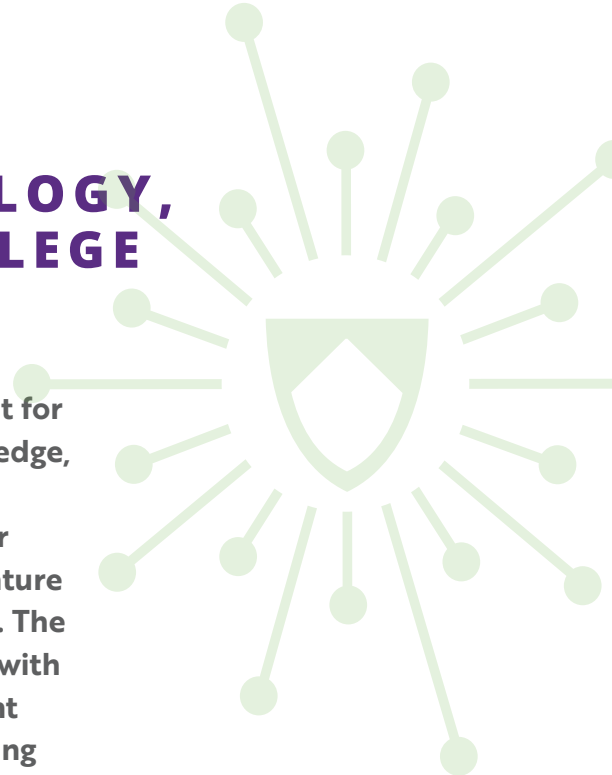


It is a great honor for me to be here to share my sentiments of gratitude. Dominican Convent School has given me everything; my values, my roots, and my view on life. My foundations in becoming a doctor came from these walls. I shall forever be grateful to my alma mater for this.

My worthy Sisters and teachers, your prayers, moral support, and encouragement at all times have made me what I am today. You have continued to work for the best interests of the students and the community at large. Dominican Convent School truly is a magnificent school, ensuring high-quality

education that motivates and empowers students to be lifelong learners and productive members of society. I congratulate Sister Anna and her staff on doing a brilliant job with us and the children who came after us. My heartiest wishes for all your future endeavors and it is a privilege for me to support this esteemed institution and temple of learning in the future whenever required.

I wish you all success. Once again thank you for everything. ●



Mission Moments

Included are photos from various mission activities this past fall and winter.

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, with tremendous enthusiasm, we opened and dedicated Siena Theological Resource Center in Dominican Convent. This space is located in the area which formerly accommodated Thorpe Senior Center. Sister Margaret Palliser, OP, founder and director, expressed gratitude to all who helped make this dream a reality.

In addition to our own Sisters and Associates, many of our Blauvelt Dominican Sisters and other Sisters and friends attended this event, including St. Thomas Aquinas College's President Ken Daly and Provost Robert Murray. Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress, offered the prayer of blessing:

"We ask you to bless all who will come here to study in the Dominican Tradition: to contemplate and to share with others the fruits of one's contemplation."

As all sang the Dominican Blessing to conclude the brief service, it became apparent that this Center is being embraced as a gift to enlighten all who will visit. Many people stayed for the open house following the prayer, enjoying refreshments prepared by Sisters from Albertus Magnus Convent in Bardonia, New York.

Siena Theological Resource Center is named in honor of our 14th century Dominican Sister, Saint Catherine of Siena, a mystic, theologian, spiritual guide, and doctor of the church. The Center's books and resources are now available for use by our Sisters, Associates, and friends. The Center is open on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons, or by appointment 845-359-4079. ●





1-2. All are welcome to the new Siena Theological Resource Center.

3. Associates Recommitment Ceremony at Mass for Feast of the Holy Rosary.

4. Sister Margaret Mary O'Dougherty helps with the sewing at Days for Girls.

5. Sister Susan Dunn, OP, Sister Nusrat Lewis and Associate Carole Davide.

6. Days for Girls in full swing with our volunteers. Days for Girls provides sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who would otherwise miss school.

7. St. Agnes Alumni, Frank Lyle and Elvin Rosa visit with Sisters Catherine Rose Quigley, Eileen Sullivan, Stephen Gerard Miick, and Eileen Richard Levy.

Aquinas High School

100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

BY STEPHANIE CARPENTIERI,
CLASS OF 1962, DOMINICAN
SISTERS OF SPARKILL ASSOCIATE

There is A Time for Everything

“Since its founding by the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in 1923, Aquinas has welcomed each new wave of New York City’s population, finding the face of God in each new set of features, and forming a body of Aquinas women with a heart for the whole human family.” (Excerpt from the Aquinas Mission Statement)

There was a Time to be Born

Aquinas Hall provided an opportunity for education beyond elementary school to daughters of first-generation Americans and newly arrived immigrant parents. Those who enrolled when the first wing of the building was in place were welcomed into an architectural structure graced with terra-cotta roofing and a cloistered walkway in a school named Aquinas Hall. What an extraordinary opportunity and privilege due to the vision of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.

There was a Time to Plant

Aquinas was not only a *Community of Faith and Learning* but a home away from home to “latchkey” youngsters, residing in nearby apartments, whose parents worked tirelessly to see that their daughters were educated for the future. Many students were the first in their families to receive education beyond elementary school and engage in enrichment opportunities—learning to play an instrument and the opportunity to bring the instrument home for practice! Aquinas was renowned for its operettas and concerts, performing in front of an audience was a challenge and a gift! Clubs and enrichment opportunities were abundant—orchestra (even if you knew nothing) clubs—glee, science, photography, as well as sports, especially basketball. Participation in these activities built confidence and forged friendships. Aquinas attracted multi-cultural families creating, a unique tapestry of color, ethnicity, and cultures enriching this Bronx “oasis.” The soul and beauty inside and outside were second to none.



Stephanie Carpentieri, Associate and Sister Irene Ellis, OP Prioress welcome those gathered.

There was a Time to Let Go

Aquinas was an outstanding school of excellence for ten decades. Following months of discernment and decision-making, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in May 2021 sadly announced the closing of Aquinas HS; the class of 2021 would be the final graduating class. While the doors would close at the end of the school year, the spirit and commitment to Truth (*Veritas*) would live on in each Aquinas alum—women educated for life due to the vision, commitment, and dedication of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill.



Sister Grace Hogan, OP shows the way.



Alumnae show their Aquinite colors.

There is a Time to Scatter and a Time to Gather

In response to the outpouring of so many Aquinas alums, Stephanie Carpentieri responded to the request of graduates who would have received their 50th year Jubilee Medal up to and including 2023 and began plans for a final reunion! On Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023, Aquinites were welcomed into the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters in Sparkill, New York. The gathering included graduates from almost every year—1946 until 2021! It was an awesome event, second to none! Alums came from near and far—California, Oklahoma, Vermont, Florida, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York! The dining room was packed to the limits. A brass school bell—all the attendees could relate to—rang out and summoned all to attention.

There is a Time to Embrace

Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill opened the celebration with a warm welcome—followed by prayer. Sister announced the alums honorees and expressed gratitude to all who lovingly brought this “dream” to life. Honorees included: **Sister Catherine Viggiano**, class of 1946 and **Helen Jenkins and Pat Finan**, class of 1948.

Each one was presented with a special Aquinas *Veritas* medallion. Other honorees included members of the 1970-73 classes who proudly accepted their 50th year Jubilee medals.

Sister Catherine Rose Quigley, class of 1959—alumna, and former assistant principal and principal

shared a few words on the privilege of entering Aquinas High School in 9th grade as a young girl and graduating in four years as a woman who received a “Blue Ribbon” education in a school recognized by the United States Department of Education as an Exemplary School—graduating women who were ready to make a difference in this world.

Sister Margaret Ryan, class of 1953 —alum, teacher, principal, and president was recognized and introduced by Sister Irene Ellis, Prioress. A resounding ovation of appreciation followed—as Sister Margaret’s ministry at Aquinas extended to more than 50 years bringing the school into national recognition! Sister Margaret expressed gratitude to all!

There is a Time to Sing

The Aquinas Alma Mater was sung by proud Aquinas alumnae:

*Angel of Schools, our Patron,
O keep us safe we pray.
And faithful to our Savior,
The Light, the Truth, the Way.
Our Alma Mater guiding,
What’re our lives may hold,
True daughters of Aquinas
And Mary’s blue and gold.
Great St. Thomas, guide us,
As for the Truth we stand,
And may it ever flourish,
Throughout our glorious land.
Our life of faith a challenge
That none may fail to see.
For “peace on earth”
we’re striving.
Let this our motto be!*



It was a Time to Cherish

This account is just a small contribution to my experience of the reunion celebrating

the life of Aquinas High School! It provided an opportunity to join as Aquinas “Sisters” and recognize the impact of that building on Belmont Avenue, 182nd Street, Bronx, New York on our lives. Our conversations, laughter, re-connections, and memories are life-long ones, unique to each of us. The candles of the Aquinas 100th year birthday cake were extinguished but never the spirit of the alumnae!

It is Time to Remember and Give Thanks

Dear Dominican Sisters, we were blessed and privileged to know you and grow into adulthood with your guiding principles of Community, Prayer, Study, and Service. May God bless you for your vision and dedication to Catholic education. Aquinas provided spiritual grounding and pursuit of truth in learning that prepared us for our future. Thank you for opening your hearts and doors to Aquinites! The celebration was perfect; we will cherish its memory. True daughters of Aquinas let us remember the Dominican Sisters with support for their ministries during the twilight of their years. ●

Rosary Academy

CLASS OF 1973

On Sept. 23, 2023, the Rosary Academy class of 1973 gathered at Dominican Convent in Sparkill to celebrate their 50th Reunion. Many alumnae attended arriving from Florida, Illinois, Utah, North Carolina, Massachusetts, New York State, as well as the NY/NJ/CT tri-state area. Although torrential rain hindered even more classmates from Vermont and northern Connecticut from attending, it did nothing to dampen the spirits of the celebrants.

The group assembled for liturgy in Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel. Sister Margaret Palliser, a former teacher, provided the music, and the “girls” enjoyed praying together again, especially singing the final song, “Day by Day” from Godspell, which took them right back to the early 1970s at Rosary. Their voices rang out as they clapped and swayed on their way into Maria Ignatia Hall, where they gathered to reminisce with Sisters Nora Doody and Catherine Viggiano, former teachers, along with a stack of their yearbooks.

After warmly reconnecting at Dominican Convent, members of the class and their families continued their celebration and reminiscing at the Rivertown Taproom in Piermont, New York.



Father Tom Kunnell presides at Mass.



Alumnae Lorraine Athing and Patti Whalen Tobin (standing) share some stories with Sisters Nora Doody, OP and Catherine Viggiano, OP.



Gretel Schneider welcomes the alumnae to Mass.

It took a group of organizers, led by Gretel Schneider, more than six months to find updated contact information on all of the classmates. A class list on Facebook helped the reunion committee find their classmates. Everyone was excited to see their former teachers in person and the Sisters were thrilled to see their former students. Sister Nora Doody said:

The class of '73 was always very special to Sister Catherine Viggiano and me. The reunion provided a great opportunity to reconnect and reminisce! Attending Mass together at Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel really conveyed a sense of togetherness. As one of the girls commented: 'We are recalling some of the best years of our lives!'

We encourage any alumnae interested in hosting a class reunion to contact the Sisters' Director of Mission Advancement and Communications at 845-359-4179. You are always most welcome. ●



Members of the Class of 1973.

ELLEN O’SULLIVAN, PREACHING FROM THE PULPIT OF HER LIFE

For the past six years, Ellen O’Sullivan has helped to lead and energize the Sparkill Associate Program in her role as Co-Director. She has had a long and loving association with the Sisters. Since she was 13, as a student at Aquinas High School in the Bronx, she identifies as an “Aquinite” and says, “It’s in the blood.” She spent a few years at Dominican Convent as a Sister in training/formation and admits, “It’s just a part of who I am.” Sister Susan Dunn, who was in the novitiate with Ellen describes her as “amazing!”



Ellen O’Sullivan

Forty-two years ago, Ellen joined the Associate Program. She responded to an invitation to join the Associates (then called Co-Members) by Vivian Shary (a founding Associate) and several others, along with a group of women from St. Anthony Parish, Nanuet. With four young children and her husband who traveled for business, at first, she could not accept the invitation; but two years later, Ellen decided to join. She thought that she needed something more, and she knew where to find it.

She encourages all members of the Dominican family to keep doing what they are doing so well and to invite others to walk with them—to learn more, come to an event, or join the program.

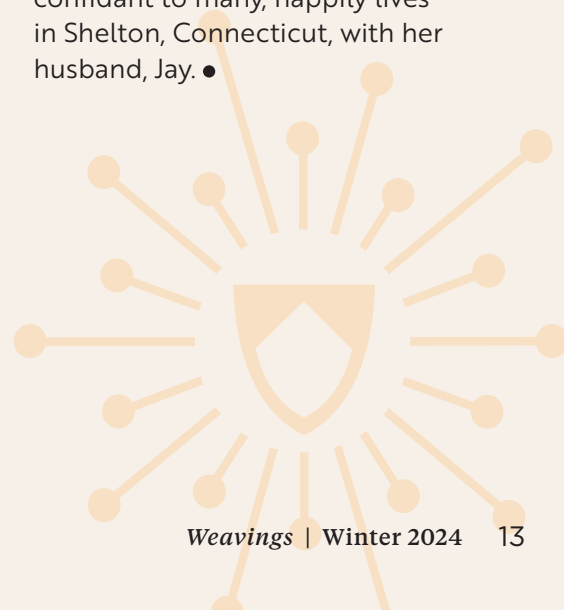
She said, “I found something deeper in prayer, spirituality, and in the women who believe what I believe and the companionship that exists in religious communities. And I’m partial to this religious community. Since we don’t always find what we need in our parishes, I know that what I was looking for I could find here. If you need a deeper sharing of spiritual life and community then Associate membership is where you can find it.”

Ellen’s Associate connection has been life-giving and meaningful to her, her friends, and her family. And she continues to do much to serve the community and those in need, such as spearheading the Pajama Drive. She also volunteers weekly to answer calls at the Dominican Convent switchboard.

Ellen is constantly giving of herself and believes, “We all have a call in one way or another, we just choose to live it in different ways. Being an Associate has helped me grow into the person God intends.”

Ellen does not relish public speaking, but periodically at community meetings stands up at the microphone and encourages the Sisters to think of someone in their lives who might benefit from the Associates’ Program. Ellen loves the words of Sister Annie Willits: “Preach from the pulpit of your life!” She encourages all members of the Dominican family to keep doing what they are doing so well and to invite others to walk with them—to learn more, come to an event, or join the program.

Ellen O’Sullivan, mother of four and grandmother to 12, friend and confidant to many, happily lives in Shelton, Connecticut, with her husband, Jay. ●



SPARKS OF LIGHT

*A spark of divine light
is within each of us!*

– Pope Francis

PHOTO BY OATAWA/GETTY IMAGES

“Sparks of Light” in Our World!

On Thursday evening, Nov. 9, the Dominican Sisters presented the 2023 *Veritas* Award to three extraordinary individuals. Throughout their lives, Bob Laughlin and Friends of the Dominican Sisters, Dr. Mary Leahy, CEO of Bon Secours Charity Health System/Good Samaritan Hospital, and James Salerno, SVP Carvel have embodied the Mission of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill and have wonderfully modeled the ideals and values held by the Congregation. These honorees have cultivated and broadened the circles of relationships connected with the Dominican Sisters’ ministries.

The event was held live at the Rockleigh in New Jersey after a few years of hiatus due to COVID-19. The excellent master of ceremonies, Joseph Ripp, a long-time friend of the Sisters, feted the past and present honorees and their devotion to the Sisters’ mission of education and service.

Pope Francis has said that a divine spark lives within every person. The *Veritas* Award is presented to individuals whose divine spark lights the world in a bright and special way.

This year, the focus of the Mission video was on some of the ways the Sisters and Associates live out their commitment to the Gospel. To view this new video, Let There Be Light, go to this link: <https://sparkill.org/news/sparks-of-light-2023/>

Many donors and friends joined the Albertus Magnus High School choir as they sang the National Anthem directed by Cesar Orozco followed by an Invocation and blessing of the meal by Sister Grace Anne Hogan, OP.

We are very grateful to our honorees, volunteers, donors, and guests for making this a successful and memorable event. ●



Honorees with Prioress Sister Irene Ellis, OP: James Salerno, Dr. Mary Leahy and Bob Laughlin.



Albertus Magnus High School Chorus with Director Cesar Orozco.



Sister Patricia Conway, Brother Michael Harlan, OFM and Sisters Gloria Lowe, and Susan Dunn, at Sparks of Light.

BACKGROUND BY STEPHANIE ZIEBER/GETTY IMAGES

Honorees

Bob Laughlin, Dr. Mary Leahy, MD, CEO and James Salerno, SVP/CBO



Master of Ceremonies

Joseph Ripp

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The Saich Family made it a night of celebration together.

Thanks to other Generous Donors

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Special Thanks to:

Hired Gun Video, MO
Multimedia Group USA, NY



Joe and Irene Macones came to support their friend James Salerno.

View the digital journal, honorees' biographies, and Veritas Award information at sparkill.org.

MY PROFOUND JOY AND

Honor

VERITAS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

BY GRACE M. BARNETT,
O.C.D.S., PH.D.

I grew up in the East Bronx and I attended grades K-6 in public school. It wouldn't be until high school that I was blessed to meet the Sparkill Dominicans. My early occupational interest was to be an airline stewardess—as they were called then. But being the vertically challenged person I was then (and am even more so now!) I would never have been accepted for such a heightened position!

After completing my education in grades 7 and 8 at Holy Family School, I attended St. Helena High School (now Monsignor Scanlan High School), staffed by the Sparkill Dominicans. From my first encounter with the Sisters, with their warmth, approachableness, and great teaching styles, I was enormously happy to begin and complete my four years of commercial studies.

It was during my junior year at St. Helena's that I felt God's call to a religious vocation with the Dominicans. I was blessed to have been accepted into the Sparkill Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary in September 1957. My sponsor, Sister Rose Anastasia, OP, remained my spiritual mentor, dear friend, and guide, from then until she passed away in 2011.

I have often encountered the Lord as "a God of surprises," and it was unexpected that I sensed His calling me *from* the religious life with a mandate to serve others in the world. Through prayer and deep reflection, I

left the Order after thirteen years and began pursuing further education, which was encouraged by Sister Ann Catherine, OP, a beloved social worker at St. Agnes School for Boys. Because of my secretarial skills, I was able to assist Sister in her work through transcription and beyond.

I was then, and remain now, in awe of the Sisters embracing former members as they do. The affection among us is truly palpable, and when the Associate Membership was initiated, I was delighted to be a part of it. I remained as such for twenty years, until our Lord called me again to another vocation.

I met and married my dear husband, Bobby G. Barnett, fourteen years after I left Sparkill, and with his support, I was able to volunteer many years of counseling/ therapy to the children and adults at St. Charles Borromeo School and Parish in Cinnaminson, New Jersey. As Jesus had taught his Apostles, "Freely have you received, [so] freely give." (Matthew 10:8). With the permission of the two pastors of the parish during those years, I was able to donate the modest fees I charged my adult clients to the Sparkill Dominicans to support the aged and infirm Sisters.

Then, in 1999, even most surprisingly, the Lord called me to serve in the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites, (O.C.D.S.). There, I have served in the duties of Secretary, Council Member, and President. Always, and ever close to my beloved Sparkill, one of my Carmelite



colleagues has rightly dubbed me with the nickname "DominiCarm!"

When I had a terrible accident at home on Jan. 30, 2023, I was immediately hospitalized and then transferred to a second hospital where I had surgery on Feb. 1. I asked my husband to please contact the Sparkill Sisters for prayers, which they faithfully fulfilled. Most gratefully, the surgery successfully repaired my tibial plateau fracture, which would have otherwise rendered me unable to walk again.

After two months of rehabilitation in the Wiley Christian Mission and more than five months of in-home therapy, I have retained my ability to walk successfully for which I am filled with much gratitude to God and to all who continue to pray for my recovery. I especially remain filled with enormous thanks to all the Sparkill Sisters, the Associates, and former members for their abundant prayers, as well as for their offered Masses, messages, and phone calls, which have helped me through a most challenging time.

It is truly my profound joy and honor to be a member of the *Veritas* Society, uniting us humanly and spiritually, as it is for my husband, Bobby, who has also become a member. ●

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Veritas (“Truth”) is one of the mottos of the Order of Preachers – the Dominicans. It points to the heart of the Dominican Tradition: to be messengers of the liberating power of truth and the embodiment of Truth in the person of Jesus.



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Meet members of The *Veritas* Society by visiting sparkill.org/join-our-donor-society

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If you would like to speak to someone in Mission Advancement, please contact, Dr. David Coppola at 845-359-4179 or email: dcoppola@sparkill.org. Thank you and God bless you!

Laudate Deum

Pope Francis, October 4, 2023

Sister Eileen Gannon, Justice Promoter, and Sister Aileen Donovan, a *Laudato Si'* Committee member discuss Pope Francis' 2023 publication, *Laudate Deum*. In this apostolic exhortation, the pope emphasizes the gravity and extent of our climate crisis and the need for immediate and bold action to care for our common home.

Eight years have passed since I published the Encyclical Letter Laudato Si', when I wanted to share with all of you, my brothers and sisters of our suffering planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home. Yet, with the passage of time, I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. . . . We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc. [Laudate Deum 2]

Sister Eileen: This is about answering Francis' call to respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor as one. Eight years ago, he wrote *Laudato Si'* and progress has been almost insignificant. The poorest in this world are the ones suffering the most. No one can deny climate change because we're watching the droughts, hurricanes, storms, floods, and the Arctic ice caps shrinking. Species are becoming extinct! The pope is saying we have a responsibility to pay attention.

Sister Aileen: I think a problem is that we have not yet fallen in love with the Earth nor recognized our place within the Earth community. We tend to see Earth and everything of Earth for our use, rather than knowing ourselves as connected and related to all of God's creation.

Sister Eileen: We often deny our connection. The Catholic, Passionate priest, Thomas Berry, (d. 2009) taught that we tend to treat Earth as an object rather than a subject. If the Earth is treated as an object, then we can do anything we want with it. Berry said that humanity must transform its priorities and recognize the dignity of all creation as an interrelated community.

Sister Aileen: When I was reading *Laudate Deum*, I reflected on the mystery of God setting the whole process of evolution in motion. At each step in the process, more beauty and more complexity emerged. A tree or a bee—each brought beauty and a gift that was needed, a purpose. When humans arrived, the most recent and most complex species, our gift enabled Earth to reflect upon herself. Unfortunately, we haven't been too good at using our gifts for the benefit of all.

What Can We Do?

Sister Aileen: The elders in our communities who have lived life, hold great wisdom—especially those who have lived through wars. But for some reason, I don't think we know how to glean that wisdom.

Sister Eileen: The pope asks everyone to take a pilgrimage of reconciliation with our home, to unite with each other, our planet, and with God. And he says, "Every little bit helps." Lowering the global temperature even a tenth of a degree will help. Our efforts to reduce pollution and waste, to consume with prudence are creating a new culture. Our seemingly insignificant acts, when combined with other seemingly insignificant acts, can make a positive difference.

The difference in the tone of *Laudate Deum* is almost amazing because it is scientific, fact-based, and critical of the lack of cooperation with international players. Pope Francis called for the COP-28 to specifically pay attention to fossil fuels. So, was COP-28 a success? Yes and no. At the very last minute the "elephant in the room" was identified—fossil fuels.



Sisters Alishba Younas and Sadaf Aamir pick fruit from the Multan house garden.



Students from Marydell Faith and Life Center plant seeds in the community garden.



What is a failure is the resolution, “Let’s phase out fossil fuels” with no accountability. I believe what should have been said is, “Let’s eliminate fossil fuels” because they are the primary cause of greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

Sister Aileen: I still go back to the idea that we can do all the individual and group actions we want—and we must—but until we come to recognize that we are all connected, that we are responsible for and to each other and all of this beautiful home, we will not as a species stop our destructive ways. I still have hope. There is movement and as Eileen pointed out, every little bit does count. But this is a perilous time. We have to embrace beauty.

The Polish-born, American rabbi, Abraham Heschel, taught that humans need to understand their place in relation to all other beings. If we do not experience awe, then we are not paying attention. He said:

Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement, . . . get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.

Sister Eileen: One of the things we’re doing is to encourage each other to recognize the beauty and value of Earth. The Webb Space Telescope has helped us. It’s so magnificent! I also think that inspiration from Micah 6 and the Talmud is apt:

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly now. Love mercy now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.

Sister Aileen and Eileen: On some level, the task is too big and beyond any individual. But that’s not an excuse. A few things the Sisters are doing:

- We are examining our use of plastics in Dominican Convent, because of its relatedness to fossil fuels. We are working with our dining and housekeeping managers and we no longer use plastic cutlery, plastic straws, or plastic food containers. It sounds insignificant, but it is making us all more aware.
- Our *Laudato Si’* Committee is exploring further ways to reduce plastic pollution.
- Over the past several years, we have invested in companies that promote positive solutions to climate change. We have converted all our lighting to LED and expanded our wildflower garden.
- We are leaving sections of our grass fallow and we no longer use gas-powered leaf blowers and the leaves are composted locally.
- We are reviewing our recycling practices.

Sister Eileen: Harkening back to *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis said:

I offer a brief resume of the technocratic paradigm. It is a certain way of understanding human life and activity to the serious detriment of the world around us. Deep down, it consists in thinking that reality, goodness, and truth automatically flow from technology and economics.

Sister Aileen: That’s the piece that’s often missing. We need to use our intellect to the full, but intellect alone will never be enough.

Sister Eileen: We each have an obligation to look at our lifestyle, and how we interact with each other and the planet. We have far to go, but we are committed to the journey. ●

SPARKING JOY IN *St. Louis*



Associates Janet Crisp, Mary Ann Speno, and Madonna Atwood share good cheer and Thanksgiving cards for those at St. Joseph Apartments.

Associates and Sisters in St. Louis helped to make the holidays merry and bright for 150 seniors who reside at Catholic Charities St. Joseph Apartments. For Thanksgiving, the Associates assembled treat bags brimming with candy along with cards to distribute to the residents. Each envelope was decorated by hand by an Associate, and signed, “The Dominican Sisters and Associates are thinking of you.”

For Christmas, the Associates organized a sing-along social with residents contributing hors d’oeuvres and the Associates and Sisters providing desserts. With Margaret Bush on guitar, the Associates and Sisters led a rocking good, holly and jolly sing-along. Sister Chris Gamache, OP, a regular senior volunteer, reported that the residents were excited about this occasion, noting the event was hugely popular and well attended. The seniors stated they wanted to come and share time with the Associates and Sisters.

Kathy Hof and Sister Chris Gamache are biological siblings united in their commitment to serving seniors. They have a great team of Sisters and Associates on board to help the cause, plus many of their extended family members. Kathy retired and joined the Associates about 10 years ago. (It has been so natural that she can’t quite remember how long.) She said, “I like to do little things.”

Associate Gwen Tresch organizes the Thanksgiving outreach with assistance from the group in packing candy. Gwen hands off the gifts to Kathy for distribution to more than 150 of the residents.

For Christmas, Kathy makes a small gift to give out, such as an ornament. One year she made Christmas stockings in the shape of gnomes (of course, filled with candy.) Kathy reports being inspired by the example of her mom who also made gifts for the neighbors in her residence—even though she was 87 when she moved in. When Kathy’s daughter found out why her mom wanted everyone’s extra candy from Halloween, she joined in the effort full force. She said, “Mom, why do you want all this candy?” She told her two daughters, who were six and four at the time, and they enthusiastically donated their candy to the cause.

So, when Kathy invited her grandchildren to help fill the stockings, they were happy to pitch in. They also helped with the delivery, which is appreciated because the halls of St. Joseph are very long. Kathy said, “I’m trying to instill in them what our mother has instilled in us.”

There is also an annual Christmas sing-along. After one Associates’ gathering, Kathy was speaking with Margaret Bush and Lynn Tustanowsky. Lynn and Margaret shared how they and their choir caroled for the residents in non-subsidized housing and offered to extend it to the subsidized units. Many Sisters and Associates joined in the fun and brought cookies with their voices. Kathy said, “We just sang and sang and sang, and more and more people kept joining us. Residents had tears in their eyes and reported that no one had been at a celebration such as this in five years.

This has turned into a large gathering and an opportunity to let people know someone cares. The residents who do not know Chris is a Dominican Sister meet her in the halls and say things such as, “It was so nice to be thought of” or “I just needed that piece of chocolate today!” or “It just made my day!” So many people share positive responses that a summer sing-along is in the planning.

Sister Chris said, “I can tell you the people’s reactions were touching. It brought our charism of Dominican joy to the place and I am so grateful for that with the Sisters and Associates working together.”

This outreach effort is helping many of the St. Joseph’s residents who have no family or community connection. Residents who live in the subsidized apartments are often poor and live simply. Some people even come without the necessities to live, but people in the building help each other. With reports of such despair and loneliness in the world, what could be more important than spreading good cheer, love, and friendship in our world? The St. Louis Associates and Sisters are indeed responding to a world in need of healing, renewal, peace, and compassion through their ministry at the St. Joseph Apartments. ●

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THE GIFT OF GOD IS *eternal life*

We remember our Dominican Sisters who entered eternal life during 2023.



Sister Elizabeth Anthony Gatto

January 7, 2023



Sister Anne Gerard Foley

January 9, 2023



Sister Eileen Guinan

January 10, 2023



Sister Patricia Clark

January 29, 2023



Sister Mary Reynolds

February 1, 2023



Sister Margaret Harrison

February 4, 2023



Sister Miriam Joseph Schaub

February 26, 2023



Sister Eileen Donovan

March 13, 2023



Sister Sheila Gorham

March 27, 2023



Sister Natalie DeNatale

April 24, 2023



Sister Lois Liekweg

August 3, 2023



Sister Annmarie Fisher

August 23, 2023



Sister Mary Fleming

November 5, 2023



Sister Mary Pius Fagan

November 25, 2023



Sister Carolyn Brambilla

December 3, 2023

*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual light
shine upon them.*

For more information visit, sparkill.org/in-memoriam

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

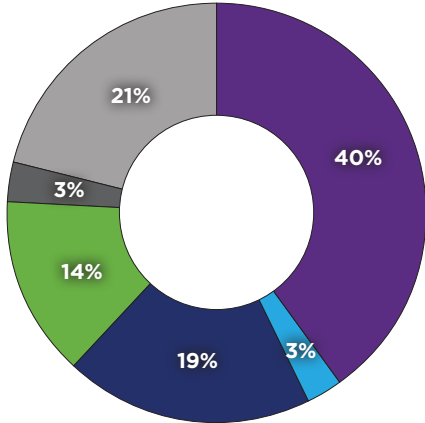
FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2023 | September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023

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# 14-1340103)

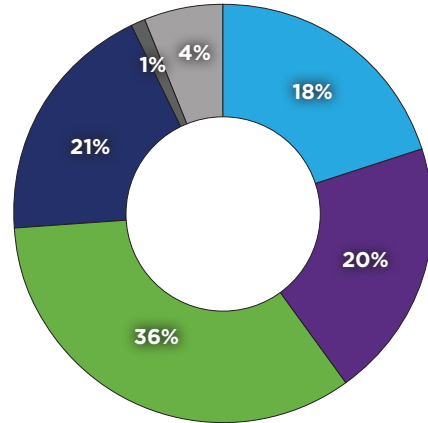
Revenue

■ Sisters Compensation	40%
■ Property Income	3%
■ Gift Income	19%
■ Investment Income	14%
■ Other-nonrecurring	3%
■ Retirement Reserves	21%
Total	100%



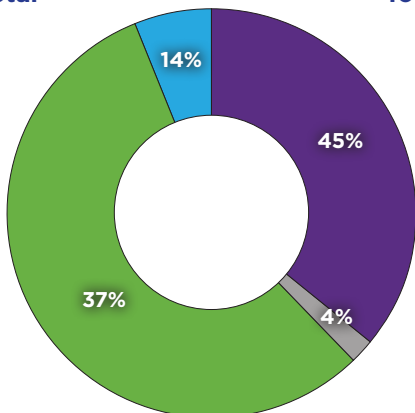
Expenses

■ Administration	20%
■ Heath & Wellness/Skilled Care	20%
■ Sisters Living Expenses	34%
■ Congregational Properties	19%
■ Ministry Grants/Contribution	1%
■ Fundraising	6%
Total	100%



Mission Advancement Source of Gifts

■ Estates/Bequests	36%
■ Foundations	2%
■ Friends & Family	56%
■ Special Events	6%
Total	100%



AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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



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celebrating 27 years of golf!*

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