UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 6-8 (Weekend) Provincial Council Meeting at Provincial Offices in Pittsburgh

MARCH 8-14 (Week) Catholic Sisters Week

MARCH 10 (Tuesday) Cluster Meeting in Texas

MARCH 10 (Tuesday) Fig magazine Spring 2020 Launch Party spotlighting the Monocacy Farm Project, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Banana Factory Arts Center in Bethlehem, Pa.

MARCH 14 (Saturday) Cluster Meeting in Pittsburgh

MARCH 14 (Saturday) City of Pittsburgh St. Patrick’s Day Parade (for those not attending Cluster Meeting)

MARCH 18 (Wednesday) Sister Clare D’Auria presents The Wounded Healer, 6:45 p.m. at St. Francis Center for Renewal

MARCH 19 (Thursday) Care for the Caregiver family education program, 6 p.m. at Mt. Assisi Place (RSVP by March 16)

MARCH 19 (Thursday) Associates meeting, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom between Bethlehem and Pittsburgh

MARCH 31 (Tuesday) Sisters Anita Kuchera and Barbara DeStefano lead Lenten Taizé, 6:45 p.m. at St. Francis Center for Renewal

COMMUNITIES OF SPIRIT, HEARTS FOR MINISTRY

Catholic Sisters Week March 8-14

Celebrating Catholic Sisters

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, offer hope. But for one week, March 8-14, we shine the spotlight on women religious and 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
- Focus on the new world they call into being

Catholic Sisters Week (formerly National Catholic Sisters Week) is now under the direction of Communicators for Women Religious. In this transition year, there is both continuity and change, beginning with the name: The initiative has been renamed “Catholic Sisters Week,” signaling a desire to raise awareness of women religious not just in the United States, but also internationally.

SPECIAL PRAYERS

Our sisters are encouraged to join with other communities of women religious by praying The Migrant Christ prayer at noon on Wednesday, March 11 – the midpoint of Catholic Sisters Week. Copies have been distributed to each sister in our Province.

Our sisters are also encouraged to offer prayers for all those churchgoers struggling through the uneasy process of parish consolidations and realignments.
A PLACE TO CELEBRATE

Our sisters in the Pittsburgh area gathered on January 31 in the new community room at Mt. Assisi Place for an ice cream social in celebration of Sister Pat Marie Buranosky’s 85th birthday. The former Mount Assisi Academy science lab and convent crafts room has been repurposed to provide the 13 sisters at Mt. Assisi Place a space to gather and pursue their passions. In addition to hosting socials, the room has three computer stations and areas for sewing, puzzle-making, caring for plants, playing board games, doing crafts and sharing conversation.

A PROUD MOMENT

Sister Frances Marie Duncan proudly attended the recent ordination of her former student Father Mark Amatrucola, who was ordained an Oratorian priest on January 18 in Brooklyn, N.Y. Sister taught Father Mark honors physics at St. Peter’s Prep in Jersey City, N.J. Also among Sister’s “Prep boys” to make good is professional football player Minkah Fitzpatrick, a free safety with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

MARDI GRAS MISCHIEF

The sisters at Mt. Assisi Place stirred up some Mardi Gras mischief on February 25 with a lively gathering and impromptu “Franciscan Theater” production. The low-budget (of course) performance, narrated by Sister Lorita Kristufek as Sister Mary Moo Moo, included a grand entrance by Sister Karen Buco as Sister Mary Martini with a tray of ginger ale cocktails; Sister Barbara Ann Webster singing as forelorn crooner Mr. D. Jected; and Sisters Georgette Dublino and Virginia Rose Carroll clucking it up for the Chicken Dance.
SISTERS’ ROLE AT SFCR EVOLVES
Sisters Anita Kuchera and Barbara DeStefano have officially retired from their formal capacities at St. Francis Center for Renewal in Bethlehem, Pa. Although they no longer report to work every day, it’s important to note that both will remain involved in the Center’s activities, including as facilitators. Along with Sister Rosaria Shina, they also coordinate our Associates program.

The Sisters’ years of commitment and dedication to the Center and its mission have positioned them as eternally beloved by all who know them. “It’s heartening to know that the Center — and those who travel to us — will still be blessed by their presence and love,” says Janice Gough, SFCR marketing coordinator.

Sisters Anita and Barbara will be specially acknowledged during SFCR’s 10th annual Star Struck Gala on May 30, 2020. This year’s theme is Coming to America.

SFCR WELCOMES FAMILIAR FACE
The Renewal Center recently welcomed Maryann Kearns to the retreat team. As Center coordinator, Maryann will wear many hats that compliment her unique talents and call upon her professional experience.

Through the Diocesan Institute for Lay Ministry program, Maryann served as a pastoral minister with the Diocese of Allentown. She is a certified spiritual director and holds a master’s degree in classroom technology.

Maryann is a familiar face around SFCR as a dedicated volunteer and as an Associate. With a love of all things technology-related, her skills will be tested as she fosters the Center’s work and mission on a weekly basis through the wonders of technology.

SISTER TAKES ON NEW ROLE
Sister Pat Mahoney recently began a new parish ministry with Neighbors North Catholic Community in Pittsburgh. NNCC includes Incarnation of the Lord, St. Sebastian, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Athanasius, four churches nearby Mt. Assisi Place. Sister also continues to lead a monthly bi-lingual Communion service for migrant children being cared for in Pittsburgh while they await sponsorship in the U.S.

MFP CULTIVATES PARTNERSHIP
Sister Bonnie Marie Kleinschuster and Eli Stogsdill, new Monocacy Farm Project manager, recently took part in a roundtable discussion with environmental studies and religious studies students at Muhlenburg College. The class, which is exploring the connection between ecology and theology, plans to do hands-on learning and volunteering at the farm throughout the rest of the semester.

DUO MARKETS MT. ASSISI PLACE
Sister Marian Sgriccia and Kate Guay, former assistant administrator at Marian Hall Home, have volunteered to do some face-to-face marketing work to attract new residents to Mt. Assisi Place (MAP). Over the next few weeks, Sister Marian and Kate will meet with social workers at nearby rehabilitation facilities to familiarize them with the name change and services at MAP. The intent is that when social workers encounter families in need of personal care, they make referrals to MAP.

SPECIAL BLESSING
On World Day for Consecrated Life (February 2), the presence of Sisters Marie Therese Sherwood and Maria Derecola at St. Matthias Parish in Somerset, N.J., was celebrated with a blessing by Msgr. Joseph Curry. With parishioners’ hands raised in blessing, he spoke the words of Pope Francis, telling the sisters to “Go forth ...” to where God leads them in life and ministry. The sisters also received many messages of congratulations and gratitude.
More than 250 people attended our 2020 Night at the Races fundraiser on February 1 in Pittsburgh. The gymnasium at Mt. Assisi Place was filled with the sounds of laughter and anticipation, as the crowd took their chances on 10 races (via video) and a variety of great raffles.

“We are so very grateful to the people who showed their support for our ministries and retired sisters,” says Sister Marian Sgriccia, event coordinator. “None of it would have been possible without our team of dedicated volunteers and our many generous donors and sponsors. We hope you had fun and a little luck too.”

The evening kicked off with a buffet-style meal, followed by the races, and awarding of door prizes and raffle winnings. More than 15 themed baskets were raffled, as was a $1,000 cash prize. A handful of our sisters around the Province won $25 winner’s purses as horse owners.

We were also happy to welcome everyone back to “the hilltop,” where Mt. Assisi Place personal care home now occupies the former Mount Assisi Convent property. “It was a chance to show people that our mission is still alive here,” Sister Marian says.

We had so much fun, we’ll do it again next February. Look for details later this year.

Sister Gracy Kundukulam makes sure to count out the winnings for lucky race patrons.

A FINE FAREWELL

The cremated remains of Sister Geraldine Ann Kasper were placed before the altar at Mt. Assisi Place for a prayer service and funeral Mass earlier this month. The urn was accompanied by a San Damiano cross, portrait and flowers, all atop lace cloths to create a loving tribute. Sister’s niece, Jessica Lee, sang The Prayer during the Mass.