

Weavings

Women making a difference

SUMMER 2020



**ALSO IN
THIS ISSUE:**

Thank you to
our staff, our
heroes

*Trust in the Lord
with all your heart* - PROVERBS 3:5

REFLECTIONS FROM SPARKILL DOMINICANS DURING THE PANDEMIC

SISTER MIRIAM JOSEPH SCHAUB, OP

SUMMER 2020

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From the president ...

Dear Friends,

We all have been living through extraordinary times these past few months and with no preparation for the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic would have upon our lives. From “sheltering at home” to “re-entering phases,” our lives have had to undergo tremendous adjustments at so many levels. The isolation of our loved ones in hospitals and nursing homes has taken a great toll on our families. The loss of family and friends has carried with it a deep sadness. We have been thrust into an unfamiliar world and often find ourselves in very difficult situations, not of our choosing.

We have also witnessed extraordinary generosity, goodness, and care shown by doctors, nurses, nursing assistants, and other health care professionals who have become our heroes during this tragic time. They, along with so many other essential workers, have been on the front lines of this pandemic. We honor them and will forever hold them in the highest esteem.

In this edition of *Weavings*, you will find personal reflections that our Sisters have written about their experience of this pandemic. We know that these reflections are just a glimpse into each writer's experience, for it is not possible for mere words to express all that anyone has experienced during this time. Perhaps your thoughts and feelings will resonate with some of the reflections.

As we continue to live through this pandemic, may each of you receive the support, love, and care that you need. May you experience God's gift of peace during this challenging time.

Our community is deeply grateful for your continued support and care for our mission as Dominican Sisters. God bless you and your loved ones!

Sincerely,



SISTER MARY MURRAY, OP
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill President

Stillness

*Who knew of its coming,
Quiet, invisible, hiding in our midst*

*Penetrating everywhere;
suddenly no longer hiding
And the world community
meets itself in places unknown
Changing forever
the landscape of belonging*

*Winds blow stronger
Birds chirp louder
Skies appear bluer*

*And spring emerges,
triumphant in the wake
Yes, into the Stillness
Eyes open wider
Hearts join closer
Love endures*

– Sister Mary Murray, OP



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THREADS OF WISDOM AND GRACE ...

20/20 in 2020

We say that hindsight is often 20/20, but I am finding that “pandemic” vision can also be 20/20. For so many people, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus what is truly important in our lives.

We set aside so many activities and pursuits that no longer seemed important. Instead, we began to appreciate, at a deeper level than we have ever known, the things that truly matter: our relationships with God, with family, with friends, and with our co-workers and neighbors. While socially distanced from our church buildings, we found a new depth of prayer and devoted a good deal more quality time to our relationship with God. We rediscovered the joy of spending time—even if only via FaceTime or Zoom—with the people we love (something that we did far less often in our pre-pandemic world).

I know that *my* vision has become sharper and more focused about many things. I am seeing much that had previously gone unnoticed. But have I seen what *God wants me to see*? Where should I be looking?

There is a wonderful story told by the late Jesuit priest Anthony DeMello about the challenge of looking in the right place:

An oyster saw a loose pearl that had fallen into the crevice of a rock on the ocean bed. After great effort she managed to retrieve the pearl and place it just beside her on a leaf. She knew that humans searched for pearls and thought, “This pearl will tempt them, so they will take it and let me be.”

When a pearl diver showed up, however, his eyes were conditioned to look for oysters and not for pearls resting on leaves. So he grabbed the oyster, which did not happen to have a pearl, and allowed the real pearl to roll back into the crevice in the rock.

I think that, sometimes, thinking that we know “exactly where to look” is the reason why we fail to find God.

But what if I’m *not* “seeing”? What should I do if I really can’t see what God is doing? First, I must recognize that the awareness that I am “not seeing” is actually a kind of sight: I *know* that I’m missing something. This awareness becomes an invitation to trust. Am I able to trust God when I don’t see, when

I can’t understand what God is doing? Or, like the pearl diver in DeMello’s metaphor, am I not looking in the right places to find what God wants me to see?

Maybe I will discover what God wants me to see (and do!) if I look closely at the inequities that have been laid bare by the coronavirus crisis: elders, black and

brown neighbors, native communities, refugees and immigrants who have borne disproportionately the brunt of sickness and death; immigrants and refugees who are being treated as less than human; hardworking people who are not paid a living wage, unable to afford healthcare or to provide for their children; essential workers who are undocumented but without whom our lives would grind to a halt, including DACA workers who are facing deportation; and those who are most affected by the effects of climate change who do not have adequate access to food, clean water, shelter, and medical resources.

I continue to grapple with the “vision” (or lack of vision) that my experience of this pandemic has brought me. I wonder what “pearl of great price” God is placing before me to be found. What is the wisdom that is waiting for me in plain sight—precisely where I’m *not* looking?



PHOTO BY BOOSTJAN/GETTY IMAGES



SISTER MARGARET PALLISER, OP

Sister Margaret has a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and is a member of the leadership team at Sparkill.



(Left) Sister Sheila Mullins at Good Samaritan Hospital

(Bottom) Sister Sheila in Pakistan

I LOVE BEING A *chaplain*

SISTER SHEILA MULLINS, OP

I am truly a very blessed person. Now, you might ask why I feel this way, and I would respond by saying that it is because, as I reflect upon my various ministries over the last 60 years, I see that I have been happy in each and every one of them.

Before entering the convent, I was sure that I was meant to be a nurse. So, I was all set to go to Bellevue School of Nursing. But God had other plans for me. In 1958, I entered the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill which, at that point in time, was predominantly a teaching congregation. I became a teacher and loved it; and then I became a high school guidance counselor, and I loved that work, too. A new ministry began quietly calling me while in Pakistan where I taught children for 17 years. In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I began to visit the sick and homebound. While visiting patients in the hospital, I found myself supporting their families as well as encouraging the nurses. These relationships became



a meaningful part of my time working among the people of Pakistan. When I returned to the United States, I decided to pursue what has become my favorite ministry, hospital chaplaincy.

For the past 28 years, I have been a hospital chaplain in Good Samaritan Hospital in Suffern, New York. I have learned so much from my patients, their families, and the hospital's staff. Today, I refer to them as my mentors. They have taught me about the importance and power of listening. And they have inspired me to believe in the wisdom of simply being a compassionate presence to those who are suffering from an illness. I love being a chaplain!



Sister Margaret Theresa Oettinger, OP and Lou Shapiro, President & CEO, Hospital for Special Surgery.

“YOU DO NOT NEED TO WORK TO BECOME SPIRITUAL. YOU ARE SPIRITUAL. YOU NEED ONLY TO REMEMBER THAT FACT. SPIRIT IS WITHIN YOU.

God is within you.”

— JULIA CAMERON

SISTER MARGARET OETTINGER, OP

I am a blessed to be a member of a dynamic team of Dominican Sisters and Brothers who are chaplains. We have worked closely together for 28 years, and during that time we learned that affirmation and support are the qualities that have enabled us to become a tremendous team.

This is evident to everybody at Hospital for Special Surgery, where I serve as a chaplain and the director of spiritual care. There is so much to say about the challenges, opportunities, and blessings I have encountered as a spiritual care provider. Perhaps, it is easiest to describe my experience by sharing a story with you.

A young boy who was brought into the hospital for surgery unexpectedly suffered a seizure. This stopped the surgery and placed him in intensive care at New York Presbyterian. The attending physician contacted the Spiritual Care office and strongly suggested that I join the child’s care team. I immediately reached out to the young boy and his parents. Recognizing their anguish, I arranged for a room in our lodging

accommodations for patient families. This permitted the boy’s parents to remain close to their son throughout his ordeal.

Working closely with the young boy and his parents, we discussed their feelings and fears. Many visits included tears and moments of remembering. As a chaplain, I have learned that listening is an art that allows others to share their thoughts and emotions. Listening plays such an important role in reaching positive outcomes, along with meeting with boy’s family, nurses, and doctors as a team.

As the days passed, the parents became more settled and were able to grow in confidence and a positive attitude. The young boy also displayed a wonderful, positive spirit and eventually even participated in the Hospital’s talent show. Their faith and trust in God brought them to a spiritual and emotional confidence that inspired me—and I experienced deep joy in what God was doing in their lives.

I feel truly blessed to be part of this team ministry of hospital chaplaincy. I feel privileged to be able to witness so many miracles God is working among our patients, families, and staff.

Trust in the Lord

with all your heart - PROVERBS 3:5



REFLECTIONS FROM SPARKILL DOMINICANS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Suddenly the world as we knew it stopped! It was the spring of 2020. We were forced into physical isolation from everything that had occupied our daily attention. We were faced with a challenge: to accept and embrace it or to despair over it. Meister Eckhart once said that if the only prayer we ever said was “thank you,” it would be enough. This silent time afforded us many moments of gratitude for what we daily take for granted, namely, life itself with all its abundant blessings. So, the spring of 2020 with its natural beauty unfolding before our eyes revealed to us the gift of God’s presence hidden in clear sight.

SISTER HELEN R. BOYD, OP

*I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower.
He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.*

– John 15:1-2

Have you ever wondered what happened to the discarded branch? Can’t you hear Jesus ask the Father for a second chance for the branch?

Obtaining permission, Jesus salvages the branch, grafts it into his wounded side, and secures it into place with a gentle embrace. Sap—divine life—again flows through the withered branch, which now accepts Jesus’ pulsating life, enabling it to grow and bear fruit.

Recalling Jesus’ words, “I am the Good Shepherd” and remembering Francis Thompson’s poem, Hound of Heaven, makes me think Jesus’ rescue of removed branches is a possibility. What a consoling thought!

SISTER MARGARET CAREY, OP

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis is teaching us how to create a more just, sustainable world for earth and its people. The year was 2015. Only four years later came Covid-19, and as never before in history our common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning.

“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life; the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life” (*Laudato Si*, 207).

This can be a thought for our present *now*. For me, now is somewhat of a time for being cautious; so little of life remains as we prepare to bring what we have to place in the hands of God—who gave it all to us. It takes courage to go forward.

This virus is a:

- C CURIOUS occurrence
- O OBSTACLE that seriously hampers action/advancement
- V VOID in this broken world
- I IMPASSE
- D DEAD END, or at least a DEADLOCK

Had it been designated as *Corona* (a “shining ring” around the sun during an eclipse), perhaps we might look at it differently:

- C CALLING/CRYING
- O OUT
- R to our REDEEMER
- O OF
- N NEEDS that we have
- A for ALTERING the present.

Jesus is the Savior of the world—the “shining ring” around each of us.

SISTER ANNE CONNELLY, OP



It's Spring!

Green grass blankets the earth with thick carpet inviting me to walk barefoot.

Trees burst with what will soon be a unique display of leaves and needles that tell us their name.

Buds release what has been germinating within. Suddenly an array of colors makes its way over lawns and gardens.

I delight in what greets me as I walk amidst such beauty. Nature's annual magnificent manifestation of new life! It's great to be ALIVE!

It's March! April! May!

Another manifestation of nature's power chooses to reveal itself – to inflict pain, loss, suffering, to wreak havoc across the world.

We suffer greatly. Never have we experienced so many deaths, not even among the casualties of Vietnam. Covid-19 is not selective. It is self-perpetuating.

Not partial to age, gender, professional, first responders, young or old, it invades any host in myriad ways.

It is greedy! Who cannot be repulsed by it?

Forget repulsion.

Find comfort and strength in the prayer of mystic Julian of Norwich.

*All shall be well, all shall be well,
and every kind of thing shall be well.*

Delight in God.

SISTER EILEEN M. CUNNINGHAM, OP

I remember when the Covid-19 virus first came into the forefront of our lives. It was Holy Week. For me, the Passion of Christ became much more meaningful. Here we were, living in fear and uncertainty, pretty much like the disciples must have felt. One day celebrating and living our lives, and the next “hiding” and isolating. And now it is Pentecost—we will soon be able to come out of isolation.

I keep looking for the blessings in all this... family reconnecting—going back to playing board games, eating meals together, taking walks together. The earth resetting itself with cleaner air because of less traffic. It’s amazing to see the “before” and “after” pictures of our major big cities.

DIANE DUNNE, ASSOCIATE

Original Blessing

Corona, the edge of a beautiful setting sun,
light and heat, evening at the end of a summer day,
happy colors, warmth in ocean’s breezes,
People at ease.

How wonderful, we proclaim at the end of day.

At dawn, we slowly rise again,
wrapped in the blessing of day.

Corona, the edge bright,
with rhythm fading from day to night.

Now your image is changing in our minds.

Corona, a vicious virus invading,
invisible in its mysterious roaming.

Now arises a rainbow of earth’s people,
loving medical experts challenging your invasion.
This evil arrives day in and day out as people
rise and die in its preying.

Remain in love penetrates our human spirits,
encountering this unholy presence.
Hearts and hands meet it head on,
rising to the dance of a new day.
We are covering our planet in enduring love.
We sing *Alleluia* to Corona’s ending.

We rise again, leaving behind the evil one.
Our love, courage, and brilliant minds
bring us home to the splendor of our Original Blessing.
One Corona, our Creator’s Sun.

SISTER MARGARET E. GANNON, OP



I find myself singing,
“I don’t know what tomorrow holds
but I know the One who holds tomorrow.” *

SISTER MARY JOYCE, OP

* Lyrics from “I Know Who Holds Tomorrow” by Ira F. Stanphill.
© 1950, 1978, Singspiration Music Brentwood, TN



“Sheltering in place” has given all of us an abundance of time to do things we may not always get to accomplish. I have been looking at a box on the top shelf of my closet that contains cards, letters, and pictures that I have saved over the years. One day I finally decided to go through its contents.

I found a letter, dated August 15, 1955, that instructed me to help my mother around the house, enjoy summer vacation, get plenty of sunshine, and be ready to come back to school in September. So many memories rushed into my mind and brought a huge smile to my face. The images were as clear as if they happened yesterday.

It was September of 1954, I was eight, and I stood in the doorway of a third grade classroom in the basement of the church. The room was full of children sitting in desks. I was greeted by my teacher who was dressed in a beautiful white habit, who called me by name and led me to my seat.

I would spend the next ten months of my life in such a happy place where I received a wonderful education, prepared for the sacraments, and took many “Voyages in English.” By June we were very ready to take on the fourth grade in September.

But September would bring great disappointment because my third-grade teacher did not return to

St. Theresa School. Yet, we kept in touch through the years by writing letters and having a few cherished visits.

As I go back to that day, I am sure my journey to Sparkill began that first day of school in 1954. I firmly believe that was when the seed was planted. I had met the person who was going to have a great impact on my life. That person was Sister Ann Eileen who would become my friend and my sponsor. She taught me every day by example to “do all things well as Jesus did.” I never forgot those words.

I am so grateful for her and for all the Sisters who were my teachers at St. Theresa School. They were amazing women. They were kind, and warm, and always exuded joy. Their joyfulness was visible and contagious. I want to thank them for giving me so much more than an education. I want them to know that they had a profound impact on my life. Thank you to Sisters Bridget (Ann Eileen) O’Sullivan, Patricia (Ann Loretta) Neary, Jeanne (Jeanne Catherine) Burns, and John William Wanstall. And to Sister Joan (Joseph Mary) Beairsto, thank you for smiling at me when I was eight.

The Covid-19 virus pandemic has reinforced for me how precious life is and how much I have to be grateful for. I want to express this gratitude publicly.

SISTER MARIA GARGUILO, OP

During the week of Ascension Thursday, I contemplated on the Apostles' fears and doubts. Before Christ leaves them, Jesus assures the Apostles that He will be with them always, even to the end of time.

In Christ's humanity, it must have been difficult to leave the ones He loves, and yet He rejoices knowing what awaits Him—the loving arms of His Father! It seems to be what we all must go through—leaving our loved ones and returning home to God.

How many people have gone home to God these past months due to the coronavirus? In the midst of this sadness, I believe that Jesus has given us the same mission as the Apostles! Even with our fears and doubts, Christ will and is gracing us to witness His loving message to all the earth! Phoebe, Priscilla, Lois are great examples for us of being all that we can be so we too can “set the world on fire!”

SISTER PAT HOGAN, OP



**Holy God of Creation, we come to You today,
Earth Day 2020.**

We come to You, O God, to listen to the echo of Your heartbeat in the rhythms of Earth. Our rhythms have been silenced; we have been stunned into silence. We make our prayer in this silence—

We pray with the psalmist: “The heavens declare the glory of God!” The rhythm of Earth turning brings us the dawn each day. Night gives way to the day in pulsating silence. The morning sky is alive with Your presence. It is Your life in us that lifts our spirit to tell of Your goodness. We thank and praise You, O God.

We pray with the psalmist: “We are Your people”—all of us, on all continents of Earth. Their usual rhythms have stopped for everyone. Something new is rising on our planet. There is an expression of caring that had not been experienced before this viral plague. This is Your kind of caring, O God. It is the echo of Your heartbeat. We humbly pray for strength and

courage to hold and nurture the seeds of mercy that You have scattered before us amid such suffering, pain, and death.

We pray with Mary and Joseph: Jesus, we look to You who knew immense joy in Your family, but You were not spared deep and disturbing pain—physical pain and emotional pain. Still You remained faithful in Your trust in God's word. Hear our prayer as we plead for the people on Earth at this time of fear and death.

Planet Earth, the blue diamond in the Universe, in silence we hear your rhythms—the rise and fall of tides, the waxing and waning of the moon, the crystal whiteness of snow, the cleansing and healing of rain, the tenderness of spring and summer, the gentleness of breeze and the howling of wind.

We listen and wait in silence... we hear Your heartbeat, God, and we believe that You hear our prayer.

SISTER BRIDGET KINIRY, OP



Sounds of Silence

Oh, what richness in the sounds of silence
A presence pregnant with vision and life,
Where soothing melodies engage the spirit
In a ballet of prayer and love.

It is reflective...
Restful as a butterfly atop a bed of flow'rs,
Where perfumed air and delicate growth
Support and enfold the visitor with courtesy and care.

It is intimate...
Hospitality and sensitivity abound,
Gentle breezes of love warm the air.
One is content to relax and renew in these arms of
benevolence.

It is climactic...
Exhilarating in its liberating powers of celebration,
A transference of rejoicing takes place,
Bestowing permanence before the noble and
beautiful face of Christ.

Oh, what a richness in the sounds of silence,
A presence pregnant with vision and life,
Where soothing melodies engage the spirit
In a ballet of prayer and love.

SISTER STEPHEN GERARD MIICK, OP

This day God gives me... a statement that has become so alive for me as I journeyed during this pandemic. It was just after Easter that we needed to go into isolation, “shelter at home,” or another word I have learned recently, “cocooning,” for at least two weeks. Now that was not too hard, as I remarked to some Sisters. It is like going on retreat. After all, isn't a retreat coming aside for a while and reconnecting with God? But the weeks continued, and that's when the journey really began.

To me, it's no coincidence that we were sheltering at home following the sacredness of Holy Week and during the emergence of spring. Four words arose inside of me: *Blessing – Dying – Waiting – Rising*. I was discovering that Holy Week is not just a once-a-year event but is lived every day God gives me. Some days only one of the words was alive, and sometimes all four words came alive in a single day. But my journey did not stop with rising but continued. Somehow the continuance of my journey took on another word, *Hope*.

For me, this was happening behind closed doors. As I was emerging outside my shelter, I became keenly aware of a whole world that was coming to life. The darkness of creation was brimming with brilliant bold colors of pink, yellow, purple, and many shades of green. Birds were inviting me to new life.

More importantly, now I was seeing a change in people. There was a greater concern for one another and a desire to reach out. God seemed to be a renewed part of most people's journeys, with a return to prayer. As I stepped outside my door, there was the witness of my Sisters' reaching out to one another in calls and sending notes to those Sisters who might be still be sheltering at home.

Hope is looming everywhere, and there is still more new life ahead as I contemplate life preparing to emerge from the cocoon. I think I am still cocooning, gently reminded that I may still need to be enclosed awhile longer to rediscover the person God created me to be—for *this day God gives me* to be as free as the butterfly, giving and receiving life. So my journey of *Hope* lives on and on, in the sacred space God gives me as gift each new day.

SISTER ELLEN JOSEPH MOORE, OP



I am a lover of flowers, not a Master Gardener.
I just love what I love.
There were fewer flowers for Easter Sunday,
Mother's Day...but, there were some.
I thought, *Wow, this is different*, and then, hopefully,
thought that there *will* be a rebirth.

Longing for what was, but hopeful for what will be...
Hopeful, for the smiles and hugs of loved ones,
not through screens...
Hopeful, for the voices of people, face to face...
Hopeful, for peace, joy, kindness in our world.

As I pray on the front porch this morning,
the peonies beginning to appear this week,
I remain filled with hope that before long
we will gather as an ever-hopeful family and
community.
God hears our hopeful voices!

ELLEN O'SULLIVAN, ASSOCIATE

**"Come to Me, all you who are heavily burdened,
and I will give you rest."** – Matthew 11:28

*In an everchanging world the Holy Eucharist is
a constant reminder of the great reality of God's
changeless love.* – Mother Teresa of Calcutta

I was seven years old when I received my first Holy Communion. Something incredibly special was given to me that day, and it has stayed with me all my life. The gift I received was a very special devotion to Jesus. This gift came with me when I entered the convent to become a Dominican Sister of Sparkill. This special gift has never faded. Receiving Communion was ever the highlight of my day.

Years passed, bringing all kinds of changes, some welcomed with joyful anticipation and other changes that had to be more slowly accommodated into my life. Mine has been a long, full, and happy life. Teaching and all the activities and events that go with it came naturally to me. I continue to have contact with some of my former students, many of whom ask me to pray for them. And this I continued to do as I brought their

intentions to Jesus through Mary his mother and Joseph his caring father. All this came together as I received Holy Communion each day.

Then came 2020! The year of my 100th birthday and the 82nd year of religious life. With 2020 came the coronavirus pandemic. The whole world is suffering and more than ever in need of the presence of God. And to my deepest sorrow, the highlight of my day, of my life, is beyond my experiencing. I fully appreciate and accept the restrictions that had to be put in place. I do accept that I am one among many who are unable to receive Jesus in the holy Eucharist. But I need to share that this deprivation is one of the most painful sorrows of my life. I pray, uniting my pain with people all over the world who are experiencing severe pain as part of their daily lives. My prayer is that our God of Mercy will alleviate this sorrow that plagues our world today. I long for the day when this barrier will be lifted, that I along with so many other people might once again experience the joy of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion.

SISTER MIRIAM JOSEPH SCHAUB, OP

The iron bell on our front lawn came from our first Motherhouse, Holy Rosary Convent, 329 East 63rd Street, New York City. How meaningful that this bell sounded for the burials of our Sisters during the time of the coronavirus pandemic.

MEMORY

The bell tolls
This crisp and chilly morning
We gather six feet apart
Bidding farewell to our Sister
Sad hearts, moist eyes
Comforted by hints of Resurrection.
Ask not for whom the bell tolls....

SISTER MARY REYNOLDS, OP

Thoughts on Covid-19

My hands are chapped from washing so much.
My nose is raw from the mask. They say, "Don't touch."
From scrubbing everything, hopefully safe I'll stay,
And life will resume more normally someday.

I see the kids playing as I look out my door,
Walking down the street, way more than four.
They're not concerned by this tiny germ.
But they'd better be careful of this insidious worm.

"Social distancing" is something out of their scope,
While we old folks do our best to cope.
This Covid-19, indiscriminate in who it infects,
Even one's closest neighbors are likely suspects.

I haven't seen my family as I "shelter in place."
I hope in isolation at least I'm earning some grace.
I phone to check that everyone's doing well,
"So far, so good" is what I can tell.

This pandemic isn't going away very soon.
Hopefully, things will get better by June.
We'll get through with a sense of humor, for sure,
As the scientists search for some kind of cure.

Until then stay home and scrub.
Get those germs off as you rub.
If you are out, come home and jump in the tub.
Maybe soon we'll be able to meet at the pub.

SISTER ELIZABETH SLENKER, OP

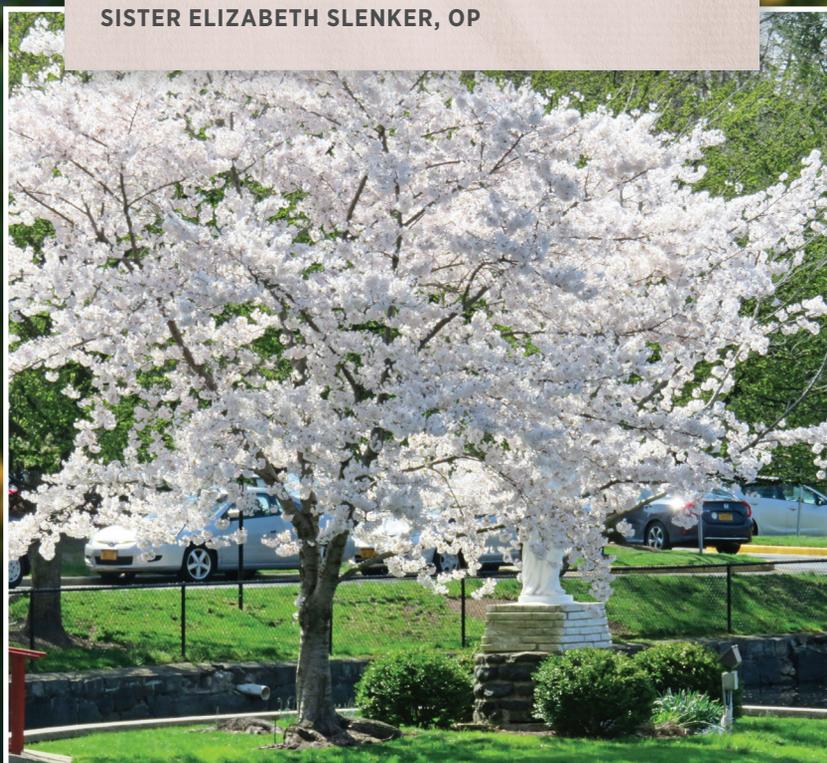
How does God speak to my heart?

The great boulders rise like Leviathan
as the tide goes out.
Shaped by the glaciers
Pounded by the sea
Surviving
Surviving
Surviving
In awesome silence they speak God's Word

Be strong
Hold fast
Love will always last

And love that washes over me
Slowly shaping me
Smoothing the edges
Creating unimagined designs

SISTER CATHERINE PATRICE MORGAN, OP



It has taken a coronavirus pandemic to open my eyes and heart to the beauty I am experiencing each day as I walk along the grounds here at Sparkill. Each tree stands tall and strong, displaying its own uniqueness. The flowers sit proudly on the branches, displaying the beautiful colors and giving off a lovely fragrance. The lawns are so well manicured. They show how well they are cared for.

Walking these grounds always reminds me of how much God cares for me in our suffering world—no matter how dark things can appear on the outside, I have beauty all around me.

SISTER EILEEN SULLIVAN, OP

God's Love

Looking out at our world filled with sadness
for the pain of so many of us,
we need to find the beauty in it also.
To feed our souls God gives us spring
Budding trees, a variety of greens, reds, and purples
Flowering trees giving up their flowers to the wind
to give us a snow of flowers
Pine trees developing their pinecones
Yellow tulips in the garden
Calmness of the lake with masked people on benches,
enjoying the air and the sunshine
Rainbow of promise—all will be well
Missing seeing friends and family,
but telephone and iPad keep us in touch
The beauty and the silence are not new to me,
but the pain of our world is harsh
May we heal soon and truly realize
the gift we are to each other
Enjoy God's gifts that help us
to have strength for one another

SISTER MARGARET TIERNAN, OP

Corona Virus

The way it was
Crisis that became
Overpowering
Resulting in
Ongoing
Nervous
Anxiety putting one in
Virtual
Isolation
Resulting in
Unusual
Survival

After prayer helped me
Concentrate
Observe
Reflect be
Open that
Now is the time to
Accept the
Very
Infinite
Reality that the
Unexpected does and will
Change all of us for SURE

SISTER AGNES WAUGH, OP





A 2020 Adieu

Without a rainbow in the sky
Drummers drumming the drama
Pipers piping their passing we
gathered on our front steps with
Salves on our lips, tears on our
lids which we wouldn't let fall (mourning
would come later), we stood celebrating
the lives of our Sisters now in a hearse
as a solemn, solemn bell tolled
their passing from our lives to the
the mansions prepared and promised His own

SISTER MARGARET RITA BERGIN, OP

The window at the end of the hall brings a view of the outside into our building. The six prominent shrubs that line up outside mark the seasons of the year, by their leaves or lack of them. I like to watch the leaves change from green to red to absence and then back to green as the cycle of life continues.

Over the past winter their bare branches were raised to the sky and, though as strikingly austere as they were, I was longing for them to signal that spring was coming. They did not disappoint. The days began to last a little longer and the warmth increased. The bushes responded by bringing forth their bright green leaves to signal spring was on the way. All was good.

However, this year the two shrubs on the western side of the line did not change. They still had their bare winter branches. Day after day no change came. It was puzzling. Why didn't they break into spring? Are they still alive? Will someone have to take them away? And then, just as I figured out that they would probably have to be removed, something happened. On a gloomy, drizzly day, I noticed a soft green haze around their branches. The shrubs were not ready to be taken away! They had just begun to bring forth their leaves. They had needed more time. Slowly the tiny bright green leaves began to unfold, and now they are turning the darker green that they will wear for the summer.

Those shrubs taught me another lesson from the nature bible of God. Never underestimate the ability of growth in a living thing—a plant, a person, or me. Sometimes we judge too quickly. We need to be more patient and allow the process to develop. God's time is not our time. God doesn't wear a watch. May we learn this lesson from the two plants. And may our own journeys have the same will to grow into the next stages of our lives.

SISTER CAROLYN WOLFBAUER, OP

I begin these thoughts as I sit in our beloved house in Saugerties. Spring has partially arrived—the forsythia and daffodils around St. Joseph's statue, the greening of trees and grass. But it is mostly cold, damp, rainy and windy.

Sitting here listening to the rain with its gloominess
Unleashed my appreciation of the sun.
Now raining, windy and cold have been the norm this **SPRING.**

Hoping each day for the pleasant sunshine
and the sound of birds
Invites me to a gratitude
Never before contemplated.
Eventually, all will be bright and sunny,
and I will say, Thank you, God.

SISTER MAUREEN FOY, OP

Thousands of people die from the coronavirus.
We mourn.

Yet nature moves on.
Trees blossom pink and white.
Daffodils nod, saying with Julian of Norwich
“All shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of thing shall be well.”

For there is a force of love moving through the
universe that holds us fast and will not let us go.

Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia! Let us rejoice.

SISTER JEANINE NOLAN, OP

The experience of the pandemic has been very unreal for us. Being locked down in the house 24/7 gave us a lot of time to pray, think, and learn about those less fortunate than we—either because they had the virus or were out of work. There were feelings of gratefulness and love, thoughts of empathy and compassion, not only for those who had the virus, but also for the many who didn't know where or when the next paycheck was coming. We are truly blessed.

**SISTER CARROL COBLE, OP & PATTY BROWNE,
A FRIEND OF THE SISTERS**

*The Sisters
continue to pray
for you, your
family, and all
those you love.*

WE WISH TO THANK SISTER MARGARET TIERNAN FOR SHARING WITH OUR READERS THE PHOTOS OF THE SPARKILL CAMPUS THAT SHE TOOK THIS SPRING.

75th

Sister Eileen Donovan, OP
Sister Margaret Harrison, OP
Sister Catherine Moran, OP
Sister Dorothy Russell, OP
Sister Jeanne Margaret Stoltz, OP
Sister Marie Louise Ruggeri, OP
Sister Ann Matthew O'Shea, OP

70th

Sister Dorothy Farley, OP
Sister Margaret Rita Bergin, OP
Sister Patricia Neary, OP
Sister Anne Tahaney, OP
Sister Florence Flynn, OP
Sister Bridget Kiniry, OP
Sister Rose Patrice Sasso, OP

65th

Sister James Louise Downey, OP
Sister Eileen Clifford, OP
Sister Carolyn Wolfbauer, OP
Sister Dolores Fischer, OP
Sister John Rose Hartling, OP
Sister Margaret Strychalski, OP
Sister Martha Marie Jaegers, OP
Sister Joan O'Connor, OP
Sister Stephen Gerard Miick, OP
Sister Genevieve Armeno, OP

60th

Sister Ellen Joseph Moore, OP
Sister Elizabeth McLaughlin, OP
Sister Elizabeth Hasselt, OP
Sister Bernadette Nonnon, OP
Sister Maryann Summa, OP
Sister Kathleen Gallagher, OP
Sister Elizabeth Graham, OP
Sister Margaret Riordan, OP
Sister Mary Burke, OP
Sister Maureen O'Toole, OP
Sister Marilyn Fallert, OP
Sister Catherine Naughton, OP

50th

Sister Margo Saich, OP

25th

Sister Catherine Bashir, OP

JUBILARIANS 2020



CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR
ANNIVERSARIES



MINISTRY GRANTS 2020-2021

and Our Partners in Mission

Our donors continue to make a difference around the world. Thank You!



We are pleased to have awarded the following grants for the 2020-2021 fiscal year

Dominican Study Center | *Bahawalpur, Pakistan*

- This project benefits poor and orphan children, the majority of whom belong to the lowest caste of Pakistan society. Coming from minority communities from rural areas, their parents are either sanitation workers in urban areas or families that work for Muslim landlords. These families live below the poverty level. High commodity prices, electricity bills and other expenses of daily life prohibit their ability to pay school dues.

Sister Purissima Hostel | *Bahawalpur, Pakistan*

- The hostel seeks to provide quality education to all children without any prejudice of race, religion, or caste. The goal is to empower children and provide supportive services to promote their education. The parents of these children are either daily wage workers or sharecroppers. They are from a nomadic culture which often places little value on the education of their children.

Days 4 Girls Project | *Dominican Convent, Sparkill, NY*

- Days 4 Girls is a grassroots network of dedicated and passionate individuals working to ensure women and girls in impoverished countries have the personal hygiene supplies and health education they need to stay in school, pursue opportunity, and succeed. During the pandemic, while Days 4 Girls was not meeting, the available supplies were used to make over 400 masks which were distributed to needed sites in the area such as Hospitals and EMS workers. The grant will allow for the replenishment of needed supplies to move forward once the Days 4 Girls can resume safely.

Proyecto Faro/Project Lighthouse

- Proyecto Faro/The Lighthouse Project is an immigrant-led organizing effort to help build a community in which all people can live without fear or anxiety. Working to galvanize support and action among those in Rockland County who feel insecure due to their immigration status, it strives to create solidarity across boundaries of legal status, country of origin, and secular and religious affiliation. Acting as a lighthouse in the midst of the storm, this project walks hand in hand with all refugees and undocumented neighbors who are navigating hostile waters with the goal of helping all to find solid ground. Proyecto Faro is motivated in part by the spirit shared across religious boundaries—that our God commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.



**GRATITUDE
& BLESSINGS
TO OUR STAFF
...OUR HEROES**



Dominican Sisters
of Sparkill
Women making a difference

HERE AT DOMINICAN CONVENT

THANK YOU TO

our staff, our heroes!

We do not have to become heroes overnight. Just a step at a time, meeting each thing that comes up ... discovering we have the strength to stare it down. – Eleanor Roosevelt

With the spread of Covid-19 in the United States also came the heroic acts of millions of Americans who rose to unprecedented challenges to assist their communities. Doctors, nurses, and emergency services staff put their own lives on the line to tend to the relentless demand for medical care under the most strenuous circumstances. Other first responders risked their health and safety to serve their communities—police officers, firefighters, staff at drug stores and food markets, carrier and postal service employees, and government agencies personnel, among many others.

At Dominican Convent of Our Lady of the Rosary we have seen firsthand the heroic actions of our own first responders and volunteers. Our healthcare, dining services, and facilities staff, including maintenance and housekeeping, as well as our IT point person,

faced the dangers of the pandemic while working tirelessly to meet the needs of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. Their department directors spearheaded preventive measures and successfully mitigated the impact of the pandemic on our Congregation.

The nurses who worked through endless extended shifts, the many employees who have faithfully provided essential services, and the Sisters who volunteered to share their burden have truly brought Ephesians 3:20 to life: the power of God at work within us is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine. During one of the most challenging times in our history, God has been with us through the selfless actions and dedication of our first responders. We honor them, we thank them, and we hold them in our heartfelt prayers.



DOMINICAN CONVENT
OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY
OFFICE OF MISSION ADVANCEMENT
175 ROUTE 340
SPARKILL, NY 10976-1047

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Save the date!

23RD ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



Dominican Sisters
of Sparkill



RESCHEDULED
NEW DATE
SEPT. 21, 2020

MONDAY, SEPT. 21, 2020 | NEW YORK COUNTRY CLUB | NEW HEMPSTEAD, NY