

ONLINE UPDATE 6.1.1
NOVEMBER 24, 2020

the
MORE...

Thanksgiving Blessings

A publication of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston



God of Inclusive Love,
We thank you for blessings of earth, air, fire, water that nurture us in endless ways.

We thank you for Native peoples who welcomed the immigrant pilgrims and shared their wisdom and knowledge so that the first Thanksgiving harvest was possible.

In this season of abundance, let us remember those who suffer from loss due to sickness, climate disasters, civil unrest, and more.

Encircle us as we pray for neighbors and strangers, for loved ones near and far, for those around our table and for those with whom we are unable to gather.

God of relationships, continue to journey with us today and through all the seasons of life. Amen.

- Joanne Gallagher, CSJ, Thanksgiving 2020

CSJ Congregation Gathering

Working Toward Anti-Racism: Much to Be Forgiven; Much to Be Learned



"Working toward anti-racism is difficult, yet it is a work of our time that compels us as Sisters of St. Joseph who long for union with others and whole earth." These opening words of Janet Mock, CSJ, set the tone for our October gathering. This first Congregation-wide virtual meeting was, for some, a maiden voyage into Zoom technology.

Our presenter and facilitator, Janet Mock, CSJ/Baden, expressed how impressed she was by our 2018 Chapter Call to tell the story of the Gospel, our charism, and our strengthening relationships for mission. That call led us to devote an entire meeting to reflect on God's desire for us during these days of division and unrest in our world. Janet reminded us that we're talking about the culture; not the individual saying, "The culture of racism is in the fiber of our being as a country. It has built this country. It goes back 400 years. For years, people of color had to speak our 'language.' Now it's our turn to listen."

In small Zoom groups we reflected on the following: When were you first aware that there was racism and how did it affect you? This led to engaging discussion from how we learned about racism as we grew up and in what ways do we find ourselves resisting becoming aware of our own racism, to what actions we are taking now to listen, educate ourselves, and be part of courageous conversations.

The day ended in the realization that, as a community whose charism is that of unifying love, there is much to be forgiven and much to be learned. We are grateful for the spirit which moves always toward anti-racism and toward the great love of God without distinction. In closing, we prayed that we bless our common desire for unity and the grace to engage and continue to widen our hearts and our circles. We signed out of our Zoom screens realizing that this meeting was an honest, hopeful beginning for what lies ahead.

PICTURED LEFT: Janet Mock, CSJ/Baden

Photo: Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden. Used with permission.



Visit www.csjboston.org and our social media channels for continual updates on stories, events, and news about to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston.

Casserly House: Celebrating our Annual Thanksgiving Prayer

by Megan Ranus, Jesuit Volunteer Corps



PICTURED ABOVE: Sisters, Casserly House staff, friends, and neighborhood families.

Casserly House held their annual Thanksgiving Prayer Service virtually this year. In attendance were volunteers, Advisory Board members, After School Program students, and other members of the Casserly House community. Prayers were shared and some of the after school students read poems. Participants were given an opportunity to share what they were thankful for this season.

Retreat for Mothers of Children with Special Needs

The Women's Table hosted a day-long retreat for mothers of children with special needs and caregivers on Saturday, November 7th, at Mount Carmel Villa in Nahant, MA. The unique day offered respite, reflection, and sharing. The program on Saturday ran from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and was facilitated by Dorothea Masuret, CSJ and Mary Rita Weschler, CSJA. To learn more about The Women's Table, visit <https://thewomenstable.org>.



PICTURED LEFT, L-R: Irene Desharnais, Jackie Wright, Mary Rita Weschler, CSJA, Rhonita Hargrow, Mary Sheehan, Lisa Connor, & Dorothea Masuret, CSJ. PICTURED ABOVE, BACK FRONT, Lisa Connor, Jackie Wright, and Rhonita Hargrow.

The Gift of Space and Beauty

by Anne Marie Willhite, Mission Integration Facilitator, Bethany Health Care Center



There is no question that these have been trying times for our residents and staff. There is one place of brightness in all this, however, and that is the beautiful activity center, the back patio, and the surrounding walks and gardens.

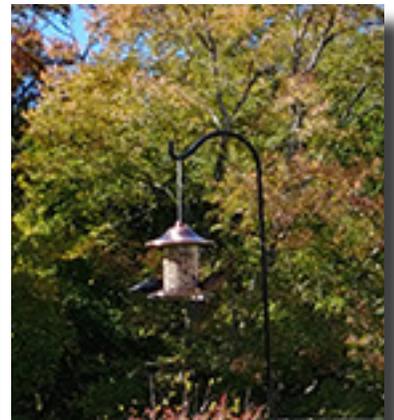
The activity center itself has been a wonderful gift to us. The ability to divide the room allows us a means of hosting family visits indoors in a safe way; continuing the vital connections our residents have with their families and friends, while at the same time, a large open space on the other side for meetings.

Another gift has been the beautiful back patio area with its surrounding walks and gardens. We have made more use of this area than ever before. Every day, residents are able to go outdoors to walk or sit in this incredible place of beauty in a safe, socially distant setting. They enjoyed the ability not only to travel off the floors, but also to see the gardens as the seasons change. Our residents have enjoyed watching butterflies and bees sampling the flowers, as well the varieties wild life that pass through our backyard. The addition of bird feeders has brought a myriad of birds and much entertainment to the residents during these beautiful fall days.

During these challenging times, we are most grateful to those friends and benefactors who have made these spaces possible; allowing our residents opportunities for renewal and connection.

PICTURED ABOVE: Barbara Hallisey, CSJ, enjoying a book on a beautiful October afternoon in one of the side gardens.

PICTURED RIGHT: Residents enjoying the sun on an October morning; A photo of one of the new bird feeders.



Audio Series: CSJ Boston Heritage Moments



PICTURED ABOVE: Jackson Savoy

Jackson Savoy, a senior at Saint Joseph Preparatory High School, shares his CSJ Boston story.

Love and service of the Dear Neighbor without Distinction has been a core value of the Sisters of St. Joseph since the beginning. During this autumn season, we celebrate CSJ heritage moments on October 2 [Boston Founders' Day in 1873] and October 15 [LePuy, France, Founders' Day in 1650]. In preparation for these events, we asked some of our sisters, associates, agrégées, and partners in mission to tell how they live this core value. Go to <https://youtu.be/sgCniV1SOa8> to view.

Artifact of the Month - *Ode to the Napkin Ring*

by Katie McNally, CSJ Archivist

Now that we are in November, the Artifact of the Month reflects on the upcoming holiday season and was inspired by an article written by the Archivist at the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Baden, PA.

Many of us will have smaller circles of family around the dinner table than we are used to for Thanksgiving this year. Those of us who are accustomed to homes warmed by a crowding of relatives will find ourselves in a more intimate gathering of immediate family, or perhaps even alone, in order to protect the health of our loved ones.

Gathering around a table to share a meal is a very human act found throughout time. One tool of the tradition, created in the 1800s¹, is the napkin ring. Its circular shape reminds us of the community – no matter how large or small – gathered together. Napkin rings are used not only for decoration but more practically as a way to denote ownership of cloth napkins between washes. We can imagine how useful they would be in the setting of a convent, monastery, or any home of a religious order. The Boston CSJ Archives holds a collection of beautifully-crafted napkin rings, each gifted to an individual sister by her family, either upon her entrance into the congregation or for her Silver Jubilee. Some are simply inscribed with their owner's name, others include intricate floral details or religious scenes.

Like the owners of these napkin rings who left their families to enter religious life, we are called to find circles of community with whomever we sit at the dinner table. Faced with the challenge of painful but necessary physical distancing, how can we be spiritually present to our circles of family and friends in renewed ways this Thanksgiving?

¹Washy, K. M. (2019). The Napkin Ring: A Symbol of Community Life. *Gathered Fragments*, 29 (1). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/gf/vol29/iss1/12>



For more information on the history of napkin rings and their connection to the Sisters of Saint Joseph, see the link to an article written by Kathleen Washy, Archivist for the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Baden: [The Napkin Ring: A Symbol of Community Life](#)

Bringing Our Oral Tradition to Life



PICTURED ABOVE L-R: Elizabeth Joseph Toomey, CSJ, CSJ Archivist Katie McNally & Catherine Decker, CSJ.

“Telling the Story” is one of the calls of our 2018 Congregation Chapter that takes many forms. Our former CSJ Boston Archivist, Mary Rita Grady, CSJ, often reminded us that, “past is prologue.” Katie McNally, our new archivist, is carrying on that conviction. We’ve all enjoyed her sharing of an “Artifact of the Month,” as she explores our archives and becomes familiar with our story.

Katie is currently researching oral history tucked away in the archives. This is not a small task. To facilitate the project, Sisters Catherine Decker and Elizabeth Joseph Toomey have volunteered to help. While the work looks a bit tedious, they are finding it engaging and enlightening. In turn, Katie is enjoying how their personal reminiscences bring these sisters’ stories alive for her.



PICTURED ABOVE: A compilation of some Zoom Meeting attendees (not all members are reflected).

In late October, approximately forty associates, potential associates, agrégées, and sisters joined in a zoom meeting with Anne Marie Willhite, Mission Integration Facilitator at Bethany Health Care Center.

Anne Marie stressed the importance of self-care, especially during this time of the pandemic. She asked us to think about who waters our roots, what stream waters them, and how we nurture ourselves during this season of heat and drought. We began with an opening song by Christopher Walker, "Be Still And Know That I Am God."

We practiced mindful breathing and were taught to be aware of our needs, discern what works now, and then follow through to let God love us with intention. We read and reflected on Jeremiah 17 5-8, imagining ourselves next to a tree beside water using our five senses to rest in His presence and ask ourselves where our need for self-care is.

Anne Marie provided a lovely image of a tree with its roots rambling into the water to help us. Opportunities were provided for small group sharing. We listened to Christopher Walker's song, "Like A Child Rests In Its Mother's Arms," and asked for the grace of surrender as we rested in His loving presence.

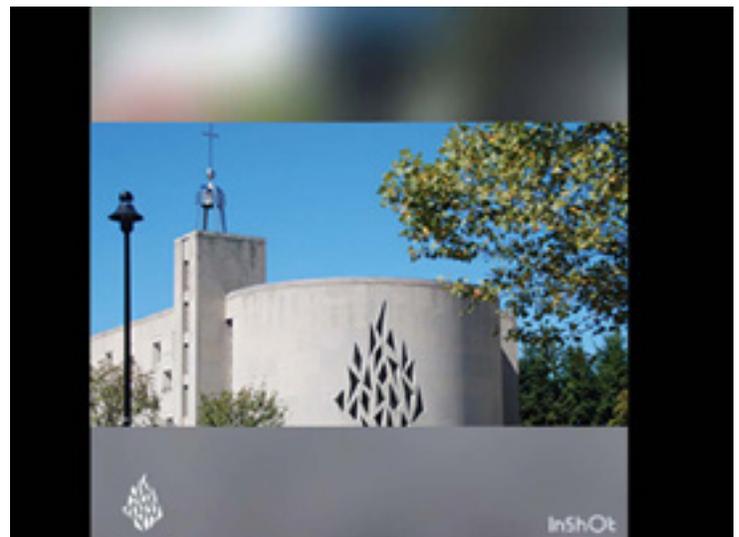


Whatever storms pass over us, we are rooted in our relationship with God, a relationship that nurtures us through adversity and keeps us from despair. We can stop

and sit by the water, being mindful to move in peace, being attentive to love, knowing God protects us, and anchors us in love when we are aware of His presence.

A CSJ Internship: Learning about Social Media, Spirituality, Self

Our CSJ Boston Communications Office has worked with interns from Regis College for the past two years. Last spring, it became clear that Covid-19 was going to make on-site internships impossible. Thanks to some creative adjustments, Garine Minassian, '21, became our virtual Social Media Intern from June through early November. Via Zoom we met to create cross channel social media campaigns for the Season of Creation, the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment, Vote 2020, and more. As soon as Garine [Ga] began her work it was evident that she was already well acquainted with our CSJ spirit and mission. She credited this to her Freshmen Seminar and the reminders around the Regis campus that speak of our CSJ mission. Ga created the accompanying video as a reflection on what she learned about herself during this internship.



Go to <https://youtu.be/OONVX6OIAAW> to view.