



# The Eagle

Easter 2023



## Dear Associates, Oblates and Friends,

The most exciting event of the last couple of months was the official launch of the Capital Campaign at the Holy Eucharist on the Feast of Mother Hannah, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023. So much preparation led up to that event including the Visioning by the Sisterhood in the first 6 months of 2021, our Chapter Meetings of 2021 and 2022, the Feasibility Study by M&M International in 2022 in which many of you participated, the formation of a Capital Campaign Committee and meetings with Section Architects to revision our plans for the renovations of the Guest House based on the feedback we received during the Feasibility Study.

The Holy Eucharist on February 9<sup>th</sup> was live-streamed but unfortunately did not “Live-stream” properly. However, you can find it on our website. Sr. Connie was the presiding celebrant, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the homilist and the Very Rev. Peter Wall spoke at the end of the service. The service was followed by a lovely reception in the refectory. We are so grateful for all the members of the Capital Campaign Committee who have been meeting every other Wednesday for over three months. Their dedication, ideas and suggestions, and hard work are so appreciated by the Sisters. Several of the members live in other parts of Canada and are “zoomed” in by Owl: a new technology to us which enables the committee members who are

at a distance to see us and for us to see them. It works extremely well.

You will find in this “Eagle” a 4-page insert about the Capital Campaign, a Campaign Gift page and a gift card and envelope plus a prayer card which we hope you will use regularly through the year. During March and April we have been visiting major donors, and as of mid-March we have approximately \$1,570,000 in cash and pledges. This includes \$1 million from the Sisterhood. We hope that if you have not yet made a donation, you will use the information provided to make a donation or pledge according to your ability. This could be a pledge over three years.

Education is an important part of the Religious Life. During the pandemic several sisters have taken online courses. Since September, Sr. Kathryn has been taking the in-person Advanced Formation and Internship in Pastoral Care Ministry Course at Wycliffe College which has helped her with her work as a Spiritual Care provider at St. John’s Rehab. Sr. Wendy Grace has been taking the Education for Ministry Course online and Sr. Florence has taken an in-person course at Regis College on Spirituality and Suffering.

We are also involved in teaching courses. Last term Sr. Connie taught two online courses: one for Trinity Theological Seminary and one for our online Companions Program: the latter was on Benedictine Spirituality. This past term I have been teaching the Companions three sections of classes under the general theme of “Who Am I, God, and Who Are You?” The first part was on the Enneagram; the second part on Julian of Norwich; and the third part on Images of God. It is very rewarding to engage people in discussions of spirituality through online courses. Sr. Doreen has also led several online Quiet Days for Associates.

Covid has continued to have an impact on the

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Community. Starting before Christmas and continuing through January, four of our sisters had Covid. Sr. Brenda was off for 3 weeks because she got Covid twice in a row. All of this entailed some cancellations of events: the New Year's Retreat was cancelled and Fr. Freeland's funeral was postponed until January 6<sup>th</sup>. Then we realized that if we took all the necessary precautions we could go ahead with events without sharing Covid with others. It has been wonderful to have groups in the house once again as well as individuals here for some retreat time.



*Fr. Philip Hobson, Kirollos Kilada, Fr. Geoffrey Ready*

We were blessed to host the Fellowship of St. Alban & St. Sergius on January 19 during the week of prayer for Christian Unity. It began at 6 pm with a sung Orthodox Liturgy followed by coffee/tea and sandwiches. Then we heard a fascinating illustrated talk by Coptic iconographer Kirollos Kilada on the interconnections between the Coptic Church and the Celtic and Old English Churches of the West.

One of the blessings of Covid is that the Superiors of Anglican Religious Communities in Canada and the U.S. have been able to meet monthly by zoom for the last couple of years to share joys and concerns. However, we are grateful to finally be able to meet in person the last week of April. This will take place at the monastery of the Order of the Holy Cross which overlooks the Hudson River, about a two-hour drive north of New York City. The Formators have also been meeting on zoom

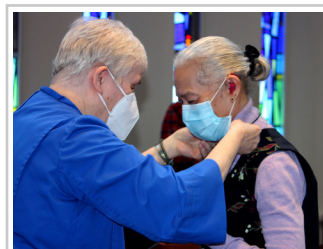
as have those in formation. This enables wonderful sharing of ideas and encouragement of one another.

"Good-byes" are always difficult: on December 10<sup>th</sup> we had to say "au revoir" to Susanne Prue who had been a much loved member of our community for eleven years. For much of her time in the Sisterhood, she worked in the Guest House so I'm sure many of you will remember her. Her deep desire was to be a more active grandmother but we hope that after Easter she will be able to volunteer in the Convent Archives. We also said "good-bye" to Rose Henbest, our only residential Companion. She decided to return to New Brunswick to continue working on a Masters in Creative Writing. We miss her cheerful presence with us and her willing assistance on reception and in the Guest House.

We have welcomed two women as Oblates since Christmas. Julie Foster made her initial promises on January 27<sup>th</sup> and Dorothea-Joan ("Dot") Sweeney made her initial promises on March 4<sup>th</sup>.



*Sr. Elizabeth with Julie Foster*



*Sr. Dorothy with Dot Sweeney*

Three of our sisters had surgery in February and March. Sr. Helen Claire's surgery was for colon cancer and is being followed up with chemotherapy; Sr. Amy Joy first had surgery to the muscle of her left eye, and then a second surgery to remove a lump above her eye. And Sr. Louise had knee surgery and is now having physiotherapy at St. John's Rehab which is very convenient for us. Please pray for a good recovery for each of these sisters.

**May God Bless you with Joy at Easter**

**Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas  
Reverend Mother**

**Sister Patricia, SSJD**  
**May 22, 1929 – October 29, 2022**



*Sr. Patricia*

Sister Patricia was born in Assiniboia, Saskatchewan on May 22, 1929 to Lillian and Melvin (Pete) Forler. She was admitted to the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine as a postulant on September 21, 1967 and made her life profession as a Sister of St. John the Divine on March 25, 1974. On the evening of October 29, 2022, she died peacefully in her own room during her 94th year, and her 48th year of life profession, surrounded by her sisters, following six long years of waiting,

Her family on her mother's side was Norwegian and she was always very proud of her heritage. The family were members of the Presbyterian Church and later the United Church of Canada. After high school she went into nursing, and graduated as a registered nurse from the Moose Jaw General Hospital which was located close to the site of the soldier's hospital where our Mother Foundress and Novices served in 1885.

Later Sr. Patricia joined the Royal Canadian Navy and was a sub-lieutenant in nursing; then trained to become a missionary and served as a United Church Deaconess. She later returned to nursing in England, became interested in the Anglican Church and was confirmed in 1966 in Kent, England where she had been nursing. She returned to Canada shortly after, due to her father's terminal

illness, and after his death she entered the SSJD Community in 1967.

During her years in Community, Sr. Patricia worked in most areas of the Convent and in several of our Branch houses. She was Infirmarian at the Convent five times, spent more than 10 years at Sunnybrook, St. John's Rehab site (known then as St. John's Hospital), completed several courses in hospital administration and was Assistant Administrator at St. John's Hospital. For several periods of time Sr. Patricia was at the Church Home for the Aged serving as Nursing Director and much later returned to Cana Place (the newly located and renamed Church Home) in other capacities. During this time she completed the course then required for administration of Homes for the Aged (now referred to as Long Term Care).

Sr. Patricia was at St. John's Priory in Edmonton for several years serving as Director of Western and Overseas Associates and, during that time, led Quiet Days and Retreats in Western Canada. On her return to the Convent she was once again in charge of our infirmary during the move of the Convent from Botham Road to Cummer Avenue and remained Infirmarian during the settling in period that followed. Later she joined the sisters in Pastoral Care at St. John's Rehab working with the team on A4.

Over the years Sr. Patricia belonged to the Guild of St. Barnabas for Nurses, the Order of St. Luke and the ministry of healing, and completed her Masters certificate as a Reiki Master. She was also a member of the Sons of Norway. She was an entertaining mimic, enjoyed dressing up for entertainments and is especially remembered as Queen Victoria in a play put on for a St. John's Day party.

Eventually in 2016 Sr. Patricia returned to the Convent, and lived in the infirmary for over six years where she received loving care from our nursing staff as she became frail and eventually needing total care.

We all said our fond farewell on the evening of October 29, 2022 giving thanks for her long years of life and ministry amongst us. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

**Sr. Doreen, SSJD**

# Women at a Crossroads

*A residential program for women seeking direction in their lives*

**July 7– July 30, 2023**

***If you are interested in:***

- sharing in an intentional Christian community
- learning how to live a balanced life of prayer, work, study, rest and recreation
- engaging in classes and discussions about Christian life and vocation
- receiving personal guidance in deepening your prayer life,

***then you may be called to participate in this program.***

**Application deadline: April 10, 2023**

**For more information:**

Sr. Dorothy, SSJD, 416-226-2201 ext. 301 or [convent@ssjd.ca](mailto:convent@ssjd.ca)



## The Companions Program

**September 2023 – June 2024**

The residential Companions program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women aged 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

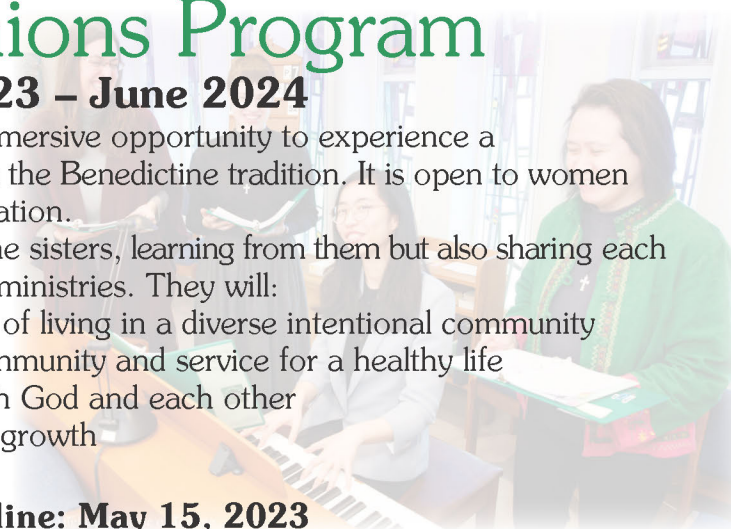
Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion's own gifts with the sisters and their ministries. They will:

- Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- Develop a personal path to ongoing spiritual growth
- Discern individual gifts and vocations.

**Application deadline: May 15, 2023**

**For more information:**

Shannon Frank-Epp, Program Coordinator, [companions@ssjd.ca](mailto:companions@ssjd.ca), 416-226-2201, ext. 342



## The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine

[www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca)

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