



# Journeys

SISTERS OF ST. CASIMIR

Vol. XXV No. 1  
Winter 2011

## Celebrating 90 years of SSCs in Lithuania

With hearts filled with great joy and expectation, Sisters Immacula, Regina Marie Dubickas, Margaret Petcavage, and Theresa Papsis traveled to Lithuania to celebrate with the Sisters of St. Casimir in Pazaislis the 90th anniversary of their founding. The celebration was set for November 18, 2010 and commemorated the actual month and day (November 18, 1920) when Mother Maria with four Sisters of St. Casimir— Sisters Immaculata, Anna Marie Rakauskas, Angela Braskaite, and Catherine Balcaitis— made their way to Lithuania to establish the congregation there. Mother Maria wrote in her journal that they thanked God for the privilege of being able to serve the Lithuanians in their homeland.

How wonderful and symbolic that 90 years later, four SSCs again make the journey to Lithuania, this time to celebrate the life and accomplishments of the Lithuanian Sisters of St. Casimir. But what a difference it was in the mode of travel and in what they would find. The first Sisters found the Pazaislis monastery in ruins as a result

of World War I. The church was without a roof and windows, the buildings and living quarters were in shambles. The Sisters set about the task of restoring the ensemble of buildings which are among the most beautiful examples of baroque style architecture in Lithuania and Europe constructed in 1712.

During World War II the Sisters were banished from their home and scattered to all parts of Lithuania to live their religious life secretly. In 1990 when Lithuania regained its independence, Pazaislis ("Celebrating 90 years" continued on page 14)



*Above: Sisters of St. Casimir from Chicago join the Sisters of St. Casimir in Lithuania in celebration of the 90th Anniversary of their founding. The Chicago SSCs brought with them an original artwork depicting the SSC Chicago Motherhouse and SSC Lithuania Pazaislis Center, linked by Mother Maria, St. Casimir and Our Lady of Fair Love.*

*Right: Sisters who left Chicago in 1920 to initiate a mission in Pazaislis, Lithuania. Seated left is Mother Immaculata, seated right is Mother Maria. Standing from left, Sisters Catherine, Anna Marie and Angela.*





## Dear Friends,

Not too long ago we were enjoying the beautiful feast and days of Christmas. It was at this time that I was introduced to a very inspiring poem "The Work of Christmas" written by Howard Thurman (a spiritual mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr.).

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.*

Today we are well into the Lenten Season. The poem is so prophetic for us as we move beyond the beauty and ceremony of our Christmas celebration to the journey of Lent. Although it may be unusual to tie these two seasons together, I think there is a deep connection.

How often we say "How wonderful it would be to have Christmas all year round." Isn't "The Work of Christmas" what we are talking about? And isn't that also the work of Lent? Can I say that what I have done lately has made a difference in someone's life, a difference in the world? How much does it cost to visit or make a phone call to someone who is sick, lonely, or going through a hard time? When was the last time I donated food or money or clothing to a food pantry or homeless shelter, or even more personally gave a few hours a week, a month, to work in a pantry or soup kitchen? There are so, so many who are lost, broken, in need of healing today: the homeless, the unemployed, the immigrant, the undereducated, the depressed, the handicapped, the addict, the victim of human trafficking/modern slavery, those suffering from the ravages of war and disaster. The list goes on and on. Sometimes all we can do is pray. And sometimes God helps us find a way, gives us the courage and energy to become involved in a more direct way. Seek and you will indeed find.

The story of Christmas is never complete until "The Work of Christmas" begins. The journey of Lent is never complete with simply the reception of ashes and observance of the days of fast and abstinence. It is fulfilled by "the work of Lent." It is only then that our lives truly reflect the angels' song of praise, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to all of us of good will" — the "Alleluias" of an Easter people.

*Sister M. Immacula, S.C.C.*

Sister M. Immacula  
General Superior, Sisters of St. Casimir



*"If we want the Risen Christ to visit our community and to grant it the peace which He gave then to His own, we must love Him, not with a tepid love but with an ardent love which inspires us to do great things for Him, to embrace His concerns as our own."*

*- Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas*

# Holy Cross Hospital Continues its Mission — *in a New Way*

The Sisters of St. Casimir continue the process of transferring Holy Cross Hospital to Vanguard Health Systems which operates four other hospitals in Chicago. The Sisters of St. Casimir have sponsored Holy Cross Hospital for the past 83 years, seeing it through many transitions and changes. In the last 15 years, like all other organizations in the health care field, the hospital has faced numerous challenges. These have necessitated freezing of raises, reduction in employees, and a diminishment in financial resources for capital improvements. Two years ago, Holy Cross faced a severe financial crisis and almost had to close its doors, leaving the surrounding community without a hospital.

The transfer of the hospital to Vanguard enables Holy Cross to continue its mission to serve the diverse community that surrounds the hospital. Sr. Immacula, in her statement announcing the sale of the hospital, stated that it fulfilled the three criteria that the Sisters had in mind in their search for a partner: *that the hospital would remain Catholic, that there would be an infusion of monies to continue making capital improvements at the hospital and to fulfill employee obligations, and that employees would be treated well.* "Many of our employees have been here for a long time, and they have been through thick and thin with us," Sr. Immacula reported. "Many of them had not had raises for the past two years."

In the agreement with Vanguard, the Sisters will con-

tinue to play an active role as they oversee the Catholic identity of the hospital. In a new and creative endeavor, the Sisters will establish a special Catholic Monitoring Committee and have an advisory role in some key decisions related to pastoral care, the ethical directives of the Catholic Church, and mission integration.

Cardinal Francis George approved the sale of the hospital and said that, while the situation is unique, he believes the agreement provides a means for the hospital to continue its mission. The Sisters of St. Casimir will oversee the Catholic identity of the hospital, while it will be owned and operated by Vanguard.

Vanguard operates one other hospital in its system which is a Catholic hospital—St. Vincent's in Worcester, MA. The SSC council visited there and spoke with key people to verify that Vanguard remains true to their word. St. Vincent's is under the direct oversight of the diocese, whereas Holy Cross will be under the oversight of the SSCs. The heritage of the Sisters of St. Casimir and the mission of Holy Cross will continue to live on in a new and vibrant, 21st century way.



## Migration Awareness



Sr. Marilyn Medinger, CND

This year's SSC motherhouse commemoration of National Migration Week (January 2-8, 2011) began with a presentation by Sister Marilyn Medinger, CND, who spoke about immigration issues to about 45 Sisters of St. Casimir. Sister Marilyn, who lives at the SSC Motherhouse, shared some of her experiences of her ministry with immigrants at the Broadview Detention

Center and at the McHenry County Jail. She also presented information to dispel some common myths about immigration.

### A Common Myth – True or False?

"Undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes."

*Answer:* **FALSE**

Undocumented immigrants do pay income, property and sales taxes.

The presentation in the context of prayer set the tone for the rest of the week and provided much to think about as we work together as a community and as a nation to address the issue of reforming immigration laws.

*Sisters Lawrence Puishys (left) and Elaine Kuizinas reflect on the immigration issues presented during National Migration Week.*

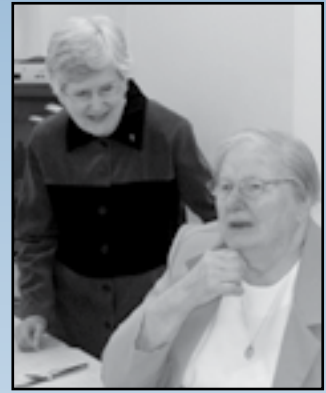


# IHM Leadership Team Vists the SSCs

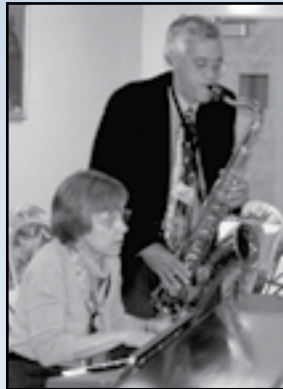
On March 3, 2011, the Sisters of St. Casimir welcomed with joy the leadership team of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Scranton PA. The weekend was spent in sharing with one another, touring Holy Cross Hospital, Maria High School, and the Food Pantry, meeting with our colleagues, and getting to know one another more personally. A highlight of our time together was the celebration of our patronal feast of St. Casimir on March 4 with a special Eucharistic Liturgy followed by a “thanksgiving meal” and a wonderful musical program presented by our friends Andy Tecson and his wife Nancy Hagan. The following day, many people joined in the first Saturday Mass praying for the beatification of Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas. Throughout our time together with the IHM Sisters there was the growing realization of the grace of our covenant relationship, a bond that was formed when Mother Cyril, IHM welcomed our Mother Maria to the novitiate in Marywood as she was embarking on the founding of our congregation, and that has continued to this day. As we deepen the covenant relationship between our two congregations, we hope to grow in our personal relationships with one another as we continue the journey in a spirit of hope and collaboration.



*The IHMs were greeted with great joy upon their arrival. From left, Sisters Agnese Chapp and Theresa Papsis look on as Sister Rosemary Goulet, IHM is welcomed by two SSC Sisters.*



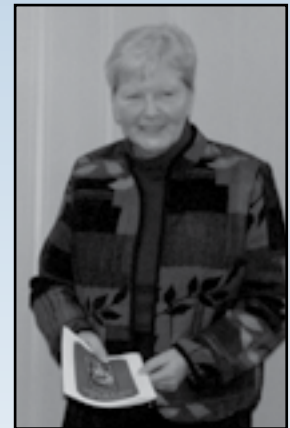
*Sr. Ellen Carney, IHM, greets Sr. Regina Janusa, SSC during a visit to the infirmary.*



*Andy Tecson and his wife Nancy Hagan lead the program during the St. Casimir's feastday celebration.*



*Sr. Terry O'Rourke, IHM, waits for a taste from a MHS Foods Class student during a tour of the school.*



*Sr. Ellen Maroney, IHM, prepares for the St. Casimir's Day liturgy.*



*(At right) Sr. Chris Koelhoeffer, IHM, and Sr. Regina Sitkus, SSC, enjoy the festivities.*



*The SSC and IHM 2011 Leadership Teams  
Standing (from left) Sisters Margaret Zalot, SSC; Rosemary Goulet, IHM; Theresa Dabulis, SSC; Ellen Maroney, IHM; and Ellen Carney, IHM. Seated (from left) Sisters Chris Koelhoeffer, IHM; Terry O'Rourke, IHM, President; Immacula Wendt, SSC, General Superior; Regina Marie Dubickas, SSC.*

## And the Amazing Story Continues

Mount Carmel, PA, a lovely little town situated in east-central Pennsylvania, is aptly named after the holy mountain in Palestine, as it sits on beautiful rolling hills. The warmth of the people and its picturesque location create a friendly place where anyone would want to live. In its early years it was destined to be a very progressive town as Thomas Edison built one of his first generating plants there and the town became one of the world's first to have its streets illuminated by electricity. It was in this growing community, settled by a variety of turn of the 20th century immigrants, that the Sisters of St. Casimir opened their first school in 1907. Rev. Anthony Staniukynas, pastor of Holy Cross Parish and the Sisters' first spiritual director, teacher, and benefactor, built the school for the newly established religious congregation which was founded for the preservation of the faith of the newly arrived Lithuanian immigrants. For years the school thrived until societal changes took hold, and many of the youth began to leave for bigger and greater sights. The school and parish eventually closed. But as they say, "if you wait long enough, good things happen." And so it did in a most unexpected way.

In 2002, Pauline Visintainer, now St. Pauline (1865-1942) was canonized in Rome. She was an Italian girl whose family migrated to Brazil. There St. Pauline, seeing the needs of the poor, established a religious congrega-

tion to tend to the orphans and the abandoned sick. She died in 1942 in Brazil, totally blind and maimed from diabetes. Her holiness was widespread and so the process began for her canonization. Many of St. Pauline's relatives who live within the Mt. Carmel, PA area attended her canonization in Rome. Their devotion and love was so great for their holy relative that they sought a place, a shrine, to keep her relic and to sustain devotion to her holy life in the Pennsylvania area. This they accomplished by purchasing a lovely closed church in Kulpmont, PA (close to Mt. Carmel) and created an inspiring center and shrine to her. St. Pauline is known as the intercessor for diabetes from which she died.

In July, when the news hit the Mt. Carmel newspaper that Servant of God Maria Kaupas was named Venerable and that she had lived and worked there, Bob Greco and the Visintainer family contacted local Lithuanian residents Marion Wydra, Mark Sassani (nephew of SSC deceased Sr. Emerenciana) and Greg Sacavage. The Visintainer family generously offered to include artifacts of Mother Maria in the St. Pauline Shrine. The Lithuanian community was overjoyed, and eagerly accepted the opportunity to honor Mother Maria, who had walked the streets of Mt. Carmel and taught their relatives. Plans progressed rapidly as Sister Margaret Petcavage, Vice Postulator, arranged to send three beautiful paintings of Mother Maria to the shrine. The paintings are especially precious in that they were painted by our own artist, Sister Kathleen Smith, SSC on the occasion of the Congregation's 75th Anniversary. Sister Margaret also sent some other special items – a blue cord Mother Maria made and wore, an amber rosary in an amber case which she had received from the Sisters of St. Casimir in Lithuania and several of her prayer books. Books written about Mother are also displayed. The artifacts are arranged in a case for visitors to see and learn about this holy woman. *The Amazing Story continued on page 15*



*Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas, c. 1904. The photo inspired a painting by Sister Kathleen Smith, SSC, which was donated to the St. Pauline Center in Mt. Carmel, PA.*



*Pictures of Mother Maria grace the wall of the St. Pauline Shrine in Mt. Carmel, PA. At left: Casimira Kaupas as a postulant while studying at the Theresianum, the Sisters of the Holy Cross' boarding school in Ingenbohl, Switzerland. She is pictured with her youngest sister, Katherine, also a boarder. Center: Mother Maria in the apple orchard in Pazaislis, Lithuania where she founded the Lithuanian Sisters of St. Casimir. Right: Casimira Kaupas (Mother Maria) as a boarder in Switzerland.*

# The Christmas Wafer

by Sister Theresa Dabulis

## What you received as a gift – give as a gift

I received my faith and the tradition of sharing a Christmas wafer on Christmas Eve from my mother who was a Lithuanian immigrant. She was a living testimony to me of what the wafer represented: forgiveness, love and peace. I have a memorable treasure of my mother holding a picture of me close to her heart in one hand and the Christmas wafer in the other.

The Sisters of St. Casimir continue this same tradition of sharing the Christmas wafer on Christmas Eve. This tradition holds a depth of meaning for me and for this reason I wanted to share it with the students at Maria High School in Chicago and Villa Joseph Marie High School in Pennsylvania.

Before sharing the Christmas wafer a prayer is said for those who are not present and those who have died, asking God to bring peace to our hearts, home and world. Everyone takes a wafer and presents it to each person present. Breaking off a piece of each other's wafer, they extend a greeting for good health, peace, joy, or whatever else they wish to express.



*Students at Villa Joseph Marie High School share bread and so much more during the Christmas wafer ritual.*

The following are some of the comments I received from the students who experienced sharing the Christmas wafer with their classmates.

*"It was an unforgettable moment for me. I was surprised by the wishes my classmates gave me."*

*"It gave me a sense of belonging."*

*"It felt good to see a smile on all my friends."*

Some of the students shared the experience with their family. For many, it was the first time they did something like this.

*"My family was thankful for the experience. Sharing the wafer helped to bring peace to the dinner table."*

*"This was an experience that I wanted to extend to my family. On Christmas Day I placed the wafer in the center of the table and we began to share our love and greetings to each other."*

*"After we shared the wafer, my family said they couldn't wait until next year so we can repeat this wonderful experience."*



*Sister Theresa Dabulis introduces the Christmas wafer tradition to students at Villa Joseph Marie High School. She also shared the story with students at Maria High School.*

# Christmas 2010 Celebrations



*Holy Cross Hospital Tea*



*SSC Associates  
Visit the Infirmary*



*SSC Motherhouse Chapel*



*Maria Students  
Perform*



*SSC Employee  
Christmas Dinner*



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*Benefactors continued on page 10*

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# SSC Food Pantry: "Simply Serving with Compassion"

Although the SSC Food Pantry has been in operation since 1994, there has been a resurgence of energy, enthusiasm, interest and support in this outreach of the Sisters of St. Casimir because of the increased need for this service within the neighborhood around the Motherhouse. The current director, Sister Mary Louise Andrulonis, has reached out for new volunteers and support. "Simply Serving with Compassion" has become the motto for Sister Mary Louise and all who work with her, from the young women who come weekly to stock shelves, to the retired men who bring bread each week.

A recent grant obtained through the **JEWEL-OSCO HUNGER RELIEF PROGRAM** demonstrates this well. With the grant Sister Mary Louise was able to purchase large storage totes, a laptop computer and a printer. Through the program, the SSC Pantry also received a food voucher for the Greater Chicago Food Depository. These benefits are helping to expand and improve the services offered at the Pantry.

In addition to this first time grant from Jewel-Osco, the shelves of the SSC Food Pantry have been kept filled, thanks to its many generous benefactors and volunteers. Sister Mary Louise Andrulonis and the Sisters of St. Casimir, are very grateful to those who have supported the Pantry in recent months.



*Maria High School volunteers take a break with Sister Mary Louise Andrulonis, Director of the SSC Food Pantry.*

Weekly volunteers include Veronica Devereux, Lisa Penkas, Sisters of St. Casimir — Sister Grace Ann Kalafut, Sister Andreata Naudziunas, Sister Mary de Sales Sokol, Sister Lourdine Ramoska, Sister Bernadette Marie Janus, and students from Maria High School.



*A statue of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of the SSC Food Pantry, is displayed in the Pantry office.*

## SSC SAINT ELIZABETH PANTRY BENEFACTORS JANUARY 1, 2010 – JANUARY 31, 2011

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Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis Mission  
Curves (63rd & Kenneth)  
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O'Donnell Eddy Floss Post #714  
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Mr. John Sokol  
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St. Linus Knitters and Crocheters  
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St. Mary Star of the Sea Religious Ed Classes  
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St. Norbert School  
St. Norbert Religious Education Classes  
Mr. & Mrs. A. Joseph Zielbauer

# Along the Way

## **Intercommunity Retirement Network Celebrates 25 Years**

For the past 25 years, the Intercommunity Retirement Network has developed and promoted new approaches to issues of aging and caregiving, offering workshops and programs for members of religious congregations and their caregivers. The Sisters of St. Casimir were one of the founding member congregations, and Sr. Grace Ann Kalafut, SSC, has been a member of this organization since 1993. She has served as a delegate from our congregation since 1998, and has been on the governing board for the past two years.



*Sister Grace Ann Kalafut (far right) with other members of the governing board of the Intercommunity Retirement Network for Religious and Clergy who have worked to make possible collaborative efforts among religious congregations in addressing the needs of an aging membership.*

## **Bethlehem Lights the Motherhouse**

The idea of the Bethlehem Light began in 1986 in Austria when a young person traveled to Bethlehem and lit a candle from the place where Jesus, the Light of the World, was born. This lantern was brought back to Vienna and carried to many other cities so that people could bring this light into their homes and places of worship. The Bethlehem Light is a symbol of peace and friendship. The mission is to reach as many people as possible and to encourage everyone to actively work for peace and



*Anne Savickas, Lithuanian scout and Maria alumna, brought the Bethlehem Light of Peace to the Motherhouse with other scouts.*

to seek tolerance and respect for those who differ in ethnic and cultural background, political ideologies, and religion. The Lithuanian scouts in Chicago became involved with this mission, and visited the SSC Motherhouse with the Bethlehem Light during this Christmas season. Together with the Sisters, they prayed for peace in our hearts, our families, our community, our country and in our world.

## **Strategic Planning at VJM**

The Villa Joseph Marie Board approved a new Strategic Plan at their meeting last Fall and continues to work with the school community in ways that this plan can be implemented successfully over the next five years with the support of alumnae and others. Plans are in place to renovate a current classroom into a state-of-the-art physics lab and to provide wireless access throughout the school.



*(standing) Sister Ann Monica Bubser, IHM, James Pirollo, Sister Immaculata Wendt, SSC, Charles MacIntosh, Sister Margaret Zalot, SSC, (Chair), E. Garrett Gummer, III, John Gibbons, Sister Rose DiFluri, IHM, and Cindy Bayer; (seated) Vicky Boyk (Vice Chair), Diana Koopman (Principal), Mary T. Michel (President), Mary Smithson, and Amy Drobile. Not pictured: Christine Heys Armetta and Sister Theresa Dabulis, SSC*

## **Farewell, Bishop Gustavo**



Sisters Theresa Dabulis, Margaret Zalot, Immaculata Wendt, and Regina Dubickas had the privilege of taking part in the last Mass that Bishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller celebrated in the chapel of his residence the day that he left Chicago for his new assignment as Archbishop of the Diocese of San Antonio. Bishop Gustavo was a great friend of our community and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

# Along the Way

## Notre Dame Students study "A City of Hope"

From January 10-16, 2011, the Motherhouse community was once again enriched by the presence of students from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN. The Motherhouse was their home base during their days in Chicago as they participated in a week long seminar called "A City of Hope" in which they learned first hand about organizing in the city of Chicago. We were privileged to share some times of prayer and a number of meals together over the course of their days here, getting a flavor of their youthful enthusiasm, their passion for justice and "changing the world," their love for life and their spirit of adventure "across the globe."



Notre Dame students used the SSC Motherhouse as their "home base" while studying in Chicago in January. From left: Mistee Colbert, Kaitlin Wegrzyn, Roman Sanchez, Sarah Furman, Sister Grace Ann Kalafut who coordinated their stay at the Motherhouse, David Jones, and Liz Furman.

They appreciated the time they spent sharing with the sisters over a meal, the warm hospitality of the Motherhouse community, and the knowledge they received about the commitment of the Sisters of St. Casimir to the neighborhood. Throughout the week they heard the stories of organizers and leaders from different areas of the city, including the stories of a number of organizers and leaders from the Southwest Organizing Project. Sister Margaret Zalot had the opportunity to share the role of the Sisters of St. Casimir in the neighborhood and how Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas continues to be an inspiration for this ministry. We are truly grateful to have received these special guests within our midst!

## Celebrating the CND Sisters



Sisters Julia Lydon, Mary MacIsaac, and Marilyn Medinger of the Congregation of Notre Dame have been living with the Sisters of St. Casimir since September 2010. On the feast of their foundress, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys (January 12) they prepared a special Vespers service and provided the evening meal. The SSCs have been enriched by the presence of these Sisters and of Sr. Paracleta, a Sister of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, who also resides with us.

*"All that I have ever desired is that the great precept of the love of God and neighbor be written in every heart."  
— St. Marguerite Bourgeoys*

## Amándoles, Madre María

Sisters Immacula Wendt and Theresa Dabulis travelled to Argentina in February to visit with the SSCs missioned there as they began their new year of school and parish ministry. During their visit, they met with the SSC Argentine Associates in Avellaneda, and led them in a prayer service of recommitment to the charism and mission of Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas. The SSCs in Argentina, although few in number – three Sisters in Cordoba and three in Avellaneda – have made a great impact on the lives of the people with whom they come in contact.



SSC Argentine Associates listen to Sr. Immacula's sharing about Mother Maria.

## Celebrating 90 Years (continued from page 1)



*Sister Immacula Wendt, General Superior of the SSCs in Chicago (left) and Sister Lidija Sicaite, General Superior of the SSCs in Lithuania, share a moment during the celebration.*

the return of the miraculous picture of Mother of Fair Love to its rightful place, creating rooms for retreatants and visitors, and adapting the convent space to the needs of the Sisters. They continue to give tours to the many visitors who come to Pazaislis from all parts of the world. Their current project is the redesign of one of the buildings on the grounds as a museum and center for learning.

The Eucharistic Liturgy commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Lithuanian Sisters of St. Casimir took place at the Cathedral in Vilnius. It was celebrated by Bishop Juozas Tunaitis together with a number of priest friends of the congregation. Symbolic gifts were carried in the procession: a basket of apples from the orchard at Pazaislis symbolizing the fruitfulness of their life, an Easter candle and the emblem of the congregation—the lily, sword, and crown. The latter was carried by Sr. Immacula, General Superior of the SSCs in the U.S. and Sr. Jone, who had served as General Superior of the SSCs in Lithuania. Sr. Theresa Papsis read one of the petitions during the prayer of the faithful. Magnificent singing of hymns by a special choir enhanced the solemn liturgy.

was restored to the Sisters and, once again, in disrepair. Today, while much work still needs to be done, the Sisters, together with the lay persons who assist them, have accomplished a great deal in restoring the beauty of the Church and its masterpieces of art, accomplishing



*Sister Theresa Papsis participated in the 90th Anniversary liturgy during the Prayers of the Faithful.*

After the Mass, the guests were invited to the Lithuanian National Museum for the educational conference. Sisters Regina Marie Dubickas and Margaret Petcavage had the privilege of giving a presentation on Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas. They presented aspects of Mother Maria's life and spirituality, and their meaning and importance today. Information about the progress of Mother Maria's cause for beatification was also provided. Other presenters were Dr. Regina Laukaityte who spoke about the place of the SSCs and their contribution to the history of Lithuania, and Professor Dr. Laima Sinkunaite, who spoke about the significance of the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Fair Love that holds a central place above the main altar in the Sisters' monastery church. Sr. Lidija Sicaite, the General Superior of the SSC Congregation in Lithuania, shared who the Sisters are today – their ministries, their spirituality, and their vision for the future.

The celebration continued with the opening of the exhibit of the Sisters of St. Casimir, which displayed the history and life of the Congregation in pictures. Sr. Lidija opened the exhibit with words of welcome and gratitude to God for the many blessings that filled their lives. A violinist rendered several musical selections. The Agape that followed featured delicious selections of food, and opportunity for fellowship, bestowing of gifts to the Congregation and words of praise for their presence and ministry in Lithuania.

What more can one say than the words on the invitation received from the Sisters. "In welcoming this 90 year journey of faith, hope, and love, the Lithuanian Sisters of St. Casimir thank God for all the marvelous gifts bestowed everyday: the discoveries and the losses, the joys and the concerns that are part of every person's life – reflections of the Father's goodness."



*Guests mingle at the opening of the Sisters of St. Casimir pictorial exhibit, which displays the history and life of the Lithuanian SSC Congregation.*

# At Journey's End — *Eternal Days Beginning*

## Sister Marion Barbara Panke, SSC Formerly Sister M. Devota, SSC

APRIL 17, 1920 – FEBRUARY 15, 2011



Marion Barbara Panke grew up in Rockford, IL. When Marion was entering the fourth grade, the Sisters of St. Casimir came to teach at her parish school. Marion and her friends were very interested in the Sisters, and used many ploys to get to know them better. Deep in her heart she was attracted to the religious life.

After graduating from the public high school, her friend, Helen Misiunas, entered the Casimirite Congregation and Marion planned to join the Trinitarian Sisters. But while visiting Helen in Chicago, Marion met Mother Maria who invited her to join the SSC Community.

On August 15, 1941, Marion, now known as Sister M. Devota, pronounced her first vows as a religious. Her first assignment was teaching at Holy Cross Parish School in Chicago. Marion received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Fontbonne College, St. Louis, MO, an R.D. from St. Anthony Hospital, Oklahoma City, OK, and a Master in Education Degree from Loyola University, Chicago.

Sister Devota served as Chief Dietitian, Director of the Food Service Department, Assistant Administrator and Vice-President at Holy Cross Hospital. Sister also was a teacher and yearbook director at Maria High School. Before long she

became involved in fundraising and public relations which included chairing the capital campaign to build Maria High School. Sister Devota was well known as the premier event planner for the Sisters of St. Casimir, Holy Cross Hospital and Maria High School.

During her years at Holy Cross Hospital she was instrumental in a number of innovative programs. In 1967 she began the Home Delivered Meals Program and further developed home care with the Home Health Aide and Friendly Visitor programs. She is credited with beginning the Education and Training Department at Holy Cross. Sister Marion also served on the Advisory Board of Harper High School and the Chicago Lawn Mental Health Center.

In 1984 Sister Marion was named Administrator, CEO of Loretto Hospital, a difficult position because of the great needs and challenges of the community it served, and changes being made in health care at that time. Sister Marion provided the leadership which enabled Loretto Hospital to survive beyond the time when many other Chicago hospitals were closing.

Sister Marion retired to the Motherhouse in 1991 and served as Activities Director for the Sisters. Due to her thoughtfulness and ingenuity, the Sisters enjoyed many day trips and surprise activities.

Always happy, always smiling, and always ready to share a joke, Sister Marion loved to spend time reading, and working on her hobby of decorating cloth calendars with colorful sequins and butterflies.

Sister Marion blessed many people by generously sharing her talents and good nature. We thank God for her life with us.

## The Amazing Story (continued from page 5)

St. Pauline's cousin, Albert Visintainer and his family of Mt. Carmel and Bob Greco, director of the Shrine, have exemplified a beautiful expression of "church" as they so graciously invited another holy person on the way to sainthood into their shrine. Blessings will surely abound in that area as these people of strong faith and belief in God working through others welcome thousands to the Shrine in the little town of Kulpmont, PA.

Sister Margaret Petcavage commented to the individuals behind the project at the St. Pauline Center, "This means a great deal to our Congregation. We are certain that through this shrine many people will come to know more of St. Pauline and Venerable Maria Kaupas, two great prophetic women of wisdom and boundless love for others."

Sister Margaret continued, "We, Sisters of St. Casimir, feel this is a thank you gift to Mother Maria and her Sisters from the people of Mt. Carmel and the surrounding areas, many of whom are our former students. It is a

huge testament to the faith of the people and their belief in the holiness and goodness of Mother Maria. She gave up her country, her family and her personal choices, all for the Lord and His people. Now it is evident that those who have been touched by her life's work have the opportunity to spread devotion to her for her self-sacrifice and life of heroic virtue. Surely Venerable Maria Kaupas and St. Pauline will hear the prayers and intercede whenever they are called upon."

Who would believe that the story of Mother Maria would continue in this way – a shrine where she walked the streets – 103 years after she came to Mt. Carmel as a young Sister and opened the Order's first school? The people whose lives were touched by her and her Sisters down through generations have immortalized her life's work. It is as if the circle has now been completed.

For more information on the St. Pauline Center, call 570-373-3350, or visit [www.saintpaulinecenter.org](http://www.saintpaulinecenter.org)

*Journeys*

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*Mother Maria's image is surrounded by artifacts from various cultures during National Migration Week.*

Lord God,  
you have declared  
that your kingdom is among us.

Open our ears to hear it,  
our hands to serve it,  
our hearts to hold it.

Bless our journey  
as we recommit ourselves to walk  
with our immigrant brothers and sisters  
as they seek to be welcomed and embraced  
by this country  
as has every other generation of immigrants  
from the founding of our nation.

This we pray in Jesus' name.  
Amen