



## In Touch

### Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla Opens Holy Door of Mercy at the Shrine

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On Saturday, March 19, at 10 a.m., Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla opened the Holy Door of Mercy at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the House of Prayer at Mount St. Macrina. Many Sisters and guests were present. A reception followed in the dining room.

The Year of Mercy ends on November 20, 2016. Day pilgrimages to the Shrine may be arranged throughout the year, by contacting the House of Prayer at 724.438.7149.

## A Message from Sister Ruth

### GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!



Dear Friends,

As we look around us every day, we see the miracle of new life everywhere. There are blossoms where, only a short time ago, there were twigs. There are fresh green leaves against a lovely blue sky where, only a short time ago, there were seemingly lifeless branches against a gray horizon. Each time we look closely at the little surprises of joy around us, we celebrate Easter and Resurrection. Each time we share these joys with others, we are like the angels at the empty tomb announcing the Resurrection of Jesus. No wonder our Church provides us with 40 days to contemplate and breathe in this tremendous outpouring of love – just a taste of what we can expect in eternity!!!

As we venture outdoors here at the Mount, we also turn our attention to the many areas that need repair and improvement. This year we are looking to repairing the roof at Trinity Center since every windy day brings another shower of falling shingles. Likewise, we are looking to replace our old faithful light lunch stand. This structure has been the center of our food service for decades – and old age is really showing with sagging beams and worn out counters. (Sounds like us as we age!!!) As always, we appreciate any assistance you can give us to complete these projects.

Throughout the years your support and kindness has touched us deeply enabling Mount St. Macrina to be the blessed and special place it is for all of us. In return we assure you that every day we bring you and your intentions to Our Lord. If you have any special needs or intentions for which you need our prayers, never hesitate to call or e-mail them to us.



With our prayers and gratitude,

*Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM*

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM  
Provincial

### In Touch

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*Plans for this year's Annual Appeal include rebuilding the light lunch stand and repairing the roof on the Trinity Center. Thank you for your continued support.*



## Corporate Reflection Days - A Time to Discuss and Share

Sisters came from the east, west, north and south to be at the monastery on Friday evening, April 8, to officially welcome Sister Dia, our General Superior, who came to visit the Sisters in our Province.

According to the Constitutions of our Order, the General Superior is required to visit every Province of the Order at least once during her term of office. This serves as a vehicle for becoming familiar with every member, fostering a sense of mission, unity and understanding among all the Sisters.

The next day and a half, the Sisters met together for Corporate Reflection Days. These occur twice a year to enable the Sisters to discuss important issues that impact their lives. Small lively group discussions led to a reaffirmation of the "Why" of our existence, that is, to continue to be "a praying, healing and life-giving presence." Every Sister has the privilege and possibility of living out this "Why" according to her talents and capabilities.

Another significant topic of these days was to begin discussion of possibilities for the best usage of empty buildings on the Mount. Building on past studies and research, the Sisters are committed to moving forward in faith to the challenges which lie ahead. Some time on Sunday morning was spent addressing concerns about the lack of vocations and vocation ministry. Sisters brainstormed ideas for publicity and focus. At the conclusion of the days, Sr. Ruth, provincial, thanked the Sisters for their enthusiastic participation during the weekend.



*Sr. Dia, General Superior  
Sisters of St. Basil the Great*



*The photo on the left shows the Sisters at work during the weekend. Pictured from left are: Sr. Petronilla Puhak, Sr. Regina Adams, Sr. Barbara Swindells, Sr. Salome Yanocho, Sr. Joanne Lickvar, Sr. Rita Keshock and Sr. Susan Harvey.*

## Sisters to Celebrate 82nd Annual Pilgrimage

The 82nd Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will be held at Mount St. Macrina, September 3 & 4, 2016. This year's theme is *Theotokos: An Inexhaustible Fountain of Mercy*.

"During this year's Pilgrimage we will honor Pope Francis' declaration of an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy, as we are honored to have a Holy Door of Mercy here at Mount St. Macrina," said Sister Ruth Plante, Provincial. Sister was referring to the door of the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Throughout the year, the Sisters are in continuous preparation for the Pilgrimage. As in previous years, the Sisters will welcome all those Pilgrims who come from all over the country and beyond. They will continue to welcome those who come early and camp on the race track or stay on the Mount. Light fare will be available at the Lunch Stand starting on



### *Theotokos:*

### *An Inexhaustible Fountain of Mercy*

Friday evening. Liturgical prayers will be held at the Shrine Altar on Friday evening for those arriving early and Divine Liturgy will be

celebrated on Monday morning, September 5 for those who stay on Sunday evening.

New this year will be a Festal Icon Walk around the Mount. Also, Healing Services will be held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, which is different from previous years.

Other plans for the weekend include many opportunities for participation in the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Catholic Church. Also scheduled are Matins, Vespers, sacrament of reconciliation, activities for teens and children, and other services in honor of the Mother of God.

The Pilgrimage holds the distinction of being the oldest and the largest Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage in the country.

Those attending the 82nd Pilgrimage will have an opportunity to participate in the first Festal Icon Walk.





## Sisters of St. Basil Invite Volunteers to Pilgrimage Preparations



For those who wish to volunteer in Pilgrimage preparations, there are two opportunities this summer.

The first opportunity is Helping Hands Day, which is sponsored by the Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. Helping Hands Day efforts will take place at Mount Saint Macrina this year on Sat., June 4.

The annual observance combines the strengths

of young people and adults to produce meaningful results for the preparation of the 82nd Annual Pilgrimage which will be held, September 3 & 4.

On this day, at Mount Saint Macrina, the youth and faithful of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, the GCU (a fraternal benefit society serving Byzantine Catholics since 1892), and the many friends of

the Sisters of Saint Basil join together for a common cause—to prepare the grounds for the Annual Pilgrimage. Volunteers will clear floral gardens, shrines, urns and other planting areas throughout the grounds, and then plant annuals. Other work centers will be the pavilions, which will be cleared of a winter's worth of leaves and other debris.

The GCU is pleased to partner with the Sisters of St. Basil the Great and interested youth and adults for Helping Hands Day. If you are able to participate, here are a few notes:

The group will meet in the Trinity Center for coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m. A brief prayer service will follow, and work will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Bring lawn tools (including brooms, rakes, weed whackers, etc.) for outside work. Bring brooms, mops, dust pans, etc., for any indoor cleaning.

Lunch will be served.

To register or for additional information, please call Sister Joanne at 724-439-4940 or GCU at 1-800-722-4428.

Later in the summer, on Saturday, August 20, there will be another organized preparation day. (The rain date will be Saturday, August 27). Volunteers are asked to meet at the Trinity Center at 9:30 a.m. Please bring brooms, weed whackers, blowers, weeding tools, rakes and clippers. Lunch will be provided.

For further information, please call Sister Joanne at 724-439-4940.



**“It’s not how much we  
give but how much  
LOVE we put into giving.”**

— Mother Teresa

## Three Basilian Sisters Called Home to the Lord



*Sr. Eleanor Mary Horvath*

Sr. Eleanor Mary (former Sr. Vincentia) fell asleep peacefully in the Lord on Dec. 8, 2015.

The daughter of the late John J. and Mary (Petro) Horvath, Sr. Eleanor Mary was born in Pottstown, Pa. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, Pottstown, Pa., on June 20, 1948. She pronounced her First Vows on Aug. 15, 1950, and made her Perpetual Profession on Jan. 1, 1956, in the presence of the late Very Rev. George Bonchonsky.

For many of the 67 years of her religious life, Sister served in culinary arts for the community in the missions in New York, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, and Pennsylvania; at

the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, at St. Basil's Home for Women and at the monastery in Uniontown. Her interest in the culinary arts led her to participate in Galand's World – A Chef's Perspective to Cooking, as part of the Continuing Education offered by the Penn State University for three consecutive years.

Sr. Eleanor Mary's ministry underwent a change in 1986 when she became a familiar and pleasant figure in the Card and Prayer Department at the monastery. As an "extracurricular" activity, Sister accompanied Sr. Dolores Ann to the regular meetings of the Multiple Sclerosis Social Club of Fayette County. She offered her services in sending greeting cards for various occasions to the members, and she was so cheerful in doing this that she was named an honorary member and the "Sunshine Lady" of the club. She continued her participation even while she was at Mount Macrina Manor where the meetings were held for some years.

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, her

brothers Daniel and John Jr., and her sister Patricia Hassar. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her nieces, cousins and their families. The Parastas Service was celebrated by Rev. Michael Huszti, Monastery chaplain. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Archbishop William C. Skurla on Sat., Dec. 12, in the Monastery Chapel with Rev. Michael Huszti as concelebrant and Deacon Raymond Zadzilko assisting. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.



*Sr. Martha Dzura*

Having reached the venerable age of 101 this past November, Sr. Martha (Mary) Dzura completed her earthly journey on Fri., Mar. 4, 2016. Very

peacefully, she fell asleep in the Lord to whom she devoted almost 80 years as a Sister of St. Basil the Great.

The daughter of the late John and Eva (Kranack) Dzura, Sr. Martha was born in Lambert, Pa. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Pittsburgh on July 15, 1937. She pronounced her First Vows on Sept. 4, 1939, and made her Solemn Perpetual Profession on Aug. 28, 1945, in the presence of the late Monsignor John Powell.

Over a half century of her religious life was dedicated to teaching in the many parish schools served by the Sisters, also serving as principal at the same time. During the span of her teaching career, Sr. Martha was sometimes assigned to a previous school mission, and in this way, often taught three generations of the same family.

Upon her retirement from the teaching ministry, Sister returned to the monastery in Uniontown, where she helped in the Vestment Department as well as

*(Continued on the next page)*

## Three Basilian Sisters (Continued)

assisting office personnel with answering the phone. Sr. Martha's life of active ministry came to an end in March 2004, when she took up residence at Mt. Macrina Manor. In her personal wishes stating how she wanted to be remembered, Sister made note of her love of teaching, her deep faith and her spirit of trust. She further stated, "I am deeply grateful to the Sisters for their prayers, support, kindness and patience offered to me during my illness." Surely, Sister would have extended this same gratitude to all those who were her caregivers at Mt. Macrina Manor.

She was preceded in death by her parents and brothers John and Michael. In addition to her Sisters in community, she is survived by her nephews Jack and Michael and their families. The Parastas Service was concelebrated on Sun., Mar. 6, by Rev. Michael Huszti and Rev. Stephen Wahal. Very Rev. Archpriest John G. Petro was in attendance. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Mon., Mar. 7, by Archbishop William Skurla with Rev. Michael

Huszti as concelebrant. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.



*Sr. Vitalia Tomcho*

Sr. Vitalia would have celebrated her 107th birthday in early June. Instead, she celebrated her patronal Feast Day by entering into the Heavenly Kingdom on Friday morning, Apr. 22, 2016. Sister entered the community in Elmhurst, Pa., in 1930, when the community was only in existence nine years, so she was one of the first vocations to answer the call to the Sisters of St. Basil.

The daughter of the late Stephen and Anna (Belley) Tomcho, Sr. Vitalia was born in Walhonding,

Ohio. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. Gregory Church, Lakewood, Ohio, on Oct. 27, 1930. She pronounced her First Vows on Aug. 30, 1932, and made her Solemn Perpetual Profession on Aug. 21, 1938, in the presence of Bishop Basil Takach of blessed memory.

In her vocation story, which was published a few years ago, Sister stated that teaching became her lifelong work. In fact, at the time of her retirement from active ministry, Sister had the distinction of offering the longest active service of any of the Sisters in community. Her teaching ministry spanned 67 years, most of these as a full-time teacher and/or principal. Only the last few years were spent in tutoring on a part time basis. Although Sister liked all the places where she was sent, her favorite time and place was teaching the sciences and math at Mount St. Macrina Academy in the 1950's. It was a great joy for her when the Alumnae returned to the Mount for their reunions and took the time to visit with her.

Among the things she enjoyed were trips to the shore, visiting her late sister, good food, and even cooking it.

Sister spent the last nine years of her life as a resident at Mount Macrina Manor. When visiting her, she could often be found fingering her rosary beads, but she was always ready for a chat. Over the years, she became well-known to many of the caregivers and quite a few of them stopped by her room for a final farewell.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brothers Michael and Stephen, and sister Mary Hausman. In addition to her Sisters in the community, she is survived by her devoted niece Barbara Akins. The Parastas Service was celebrated on Friday evening, Apr. 29. The Funeral Divine Liturgy was offered on Sat., Apr. 30 by the Very Rev. Andrew Deskevich, Protosyncellus of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, with Rev. Michael Huszti as concelebrant. Interment followed in the Dormition Section of Mount Macrina Cemetery.



## Part of my Journey...

By Sister Seraphim Olsafsky, OSBM

Each of us carries many hopes and dreams over our life's journey. My deepest dream from childhood was to become a Sister and I am grateful that I never let go of that dream. I was blessed to be taught by Sisters and Priests for most of my early education. Several of these strong and faithful women still stand bright in my memory. I can recall the words of one who taught us to "think about whom we would like to be when we become old". She even asked us to think about what we might like written on our tombstone! I admit that was a little drastic for fourth graders, but over the years her words, now and then, helped keep me out of some trouble.

My love for art developed in senior year of high school where a gentle and beautiful soul, Sr. Alice Marie OSU, instilled in me an appreciation of beauty. That year I won a city award for designing a Youngstown Symphony poster. At graduation I was awarded an Art Scholarship to a Cleveland Catholic College. Because my call to become a Sister was so deep, I did not accept the scholarship (to the chagrin of my father). In that era, we were taught to allow nothing to stand in the way of a vocation, or this precious gift might be taken away.

*(Continued on the following page)*





## Part of my Journey... (Continued)

Many years have passed and numerous ministries and responsibilities have filled the hours and the days of this sacred call to religious life. Toward the later part of my ministry of administration, I attended a Fayette County charity banquet and bid on an oil painting course at Touchstone Center for the Arts in Farmington PA. After winning it and then attending, I was initiated into the process of oil painting through a very encouraging teacher, Harold Frontz. Thanks to his patience and very encouraging words, I began the work of unfolding my second dream.

I am grateful to our Community that following leadership ministry, I've had sabbatical time to follow this creative pursuit through additional workshops and continuing practice. To dip a brush into God's lush and glorious



colors moves one to another place where time and concerns disappear. It is so rewarding that even if a work is never seen one would still keep doing it. One learns techniques and practices, but remains humbled and awed that occasionally a work of art comes into existence. Always at play is inspiration and a good bit of mystery. The quest for beauty is purely a graced privilege. Some of my paintings are available at the Religious Gift Shop at Mt. St. Macrina.

## Basilian Sisters Commission Meet



*The members of the Basilian Sisters' Governance Commission met in Uniontown in early March to continue their work. The Commission's project is to review the present structure of the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great and make suggestions for further development for the delegates to consider at the next General Chapter. The Sisters serve in over 12 countries; delegates meet at a General Chapter every six years.*

*Pictured are: Sr. Dorothy Ann Busowski, Provincial, Fox Chase Province, Sr. Barbara Jean Mihalchick, Sr. Josifa Simova (Presov, Slovakia), Sr. Susan Sisko, Sr. Vasylia Strutynska (Ukraine) and Sr. Dia Stasiuk, General Superior.*

## Sr. Josifa Visits Mount St. Macrina

On January 15, Sr. Josifa Helena Šimová, OSBM arrived at Mount St. Macrina. From Sorrowful Mother of God Province of the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great Prešov, Slovakia, Sr. Josifa will be visiting the Sisters of St. Basil until June 28.

During her visit, she plans to make the best of her time to improve her English and use the time to readjust to her new role in religious life after spending so many years in administration. In addition, she helps the Sisters at Mount St. Macrina in whatever way is needed.

Sr. Josifa came from a devout Byzantine Catholic family. She lived the usual life of a teenager, started to think about her spiritual life

once she met some Basilian Sisters.

"I began to live a closer life with Jesus and this led me to thinking about entering a monastery. At that time Slovakia was under communist regime and there was no monastery allowed in our country. Sisters lived in apartments, usually two or three together," explained Sr. Josifa.

When she entered 29 years ago, Sister began to work with the Sisters in a social care institute for mentally ill boys in Bardejov. Four years later, when the political situation in Slovakia changed, the new Provincial Superior took Sr. Josifa to Prešov. There she worked in a residence for girls as a prefect. She also taught catechism and organized summer camps for children.

Later, Sr. Josifa became the local Superior in Prešov, and then a member of a the Council. In 2001, Sister became a member of the General Council in Rome. Last year, she completed her second term as Provincial Superior. Those last 10 years were so busy that when a new Provincial Superior was elected, Sister asked for a



sabbatical year and the Sisters at Mount St. Macrina are so pleased that she chose to spend half of it here in Uniontown.

Although she doesn't like being so far away from Slovakia, she likes visiting here because it is like coming home.

"I enjoy being with the Sisters and Mount St. Macrina is such a beautiful place. I have not done much traveling across the USA, but I believe it would be lovely to see more of this beautiful country. The first time I was here it was 23 years ago. I wanted to learn English. Being in a country

and community where people speak English, you can learn it more naturally. I stayed here for a year. From that time on, I have been here several times for meetings. Each time I say "goodbye", it is very sad, but I have learned that after each goodbye, comes a new "hello", said Sister.

When asked if she had any additional comments, Sr. Josifa added, "I would like to thank all those who made it possible for me to be here. I also want to thank Sister Ruth and all the Sisters here who have helped to make my stay here far from home a blessed and marvelous experience."







## Mount Macrina Manor Renovations



Phase I

It has been just a year that the Sisters of St. Basil of St. Basil and the board and staff of Mount St. Macrina Manor celebrated the ground-breaking of the new addition and renovations of the facility.

Both Phase I and Phase II of the project have been completed. At the time of this printing, Phase III had also been completed and all three phases passed the Life Safety inspections.



Phase II

## **In Touch**

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[www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org)

## **Young Adult Retreat**

*(Male & Female, 18-34, married or single)*

**Sponsored By The Sisters of St. Basil The Great**

**June 24-26, 2016**

**7:00 pm Friday—11:00 am Sunday**

**Mount St. Macrina House of Prayer**

**Uniontown, PA**

**Offering: \$100 • Registration Due: June 17**

**All Christian denominations welcome**

**For further information,  
please call 724.438.7149  
[www.sistersofstbasil.org](http://www.sistersofstbasil.org)**

## **Helping Hands Day**

*Sponsored by the Greek Catholic Union*

**Saturday, June 4**

**9:30 a.m. - Coffee & Doughnuts (Trinity Ctr.)**

**10:00 a.m. - Work begins**

Bring lawn tools (including brooms, rakes, weed whackers, etc.) for outside work. Bring brooms, mops, dust pans, etc., for any indoor cleaning.

Lunch will be served.

*To register or for additional  
information, please call Sister  
Joanne at 724-439-4940 or  
GCU at 1-800-722-4428.*

