

### Speak Up for Our Retired Religious

The annual Retirement Fund for Religious collection will be held Dec. 12-13 in the Diocese of Camden. Now in its 28th year, the appeal is coordinated by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) and offers support for senior Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests whose communities lack sufficient retirement funding. Some 33,000 women and men religious past age 70 benefit.

The Diocese of Camden contributed \$171,551.43 to the last collection. In 2015, the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Infant Jesus, Hospitaler Order of St. John of God and the Little Servant Sisters of the Immaculate Conception received financial assistance made possible by the Retirement Fund for Religious. Women and men religious who serve or have served in the diocese but whose communities are based elsewhere may also benefit from the annual collection.

The 2014 appeal raised \$28.3 million, and the NRRO distributed more than \$25 million in monetary support to 395 religious communities. Throughout the year, additional funding is allocated for communities with the greatest needs and for retirement planning and educational resources. Ninety-three cents of every dollar directly aids elderly religious; the remainder is used for administration and promotion of the appeal.

While the response to the collection is unprecedented, so is the need. The total cost of care for senior women and men religious has exceeded \$1 billion for each of the last six years. of the religious communities providing data to the NRRO had a median age of 70 or older. Accompanying the higher median age is a decrease in the number of religious able to serve in compensated ministry, which further reduces the income available for eldercare.

Hundreds of religious communities also lack sufficient retirement savings, due in part to historically low compensation. "Most senior religious worked for years for small stipends and did not receive retirement benefits," said Sister Bader. Religious communities are financially autonomous and thus responsible for the support and care of all members. Annual distributions from the Retirement Fund for Religious provide supplemental assistance to help meet such day-to-day needs as prescription medications and nursing care.



Women's Discernment Group  
Invite young Women to  
Retreat Center  
1215 Cresson Rd.  
Cherry Hill, NJ

- December 7 Our Relationship with God
  - January 4 The Dignity of Women
  - February 8 Commitment
  - March 7 Charism/Spirituality
  - April 4 Vows and Religious Life
  - May 2— Service /Ministry
- Call 856-848-6049 to register.



Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan, D.D.  
Bishop of Camden  
  
Sister Mary J. McGarrity, IHM  
Bishop's Delegate for Women Religious  
631 Market St.  
Camden, NJ 08102  
mary.mcgarrrity@camdendiocese.org

#### Pray for Vocations

O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you.

Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of Heaven above all things.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



## NEWSLETTER WOMEN RELIGIOUS CAMDEN DIOCESE

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### SOCIOLOGISTS STUDY Religious

On October 10th, the authors of a highly acclaimed study of the generations of women religious who entered religious life after 1965, gave a presentation entitled "Catholic Sisters: Who they are and why we need them." Held at Immaculata University, the three authors, Mary Johnson, SND de Namur, Patricia Wittberg, S.C. and Mary Gautier shared the results of their study based on the analysis of numerous surveys. The authors systematically reviewed how the new generation of Sisters differ from previous ones, and what those changes suggest about the future. The audience consisted not only of sisters from various congregations but also of priests, brothers and laity who are interested in fostering vocations to the consecrated life.

Brother Paul Bednarczyk, CSC, Executive Director of the National Religious Vocation Conference, hosted the event - one of a series of gatherings scheduled at universities across the United States. Brother Paul's hope is that this type of interaction will raise awareness and support for current and future Catholic sisters.

Having completed and published their findings in NEW GENERATIONS OF CATHOLIC SISTERS, The challenge of Diversity, Johnson, Wittberg and Gautier are now beginning to garner information from religious women who were born outside of the United States and who are currently ministering within our borders. Although the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, has published the third edition of GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING PASTORAL MINISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES, the three sociologists hope to survey the sisters already here in an effort to clarify how well those mandates have been followed. Religious in the Diocese of Camden will be included in the study.

### UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS \* \* \* \* \*

If you were there, the experience of being with the thousands of families at the World Meeting of Families will be unforgettable. The theme of the gathering LOVE IS OUR MISSION inspired the speakers and audience as well. Among those attending were numerous women and men religious from all over the world. Some from as far away as Africa and Australia and some from South Jersey! Why were they there? Without a doubt, the crisis in the family is also symptomatic of the crisis in vocations to consecrated life. When the family lives the joy of the gospel, then the call to serve is heard and followed.

Through his way of being and especially by his words to religious in the celebrations in New York and again in the Cathedral in Philadelphia, Pope Francis expressed his love for and admiration of women religious in particular. Who will forget his sincerity when he leaned forward and said to simply, "I love you," giving all of us the gift of encouragement and his blessings on our life and work.



### Thank you and farewell to . . .

Since June, the following sisters left the Diocese of Camden after many years of dedicated service they are: Sisters Rosa Stillitti, FMIJ, Kathleen Dolores Keenan, IHM; Kathleen McShane, SSJ; Patricia McGinley, SSJ; Joan Gertrude Jaskel ,SSJ; Stella Lotz, SSJ; Esther Catherine, SMI; and Sister Bernadette Gachiri, SMI who was elected to serve on the General Council of her community in Kenya. And

Welcome to Sisters Diane Simons, IHM; Dulce Cruz de Mana; Sister Minerva Barrera; Sister Ximena del Rosario Arista; Gabriela de Jesus of the Misioneras de Maria Formadora who will work in Mary, Queen of All Saints Parish and to Sister Mary Rose Maroz, SCC who will work in Home /Health Care Office .

## The Committee for The Year of Consecrated Life . . . . .

The Committee on the Year of Consecrated Life met on October 13 to evaluate the Year of Consecrated Life and to plan for the Year of Mercy. Those present remembered that at the Convocation in October 2014, sisters from various communities were taped by the students from Paul VI high school. The resulting video was then posted on YOUTUBE. During the meeting sisters volunteered to write a column for the *Catholic Star Herald*. During the year, these personal vocation stories appeared once a month in the diocesan newspaper. One of the events scheduled by the Vatican for universal observance was a day of prayer for Consecrated Life to be observed on September 13th. The parish of St. Joachim inserted petitions into the Sunday masses and recognized the four religious communities that live and/or work within its boundaries. Sister Janice, FMIHM and her community renewed their vows during a Mass celebrated by Father Matthew Weber. The entire student body of St. Michael the Archangel, Clayton were present.

Plans for the Year of Mercy include publishing pictures of sisters who are living the Works of Mercy everyday through their various ministries. Although this is true of all our religious, those who sent in their pictures will appear in the CSH close to the opening of the Year of Mercy.

Also in process is the taping of an interview in Spanish with Sister Maria de Jesus Herrera, MDPVM conducted by Dr. Harry Paraison which will be aired on DH/Perfil Latnino TV, Inc.

## Vocation Awareness

Inspire, invite, share your story

Each year we receive copies of **VISION** from the National Religious Vocation Conference. Within its pages, the reader will find stories of how others have heard and answered the call to discipleship within a religious community. Some of the articles talk about prayer, discernment, religious life in general, serving the poor, and even “8 secrets to healthy celibacy.” While we hope that this resource is already in the hands of every parish priest, we know that only one-to-one invitations usually work. According to the latest studies, the 1200 young religious who have recently entered religious life, were for the most part, invited to think about it by some adult who saw in them the potential priest, brother or sister.

## Global Sisters Report



As the Synod of Bishops completed their meetings in the Vatican, Sister Carmen Sammut who heads the International Union of Superiors General (USIG) commented as follows:” I think we should not give up our role at the frontiers of the Church with the people . . . who are needing the pastoral care — and get it very often not from the official church, but from us. We should ask ourselves: How are we engaging with people the official church is not seeing?” Sister Carmen was one of 32 women who took part in non-voting roles alongside of 270 prelate-members. Sisters participation came about only after she raised the issue with Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri. “Don’t think it was automatic. We worked for it.”

## Prepare the Way - The Landscape of Incarnation



**Clare A. D’Auria OSF**, a Sister of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Aston, PA, currently ministers as a staff member at the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston ,Pennsylvania. For half of her forty-five years in ministry, Clare has served in retreat work, offering spiritual direction, directed and conference retreats, as well as numerous workshops, especially in Franciscan spirituality, throughout the United States.

An Advent Day for the Religious of the Diocese of Camden

December 5, 2015

St. Charles Borromeo

176 Stagecoach Road

Sicklerville, NJ 0808-19421

Presenter: Clare A. D’Auria OSF

## Year of Mercy December 8, 2015—2016

On April 11, 2015, Pope Francis announced “an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy that is to have God’s mercy at its center” (*Miserecordiae Vultus*). His desire for the whole people of God is that we live this Holy Year in the light of Jesus’ words:” Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke6:36). We religious are called to contemplate, imitate and adopt God’s mercy as our lifestyle. This jubilee year will be a time of extraordinary grace. Christ offers all the tenderness and love and especially the mercy of God.

Jesus is the face of the Father’s mercy and reveals God as a Father who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy. In mercy, we find love.



## National Catholic Sisters Week

Have you heard the exciting news?

NCSW just recently unveiled their new \$50,000 grant program for organizations across the nation. This mini-grant program is intended to help increase the celebration of women religious and their work during the official National Catholic Sisters Week of **March 8-14**. As co-director Sister Mary Soher, OP, explains: “We’re excited to see what our grant recipients come up with. We expect to be dazzled by their creativity. There is a wellspring of appreciation and joy around women religious, and these grants will draw that out for the benefit of a broader audience.” Go to [www.nationalcatholicistersweek.org](http://www.nationalcatholicistersweek.org) for more information on the grants.