

SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR STORIES

PRESENTATION

IANK

NEW WINDSOR

Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inspired by our foundress, Nano Nagle, commit ourselves to the Gospel values of hope, justice, freedom and human dignity. In union with one another, we pledge ourselves to act for and with the poor and oppressed of our world and to care for the earth.

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Chapter Commitments

Read more about how we are living fully our commitments from our 2021 Chapter commitment statement.



Prayer Association

Our sisters pray daily for the intentions of our friends and partners. We invite you to order our prayer cards to let your loved ones know you are thinking of them and have included them in the sisters' prayer intentions. The usual donation is five dollars, to be sent after you have used the card.

Send your email requests to sisterhcox@gmail.com or write to Mission Advancement Office Mt. St. Joseph 84 Presentation Way New Windsor NY 12553

On the cover, Sisters Yliana Hernandez, Norma Carney and Virginia Wilkinson attended a blessing for properties that will be renovated by Habitat for Humanity in Newburgh. The wood they are holding will be placed in one of the homes. Not pictured: Sister Mary Catherine Redmond.



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Partner Feature

Associate Mary Jane Person has had a relationship with the Presentation Sisters for several decades. Learn about her continued commitment to the mission of the congregation.

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Care of Creation Raffle

Learn how you can purchase a ticket for a chance to win a hybrid car or \$20,000 through our car raffle. Additional prizes are \$4,000 for second and \$1,000 for third.





From left, Sisters Catherine Cleary, Laura Urbano, Mary Catherine Redmond and Dorothy Scesny.

Dear Partners in Mission,

Listen!

Something strains to be born, to shake itself free:

Something brand new trembles at the far edges of our minds:

The shape of the gospel message, conceived in our present labor and pain.

I cannot tell you where I found this quote, but I believe that it speaks to this present moment in our world. We are in a new time and each moment brings forth a new need.

And so we invite you to read the "good news" in this issue of Presentation Lantern. We especially want to share with you the work we are doing in regard to our Chapter commitment that we shared with you in the summer issue of Presentation Lantern. Our commitment statement reads:

In the spirit of our foundress Nano Nagle, Presentation sisters and associates commit ourselves to address the needs of woman and children, especially as they are impacted by economic, environmental, and racial inequity.

We chose this statement as it connects us to our foundress Nano Nagle and her ministry during the enforced penal laws of Irish history. Today, this statement connects us to the migrant, refugee and those made poor in this century and in this country. There are three components to our commitments: prayer, education and formal action. These components enable everyone to participate in this endeavor according to their abilities.

If you would like to join us in this ministry, please know that we would appreciate your assistance. In subsequent issues, we will continue to share what we are presently doing in each area. Your assistance, in whatever way you may choose, will help spread our ministry, contribute to God's call that we have hearts as wide as the world and renew our baptismal call to missionary discipleship.

During this summer season, may you be able to still the "have-to-do-list" so that the gift of this season be a breath of welcome newness in the unfolding adventure of the present moment.

In union,

Sister Catherine Clear, vice president on behalf of the leadership team

Living Fully Our Chapter Commitments

Throughout history, religious life has been everevolving. Building on our history, we live fully in this present moment to meet the needs of a new era as we continue to live out our charism and mission. We look to God for wisdom and the grace to be receptive to change.

The structures, such as schools and physical ministries that have been the story of religious life to this moment, are no longer our lived reality as we explore ways of BE-ing mission and carrying our Presentation



Associates Cindy Delaney, Holly Calder, Geri Novia, Marie Pulnik and Karen Trevino partnered with the sisters in collecting items for women at the Women's Recovery Center in Massachusetts.

charism to those most in need. At the LCWR Assembly in 2022 Anne Munley, IHM, helped us to recognize that "we are not our buildings, our institutions, or our ways of organizing ourselves." We are now being called to "an awareness that these times offer graced possibilities to deepen our understanding and response to our personal and collective call to be a presence of love in a world torn by violence and divisions of every kind."

We explore ways of collaborating with "partners in mission" who extend our charism through their

work in the world. This collaboration has invited the exploration of services that give life to the Chapter commitment statement we set at our 2021 Chapter.

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environmental, and racial inequity.

Economic Core Working Group

Members: Sisters Laura Urbano, Linda LeBlanc and Pat Dowler, and Associates Rose Norton and Pauline Aliskevicz.

The goal of this group is to provide education, resources and experiences for collaboration, outreach and advocacy for the sisters and associates to have a better understanding of the causes and impact of economic inequity on women and children.

Over the past several months this group has sought out opportunities to partner with agencies that support women and children. They have facilitated collecting gifts and clothing for families in need and collecting food items for local food pantries. In addition, they partnered with Big Brothers, Big Sisters in Orange County to adopt three families for Christmas giving and worked with associates and sisters in New England to prepare gifts for women at the Women's Recovery Center.

The group has also provided resources on our website and education on human trafficking.

In the future, the work will include exploring how we can assist immigrants in finding housing and accessing services. They also want to offer spiritual support and advocacy and will continue to partner with organizations that assist women and children.

Environmental Core Working Group

Members: Sisters Dale McDonald, Norma Carney, Eleanor Joyce, Maria Lopez and Dorothy Scesny, and Associate Kristina Soltesz.



On a recent spring day sisters and associates gathered to work on updating the Friendship Garden at Mt. St. Joseph. Leslie dePaz, Associates Theresa Gaffney and Noelle Molloy, and Sisters Sheila Moroney, Dolores Doyle, Maria Lopez and Eleanor Joyce are pictured with the new garden beds.

The focus in the past several months has been to address the relationship between food security and sustainable agriculture as a means to promote healthful practices for addressing women and children's health issues.

The group has been engaged in education and action. In February they presented a Zoom for sisters and associates that provided education and information about food insecurity. The garden at Mt. St. Joseph is being updated. Soil has been tested and additional soil

will be added to meet the needs of the garden. Work has also begun to repair present raised beds and to add galvanized raised beds and sheds. This fall the garden will be dedicated to those who died from COVID-19. In addition, the working group is learning more about the Urban Farm Food Initiative and continue to collect food items for local food pantries.

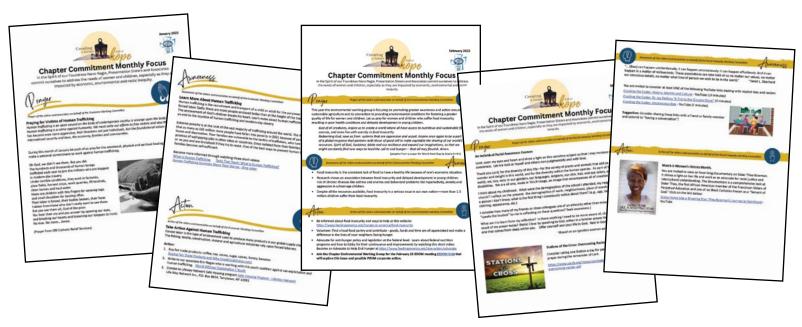
Next the group will focus their efforts on providing education, consciousness raising and advocacy training to address the issues of pollution, particularly air and water pollution and its impact on women and children. The first piece of this is focused on plastics pollution.

Racial Inequity Core Working Group

Members: Sisters Paula Cormier, Virginia Wilkinson, Mary Naccarato, Catherine Cleary, Gloria Perez, Anna Raimon, Yliana Hernandez, Katherine Fisher and Brian Elizabeth Barnicle, and Associate Donaldo Batiste.

The goal of this group is to encourage the sisters and associates to look more closely at their own implicit biases and the systemic racism that exists in our country and our church.

They have been providing resources and reflections for sisters and associates to examine implicit biases. They will continue to explore ways in which they can continue this education and reflection process.



Each month the core working groups provide prayer, action and awareness items related to our Chapter commitments so that we can all deepen our commitment to living our mission. These can be found on our website.



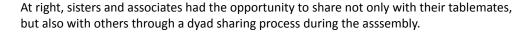
Journeying Toward Transformation

For the first time in several years sisters and associates were able to meet in person for our annual assembly, "Journeying Toward Transformation." The time was filled with life-giving input, deep sharing and time to be with one another. Participants welcomed Bridget Bearss, RSCJ, LCWR director of transformative justice, to lead them in reflecting upon how they are on a journey to BE mission. Barbara Mullen, CSJ, who will be serving as the congregation's facilitator, reminded the group that the primary mission is who each person is rather than what she or he does. Hearing updates from working groups and leadership energized those present to return home and live out the mission to which all Presentation people (sisters, associate ministers, staff and partners in mission) are called.

Adding in a bit of fun and service, following Mass on the second evening we held a baby shower to collect items for St. Vincent de Paul, Newburgh, New York, and Carenet Baby Service in Leominster, Massachusetts.



Above, Sisters Catherine Cleary and Gloria Perez take time to share their reflections on being mission with one another during our recent assembly.





100 Years: A Life Well-lived

What does 100 years, with over 80 percent spent as a vowed woman religious, look like? If you measure by Sister Hannah Cox, it looks like a life well-lived in service of those in need.

Hannah has been on a journey of transformation her entire life. As she celebrates 100 years on June 25, 2023, she can look back on a life of service. She served as an educator, worked with the poor and provided care and compassion in a nursing home. "I have worked with all different ages and all different ways of life," she explains. "We all look for love and for peace of mind. It's the same thing we all struggle with."

She has also evolved through the changes in religious life that Vatican II brought, as well as the current transformation in religious life.

At every point in her life and through each of her ministries, Hannah has had a unique gift for bringing out the best in those around her. So many of them comment on what a difference she made in their life. A recent Facebook post featuring her garnered hundreds of comments, many thanking her for being kind and compassionate, as well as for her great sense of humor. Below is a small sample of the comments:

- ... a truly special person and a great leader.
- Sister Hannah, so loved by so many of us! Thank you for the best memories of St. Helen and the Catholic school years!
- She is a blessing to all whose lives she has touched. God bless you, Sister Hannah. I'll always remember you for your kindness towards me.
- Sister Hannah was such a wonderful principal. I will never forget what she did for me.
- I remember how you sat and prayed with me during my pregnancy. My daughter still has the cross you gave her when she was born.
- What a caring, dynamic lady! May God bless her always!
- You talked and prayed with me when my mom passed; I will never forget your beautiful heart.

Hannah praises the partners and collaborators with whom she has been blessed to work. "I can never say I did anything alone," she states. "We always did it together. God gives you a certain gift and he doesn't



If you would like to send greetings to Sister Hannah for her 100th birthday, please address them to: Sister Hannah Cox, Mt. St. Joseph, 84 Presentation Way, New Windsor NY 12553

give you every gift. Other people have gifts and you put them all together."

Hannah explains that in sharing ministry with one another each person can use his/her gifts and it produces a friendship and sharing. "You're happier when you're working in a group," she reminds us. "And if you're going to do any work, you have to be happy."

Still active in the prayer association ministry, retiring is not on Hannah's mind. "Some people tell me I should retire and enjoy myself," she says. "I enjoy doing ministry. Everyone has to feel needed; they have to feel like there is something they are living for."

"I wake up in the morning and say, 'What am I going to do today?'" she explains. "I talk to God. I have peace in my mind. I am thankful for the gift of community and our time of life and prayer together."

"I have hope for the future," she concludes. "I have hope that Nano Nagle's love for the poor and giving of oneself have been passed on in one way or another, not just by religious but by lay people who are sharing in this work."

Shining a Light on Partners



Associate Mary Jane Person took part in the Gathering of Presentation People in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, last fall. Above, she is working with others from across the United States on building on dreams for the future of collaboration.

Associate Mary Jane Person has known the Presentation Sisters since her time as a young girl in St. Leo's Parish, Leominster, Massachusetts. "I went to religious education classes there," she explains. "Then in eighth grade one of my neighbors joined the choir and asked me to join with her. That was the beginning of my journey with the community."

Though she professed vows and entered the congregation after high school and loved her 30 years as a member, Mary Jane found she needed space to find herself. After a great deal of reflection and prayer, her journey of transformation led her to a call to live as a single person in the next chapter of her life.

Though she left vowed life, her heart stayed with the Presentation community and her many friends who remained as members. Her mother was an associate of the congregation and Mary Jane still took her to meetings. One day Sister Pat Dowler said to her, "When are you going to become an associate? When you're ready, we welcome you."

This was the invitation she needed to begin a new associate relationship with the community. Though she had many years of experience with the Presentation Sisters before becoming an associate, this new relationship brought new insight to her life. "I've learned so much about Nano Nagle and I admire the courage she had."

Mary Jane finds a kindred spirit in Nano. "She could have had a life of travel and comfort. I could have chosen that path as well but, like Nano, I want to make a difference in the world that I live in. This world needs people to make a difference," she shares.

Throughout her life Mary Jane has lived very simply and tried to do as much as she can for others. "I'm approaching 80," she explains. "But I am still young at heart and still have a lot of things I want to do. I look for opportunities to reach out to people in need all the time. I have always tried to be of service to others."

After serving as a teacher for many years, working for a publishing company that published religion books was a natural fit for Mary Jane. She traveled across the country, giving summer workshops for the company and meeting many people along the way.

Now director of the associate program for the congregation, Mary Jane puts her people skills to work as she strives to help others learn more about what it means

to be a Presentation associate and how enriching it is. "What I love about being an associate is being with other people who believe in the same thing ... that we can make a difference."

Mary Jane experienced the Gathering of Presentation People from across the United States last fall and joined a group working to develop shared Presentation experiences for Presentation people. With this group she helped to plan food drives, using the theme "Yes We CAN," in locations where the sisters live and minister. They continue to meet to find new ways in which Presentation people across the United States can share experiences in mission and ministry.

"If we can help the people here and somebody helps the people there ... other people see that and can join us and help. To be a part of a group that feels making a difference is important is, to me, invaluable," she shares.

In her role with associates Mary Jane gets to work with new associates as they complete the formation process. She enjoys working through the associate journal with new people, hearing their stories and helping them to connect these with Nano's story. "I learn so much working with each person who goes through the formation process to become an associate. It has been so enriching," she explains.

In addition to working with the associate program for the congregation, she spends time helping with the First Communion program in her parish. "I don't say I'm retired; I say I'm recycled," Mary Jane explains.

One important part of Mary Jane's life is remaining connected with the sisters. She worked with Sister Pat Dowler in the associate program for over 12 years. When she would go to the convent for planning time with Pat, she enjoyed having lunch with the sisters living there and catching up on each other's lives.

She has driven sisters to events and prepared meals for those who appreciate her homemade soups. In many small and big ways, she stays connected and recongizes the important role the sisters play in her life.

This hospitality and desire for a connection extends to associates. "I spend a lot of time calling people," she shares, "especially when they are going through something and need that support." She also visits associates in their homes, striving to keep everyone connected.

In New England, service often brings the sisters and associates together. Associate Pauline Aliskevicz is the program director for Haitian Outreach, a ministry that supports children in schools in Haiti. This mission aligns with the Sisters' focus on ministry to women and children in need. Seeing a kindred organization, Presentation sisters and associates donate items and money and spend hours putting together backpacks for this important program. The associates, partnering with the sisters, also reach out



Picture above, back row, Associates Katie Boudreau, Paula Lanson, Rose Norton, Anna Sabourin and Mary Jane Person. In front, Associate Angela McGuire, Sister Marie Marlene, Sister Verlaine Cadet, Associate Claire Boudreau and Associate Pauline Aliskevicz gathering in April to celebrate 25 years of Haitian Outreach Ministry.

in mission in support of women in a rehab center run by Catholic Charities and of women and babies at Carenet baby services.

In 2022 the associate and vocation ministries for the Presentation Sisters merged to become the new members initiative (see page 10 for more information). Mary Jane has taken on the role of faciliator for this group in their work to, in her words, "make known the fact that Presentation sisters and associate are still here and welcome new people."

Mary Jane says the committee tries to involve everyone. "Everyone can do something," she explains. "It might be praying for the success of our work, it might be offering your ideas and it might be doing something extra. It's sisters and associates working together to make a difference."

Mary Jane's servant heart shines through in all she does. "I have had experiences throughout my life that have enriched me," she says. "Every piece of my life is a value to who I am today."

Widening the Tent: New Members

As we continue our journey toward transformation as women religious and associates, we want to widen the tent in these new times, encouraging and engaging sisters and associate ministers to BE mission where they are through prayer, presence, witness and service. In May 2022 we launched a new encompassing vision for membership, uniting all our efforts into one committee: the new members committee. This committee promotes our Presentation way of life to all interested people according to their particular call or vocation: either as a vowed religious or as an associate minister.

A Come & Be prayer held the first Thursday of each month via Zoom continues to support, encourage and call together our Presentation people in prayer and reflection. The committee recently sponsored mornings of reflection for Advent and Lent, as well as a sharing by Sister Yliana Hernandez on her time with the Kino Border Initiative.

This group also continues work that has been ongoing. This includes support of the Haitian Outreach ministry, prison outreach and the Carenet program in Massachusetts, and support of families in need and monthly sandwich making for the community in New York.

On June 10 we will be hosting a service day as we live out our commitment statement to address the needs of women and children, especially as they are impacted by economic, environmental and racial inequity. We are partnering with Downing Park Urban Farm for this service experience. We will begin with breakfast at 8 a.m. at Mt. St. Joseph, followed by a morning of service. We will then return to Mt. St. Joseph for lunch and reflection time. If you are interested in being a part of this day of service, contact Kelly at kellyr@sistersofthepresentation.org.

The committee is planning additional days of prayer and service. If you would like to receive information about these events, or becoming a sister or an associate, we encourage you to contact us!



If you are interested in learning how you can become a Presentation associate, contact:

Associate Mary Jane Person 508-797-9027 personmaryjane9@gmail.com Associate Dr. Donaldo Batiste 224-688-1591 drbatiste53@gmail.com If you would like to learn more about discernment to become a Presentation sister, contact:

Sister Laura Urbano 845-564-0513x104 lurbano@sistersofthepresentation.org



CARE OF CREATION

Join us in our commitment to caring for creation by purchasing a ticket for your chance to win a Toyota Corolla Hybrid!

\$100/ticket

No more than 1500 tickets will be sold

First prize: Toyota Corolla Hybrid or \$20,000 Second prize: \$4,000

Third prize: \$1,000

Drawing will be held August 26, 2023



Contact Maryann with questions 845.567.0204 x123



Presentation Picnic

A CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

AUGUST 26, 2023 - 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR SUMMER PICNIC



Gratitude for our Leominster Convent

Transformation often requires us to let go of something so that we are able to welcome in something new.

In 1886 Mother Magdalen Keating set out from Staten Island, New York, with a small group of sisters to begin a new foundation of Presentation Sisters in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. The Sisters eventually opened schools and other ministries in other areas of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Over 25 years ago the congregations in Fitchburg and Newburgh, New York, joined to become the New Windsor Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Today's call to women religious continues to be one in which we place our hope and trust in God. We as a congregation have made life-giving decisions that have created space for the new to emerge. One of those decisions was for our sisters living at Presentation convent in Leominster, Massachusetts, to move into Notre Dame du Lac, an environment that will support community with the services needed to allow each sister to age in place in the presence of community. This facility is also home to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, enlarging the network from which our sisters can continue to draw community and spiritual support.

It is certainly not easy to leave Presentation convent, but Nano Nagle has shone her lantern in directing us in this evolving time of religious life.

On March 12, the community at Presentation convent gathered with our sisters, associates, family and friends for a celebration of gratitude. Our celebration began by acknowledging the loss and fears that rise within the heart upon completion of one part of the journey and transitioning to another. We celebrated the gift of God's promise of peace and a future full of hope, symbolized as the sisters joyfully processed from the chapel carrying their lighted lanterns.

During the following week our sisters moved to Notre Dame du Lac. In the weeks since this move, our sisters have settled into their new environment and are thriving as they now have many more activities and options for community sharing. This has affirmed our congregational decision as the move has already provided to be life-giving for our sisters.

We honor the various emotions this move elicits for so many. In our almost 140-year history, we have learned over and over again, change is inevitable. This is another opportunity to honor the losses of the past and look to the possibility of what is yet to be.

During our celebration on March 12, the leadership team blessed the sisters and the sisters blessed each other and the congregation as we move on to the next stretch of our journey toward transformation.



In Loving Memory



Sister Bernadette (Mary Rosanne) Rohan

September 30, 1939 ~ March 8, 2023

Sister Bernadette (Mary Rosanne) Rohan grew up in a large Irish family in Queens, N.Y. She met the Presentation Sisters at St. Michael's High School, Manhattan, and joined the congregation in 1957. She professed final vows on April 23, 1963.

After earning an education degree from Fordham, Bernadette taught for several years in New York and New Jersey. Always wanting to be a nurse, she went back to school when Presentation sisters began moving into other areas of ministry and fulfilled her calling in the medical field. She found her true passion in working in the community outreach program at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, ministering to the most vulnerable people in the city. Bernadette faithfully carried on Nano's legacy by extending hospitality to the poor.

Throughout health issues Bernadette never lost her sense of humor and kept a joyful heart. Her optimism and faith sustained her during her final years.



Sister Joan Mary (Mary Prague) Mc Dermott

May 1, 1934 ~ April 30, 2023

Sister Joan Mary (Mary Prague) McDermott was a graduate of St. Bernard's High School, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and entered the community on September 24, 1952. She professed her final vows on August 20, 1958.

After earning a bachelor's and a master's, Joan Mary furthered her studies in ministry to the aging and infirm. In addition to education, religious education and ministry to the aging, Sister extended her work by serving the poor in Mexico, Jamaica and Trinidad.

Known as a gentle and compassionate woman whose love and concern for others went beyond the norm, Joan Mary was called upon by several religious congregations in the Diocese of Worcester to conduct workshops, reflection days and retreats on aging. Her light shone brightly in this ministry, where her compassion and understanding of the aging process made for experiences that provided sisters with the strength and tools needed as they aged. In 2016, she was awarded the Retirement Fund for Religious Award.

SHINING OUR LIGHT

Right, associates with baby shower gifts at Carenet baby services.

Below, staff from St. Bernard's school visited the sisters at Notre Dame du Lac.











Center, Sister Gloria Perez with gifts collected at the baby shower for St. Vincent de Paul.



Sister Eleanor Joyce returned to teach a lesson at Nora Cronin Presentation Academy.





Above, sisters and associates are updating the garden at Mt. St. Joseph.

Left, sisters and associates make

Catholic School Scholarships

We are pleased to announce the recipients of our Catholic school scholarships for the 2023-24 schoolyear. Called to the New York area in 1874 to educate Catholic children in Manhattan, our sisters have long held the belief that education is fundamental to providing the tools to build a solid foundation for the future. Our foundress, Nano Nagle, also held this belief as she educated young people in the lanes of Cork, Ireland, in the 1700s during the time of penal laws.

We have carried on this tradition of Catholic education, serving as educators in Catholic schools in the region for well over 100 years. In recent years many of our sisters have been called to serve other areas of need, but our commitment to Catholic education is as strong as ever. To promote Catholic education and Catholic values in our youth, we are awarding Catholic school scholarships to help those in need to access a Catholic education.

Recipients of our high school scholarship in the amount of \$2,000:

- Tina Raia, John S. Burke Catholic High School, Goshen, New York
- Kevin Bennett, John S. Burke Catholic High School, Goshen, New York
- Cobbi Okyere, St. Bernard's High School, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Recipients of our middle school/elementary scholarship in the amount of \$1,000:

- Heidi Barragan, Nora Cronin Presentation Academy, Newburgh, New York
- Isabella Castillo, Annunciation Parish School, Crestwood, New York
- Regan Kelly, John S. Burke Academy, Goshen, New York
- Anna Hernandez-Silva, St. Leo's School, Leominster, Massachusetts
- Gabriel Lopez, St. Bernard's Elementary School, Fitchburg, Massachusetts



Did one of our sisters make a positive impact in your life? Was she a teacher that went above and beyond to make sure you understood what you were learning? Did she show care and compassion during a vulnerable time in your life?

We invite you to support the Presentation Sisters with a donation in honor or in memory of a sister who shown a light in you life!

You can use the enclosed envelope and note the name of the sister on the line provided. We would also love to hear about you and your connection to the sister and invite you to enclose a note telling us more.

You can also make a donation via our website by logging on to www.sistersofthepresentation.org/support-us





Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mount St. Joseph 84 Presentation Way New Windsor, NY 12553

www.sistersofthepresentation.org

Facebook @PresentationSister Instagram @nw_pbvm



Join us via Zoom for prayer and reflection at 8 p.m. Eastern the first Thursday of each month.

More information can be found on our website or Facebook page.