

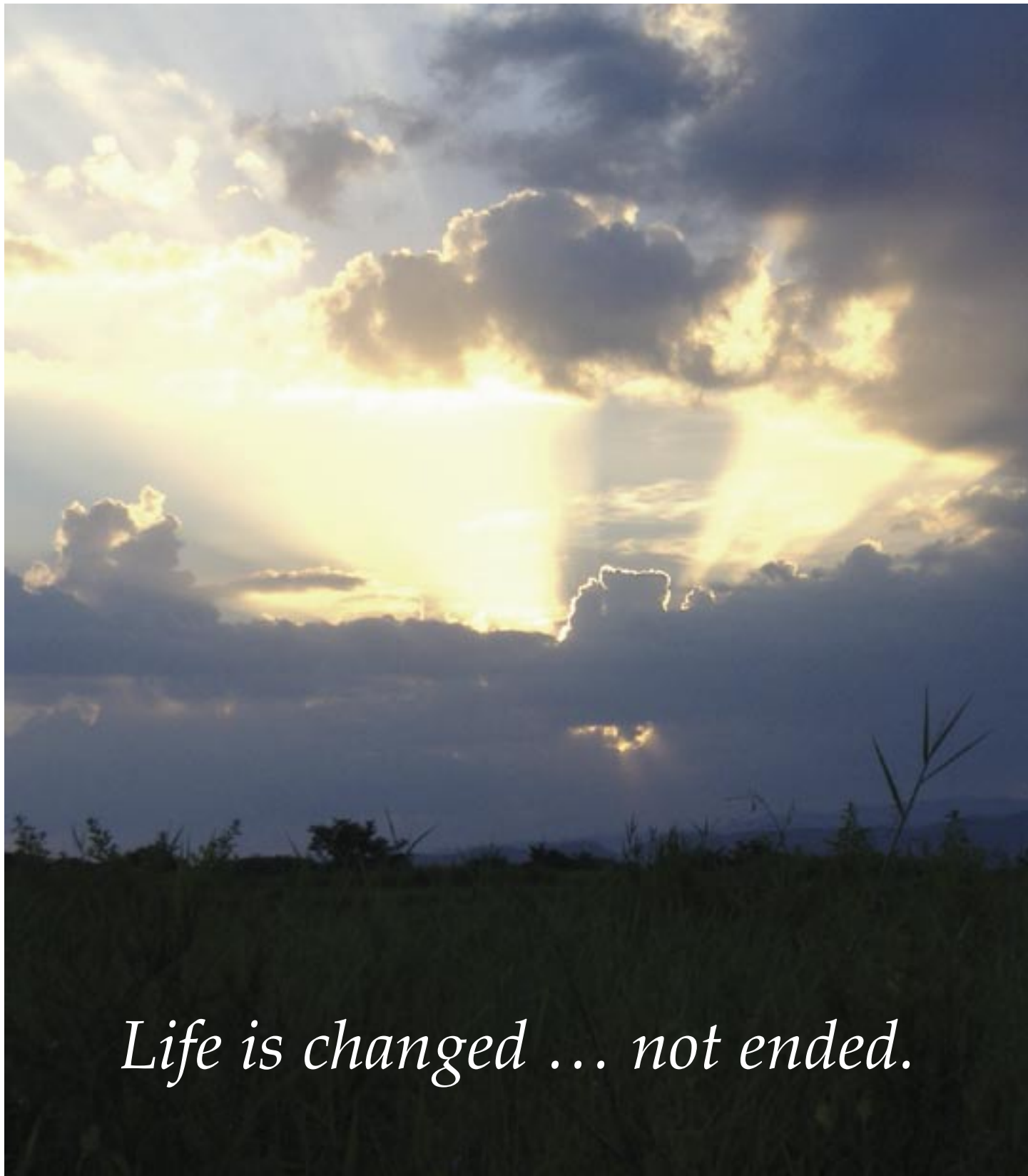
The Vine

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

(John 15:5)

Volume 2, Issue 2
Fall 2008

A newsletter of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Life is changed ... not ended.



Letter from Mother Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ Provincial Superior

Dear Friends,

As summer days draw to a close and the farmer's fields are ripe for harvesting, we are reminded of the beautiful words of our Savior, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Mt 9:38). In His goodness, the Master of the harvest has seen fit to call us, unworthy though we are, to the great mission of loving and serving Him in consecrated life. We are grateful for this grace and rejoice in all that the Lord

has been doing in our Province, our own corner of His vineyard.

During the months of May and June, we were blessed to have had with us from Cracow, Poland, our Mother General, Mother Agnieszka Kijowska and her Assistant, Sr. Auxilia Felisiak, as they made their visitation of our American Province. The visit of our general Superior is always a time of graces and renewal for us as we try to live out ever more authentically our charism of extending the Kingdom of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus within

ourselves and in the world.

In June, our province joyfully celebrated the silver jubilee of religious profession of Sister Marietta Therese Hanley and also opened our door and our hearts to our new aspirant Katherine Major who entered our community in August. Certainly, we thank the Master of the Harvest for His providence, even as we pray fervently for those also whom God is calling to embrace our way of life.

Besides affording us time to rest and visit our families, the summer months allow our Sisters the opportunity to work with youth through various summer camps. Our Sisters participated at the summer camp of St. Aloysius Parish, Cresson, PA, and also traveled to northeastern Pennsylvania to coordinate summer camps at St. Therese Church, in Willkes-Barre and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Nanticoke. These are always happy and fun-filled days for the children, and yes, also for our Sisters!



The 25th Jubilee of religious profession of Sr. Marietta Therese Hanley. Also included is Mother General Agnieszka Kijowska, SSCJ and Bp. Joseph Adamec of Altoona - Johnstown Diocese.



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M. General visiting our Sisters in Swedesburg, PA. From left - Sr. Klara Slonina, Sr. Margaret Mary Hill, M.General Agnieszka Kijowska, Sr. Asst. Auxilia Felisiak, M. Ryszarda Wittbrodt, and Sr. Miriam Joseph Spineweber.



With Fr. Ronald Giannone, OFM Cap., Executive Director of The Ministry of Caring, Inc., Wilmington, DE.

*Letter from Mother Ryszarda
Continued from page 2*

Summer is also the time when our Sisters can come apart to our formation and retreat house in Munster, PA to make their annual August retreat. This year our retreat was directed by Father David Brzoska, Vice-Rector of St. Vincent's Seminary, Latrobe, PA who gave us much to reflect upon. We are grateful to God for this time to come apart and be renewed in Him.

As co-laborers in the Lord's vineyard, God has given us so many friends such as yourselves, who are helping us complete our much-needed projects. Through the goodness of so many, the repair of our Province house roof is well underway as well as the much-needed renovations to the outdoor stairwells of our Province and novitiate houses. Also through the support, hard work and dedication of our Golf Committee and our kind sponsors, our Province organized its first annual Golf Tournament on September 12, 2008 at Summit Country Club, Cresson. Words fail us as we try to thank all of you for your goodness and generosity, so we must rely upon Jesus, our Divine Spouse, who alone can reward you adequately for your sacrifices and kindness on our behalf.

May the Lord bless and keep you!

In the Divine Heart,

Sr. Ryszarda Wittenrodt, SSCJ



The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, May 30, 2008, before our Provincial Chapel, Cresson, PA.



At the Guardian Angel Child Care, Wilmington, DE.

Prayer to Obtain Graces Through the Intercession of St. Joseph Sebastian:

Almighty, Eternal God, One Holy Trinity, I adore you and give you thanks for the graces you have bestowed upon Saint Joseph Sebastian, whom you have inspired with fervent devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Following His example, may I too love the Divine Heart and may this Heart become a source of holiness and consolation for me. Hear my prayer, through the intercession of Saint Joseph Sebastian, and grant me the grace of ... which I ask of you. Amen.

Saint Joseph Sebastian, Pray for us.



**Saint Joseph Sebastian Pelczar (1842-1924)
Founder
of our Congregation**

To contact us:



**SISTER SERVANTS
OF THE MOST SACRED HEART
OF JESUS**

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Father Marek Bzinkowski – A Man on a Mission from God

On December 5, 1999 near the city of Santa Cruz, Jamaica, a Polish missionary named Father Marek Bzinkowski was involved in a violent car accident which left his left leg mangled and put him in mortal danger from rampant infections of the blood and bone. Given the primitive medical care of the region, it became clear to local medical personnel that Father needed to go at once for emergency treatment in the United States to save his life. Responding to this critical situation was the Most Reverend Joseph V. Adamec, Bishop of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, who arranged for Father Marek to be flown to Altoona Hospital in Pennsylvania where he would need to undergo multiple operations for his injuries.

Since Father Marek is a native of Poland, diocesan officials were eager to introduce him to the Polish Sacred Heart Sisters in Cresson, Pennsylvania. What seemed at first to be a passing encounter with a critically ill missionary would later have lasting effects in the life and history of our religious Congregation.

Father Marek first visited our Cresson Provincialate on Christmas Eve, 1999. Those then present can recall the heart-breaking sight of the very sick patient whom doctors had given brief leave to join us. The picture of suffering, Father Marek was wheeled into our chapel, his



Father Marek Bzinkowski, Pastor of the Holy Spirit Church, Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica.

face ashen with pain, his body weakened with illness. Accompanying him was our Sisters' dear friend and former diocesan director of the Propagation of the Faith, Monsignor Francis Ackerson, also ailing. Together both suffering priests concelebrated the Holy Mass at a makeshift altar in the center aisle of our chapel as they were unable to climb the altar step.

What many did not suspect on that Christmas Eve was that Father Marek's infection was so relentless and his nerve damage so extensive that doctors doubt-

ed whether, if he did survive, the young missionary could ever walk again.

But, by God's grace, survive he did, however with a long road of recovery ahead for him. Our Sisters in Cresson were privileged to provide nursing care for the convalescent priest, whose presence with us gave witness to his tremendous, personal love for Jesus Christ and unflagging missionary zeal.

Against all odds, in what could only be seen as a miraculous turn of events, Father Marek did in fact regain his ability to walk. Shortly thereafter, in spite of physical pain, he eagerly prepared to return to his mission and resume his work of loving service among the people of Jamaica. Yet at his departure for the West Indies, Father Marek expressed the belief that it was not by chance that we had met him, but instead, was part of the plan of God to bring our Sisters to serve the poor of Jamaica at his mission.

His dreams would eventually become a reality. After prayerful discernment, the Superiors of our Congregation, at Father Marek Bzinkowski's invitation as pastor and with the permission of the Bishop of Mandeville, perceived it to be the will of God for the glory of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus that our Sisters should be sent to live and work there.

Presently, our Sisters provide education and catechetical instruction to improve morality and, hopefully, effect a more stable family life and good future for the people of Jamaica. They also provide basic and much-needed free health services for the people at a simple clinic run by our Sisters in Maggotty. Our Sisters are further involved with outreach to the poor in the villages, as they seek to be a witness of hope to those in need, spiritually, materially and morally. Considering our unlikely but now very real presence in the Caribbean and the tremendous work our Sisters are accomplishing there, it is safe to say today that Father Marek's meeting with us in 1999 was by far "no accident" but very much part of the plan of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



The village of Maggotty, Jamaica, where the Sisters live and work – can be seen: church, convent, and rectory.

A Letter from Our Sisters in Jamaica

Since the opening of our mission in Maggotty, Jamaica in 2004, many new developments have occurred. Under the direction of the pastor, Father Marek Bzinkowski, our mission now includes a large Community Center with dormitories to accommodate volunteers. Throughout the year, people from all over the United States and Europe come to Maggotty to help in various ways – teaching, working in the clinic, painting, and helping with construction projects. We look forward to the arrival

Rita spend three days a week working at the clinic. We are presently seeing about 150-180 patients a week. Two days a week the Sisters must travel for home visits to the sick unable to come to the clinic. These visits take much time since the surrounding districts are a distance from each other. For most visits, the Sisters travel by local taxis that know the villages. But sometimes the Sisters must walk a great distance or even climb the hills to get to someone's home.

In 2006, Sr. Clare Marie Carriger

arrived to help our Sisters in Maggotty. Sr. Clare Marie is a teacher but helps in the clinic when it is open. Sister also helps with home visits when there is a need. There are classes after school with the children and adult reading classes in the evening three days a week. Sometimes, Sr. Clare Marie has reading classes during the day with students who do not attend school.



Sr. Superior Emila Malczak and Sr. Rita Kurdziel, leading prayers in the clinic.

of these volunteers, who keep coming back, year after year. Not only do they accomplish a lot of work, but their support and friendship is a real treasure.

Sr. Emila Malczak and Sr. Rita Kurdziel have been working at Holy Spirit Clinic since their arrival in Jamaica in 2004. At first, their clinic consisted of only one available room for everything – seeing patients, preparing medicines, and doing minor surgeries. Now there is a separate room for the pharmacy where medicine is prepared and where small emergency surgeries can be performed.

For the past two years, a nurse practitioner from the United States had been helping to run the clinic. However, upon the completion of her contract, she returned to America. Sr. Emila and Sr.



Sr. Assistant Auxilia Felisiak with Jamaican family.



Sr. Rita Kurdziel, a confirmation sponsor for a Jamaican woman.

Several volunteers came in the spring to teach sewing to the local women. We were grateful to offer these classes, since we have about eight sewing machines and lots of fabric for sewing. During the summer, practice sessions were offered for women to make pillows and pillow covers. A local woman conducted the practice sessions under Sr. Clare Marie's direction.

The Sisters are now enjoying fresh milk from one of the cows belonging to the mission. We also have fifteen chickens that give us eggs each day. Sr. Emila bakes bread every few weeks, so the milk and eggs are necessary.

In May, our Mother General Agnieszka and her Assistant, Sister Auxilia, came to Jamaica on visitation. Provincial Councilor, Sister Jacinta Miryam came also from the American Province. We were so happy to see Mother and our Sisters and to share our mission life with them.

In June, Sr. Rita went to Poland to celebrate her Silver Jubilee of religious profession and seek funds for our mission activities while Sr. Clare Marie went to the United States for a visit in August. During that time, Sr. Jacinta Miryam returned to Jamaica to assist

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A Memorial to Father Eugene Jacobs

After retiring from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in 1988, Father Eugene Jacobs became a chaplain to the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Cresson and Munster/Portage, PA, however, he spent the last two months of his life in Garvey Manor in Hollidaysburg, Pa.

As a priest his favorite subjects were the Holy Mass, the priesthood, and the Blessed Mother. He always requested at least one hymn in honor of the Blessed Mother at his Masses. Father Jacobs succeeded in his work through devotion to Mary.

To spotlight his ministry briefly: as a young priest in Morgantown, WV, he found a need for a Catholic hospital. People were dying without the sacraments. Through an effort of prayer he acquired Vincent Pallotti Hospital with-

out spending a cent! This milestone of acquiring the hospital is described in the book *A House Built on Rock*.

Another highlight of his priesthood was to found Birthright of Huntington, WV, which, after 35 years, still continues going strong and is saving babies from abortion.

Probably Father Jacobs is most remembered for ability to bring people to conversion to the Catholic faith. After teaching at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, Bishop Swint requested that Father Jacobs return to the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston where he made over 1,000 converts!

It is recalled that at the age of five or six, Father Jacobs was playing too long in the sun. He came indoors and went to his mother's bed to lie down. This was a sign to his mother that

something was wrong, so she called the doctor. He was carried outdoors to give him air. The doctor said that he had had a case of sunstroke, which made him immobile. He appeared to be unconscious, but he could hear every word. His sister Geneva tearfully said, "You can have all my paper dolls if you get up!" Father later believed that God allowed all this to happen to him so that later, as a priest, he would know that when he went on sick calls there would be times when people would seem to be unconscious, but were not, for they could still hear!

When Father Jacobs received the last rites on March 4, 2008, hopefully he could hear the priest say, "By the authority vested in me, I grant you a plenary indulgence."

*"Life is short and death is sure.
The hour of death remains obscure.
A soul you have and only one.
If that be lost all hope is gone.
Waste not time while time shall last
For after death 'tis ever past,
All seeing God your judge will be
And Heaven or Hell your destiny.
All earthly things will pass away-
Eternity alone will ever stay."*

Dividends

By Robert J. Allen

What legacy will you leave the world? Many of us may need to reevaluate what demands we have placed on our life by looking to what has been or is important to us.

When we take time to more fully understand and realize how many religious and others are praying for us daily we are truly being sustained by God's many gifts to us.

No one to my knowledge has ever been able to determine what dividends are attributed to pray like you would in your investment portfolio, but the return on time in prayer is much greater and longer lasting.

People in our country are turning to religious institutions or charities because of the important role they play in our life and in our society. It's reassuring to know that you can and do make a difference in the universe, when you donate or support a religious community. They will pray for the people of the world irrespective of financial contributions, but they do need your help. Your donation is what empowers them to lead a life devote to serving God and each of us because God provides through generous people.

Let the dividends you receive be shared with those who are paying dividends at a high level of return for eternity.



*Please
remember us
when making or
revising your will.*

*Our name is:
Sister Servants of the Most Sacred
Heart of Jesus*

Our federal ID number is: 75-236-912

Nuns on Wheels Program

Would you like to donate a used vehicle...Car, Van, Truck, as is? While we may need to sell it or trade it, this donation will be a great help to the Sisters and you can claim its value as a charitable gift and tax deduction to the extent the law allows.



The Sisters would like to extend their thanks to S&A Homes, 2903 Benner Pike, Bellefonte, PA 16823, for their donation that will cover the cost of this and some future issues of our newsletter *The Vine*.

In our life and apostolate, it happens at times that that we are faced with many difficult situations. In such moments we become keenly aware that, alone and unaided, we are unable to meet such challenges. Each time we are turning to you for help and are so very touched by your response and support.

The repair of our roof progresses very well and the step repair is underway –all this thanks to your sacrifice and generosity.

Please, know that we are remembering you and your intentions in our daily prayers, especially during the Holy Mass offered on the last Thursday of each month for our all our Benefactors and their intentions.

We trust that the Sacred Heart will richly bless you and your families.

In the words of Saint Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians, we read: We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers, unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love. You are collaborators with us in bringing the love of the Heart of Jesus to others and we make the words of the Apostle of Christ our own thanking God for you constantly. May God bless you and keep you always in His love.

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Jamaica

the Superior, Sr. Emila. This summer, we also had two volunteers helping at our clinic.



Sr. Sup. Emilia Malczak at the clinic distributing medications.



M. Amabalis looks at a picture book with the children.

August 6, 2008, was a day of great joy for our Diocese here in Jamaica! Bishop Neil Tiedemann, C.P. was ordained the third Bishop of the Diocese of Mandeville, which had gone nearly two years without a Shepherd. We are so grateful to God for this episcopal ordination! Having worked as a priest in Honduras for many years, Bishop Tiedemann understands mission life. Bishop Tiedemann also speaks fluent Spanish – a language that Sr. Emila and Sr. Rita know well. God is good!

Our mission is growing, however we have many needs. We ask the prayers of our Sisters throughout the world for our intentions - first, that we can find a doctor who will come and help in our clinic. Also, we need money for medicine, especially to treat diabetes. It is very

difficult to bring medicines into Jamaica – we must depend on outside sources and organizations that can transport them legally.

We are also seeking funds for the construction of a larger clinic – this is truly necessary due to the large crowds coming to our clinic, as well for greater protection of our medical supplies during the heavy rains of this region.

We remember all of our Sisters and Benefactors



Sisters with children in the village of Maggoty.

daily in prayer. Let us join together in this Year of St. Paul to bring the love of the Sacred Heart and His message to all people whom we serve, especially the poor, the youth, and those most in need of God's mercy. God bless you!

*Your Sisters in Maggoty,
Jamaica*

Paper Products

On your weekly trip to the store, please consider purchasing an item or two of paper products to help the Sisters. A list of needed paper items is provided as a guide:

- Kleenex
- #10 Envelopes
- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Napkins
- Paper Plates
- 8 ½ x 11 White Paper
- Address Labels

We are so very grateful for any of your kind donations that will help our Sisters. Be assured of our prayers for you and your intentions.

The Invitational Golf Tournament 2008

Although the weather may not have cooperated, so many of our good friends did to organize our First Annual Sacred Heart Sisters Golf Tournament, *The Invitational, 2008*. This fundraiser to benefit the mission and works of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Cresson, PA, was held on Friday, September 12. Heavy rains may have kept golfers off the green, but we hope everyone still was able to enjoy the raffles, the putting contest sponsored by **Memorial Medical Center, Johnstown**, the million dollar hole-in-one shootout sponsored by the **Trimbath Family**, many exclusive prizes donated by **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**, as well as an ethnic Polish dinner prepared at the Cresson Country Club.

In addition to these *Special Angels of Assistance*, the Sisters would also like to thank in a special way: **Jack, Jennie & Paul Calandra** who sponsored the dinner for this event; **Heating**

World; Mainline Pharmacy, Cresson, PA; **Resta** of Cresson, PA; and **Mr. Robert Allen** who donated the gifts for the golfers.

“We want to thank everyone who contributed in any way toward this first annual *Invitational* golf tournament,” said Mother Ryszarda. “Although we were disappointed that our golfers couldn’t use their skills, still we appreciated the fellowship and wonderful attitudes of those who stayed for dinner.” She added that the Sisters offer their prayers and gratitude to all.

A committee headed by **Ward Prostejovsky** worked for approximately a year to put this event together. “We thank those wonderful people who worked so hard,” Mother Ryszarda said.

Tee sponsors included: **Ralph J. Albarano & Sons, Inc.**; **St. Aloysius Parish**, Cresson, PA; **Cambria County Federal Savings and Loan**; **Bobby Clark**; **Cresson Steel Company**; **DeGol Carpeting** of Duncansville, PA; **James Drug Store**; **Jennmar Corporation**; **Altoona Knights of Columbus**, No 551; **Cresson Knights of Columbus**, St. Anne Council, No. 4259; **Lamar Advertizing**; **Mount Aloysius College**; **Kenneth J. Noll**, CFP, Altoona, PA; **Mark Petryshak Construction**; **Portage Service Center**; **PEROVE Wealth Management**; **Sacred Heart Ushers Club**; **Mark Serenko Funeral Home**; **Stager’s Store**, Portage, PA; **Smithmyer’s Superette**, Loretto, PA; **Stepping Stones**; **S&T Bank**; **St. Francis University**; **St. Stanislaus Kostka Brotherhood**; **Wilkinson Bus Lines, Inc.**



This beautiful Invitational Trophy designed, cast, and donated by **Servinsky Jewelers**, will be held in safe keeping by the Sisters, until it can be won in next year’s Tournament.

Row 1: **Mother Amabilis Debicka, SSCJ**; **Mother Ryszarda Wittbrodt, SSCJ**; **Betsy Helsel**;

Row 2: (From left) **Kenneth “Tiger” Trimbath & T.J. Trimabth**; **Ward Prostojevsky** (Tournament Chair); **Robert Allen** (Development Director).



Mother Amabilis Debicka, SSCJ, with a happy prizewinner!



Sr. Mary Andrew Hooper, SSCJ, and our **Sr. Clare Marie Carriger, SSCJ**, visiting from Jamaica, preparing for the raffle.



Registration featured **Breakfast and Snacks** donated by **Mount Aloysius College**, Cresson, PA.

In-kind donations included: **Amici’s & Bogartz Restaurants**; **Damin Printing**; **Ebensburg Country Club**; **Iron Masters**, Roaring Springs, PA; **Mid’s Candy & Gifts**; **Oakmont Country Club**; **Summit Country Club**; **Sunnehanna Country Club**; and **Velenty Bottled Water, Co.**

Due to inclement weather, some prizes could not be won this year, however we sincerely thank the following sponsors of major prizes: **Thomas Automotive Family** and **Ebensburg Yamaha**.

We are looking forward to next year, when, God and weather permitting, we can finally ‘get out and play!’