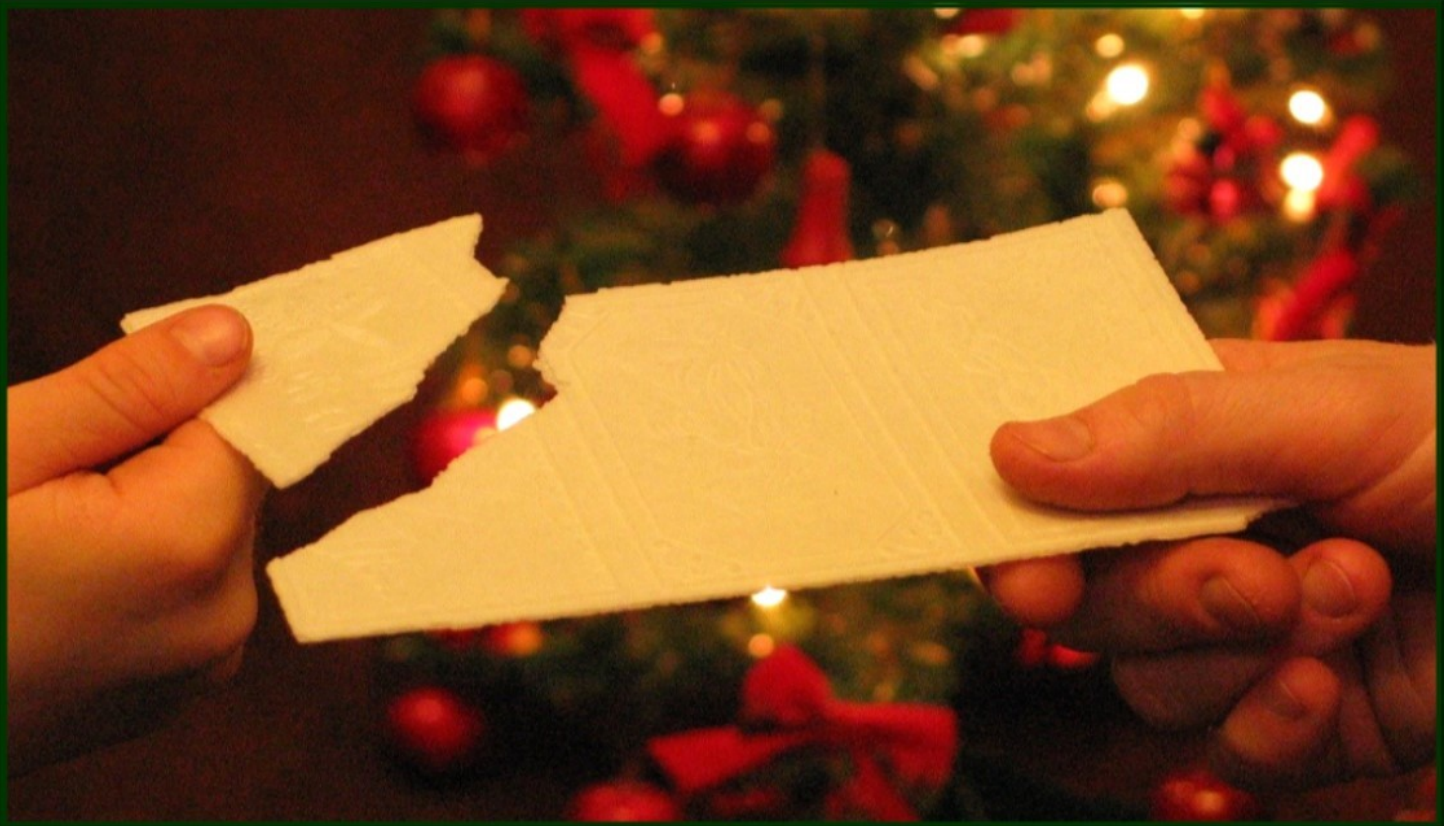


Volume 19, Issue 3
Christmas/Winter 2020
A newsletter of the Sister
Servants of the Most
Sacred Heart of Jesus

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. Jn 15:5*

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



*Nothing says "I love you," at least in a Polish-American family,
like the sharing of a thin, flat, tasteless wafer, called the Oplatek, at Christmas Eve.*

*The sharing of this unleavened bread with another person
is sharing all that is good with life.*

It's a time to tell each other, 'I love you, I care about you.'

*As we share the Oplatek with all of you,
our dear Family Members, Friends and Benefactors,
we send our love and gratitude,
promising our prayer before the Manger of Jesus Christ,
the Newborn Savior of the world.*

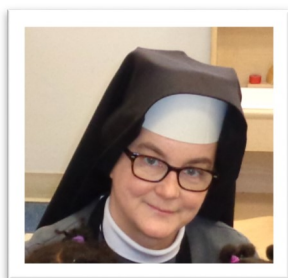
Sacred Heart Sisters

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Letter from Mother Klara, SSCJ Provincial Superior

Glory be to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



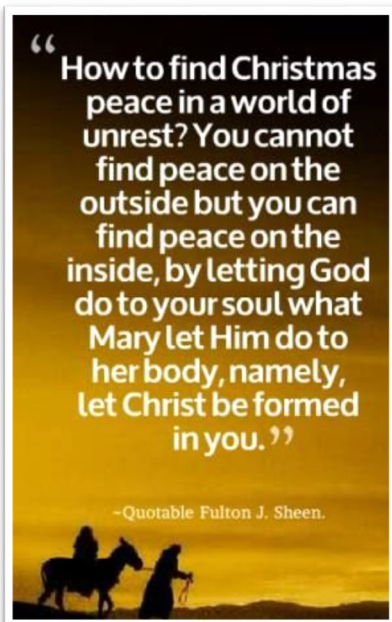
As we make preparations to celebrate Christmas and Wigilia (Christmas Eve Supper) with our Sisters from our convents in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Tonawanda, New York, Columbus, Ohio, Munster Township and Cresson, Pennsylvania and

(through ZOOM), with Maggotty, Jamaica, I think of hope and joy, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, disturbing news, illness etc. I think of a tiny Child, born in Bethlelehem, bringing us Salvation, opening to us the Heavens, giving eternal Life. And I think of the children who didn't give anything to mankind, because they weren't allowed to be born. An unborn scientist who will never find a cure for any illness; an unborn composer who will never compose any song; an unborn politician who will never fight for peace and justice; so many of them...

As I kneel before the Manger, I pray in thanksgiving for the families open to life, for the young people open to God's calling, for my Sisters, starving for holiness, and for all our Friends and Benefactors, so generous to us. Pax et Bonum!

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ

Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ
Provincial Superior



Memories of Bl. Klara Szczesna (1863—1916)

*by Sr. Eufemia Henryka
Kasprzycka*



I entered the Congregation on April 17, 1914. Since this time, I twice had a chance to meet in close proximity and speak with Mother General Klara. The first time I met her at the seminary in Tarnow, where I was sent in May as a postulant.

The second time I saw Mother Klara was in 1915. I had stopped at our motherhouse in Krakow on my way from Tarnow through Krakow to Wadowice, during an epidemic at the army hospital where our Sisters and our whole novitiate was working. I was with two postulants, Sr. Apolonia and Sr. Imelda. We went to greet Mother General in her cell. She kissed us in a maternal way and sat down on a low couch, settling us down on the floor around herself. With great love and the thoughtfulness that then filled all good and godly superiors who cared about the young generation in that difficult time, Mother Klara spoke with us as a mother talks with her children when she sends them far away. She gave us instructions and directions on how we should behave during our trip, after we reached the hospital, during our work, and how we should react and respond, in the event of possible offensive behavior. Watching Mother Klara in our simplicity, we absorbed her every word as something of the greatest importance and holiness. The goodness of Mother, from which flowed all her words and encouragement, bound us to her, and provided us with courage for each battle and strengthened our vocation. We felt that every word of Mother was filled with God's spirit, because it influenced us in God's way. We bid farewell to her and, tragically (!) we nevermore saw her on this earth.

Post Script:

When Mother Klara sent us to the army hospital in Wadowice and gave us various directives, she advised that we should not show fear anywhere because of our unpreparedness. We should rather have such an attitude and behavior that we could do anything. Our will and attitude of resourcefulness will then be a cause of confidence to the government, and we would never experience a lack of the help of God, if we would but work with a good intention and for the glory of God.

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



**From the Writings of our Founder
ST. JOSEPH SEBASTIAN PELCZAR
(1842-1924)**

**BE SUBJECT TO THE DIVINE WILL
IN ALL OF LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES
AND BE PATIENT IN SUFFERING**

Submission to the will of God is the roof of our spiritual edifice. The soul that has acquired this virtue may in good conscience say, "Lord, I do not wish anything but to do your will." The will of God is discovered in two ways, active or passive. God's will may command, forbid, permit, counsel or execute His eternal plan in time. Our submission to God's will may be either active or passive - active when we carry out the divine will; passive when we accept what God does.

According to the doctrine of the Fathers of the Church and theologians, there are certain things that God proposed unconditionally and His Will must be fulfilled; and there are other matters that are conditioned, that is, dependent on free human will. For example, God wishes everyone's salvation, provided each person cooperates with His grace.

How does one recognize the will of God? It is recognized in the following manner - the Commandments of God, the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Precepts of the Church, just orders of legitimate superiors, obligations of one's state in life, acts of Divine Providence and the genuine aspirations that come from God.

What is meant by "according to the will of God?" In the first place, we should adore God's most wise plans and we should submit to them without hesitation if they are clearly understood. Do not fret or even seek to find out whether they are pleasant or unpleasant - if there is some doubt, do not insist on putting them under a microscope. Rather, in all things, we should submit to God's wisdom, love and holiness.

Do not oppose God's will when it is obvious. Furthermore, one should seek always and everywhere to carry out God's requests and to consider His will as the only norm of our way of life.

It may often happen that, due to the natural law, one suffers a set back and it cannot be avoided. For example, one contracts a disease because the

atmosphere is infected, or a raging storm destroys a harvest, etc. It is true, God keeps us away from such disasters, but if He doesn't, be patient! He will draw out some good from every evil; He will use these occasions to correct, purify and sanctify us.

Perhaps you wonder if those hurts, outrages and calumnies perpetrated by other men really are permitted by God. This much we know. Yes, indeed, they are sins. They are evil. However, God, who is all holy, does not want them to happen and so He condemns and punishes those evil doers. On the other hand, yes, it is also true that God tolerates the sinner, in order to chastise and put someone else to the test.

If your neighbor sins and by his sin causes you harm and makes you suffer, certainly you have every right to condemn the sin. However, you should view your own hurts as a test from the Lord Who is using your neighbor as an instrument of His justice and mercy.

"Shall I not drink the chalice that the Father has given me?" said our Savior. (Jn. 18, 11) This chalice was prepared by the Jews. But one must not conclude that they acted according to a command of God. No! Their wrong came from their evil will and, therefore, they sinned. But God was aware and tolerated this sin, using it as the instrument to carry out His own most sacred plan.

God never goes along with the sin, but He does accept its penalty, the Cross. So, too, we should be willing to carry our cross. If you shoulder only the crosses you deserve and not some others, you will be missing an excellent opportunity to advance along the way of perfection.

Union with the will of God gives us perfect peace. What can possibly fray your nerves: you quietly accept whatever happens, knowing full well that everything takes place by the most wise and most merciful will of God?

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saints Among Us:

Sr. Longina Kurzeja, SSCJ & Fr. Józef Kurzeja

By Sr. Klara Slonina, SSCJ & Sr. Mary Joseph Calore, SSCJ



Our Sister Longina (Anna) Kurzeja was born on June 10, 1926 in Zasyn, the older sister of the Servant of God, Fr. Józef Kurzeja.

She entered the Congregation of the Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on December 1, 1947, made her first religious profession on September 30, 1949, and her perpetual profession on September 30, 1955. In 1999, she celebrated her Golden Jubilee of religious life.



Sr. Longina with her family

From 1949-1980, Sr. Longina was assigned to work in our convent kitchens – in the General House in Krakow, the Provincial House in Częstochowa, the bishop's curia in Kielce; and, from 1972-1980 at the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow. It was there

that Sister Longina served under St. John Paul II, as the then Archbishop of Krakow.

During her time of service at the Krakow Curia, Sr. Longina's brother, Fr. Jozef Kurzeja, was pastor and founder of a parish in Nowa Huta, Poland.

This city was intended by the communists to be a godless, Stalinist utopia where there would be no church, no Catholic presence, but only something of a proletarian paradise.



The "Green Shed" - a tiny church built by the workers in Nowa Huta

And it was there, that Sr. Longina's younger brother, Fr. Jozef Kurzeja was a fearless defender of the faith.



Cardinal Karol Wojtyla blesses the streets of Nowa Huta. Father Kurzeja is on the far right, Cardinal Andrzej Deskur is in the center.

Fr. Kurzeja won the admiration and respect of the future St. John Paul II, who held him up as a model to be imitated.



Blessing of the cornerstone for the church in Nowa Huta

And this good priest died of a heart attack on August 15, 1976 at the age of 39, his health ruined by constant harassment and persecution by the secret police during those Communistic times. His cause for canonization goes forward, and he is known in Poland as the Servant of God, Fr. Jozef Kurzeja.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



Upon Fr. Kurzeja's death, then Archbishop Karol Wojtyla "adopted" our Sister Longina as a sister, and kept in touch with her for years.

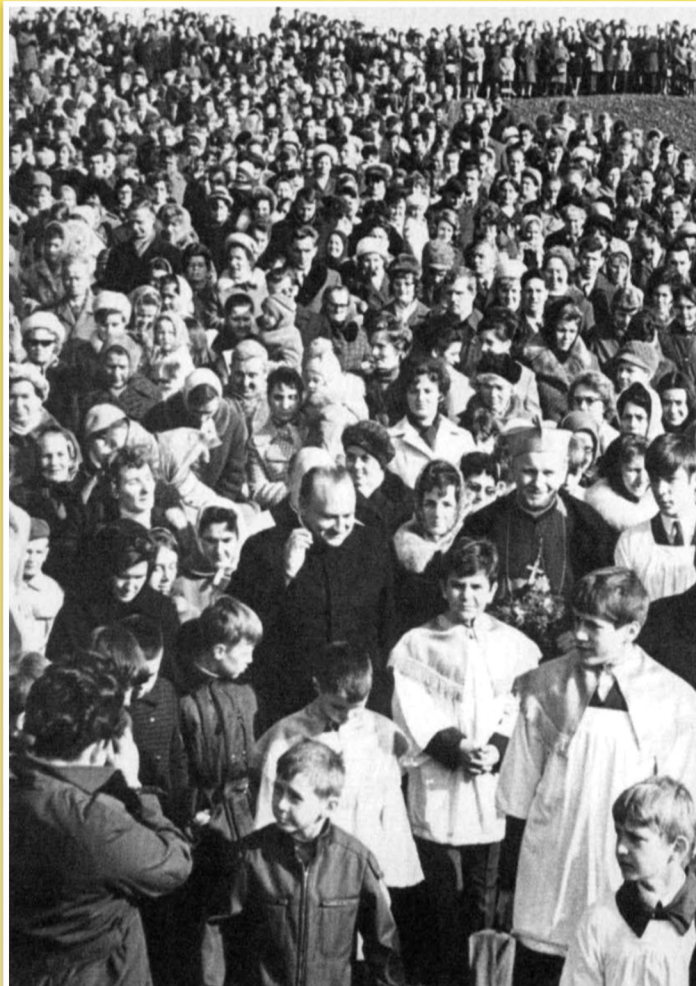
Two years after Fr. Kurzeja's death, in 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope and took

with him several Sacred Heart Sisters, members of his office and domestic staff from Krakow, who would serve in Rome. Sr. Longina served with them from 1980 to 1984.

Sister served faithfully in Rome, until she was transferred back to the Provincial House in Częstochowa, where for many years she worked among the poor, especially by supporting the homeless. There, Sr. Ryszarda Wittbrodt of our American Province was stationed for a time with Sr. Longina in Częstochowa, and assisted Sister Longina in her documentation of her brother's life, already being hailed for its holiness.

Sister Longina Kurzeja died on August 14, 2012 in Krakow, which was a truly significant date. It was not only the death anniversary and feast of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, the saint chosen by her late brother as patron of his Nowa Huta parish, but it was also the vigil of Fr. Jozef Kurzeja's own death anniversary in 1976.

These souls stand as witnesses to the hope that faces the darkness of our time. We thank God for such examples and we pray that we also may be found worthy in the day of trial.



Nowa Huta—the place where Faith, Hope and Love are stronger than fear



St. John Paul II in Nowa Huta, 1979

Without electricity, without water, we built a 450 square meter building with shovels, in four months. At first, I didn't believe it was possible! This is Fr. Kurzeja's personality and way of being; his approach inspired a voluntary work for twelve hours without a break, without even rest! When we finished the construction on November 30, I asked myself: 'How did we do it?' (the work started on July 23).

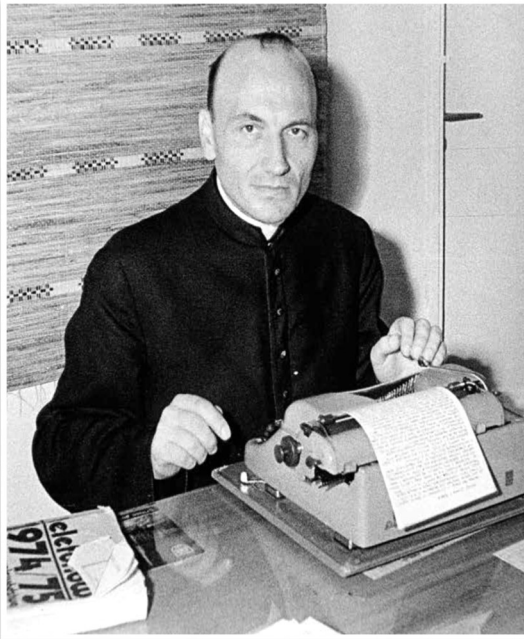
*Mieczysław Krzywdziński
Construction Master*

The devil fears hearts on fire with love of God.
St. Catherine of Siena

You will never be happy if your happiness depends on getting solely what you want. Change the focus. Get a new center. Will what God wills, and your joy no man shall take from you.

Venerable Fulton Sheen

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



SERVANT OF GOD FATHER JÓZEF KURZEJA

Brother of our late Sister Longina (Anna) Kurzeja,

God will allow you to survive everything; I am praying for you, Haniu. What is difficult, will pass, and we will see the good fruits of it. Each day comes and goes, likewise what is good and what is bad, unpleasant. Sometimes we would like to act differently, choose the easier path, but if we constantly remember the future life, we will accept everything, and eternal joy will sweeten our difficulties. We must remember that we are earning for a future life, when we will see only beauty and brightness, which gives a depth of happiness we can only dream of. Eternal life cannot be embraced by our weak human reason. Sister, throw flowers while you have strength to gather them.

Fr. Józef Kurzeja

(from a letter to his sister Anna Kurzeja—Sr. Longina)

Years pass, a man grows old, like Jonah he runs away from God's will, until God catches the man. God does this in many ways, often through illness. It was so with me; when I escaped from God's inspiration, Providence chased me so that I would not retreat from the path that is assigned to every human being. For six years I have been working in conditions that are impossible to describe, because there would be not enough paper; you can tell it only to a patient listener, probably like you. I started my ministry in Nowa Huta-Mistrzejowice from scratch. I have survived dozens of police interrogations, ten court hearings, 26 detainments. It cost me a lot, I am losing my health, my heart is completely worn out, but the fruit is permanent. I have 5 nuns to help, 4 priests, the permission to build a church, [and] bad health, but probably because God's power would be shown in weakness.

Fr. Józef Kurzeja

Letter to Juliusz Lembas, 25 April 1976

Your work was a manifestation of prayer, building the community of the People of God; with your work you proved that you are the patrons, protectors and benefactors of the Polish Church today. I thank you with all my heart. God reward you all.

Fr. Józef Kurzeja

(thanking the parishioners from Raciborowice)



When our Congregation was founded in Krakow, Poland in 1894, by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Blessed Klara Szczesna, our religious family of Sisters was founded to work with girls. In those days in Poland, many girls were coming from rural districts to the cities to work in the homes of the wealthy. Our founders wanted to protect and preserve these girls from exploitation and loss of virtue. They knew that a holy girl can be a very powerful person indeed for the Church, for her family and for society at large.

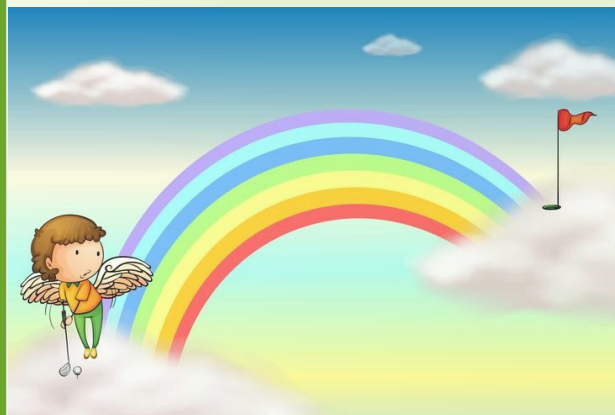
“This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thes. 4:3). God is inviting all of us to become saints, in every age and walk of life. I appeal to all girls who are reading this, “My young friend, be holy!” It is the key to your happiness, your character, the fulfillment of your mission in life!

Image: Charles Bosseron Chambers, The model for men and women, c. 1930

Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

A special thank you to all those who participated and contributed in the
13th Annual 2020 Golf Tournament of the
Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus'
"The Invitational". This year's being a "Swingless Tournament",
with everyone's help, we were able to have our most successful fundraiser ever. We are so grateful.

We particularly want to acknowledge our Special Angels of Assistance:



**JACK & JENNY CALANDRA
PAUL & MAUREEN CALANDRA
JERRY MOSCHGAT, MAINLINE PHARMACY
ALPHA POWER SPORTS
PEDIATRIC THERAPEUTIC, LLC
RICHARD PROSTEJOVSKY
WARD PROSTEJOVSKY
MONSIGNOR BERNARD PRZYBOCKI**

Thank you to all those who participated:

Al & Bonnie Borgony
M/M John Brozetti
Kevin Byrne
Jack & Jenny Calandra
Paul & Maureen Calandra
Cresson Motors
Allan Diehl
Quintin Dziabo
Ebensburg Insurance
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Ray Lenz
David & Cynthia Lidwell

Ronald & Dianne Macedonia
Mainline Pharmacy
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Dave Rito
Fr. Dave Rizzo
Richard Rodkey
Brian Swedkowski
Kenneth & Christine Trim bath
Rev. Leonard Voytek
Jesse & Helen Wright, Jr.



Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

CAN WE PRAY FOR YOUR INTENTIONS?

Please call our Sisters with your prayer intentions — 814.886.4223
or send us word via our website
www.sacredheartsisters.org.



Is God calling you?

Do you want to leave everything behind, and offer yourself totally to Him? Are you brave enough to love and suffer, to fall and get up, to smile and cry, and pray? Do you want to join us, the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and proclaim the Kingdom of Jesus' Love everywhere? If your answer is yes! come visit us, experience the spirit of silence, prayer and sisterly life in community.

Our Congregation is:

- Pontifical
- Franciscan
- Contemplative-Active
- Devoted to the Sacred Heart
- Founded by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Bl. Klara Szczesna in 1894 in Krakow, Poland



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Blog: <https://sscjusaprovinceblog.wordpress.com>

Our Federal ID Number is: 20-812762

The Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded in Krakow, Poland in 1894 by St. Joseph Sebastian Pelczar and Blessed Klara Szczesna are devoted to extending the Kingdom of Love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus by prayer, community life and apostolic work in the areas of

teaching * catechesis * nursing * personal care
parish music ministry * retreats * youth ministry
and missionary work

Internationally, the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus serve in the following countries

- ♦ Poland
- ♦ Ukraine
- ♦ Italy
- ♦ France
- ♦ Bolivia
- ♦ Argentina
- ♦ Jamaica
- ♦ United States.

The United States Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is represented in the Dioceses of:
Altoona-Johnstown, Harrisburg, and Grand Rapids
and in Mandeville, Jamaica, West Indies.

Are you seeking residential, personal care
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