It can sometimes seem that our world has grown dim and lifeless. We long to know that God is with us, that He is alive and doing beautiful things in the hearts of many. We look for signs of hope - a hope that can bring meaning back to our lives, and that we can be a part of.

There is a new springtime with many young people across the globe embracing the faith. As the Sisters of Life open the doors of their new Motherhouse to provide for the growing number of young women who seek to give their lives to Christ that they might be His hands, His feet, and His heart to a world that thirsts to be healed; we proclaim: Praised be Jesus Christ!

God is very much alive.
Since its inception, the Sisters of Life have seen evidence of the miracle of God’s grace in the foundation and growth of this new religious family. Entrusted with a charism of life (a gift of God’s Spirit) for the Church and the world; blessed with a steady and growing stream of vital, young, talented and good women entering the community (we now number 76 members); charged with numerous missions in New York, Toronto and Connecticut, and an outreach of evangelization throughout our nation and internationally – all at the service of proclaiming the sacredness of human life and God’s plan for human love – the Sisters of Life now need a place which can serve as the spiritual epicenter for our growing religious community. In the tradition of the Church, a central house which draws all the members of a women’s religious community together as family is called a Motherhouse.

Jesus saw the two disciples following him, turned around and said, ‘What do you want?’ They answered, ‘Rabbi,’ -- which means Teacher -- ‘where do you live?’ ‘Come and see,’ he replied; so they went and saw where He lived and stayed with Him...”  

(John 1:37-39)
Following the Spirit’s prompting to ‘house the graces,’ we will open the doors of our first Motherhouse this year. The Motherhouse project will secure the deep foundations laid in the past 20 years and simultaneously respond to the blessings of growth in members and missions. Immediately, this large convent will fulfill a long-standing need for the Mother Superior and her assistants (the Generalate) to live side-by-side with our Novitiate -- the youngest members of the community. It is for the youngest that a mother has special regard and responsibility. The formation and integration of our newest members in a thorough-going spiritual way of life is a paramount duty, and a way of reverencing God’s great grace and gift of a call to religious consecration.

You, the generous benefactors of the Sisters of Life, have supported the community and its growth so generously for the past two decades. We thank you, and now, invite you to continue with us to follow the graces God bestows by becoming part of this new chapter in our lives through your prayers and continued support. We will need you more than ever.

God speaks in particulars. The first question asked of Jesus by His followers was -- Lord, where are you staying? To which He responded with an invitation, come and see. This special edition of our newsletter is an invitation to “come and see” the wonders the Lord is working among us, for “If the Lord does not build the house in vain do the builders labor.” (Psalm 127:1)

In Christ our Life,
Mother Agnes Mary, SV
Reconstructing more than a house... 
building a network of faithful friends

Saturday morning, 9 am. Commercial vans loaded with everything from power saws to industrial painting equipment pull into 38 Montebello Road. It would seem like any ordinary work site except for the fact that these vans sidle up next to minivans teeming with kids who spill out of their cars just as eager to dig into the work at hand as the college students already in the house, meeting other volunteers over coffee and sweetbread. Jim Fitzgerald, our foreman who is donating his time and 35+ years of experience as a contractor to this Motherhouse project, welcomes group after group as they arrive as if he has known each person for a lifetime. Each name is quickly remembered, and assignments are often accompanied by a story or joke. The assignments themselves, however, are no joke: demolition, electrical work, carpet removal, painting, wood chipping, sanding – the possibilities are as numerous as the tasks at hand.
“I was touched by the devotion and mission of the Sisters and saw (coming to the volunteer days) as a great opportunity to meet other Catholic people and get more involved. There was a need for carpentry here, and God has blessed me with the gift and trade of carpentry. I feel honored to use that for this project with the Sisters.”

-Rob Martin

We are deeply grateful to all the companies who have donated their professional services:

Knights of Columbus Councils in Rockland County
Franck & Lohsen Architects
Aquinas Painting
Meridian Interiors
Chuck’s Handyman Services
EMFO Contractors
JPE Design and Contractors, Inc.
Metro Pest Solutions
Colgate Scaffolding
Over the last four months, a bevy of volunteers has emerged every Saturday to help us ready this long-vacant property to house an abundance of future graces. Some – especially skilled workers – have come every single week, donating one of their precious days off to this project. Others, driving from as far as three hours away (each way!), have come for a one-time adventure. Since September, over 250 volunteers have worked with us at the Motherhouse. As each of these volunteers has stepped into our lives, they have – to a one – stepped into our hearts as well. The Sisters, who travel in groups every week to participate on site, have been amazed and humbled by the generosity, talent and diversity of those who have responded to this plea for help. Licensed plumbers, electricians and painters work side by side with eager 8 year olds like Elizabeth - who captured everyone’s heart the first of her seven volunteer days - and retired women like Nettie, who keeps everyone in the kitchen on their toes.

Kevin Newe, a Co-worker of Life who also happens to be a union marble, tile and terrazzo worker, couldn’t think of a better project for his role as a St. Joseph’s worker. Kevin has come faithfully for over 15 Saturdays in a row, working on everything from breaking down old boilers to ripping up floors. Artie Saladino, a retired electrician, heard about the project at his local Knights of Columbus meeting, and was quickly put in charge of repairing and changing the timers on the many pole lanterns that line the long driveway and perimeter of the property. Chris Englehart received a Co-worker of Life e-mail which heralded the loss of leisurely Saturday mornings for this young telephone company employee who, since reading it that fateful day, has been setting up the networking for computers and telephones throughout the house, sometimes even bringing his father, also a telephone company employee, along to assist the effort. And Rob Martin, a carpenter by trade, was drawn in through his connection to the NY Frassati Fellowship of Young Adults. In the course of 11 Saturdays, Rob has cut down and finished donated pews and built beautiful, classical side shrines for Our Lady and St. Joseph for the main chapel. And this is just the beginning of the long story of generous and gifted people who have been a part of this momentous project.

Each person or family or youth group that has joined the effort has responded to our need with their gifts in a gesture of self-giving and sacrifice. They joined together with those they had never met before and together have rebuilt and reclaimed a place for the Lord to live and reign and be loved. Yet this same Lord for whom they prepare a place has walked among us throughout these months. His Spirit has permeated our Saturdays with joy and peace, with a familiar fellowship, with happiness. This is what the Lord asks and promises all of us as we seek to build a culture of life. Every time we recognize a need for a word of truth in love to be spoken, an act of generosity towards someone who is vulnerable, a gesture of healing and hope to be made, a call to a sacrifice of our time and talent, and we act on it, the Lord is with us. It is He, who, with our little yeses, will rebuild and reclaim our culture and every human heart within it as a place of authentic love and reverence for every person, especially those who are most vulnerable. And He will give us happiness along the way.

“These Saturdays have been a blessing – it’s been a blessing to meet the Sisters, all the other volunteers, and it is fun, productive work. I can’t think of a better thing to do on a Saturday. I believe in service, that we all have to do our part. I look at the religious and I’m inspired. Plus, the weather – every Saturday - has been stupendous.”

- Kevin Newe
Making History!

Dear Friends,

As we enter this new chapter in the growth and expansion of our community, I have asked the Friends of the Sisters of Life, a group of laity dedicated to supporting the growth of our community, to assist us in undertaking a fundraising campaign. You, our faithful donors, from the very beginning have supported our religious lives and missions for which we are so grateful. Now we have additional capital and infrastructure expenses to meet and payments for renovations that must be made, and we need you more than ever.

The fundraising campaign for the Sisters of Life Motherhouse is being coordinated by a committed and enthusiastic team with Tom Grace as Chair and Kevin Dwyer and Gregory Oussani as Vice Chairmen. You will be hearing more about the many opportunities to assist us in this effort in the future.

This new initiative is an opportunity inviting each of you to participate in the foundational history of the Sisters of Life. No less important than our volunteers who are contributing their time and skills to the renovations project, your support is just as needed. Like the immigrants who built St. Patrick’s Cathedral, now every brick, every dollar you contribute will help rebuild a house, and more importantly, help build the Culture of Life.

If you would like to assist us in these efforts or learn more about the Motherhouse fundraising campaign feel free to contact Tom Grace, Kevin Dwyer or Gregory Oussani at: TGrace@sistersoflife.org, KDwyer@sistersoflife.org, GOussani@sistersoflife.org or call the Sisters of Life at 914.968.8094.

In Christ, our Life,

Mother Agnes Mary, SV
Superior General of the Sisters of Life
The Beginnings

Our history in New York

We are daughters of the Church, and very specially daughters of the Church of New York

John Cardinal O’Connor, our spiritual father and the great Apostle of the Gospel of Life; as the Archbishop of New York founded the Sisters of Life on June 1, 1991 to protect human life and advance a sense of its sacredness in all of society.

1991–2000

Indicates other convents in New York
Sacred Heart of Jesus, West side of Manhattan
Visitation Convent, East side of Manhattan
St. Paul the Apostle Convent, Yonkers
St. Barnabas, Bronx
St. Frances de Chantal, Throgs Neck
(not shown: Villa Maria Guadalupe Convent in Stamford CT and St. Catherine’s Convent in Toronto Canada)

2004

Canonically established the Order


2011

Generously helped us acquire our New Motherhouse

Timothy M. Cardinal Dolan as the Archbishop of New York generously assisted the Sisters of Life in the acquisition of its first Motherhouse in Montebello, NY on August 30th, 2011.

2012
What is a Motherhouse?
A place to worship the Lord and giver of Life.
A place to set one’s life on the Rock of Jesus Christ.
A place to create and collaborate
in bringing the Gospel of Life to the world.
A place of transformation and renewal in Christ.
A place to return from mission to gather together as family.
Back row left to right:
Sr. Mary Elizabeth, SV
Sr. Hosanna Christi, SV
Sr. Catherine Peter, SV
Sr. Mary Kolbe, SV
Sr. Rose Clairvaux, SV
Sr. Bernadette Therese, SV
Sr. Mariae Agnus Dei, SV
Sr. Magdalene Teresa, SV
Sr. Taliitha Guadalupe, SV
Sr. Bethany Madonna, SV
Sr. Giovanna Mariae, SV
Sr. Therese Marie, SV
Sr. Mary Aquinas, SV
Sr. Mariam Caritas, SV
Sr. Joan Marie, SV
Sr. Mary Louise Concepta, SV
Sr. Maris Stella, SV
Sr. John Mary, SV
Sr. Monica Faustina, SV
Sr. Maria Anne Michela, SV
Sr. Maeve Nativitas, SV
Sr. Maria Kateri, SV
Sr. Grace Dominic, SV
Sr. Elizabeth Ann, SV
Sr. Mary Rose, SV

Middle row left to right:
Sr. Margaret Ruth Mary, SV
Sr. Lucy Marie, SV
Sr. Mary Loretta, SV
Sr. Veronica Mary, SV
Sr. Avila Marie
Sr. Maria Theresa
Sr. Marie Veritas
Sr. Virginia Joy
Sr. Anne Elizabeth Mary
Sr. Gianna Maria
Sr. Monica Marie Therese
Mother Agnes Mary, SV
Sr. Maria Regina Immaculata
Sr. Cecilia Rose
Sr. Annunciata Maria
Sr. Mariana Benedicta
Sr. Teresita Maria Misercordia
Sr. Faustina Maria Pia
Sr. Marija Joseph, SV
Sr. Brigid Ancilla Marie, SV
Sr. Catherine Marie, SV
Sr. Maria Emmanuel, SV
Sr. Mary Karen, SV
Sr. Dorothy Guadalupe, SV
Sr. Loretto Michael, SV (hidden)
Sr. Josamaria Perpetua, SV
Sr. Shirley Ann, SV

Front row left to right:
Sr. Marie-Noel Maximilienne, SV
Sr. Mariae Laetitia, SV
Sr. Charlotte Ann Marie, SV
Sr. Mary Teresa, SV
Sr. Mary, SV
Mikki
Megan
Angel
Maggie
Cathy
Stephanie
Karen
Sr. Rita Marie, SV
Sr. John Joseph, SV
Sr. Ann Catherine, SV
Sr. Antoniana Maria, SV
Sr. Marita Therese Francesca, SV
Sr. Rosario John, SV

Sisters not pictured in group photo (from left to right):
Sr. Loretto Michael, SV, Sr. Bridget of Jesus, SV,
Sr. Mary Gabriel, SV, Sr. Fiat Marie, SV,
Sr. Amata Filla, SV, Renee
Every summer, the novices escape the heat of the Bronx by spending two weeks at Camp St. Joseph with its rustic cabins, neighboring cornfields and dairy cows. Two summers ago, the novices decided to build a grotto to our Blessed Mother on the grounds. We had no idea what such a project would entail and were somewhat flabbergasted as we came to learn what was actually needed for a six-foot grotto: the digging of a 3 ft. x 6 ft. hole, a foundation of poured concrete, several pallets of landscaping rocks, mixed cement and a lot of labor. It was a good thing we didn’t know because 1) we might have given up at the start and 2) if we hadn’t given up, we could easily have thought our ingenuity was the source of its completion. Instead, we had joy after joy as the Lord made it quite evident that He was about building a grotto for His Mother – all He needed was our total confidence and cooperation. We were amazed time and again as just the right person with just the right tool or skill came onto the scene. In a remarkably short time a truly beautiful place of prayer in honor of the Virgin Mary was built, and built well. Because we dug deep and built it on a solid foundation, this grotto became something more far-reaching than we had imagined when we began: a gift of prayer for generations. It wasn’t long into the project that the obvious correlation to formation became apparent – everything about it seemed to speak of the spiritual journey, and especially of the Novitiate.

Every Sister of Life spends her first two years as a member of the community as a Novice, learning the way of life in classes and in practice, growing in prayer, in the charism and in community life. Ideally, this time for each Sister is steeped in the culture of life, permeated with gratitude and joy and defined by a growing awareness of the love of the Lord Jesus for her. If these years are lived and guided well, the professed Sister who emerges is one who has a gift far too few in our culture possess: she knows who she is. She has dug deep and knows what rocks the Holy Spirit has had to dig up from the soil of her heart; she leans all her ontological weight on the unwavering, personal love of Jesus Christ; she is free -- every thought, action, attitude of hers is now to be built on nothing less than the truth He has spoken about her. He has called her by name, and she is His.

These incredibly beautiful years are also delicate ones. The graces are new, tender. They need to be nurtured and encouraged, strengthened and tested. The quiet locale of the new Motherhouse, and that it will house not only the Novitiate but also the Generalate of the community, means that the Novices will learn recollection and prayer and the ways of Religious Life surrounded by the charism in full bloom, encouraged by the presence of Mother Agnes Mary and other mature Sisters, and more aware of the blessings of life beyond the Novitiate.

We can’t think of a better start to a life which, with fidelity, is to be a gift for the Lord and the Church not just for one lifetime, but into eternity, with grace rippling down through the centuries to those most in need. Here, within the sanctuary of our Motherhouse, each Novice will have the opportunity to dig deep and lay her foundation on the rock of God’s love as never before. When the floods of the world arise, and the streams later try to break against her, she will not be shaken, for she will have come to Jesus, heard His words of life, and acted on them. That is discipleship -- such trusting and courageous faith in action is what allows the Lord to unleash His love and mercy and healing on the world. This is what our world needs most. He asks it of all of us, and now He has given our Novices an even more ideal setting in which to follow His voice. For this, we thank Him unceasingly and pray that we may respond with ever more generous love.
We are blessed to receive an incredible intellectual formation by way of many formative experiences and classes, including philosophy, catechism, the documents of Vatican II, spiritual theology, moral theology, Christology, Scripture, and virtues. It is crucial for us as Religious Sisters to understand and appreciate the truths of our Catholic faith in order to engage those in our culture. Countless people in our society today deeply desire to know the truth about life and love, the truth that authentic freedom and love are possible. The best way to help others come to know and love Christ and His Church, the source of God’s grace and mercy, is first to know and love them ourselves. The classes we participate in open our own hearts and minds to the fullness of the faith. Once in the mission, we will then be able to effectively articulate to others the reasons for our joy and our hope. In this way, they too, may be led into a deeper relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and be truly set free.

-Sr. Maria Regina Immaculata

Evangelization Nationally and Internationally

In a world that believes that freedom is found in doing whatever you want, that love is a fleeting feeling, and that faith is a crutch; we, as Sisters of Life, proclaim a very different message. The reality that freedom is the ability to choose what is true, good and beautiful; that love is possible and is faithful, life-giving and meant to endure forever; and that faith in God opens us up to the very meaning and destiny of our lives. (We bring this message across the country and beyond through various speaking events at colleges, parishes, conferences, youth events and retreats.)
As a novice, I’ve had the great opportunity to grow deeply in the dialogue of love that is prayer. As I surrender more and more to God’s indescribable and utterly gratuitous love, and understand that this is His life in me, I become more and more eager to share this life and love with others in mission.

This gift of prayer is not given to us Sisters alone, as God desires a relationship with every person. He desires that we not just talk at Him or just talk to ourselves, but learn to truly speak and listen to Him as He whispers in the silent depths of our hearts. God waits for each of us, to teach us greater faith and trust, to strengthen us for the trials of life, to pour His tender and merciful love upon us.

-Sr. Mariana Benedicta

An ongoing life of prayer:

As Sisters of Life we are not only active in our missions, but we also have a strong contemplative component to our religious lives. In our local convents each day, the Sisters pray four hours together, participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, chanting the Liturgy of the Hours, praying the rosary, and in Eucharistic Adoration. During these sacred times, we lift up all the intentions of those working to build a culture of life, those who support our missions and our religious lives, families, those who have asked for prayer and those most in need.

We implore the Lord for mercy, that He renew in our country and the world a deep sense of the sacred gift of every human life, the treasure of married love, and healing in families and in society.
I had always thought that the gift of community life would simply be the joy experienced in being in the presence of my Sisters. I have begun to realize, however, another joy in community is that my Sisters reveal my true self to me. I begin to see the honest to goodness truth about me, not just a polished resume version I want others to see. As living in a family always reveals, each of us begins to see those areas that need growth or healing. And often, when faced with our weaknesses the desire and tendency is to want to run. In formation, however, we are called not to run, but to remain with Jesus in these places of brokenness. It is here, in His unconditional love, that we are able to look honestly within, learn to really let go of our fears and to love others with a self-forgetful heart. One day in the mission, I truly desire to share the freedom that comes from living in a loving Christ-centered community and the opportunity it allows each one of us to discover our true and best self.

-Sr. Monica Marie Thérèse

Providing an atmosphere of love in mission:

Once a novice makes her profession of vows she is sent out in mission. Whether the Lord calls her forth to live with and serve women and their unborn children in one of our convents, to walk with pregnant women who call for support through our Visitation Mission, to welcome and sustain in prayer retreatants at Villa Maria Guadalupe, or to extend God’s mercy to those who suffer from abortion, she has one desire—to provide a space where the other can grow and flourish. We seek to create an atmosphere of unconditional love where fear is banished. A place to find the Lord who longs to say—welcome home.
Would you like to include some of your family and friends on our newsletter mailing list? We typically send out our Sisters of Life newsletter three times a year.

You may either fill out the on-line form at www.sistersoflife.org or fill out and send in the form below (feel free to include additional names):

Name: ____________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
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Name: __________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________
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Name: __________________________________________
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