



# Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, USA Province

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## LETTER FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I pray that 2019 will bring to our friends and families the blessings that God pours forth each day to those who seek Him. I pray that God will place us where we are meant to be - that we may open our eyes to the amazing grace that shines within us - that God will continue to guide our steps along the roads we travel. I pray that God unfolds endless possibilities and gives us the strength and confidence to leave behind all that has not been "for good." I pray that each new beginning will be filled with joyful hearts and peaceful thoughts, and that we may never forget that each moment of each day is a precious gift.

With gratitude and hope,

Sister Belén Escauriza, acj



## Saint Raphaela Center Welcomes the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations

Serving the community for over sixty years, St. Raphaela Center is a retreat center whose purpose is to "promote human development and help people to internalize their faith as individuals and members of a community." In so doing, the center prides itself in offering an environment that appeals to individuals and groups who are looking for a homelike environment to conduct retreats, conferences, symposiums, and other similar programs. One such group that recently met at the center was The Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University. Rather than opting for a hotel, classroom setting, or conference center, the academic roundtable of twenty-two guests chose



St. Raphaela Center for its three-day conference held in January. In addition to scholars from Texas, Kansas, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Washington, DC, those attending came from Israel, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Austria, and the United Kingdom. Their purpose was to study and discuss some of the major issues in Christian-Jewish relations including identity and borders, fulfillment, Jewish and Christian missions, Christology, covenant, the Apostle Paul, and the connections between Christian-Jewish relations and global religious pluralism.

Calling St. Raphaela Center "an ideal place for thought, study, and conversation", one of the group's organizers, Philip Cunningham, Ph.D., Professor of Theology at Saint Joseph's University, noted the center's warm appeal and its conduciveness in hosting a group of this size and purpose. As the center continues to move forward in its scope and scale of offerings, and with the addition of the House of Hope as an extension of the center, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus continue to welcome individuals and groups of all denominations to experience its offerings, finding time and space for peaceful and purposeful reflection and contemplation.

PLEASE JOIN US for the

*2019 Journey of Hope*

Wednesday, May 1, 2019  
at 6:30 pm

St. Raphaela Center



**Guest Speaker**

**Phil Martelli**

**Head Coach**

**Saint Joseph's University**

**Men's Basketball Team**

For details, visit [www.acjusa.org](http://www.acjusa.org)



# Sr. Jessica Kerber - Leaves Haverford as a Tertian and Returns as a Professed Sister



*Sister Jessica is surrounded by the tertians, members of the Handmaids' General Team and Reverend Francisco José Ruíz, sj*

Following her six month tertianship along with twelve other Handmaids from around the world, Sr. Jessica Kerber professed her final vows in Rome, on November 10, 2018. Superior General of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sister Rosario Fernandez-Villaran and the General Team witnessed the momentous event during a liturgy that was celebrated by Reverend Francisco José Ruíz, sj, who also directed the group through the 30-day Spiritual Exercises. In what she described as a deeply moving and spiritually fulfilling experience, Sister Jessica became thenewest Sister of Perpetual Vows in the United States province. During the liturgy, the sisters sign the official document acknowledging their profession and receive a ring that seals their commitment to their profession. Sr. Jessica received the ring that had once belonged to the late Sister Assumption Escauriaza, someone with whom she had an exceptionally close and loving bond.

A short time later, Sr. Jessica was back in the US, where



*From left, clockwise- Sr. Jessica receives her ring from Sr. Rosario Fernandez-Villaran. Reverend Francisco José Ruíz, sj blesses Sr. Jessica during her consecration of vows. Sr. Jessica signs the official document recognizing her as a Handmaid of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*



*The Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus receive Sr. Jessica as a full member with an embrace at the Saint Joseph's University chapel.*

she celebrated with family and friends at a Liturgy of Thanksgiving. Held in the Chapel on the campus of Saint Joseph's University, Reverend Dan Joyce, sj presided. Vocal and instrumental music offered by many talented friends, associates, and former colleagues enhanced the joyous and heartfelt celebration. A luncheon followed during which time Sr. Jessica mingled with guests and acknowledged her deep gratitude for having the love and support of so many as she traveled the journey of responding to God's call to consecrated life.

As a newly professed sister, Sr. Jessica has been sent to the Philippines for three months to share in the mission and ministry of the Handmaids' communities there. Upon her return to the States, she will be incorporated into one of the ministries of the province.



# Checking In With Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila



*Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila with some of the students in the program at Comillas Pontifical University.*

In her second year of studies at Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, Spain, Sister Catherine Kirwan-Avila is in a masters program focused on Ignatian Spirituality. A small and very diverse group of students comprise the class, which includes several Jesuits, three lay people, an Anglican priest, a diocesan priest, and three women religious. Hailing from Argentina, Spain, Italy, Ivory Coast, India, Lebanon, South Korea, Chile, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and the United States, theirs is by all accounts a rich and multicultural mix.

As part of the program the students' learning journey takes them through the history, characteristics, tools and applications of Ignatian spirituality, with a strong emphasis in the original sources. Five weeks are dedicated to exploring the Spiritual Exercises. The master concludes with an extensive final paper. Sr. Catherine's investigative paper is intended to focus on the spiritual experience of St. Raphaela, which was deeply shaped by her practice of Ignatian spirituality, and in particular, the Spiritual Exercises.

Reporting that she loves the program and is learning a great deal that will be useful in her future ministry, Sr. Catherine notes that she *"is grateful for the opportunity to dive into this spiritual spring from which the Handmaids drink so deeply!"*

The Handmaid community that serves as her home in Spain includes six juniors and five professed sisters. As a junior, although Catherine's primary responsibility is to her studies, she is also involved in a variety of ministries in the neighborhood and in the city. From teaching CCD classes in the local parish, accompanying faith groups of college students and adults in weekly or bi-weekly

meetings (in collaboration with Jesuit ministries), supporting a group of students from the Handmaid school, Sr. Catherine's time is well spent.

Various members of the community also collaborate with an organization called "Ellas lo Bordan", which provides formation, employment and holistic accompaniment to mothers who have emigrated to Spain from diverse countries and who have suffered or are at high risk of exploitation. Another community activity is hosting monthly guided adorations with youth, college students, and people from the neighborhood and parish. Students from the school are also encouraged to visit the chapel during times of adoration. Sr. Catherine teaches a



*One of Sr. Catherine's students visits the chapel during Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.*

CCD class and accompanies a small group of adults who routinely gather for a shared dinner and prayer.

In November all of the sisters in formation in Europe gathered in Pamela, Portugal for a weekend of encounter and formation in the Handmaid pedagogy of the heart. In the near future, Sr. Catherine, along with the other juniors and sisters of vows living in Europe will gather in Martinez Campos in Madrid for three days of prayer which will conclude with a devotional renewal of vows.



*Formation encounter with all of the sisters in formation in Europe (held in Pamela, Portugal in November)*





## Turning Dream Into Reality - the Birth of a Chapel



*we rebuild the porch as a small chapel so that our indoor chapel becomes "public"?* According to Sr. Margarita Martin, it had always been the desire of St. Raphaela Mary to have the sisters' convent chapels available to all. For the Handmaids, this idea would fulfill a long awaited goal. At the same time, a new director (Fr. Frank, OFM) at the Newman Center at University of Georgia Catholic Center met the sisters and asked if there was anything he could do to be helpful at Oasis. And with that, a "God-at-work" event began.

A second collection requested by Fr. Frank reaped the \$2,000 necessary for building materials. Soon after, the Oasis neighbors gathered to volunteer their building skills, many even after a day's work staying long into the night. Within a short time the 10' x 8' porch-chapel was born! As is customary in Mexico, women from the "Colonia" organized themselves and made a calendar with a "Servidora del Santísimo" for each day. Their commitment includes taking part in holy hour, cleaning the chapel, and bringing flowers and candles once a month. Moreover, a group comes each midday for prayer and faith sharing. Many - even those from beyond the neighborhood - visit to pray at any time. The porch was built with a direct entrance from the outside and is open all day from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. It is obvious that Jesus in the Eucharist is healing and comforting all who come as they bring broken hearts in the midst of so very many challenges and fears in their lives. To be sure, St. Raphaela Mary must be very pleased.

## IN THE HANDMAIDS' PRAYERS

### *Please pray for the souls of our dearly departed including:*

Paul Abeln, John Alcorn, Joe Aloisi, Joann Ball, Jim Bamber, Noreen Barns, Sr. Mary Ellen Barrett, Dr. Albert Beatty, Jo-Ann Bill, Theresa Boyce, Sr. Kathleen Brabson, SSJ, Raymond Brant, Michael Bray, Christopher Brown, Thomas Buhl, Carolyn Burns, William Calpin, Rose Capista, Dolores Charles, Sue Charles, Matthew Cianci, Tim Clark, Rose Conley, Sister Mary Ann Craig, acj, Sue Crupi, Joseph Cullison, Betty DeHope, Joan Delpino, Elvira DiCesare, Jean Diver, Mr. Doman, Pat Dougherty, Elizabeth Dunn Dorian, Robert Duncan, Nancy Egan, Katie Ehret, Lauren Ehret, Bob Eidenshink, Emil Ellis, Robert Ellis, John Epright, John Evans, Jim Fieber, Alicia Flannery, Joan Fitzpatrick, Jean Funkhouser, Gary Gabriele, Harry Gallagher, John Garrett, Ray Garrison, Sr., Mary Gaughan, Joan Gavin, Joseph Gerngross, Marie Giovannini, Bobbie Godridge, Jim Grague, Bruce Grant, Peg Greenhalgh, Michael Grover, Dennis Harris, Dolores Haviland, Betty Anne Heenan, Louis Heller, James Hennessey, Regina Hilbert, Richard Hinkie, Louis Ianni, Maureen Rose Jacobs, Jay Javie, Barbara Johnson, Gerard Kaiser, Thomas Keane, Jr., Richard Kearney, Sr., Fr. Thomas Keating, Maureen Kehoe, Dorothy Kelly, Anna Klein, Andre Labail, Florence Lamsback, Tommy Lanerty, Pauline Langa, Ann Lorti, Steve Love, Erin Lunday, Bill Luskus, William Magee, Margaret Marasco, Joseph Martin, Kevin McGovern, Frank McMahon, Kathleen McNamee, Gerald Meister, Sarah Monaghan, Mary Anne Monroe, Michael Moran, Joseph Morau, Elizabeth Mulligan, Paul Nappi, Mark Nicoletti, Jr., Hilda Nunez, Joseph O'Brien, Sr., James O'Hara, Jeanette Pasquine, John Paul, Victor Payne, Lucille Pehi, Anthony Pello, Robert Piergiovanni, Tom Porter, Dick Prehett, Rose Marie Ranieri, Louis Recigno, Nancy Reilly, Ethel Reinard, Richard Riemet, Beverly Rochon, Edwin Rodgers, Anthony Roma, Gene Roma, Susie Roma, Kathi Rosenberry, Ellen Ryan, Henry Sallush, Susan Salvesson, Margaret Schwartz, Clair Seelaus, Francis Sicoli, George Smethurst, Patty Sauter Speakman, Victor Strano, Margaret Stutz, Jim Sweetwood, Theresa Sykes, Mary Patricia Tierney, Anne Vickers, Mary Viola, Albert Woelbe, and Mrs. Young.

### *Please pray for the requests offered on behalf of:*

Marie Balle, Tasiny Barnes, Marge Bartlomiejus, Marie Blaise, Bernice Brozezinski, Dee Bruno, Bernadette Celluci, Cindy Cline, Costello Family special intention, Sr. Uyen Chi Dang and all Handmaids at St. Raphaela Center, Mary Day, Deenn Family, Kate Dennin, Jim, Connie, and Jackie DeLorimer, Eileen and Michael Dolich, Matthew Dorian, Bernadette Dougherty, Monica Dougherty, Msgr. Paul Dougherty, Orel Eligene, Antonio and Penafancia Espieity, Cristina Espirito, Nancy Feeney, Rosario Prieto Felipe, John Harkins, Anne Harnett, Hayden Family, Joann Hoffman, Thomasine Hofstetter, Holland Family, Kathy Hoover, Rev. Michael Hricko, Doris Kennedy, Mary Lee Kelly, Rev. Lawrence Kozak, Barbara Lapres, Kathryn Llewellyn, Patricia Lynch Clem Marchildon, Emily Matthews, Michelle Mayfield, Eileen McCauley, Clare Medori, Judybeth Miller, Jean Ordony, Mary Agnes Ostick, Joan Palmer, Victor Pane, Barbara Parise, Frank Petrillo, Barbara Platt, Patricia Porter, Gail Posedenti, Clayton Riley, Eileen Robinson, Theresa Romano, Semmons Family, Solomon Family, Sisters of St. Joseph in Neumann Community, Alison Tapia, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas, Rev. Raymond Tribuiani, Maureen Wagner, Sue, Joe and Kelly Ward, Tye Wentworth, Wetmore Family, Jennifer Wingert, Elizabeth Wolfert, Christine Xiou, Donna Zenobi, Bill, Edward, Jacqueline, JoAnn, Joseph, Kevin, Linda, and Maureen.