

REFLECTIONS

MAY 2026

&
Connections



STORIES OF MISSION
& MINISTRY



CSA

Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Promoting Justice, Building Community

Dear Friends,

We are all called to be joyful witnesses of the Risen Christ even in the midst of the world we are experiencing today. Together, as companions, we remind each other and all peoples that the God who raised Jesus from the dead is still with us and active within our midst.

It is with that belief that we, the Sisters of St. Agnes, will gather June 15-25 for General Chapter 2026.

The general chapter fosters spiritual and apostolic vitality, protects our founding charism and spiritual heritage, makes decisions affecting the life and welfare of the entire congregation, and elects the general superior and her councilors (CSA Constitutions). Chapter occurs every four years and is a time of deep prayer, dialogue, and discernment.

Within this edition you will find a copy of the prayer that we have been praying as a community in preparation for Chapter 2026. God, who is Love, continues to call us through the transitions that mark our lives. Please pray for us and for the guidance of the Spirit during the sacred days of Chapter 2026. *May the Empowering Spirit strengthen us to respond to the transitions that mark our lives with humility, courage, and wholeheartedness (Chapter 2026 Prayer).*



Pictured L to R: Sisters Sharon Pollnow, General Superior; Lael Niblick, General Councilor; Madeline Gianforte, General Councilor; and Peg Spindler, General Vicar

Since being elected by our Sisters to serve in CSA Leadership in June 2022, we have experienced countless blessings, and you are among those. We thank you for your prayers and your *support that among us and in our world the Risen Christ be discovered and revealed* (CSA Statement of Mission 1990).

Grateful companions on life's journey,

Sisters Sharon, Peg, Madeline, Lael

CSA General Council

Contents



Editorial Board Members:

Sister Jeremy Quinn, Sister Jean Perry,
Dusty Krikau, and Mary Christopherson

- 3 Legacies & Relationships
- 4 Plastic Recycling Challenge
- 5 Hope & Unity in the US
- 6 Where Can I Go?
- 7 In Memoriam / Jubilee Mass
- 8 Join in Prayer



Legacies & Relationships

By Annabelle Seel

Annabelle is a senior at St. Mary's Springs Academy.

On March 5, 2026, CSA held its annual Breakfast with Women: Energizing Spirits. The purpose of the event was to foster connection and promote spiritual growth. The presentation and conversation focused on creating a spiritual legacy, a concrete way to pass on your faith and your relationship with God to others. The event featured a delicious breakfast, time for fellowship and networking, and a presentation by Sister Anita Henning, CSA. She discussed the practice of leaving a spiritual legacy by conducting interviews with those at the end of their lives, in order to learn more about their understanding of God and their faith. She shared her personal experience of interviewing her sister and what she learned from this experience.

Nine senior girls from Saint Mary's Springs Academy were invited to attend the event. While this topic may seem far from the minds of young high schoolers, the girls found the experience enriching and informative. They shared that they learned it was important to give those who are nearing the end of their lives a chance

to discuss their spiritual journeys. One student shared, "This inspired me to be more thoughtful about my relationships with elders. It motivated me to talk with my grandparents more." Additionally, an interactive activity during the presentation invited attendees to set up a "date" with themselves for reflection. Many of the high schoolers followed this instruction and found it to be useful for their spiritual development. Printed journaling guides and times for discussion also helped to aid in their learning and understanding.

Overall, the students left the event feeling welcomed, inspired, and fortified. "We felt like special guests because so many people knew we were going to be there, greeted us, and took time to talk with us one-on-one," one student shared. Another student enjoyed seeing "so many women from so many different backgrounds and stages of life." Each girl attending the breakfast was able to take away a new connection or a bit of spiritual guidance to help her grow and improve in her relationship with God.

Plastic Recycling Challenge



Sisters, Associates, and staff at the CSA Motherhouse have joined the “NexTrex Recycling Challenge” to remove as many soft plastics from the waste stream as possible. To expand the reach of this effort, CSA’s Office of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation, led by Tracy Abler, created partnerships with Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Badger Soft Water (salt bags), and Fond du Lac Food Pantry (pallet wrapping).

Together, they collect, sort, weigh, and record the plastics before delivering them to drop-off sites. When considering the weight of plastic grocery bags, cereal box liners, bubble wrap, and other similar soft plastics, their goal of 250 pounds each quarter seems lofty, and yet, in just one month, volunteers gathered 200 pounds. The materials are recycled into Trex decking and outdoor furniture which, when purchased, close the recycling loop and keep the plastic out of the landfill.

“Partnerships are the key to our success,” said Abler. “Dedicated members of the Pilgrim UCC Green Team pick up salt bags and pallet wrapping several times a month. It is heartening to know that volunteer efforts can have such a huge impact but challenging to know how much more is still not being recycled.”

The industrial scale of plastic use at Badger Soft Water and the food pantry highlight how quickly waste can add up, but households can still have a huge impact. Abler shared, “Ultimately, our goal is for everyone to avoid purchasing single-use plastics whenever possible, while also knowing it’s nearly impossible to eliminate plastic entirely. We can all make small steps though, such as using reusable grocery bags, buying juice and milk in cardboard or glass, avoiding plastic water or soda bottles, using bars of soap instead of bottles, et cetera.”

This challenge is one more way that CSA is working to advance the goals of the Laudato Si’ Movement.

Choose Your Own Level of Challenge

Level 1: Reduce your plastic consumption.

Level 2: Recycle your soft plastics at community collection spots.

Level 3: Participate in Plastic Free July!

Hope & Unity in the US



The evening of April 23, 2026, was filled with reminders of unity and hope at the first of three speaking events for the US at 250 Speaker Series featuring the Honorable Janine Geske, former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice.

CSA Archivist Jenny Lukomski welcomed the audience with a reminder that the US is a nation that is constantly striving to be better. She said, “When Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about Democracy in America in the mid-19th century, he noted the contradictions and paradoxes in our society, but also incredible hope. And this is what we’re celebrating this year—the hope we and our ancestors have had for 250 years that we can live up to the values put forth in our founding documents.”

Sister Sharon Pollnow, CSA General Superior, offered the opening prayer with a similar focus. “May all share in the blessing of this nation and live with dignity, security, and hope. ... May this anniversary not only recall where we have been, but call us forward to become a more just, more compassionate, and more unified people.”

Throughout her remarks, Justice Geske reflected on how unity has been vital to the birth and growth of the United States. When reflecting on the development of the

Constitution, one sees that factions were just as present in history as they are today. The divides were just as great, but the responses were different. She highlighted the key difference: the Founders were willing to find compromises because their primary concern was protecting the rights of citizens. She shared numerous examples from judicial cases showcasing how that desire for unity has been a constant source of strength for the United States.

Audience members engaged in a question-and-answer session followed by a reception with the speaker. Questions were hard-hitting and conversations at the reception included continued exploration of how we can be part of creating spaces of hope and unity.

The next speaker, Sister Dianne Bergant, CSA, will talk about unity and diversity from a theological perspective on September 17.

Missed it?
Watch the recording!





Where Can I *Go*?

By Patricia Hayes, CSA

Sister Pat Hayes lives and ministers in New York City.

Human dignity is defined as “the intrinsic worth and respect that every individual deserves simply by being human regardless of their background, circumstances or abilities.” Two examples of the expression of human dignity are “protecting personal privacy” and “fostering environments that avoid humiliation”. So, what does that definition have to do with the title of this article: “Where Can I Go?”

When you’re traveling, vacationing, or just away from home for any reason, looking for a place to “go” presents a challenge. Perhaps you duck into Starbucks, or Applebee’s, or Dave and Buster’s and purchase a beverage you really don’t need or want so you can use the “for patrons only” restroom. Or you map out your day and the places you want to visit in light of their proximity to public parks with their “comfort stations” which are not usually comfortable and not well-maintained.

If you’re elderly or walk with an assistive device, navigating any public space is a challenge. Most comfort stations, which are few and far between, aren’t easily accessible. Homelessness presents greater challenges to both the

individual and businesses. In any case, no one wants to be caught in an embarrassing situation and finding a restroom offers a merciful solution while helping an individual “avoid humiliation” and “preserve personal privacy.”

Any major city you visit offers the challenge of locating a place to “go” when you really, really need it. New York City, especially, is a vacation mecca. Having safe, clean, and easily accessible sites to “go” is welcomed. In fact, access to public toilets was identified as one of the top 17 ways to improve New York City.

The New York City Council is hoping to solve that issue. The city council invited a “request for proposal” for 20-30 modular public restrooms. These modular restrooms would be free-standing, self-cleaning, and strategically placed in heavily trafficked areas.

As we accomplish 250 Acts of Mercy in 2026, we can explore modern definitions of mercy. It seems that answering the question, “Where can I go?” is a civic, corporal act of mercy.

In Memoriam... Walking with God



Sister Miriam Therese Putzer, CSA

Sister Miriam Therese, baptized Catherine Mary, was born October 2, 1931, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to Matthew and Cecilia Binder Smick. When Catherine was three years old, her mother and baby Susan died in childbirth. Catherine and her brother Eugene were placed in the loving care of their aunts, Verona and Emma. In 1937, they were adopted by their Aunt Emma Binder Putzer. Catherine graduated from St. Mary Elementary School in Oshkosh where she was taught by the Sisters of St. Agnes. In 1945, she entered St. Agnes Convent, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, graduated from St. Agnes High School, and on August 15, 1951, made her first profession of vows as Sister Miriam Therese in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.

After beginning studies at Marian College in Fond du Lac, she completed a B.S. in Education at Fordham University, Bronx, New York, and later earned an M.S. in English from Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana. A well-loved teacher, she ministered as an elementary school teacher and principal in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania and as a high school English teacher in New York. She also served the congregation as aspirant directress, general councilor (3 terms), local coordinator at Nazareth Heights Retirement Center, and novice directress for CSA novices in Nicaragua, a life-giving experience among the sisters and people there. Upon returning to Fond du Lac in 2001, Sister lived and served as spiritual companion to the sisters at Nazareth Court and Center, while also translating for Spanish-speaking patients at St. Agnes Hospital. When her own physical health required more care, Sister Miriam Therese moved to St. Francis Home where she died January 30, 2026, the 75th year of her religious profession.



Please join us
for the livestream of
Jubilee Mass

Sunday, June 28, 2026

3:00 p.m. CDT

Celebrating our 2026 Jubilarians

See details at www.csasisters.org/jubilee



320 County Road K
Fond du Lac, WI 54937

csasisters.org



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Or call **920-907-2300**

We are grateful for all who join in prayer for the delegates of Chapter this June.

The Sisters of St. Agnes have been praying as a community in preparation for Chapter 2026 which will take place June 14-25.

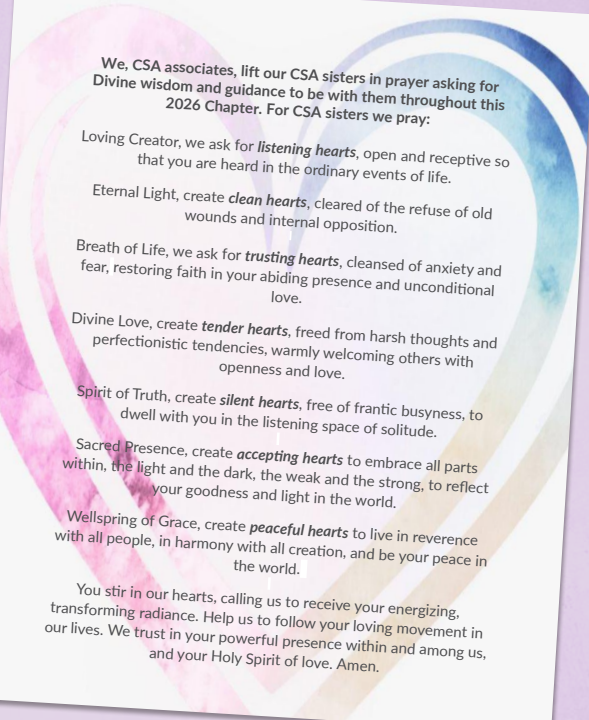
CSA Associates will pray for sisters during Chapter, and we invite you to use their prayer (below, right) during your prayer time.



God of Beginnings, you call us to live our vowed life in community authentically and passionately. Together, we accompany those whose faith life or human dignity is threatened.
Empowering Spirit, embolden us to be channels of Your love and compassion in a world of fear and division.

God of Vulnerability, break open our hearts to see and release all that limits our vision. Together, we welcome the truths that nest within each of us.
Empowering Spirit, keep us clear-sighted and honest in confronting the injustices that demean Your image in our sisters, our brothers, ourselves, and all creation.

God of Resurrection, you call us to be joyful witnesses of the Risen Christ. Together, we traverse the Good Friday terrain in our country, church, and world.
Empowering Spirit, strengthen us to respond to the transitions that mark our lives with humility, courage, and wholeheartedness.



We, CSA associates, lift our CSA sisters in prayer asking for Divine wisdom and guidance to be with them throughout this 2026 Chapter. For CSA sisters we pray:

Loving Creator, we ask for *listening hearts*, open and receptive so that you are heard in the ordinary events of life.

Eternal Light, create *clean hearts*, cleared of the refuse of old wounds and internal opposition.

Breath of Life, we ask for *trusting hearts*, cleansed of anxiety and fear, restoring faith in your abiding presence and unconditional love.

Divine Love, create *tender hearts*, freed from harsh thoughts and perfectionistic tendencies, warmly welcoming others with openness and love.

Spirit of Truth, create *silent hearts*, free of frantic busyness, to dwell with you in the listening space of solitude.

Sacred Presence, create *accepting hearts* to embrace all parts within, the light and the dark, the weak and the strong, to reflect your goodness and light in the world.

Wellspring of Grace, create *peaceful hearts* to live in reverence with all people, in harmony with all creation, and be your peace in the world.

You stir in our hearts, calling us to receive your energizing, transforming radiance. Help us to follow your loving movement in our lives. We trust in your powerful presence within and among us, and your Holy Spirit of love. Amen.