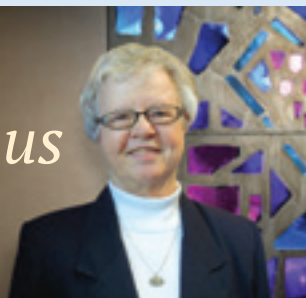




That all may know the Savior

SISTERS OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR Salvatorian News

Walk with us



A look back on summer 2017 first brings to mind the visit by two members from our Generalate in Rome. Superior General Sister Edith Bramberger and our own Sister Marion Etzel, councilor and secretary, shared experiences that unite us in spirit with our Salvatorian Sisters serving around the world. We're especially grateful Srs. Edith and Marion could also be part of our Salvatorian Family Jubilee celebration and our province assembly in June.

Another summer highlight has been getting to know Linda Pischke, who we'll honor with our annual Woman of Faith Award on September 21. Linda's experience in jail ministry shared on Page 6, echoes the sacred call Salvatorian Sisters have answered over the years to minister to people behind bars.

In August, our two newest sisters professed perpetual vows along with two men from the Society of the Divine Savior. It was a joyous occasion, reminding us all that becoming Salvatorian is a lifelong journey, not a destination. And so, they walk alongside Salvatorians everywhere, albeit with a new sense of belonging. We invite you to walk with us too through your prayers.

Holding you in prayer,

A. Beverly Heitke, S.D.S.

Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS
Provincial Leader

Guatemala is a land of great need and deep faith

Guatemala is one of the most impoverished countries in all of Latin America. Natural beauty of the mountains and vibrant dress of indigenous Mayan people contrast with the reality of natural disasters that keep its population in a state of poverty. The education level in Guatemala is among the lowest in the world.

In 2015, Sisters of the Divine Savior U.S. Province accepted an invitation to collaborate in a Guatemala mission with Salvatorians from Spain and South America. Salvatorian priests and brothers and Lay Salvatorians went to Guatemala in 2002 and now have a clear mission identity in the Diocese of San Marco. They serve the diocese by training lay religious leaders and teaming up on social projects sponsored by the local Catholic Church. In the last year, we've joined with Salvatorian Sisters from Brazil and Colombia to support this mission work in a number of ways.

Salvatorians have three established sites in Guatemala. San Pablo is mainly dedicated to initial formation for men interested in

becoming a priest or brother. In San Marcos, Salvatorians offer pastoral education and train lay ministers. The third mission site in San Sebastian is where our SDS Congregation set up a small community of sisters in the last year to serve the surrounding villages.

Sister Liza Segleau spent about eight months in Guatemala helping to establish the sisters' community. She witnessed living standards not even imaginable by most of us. Dire poverty is not unique to the small village that captured Sr. Liza's heart during her time there. Her observation conveys the day-to-day struggle of many Guatemalan people.

"Off the beaten path, a small town called El Nuevo Milenio (The New Millennium) is inhabited by a group of 65 Mayan (Mam tribe) families who were displaced during Hurricane Stan back in 2005. The Guatemalan government built one-bedroom cinder block homes for each family. Other agencies paved roads through town and put in street lights. The Canadian Rotary Club built a small school there. Somehow, each

continued on page 3—>

The season's "first crops" celebration brings people from 12 villages to the large Catholic church in Chisguachin.





New members' voices resound with gratitude

Amid prayers of the faithful at St. Pius X Parish in Wauwatosa, Wis., Salvatorian Sisters Debra Breese (left) and Janice Hartman professed perpetual vows on August 13.

Sr. Janice Hartman began her vocation journey later in life, and says she's grateful "that door opened for me." She ministers as a certified nursing assistant and resident care assistant at St. Anne's Salvatorian Campus in Milwaukee. Sr. Janice feels privileged to walk the path of the first Salvatorian Sisters who came to America to provide home care to elders. "Caring for people who now make St. Anne's their home, I do feel I carry on their legacy." How has life as a Salvatorian impacted her ministry at St. Anne's? Sr. Janice answers simply, "It's given me greater

compassion. Christ is using me to show His love for people in need."

Sr. Debra Breese began her Salvatorian journey along with Sr. Janice in 2008. The legacy of the first Salvatorian Sisters who came to the U.S. inspires her ministry at Divine Savior Healthcare (DSH) in Portage, Wis. Sr. Debra has dedicated her formation journey to learning how dementia affects residents she cares for

in Tivoli assisted living center at DSH. She recalls feeling fear and despair in a workshop that simulated living with dementia. She says her ongoing training helps her "bring our Savior's love to Tivoli residents in many ways." When asked about religious life, Sr. Debra is happy to talk about it with residents and co-workers. She says, "They have truly been a witness to my formation."

Read more about Sr. Janice and Sr. Debra online at sistersofthedivinesavior.org/new-sisters



Companions in Mission

Last year, **David B. of Chicago** updated his will to include the Sisters of the Divine Savior as one of the beneficiaries of his estate. He designated his gift specifically for Salvatorian Sisters' retirement needs. David's own words capture the sentiments behind his legacy gift that honors the memory of his mother's cousin, Sister Charitas Elverman, SDS.

"I am so happy to be able to make a difference in the lives of the Sisters of the Divine Savior. I have great affection and admiration for the Sisters as a result of the loving devotion Sister Charitas showed me. Her devotion, kindness and love will always be a part of me. The love and prayers she gave me and our family is what guides me every day."

This year, David's 70th birthday coincided with the 63rd anniversary of his First Communion. He cherishes the memory of that day, saying, "One of my special guests on that occasion was my dear cousin Sister Charitas. It is these good memories and having had such wonderful people in my life that make me so grateful to God."

Above right: David B., Chicago; **right:** "Growing up, I was treated with great love and affection by the entire Elverman family," says David, pictured here with his mom's cousins, Father Donald and Sister Charitas Elverman.



Our SDS Apostolic Circle recognizes the generosity of David and other friends who have named the Sisters of the Divine Savior in their will or estate plan. Apostolic Circle members are recognized in our stewardship update and on a plaque at the SDS Community House in Milwaukee. Every December, we remember these donors in an anniversary Mass at our Motherhouse, Villa Salvator Mundi in Rome, near our founding site in Tivoli, Italy.

Great need and deep faith continued from page 1

home also has electricity. The Guatemalan government also put in a water tower for the new town, but the community can't afford gasoline to run the pump. Except for one street where families were able to dig wells, all others have to buy their water elsewhere. They still do not have the titles to their homes and have no land to grow food for their families, which forces them to rent a plot elsewhere."

Working to improve the quality of life in Guatemala is just one piece of the Salvatorian mission there. Promoting vocations and serving the spiritual needs of its people are also priorities. More than half of Guatemala's people identify as Catholic and the dominant church is Roman Catholic.

Three Salvatorian Sisters from South America now serve in Guatemala. Sr. Jovelina from Brazil works with youth and does vocation work at the diocesan level with Fr. Rodolfo from Spain. She also does vocation work with Sr. Yenfa from Colombia when a woman expresses interest in the SDS Congregation. Sr. Jovelina also coordinates pastoral support for women in the area.

Sr. Yenfa works with Fr. Santi, also from Spain, teaching classes to catechists and pastoral ministers in San Marcos. She also works with vocation groups around the diocese with Fr. Rodolfo. Both Sisters Yenfa and Jovelina do a monthly vocation program on the Catholic Radio Station at the Diocese of San Marcos.

Sr. Vera, also from Brazil, works with a Birth-to-Five program at the Diocese in San Marcos to address malnutrition among

mothers and children. She also leads retreats and helps with a Catholic TV program focused on the environment.

The three sisters live in Chisguachin, a village less than three miles outside San Sebastian. Chisguachin sits more than 9,000 feet above sea level. Nearby, the sleeping volcano Tajumulco stands more than 13,000 feet above sea level. Rocks and stones abound in this volcanic area. No main roads lead into the surrounding areas of Chisguachin. Our sisters walk everywhere or rely on local people for transportation. All roads are made of stone laid by the local people. When someone sees a hole forming in a road, a few farmers get together in early morning to repair it.

These men have farms of their own or rent a bit of land to grow food and raise a few animals to feed their families. At times, they might have surplus vegetables or livestock to sell at the market. Regardless of their family responsibilities, they come out to haul, break and fit stones whenever a road becomes impassable. As Sr. Liza likes to say, "No engineering degree required, just good will."

Agriculture is a way of life in Chisguachin and farming tasks are done totally by hand. The people suffer terribly when crops yield poorly due to weather conditions. And, they pray thankfully when crops yield enough to sustain their loved ones.

Sr. Luz Marina, Superior of the Colombian Province oversees our inter-province mission in Guatemala. In her mind's eye, precarious travel to this rural area due to poor road conditions parallels the precarious lives of Guatemalan people due to influences beyond their control. In spite of their daily struggle, people from 12 surrounding villages look forward to gathering at the large parish church in Chisguachin to celebrate special feasts and pray in gratitude for each small blessing.

Our U.S. Province is committed to the Guatemala mission for three years. Our commitment is focused on pastoral service for women in the parish, as well as a formation program for women who are discerning God's call to become a Salvatorian Sister.

Road crews in Chisguachin are local farmers who fit each stone by hand.



In Memoriam

Sister Alice Gindt, SDS (formerly Sr. Herman Joseph) died on July 28, 2017. In her 62 years professed as a Salvatorian, Sr. Alice ministered in teaching, nursing and elder care. You can read about Sr. Alice here:

sistersofthedivinesavior.org/sister/sister-alice-gindt-sds

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Counting Your Blessings

You're helping us do the possible

You're speaking to us with your gifts. And, you're giving voice to powerless people we serve around the world. Your response to our May appeal has lifted us past the half-way mark for our projected annual commitment to UNANIMA International. Your generosity is helping us find courage and strength to unite our voices with other Catholic Sisters. Together, we're speaking up for human rights for women, children, migrants and refugees.

Thank you for helping us do the possible. Please continue your prayers to our Providential God to help us do the impossible.



Thank you!

Tea pluckers in Sri Lanka

Sr. Rita's sentimental journey

We hear you! The Mission Advancement Team received great feedback to our interest survey back in February. It's no surprise many of you want to hear more stories about Salvatorian Sisters living and serving in the U.S. After all, many of you have come to know the sisters through their service in schools, hospitals, social service agencies and parishes over the years. Friendship is the tie that binds — even between generations as this story shows.

Call it chance — or just maybe, providence.

The drive between Sisseton, S.D. and Milwaukee is long no matter which way you're traveling. Sister Patrice Colletti shares about a heartwarming encounter when she and Sister Rita Vogelsang drove back to South Dakota after coming to Milwaukee for the U.S. Province Assembly in June.



Above: Sr. Rita served 16 years in Birmingham, Ala., where she first met JC (left) and Isaac as youngsters.

Our two sisters enjoyed an overnight stay at the “Welcoming House” of the Little Falls Franciscans, a refurbished convent in St. Cloud, Minn. When they arrived, the Franciscan Sisters were also hosting a group of young men and women serving in a yearlong volunteer program there. Sr. Patrice takes it from there:

“Sister Rita and I were welcomed warmly and joined the group of volunteers and staff for a delicious picnic supper and evening prayer. Here's the really amazing thing: as we visited, Sister Rita realized that two of the volunteers, JC and Isaac, were the sons of one of her former colleagues from when she ministered with the Salesians in Birmingham, Alabama.”

Reconnecting with the boys at a convent in the middle of Minnesota on a beautiful summer afternoon flooded Sr. Rita's mind with special memories from her time in

Birmingham. She especially remembers the gratitude of local people whose struggle with poverty was a way of life.

She recalls, “Walking in Birmingham's Gate City Housing Complex, carrying leftovers from any event we had at the parish, a Thanksgiving meal, or summer camp program, the residents and their children were eager and grateful to receive whatever we had to share.”

Sr. Rita also recalls the strong faith of a single mother with three children who stepped up to assist with the parish vacation bible programs and last minute sacramental needs. Today the woman is married and serves the parish as director of religious education. Time and again, Sr. Rita witnessed deep gratitude and generosity among people from the inner city parishes where she served in Birmingham.



A legacy gift from your estate doesn't need to be cash. It might be a percentage of a savings account, a retirement fund, or securities such as stocks or bonds. A conversation with your legal or financial advisor is the best place to start. Your decision to name the Sisters of the Divine Savior as a beneficiary of your estate will help ensure our service to God's people beyond your lifetime.

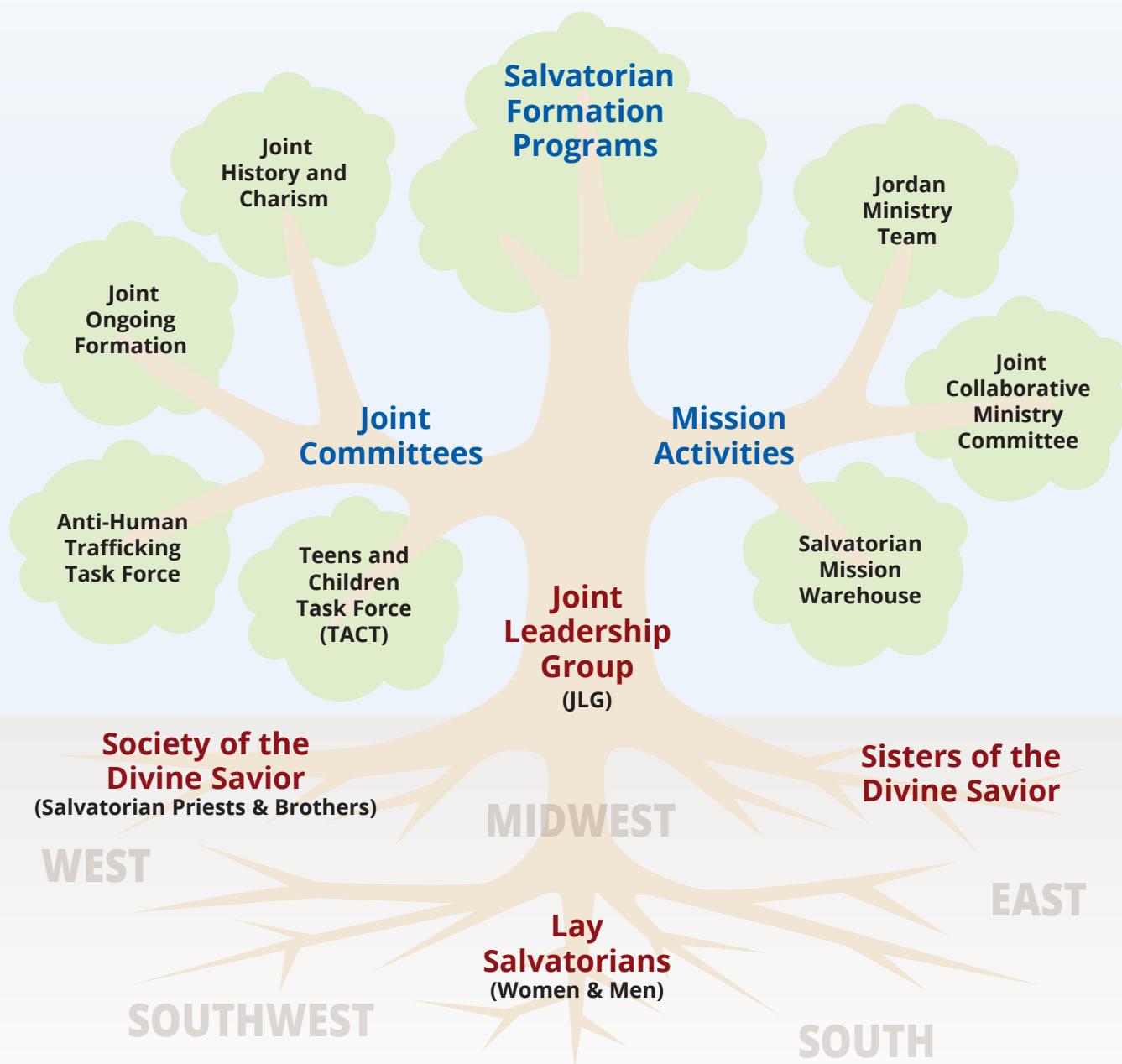
To learn more about leaving a legacy gift and becoming a member of the SDS Apostolic Circle, email Lori at landl@salvatoriansisters.org or call (414) 466-7414.

Salvatorian collaboration thrives, rooted in our founding mission



Collaboration describes how the Sisters of the Divine Savior, Society of the Divine Savior and Lay Salvatorians intertwine mission and ministry. Adapting the image of a family tree depicts ways these three “branches” of the Salvatorian Family collaborate in the U.S. Three large roots reflect Fr. Francis Jordan’s founding vision for women and men, both religious and lay, to evangelize the world as equals. Smaller roots point to geographic regions where Salvatorians live and serve today. The trunk, or **Joint Leadership Group (JLG)** draws elected leaders from all three Salvatorian

branches. JLG oversees a number of **Joint Committees** shown on four leaf clusters to the left. Three leaf clusters to the right show some **Mission Activities** where Salvatorians also collaborate. At the treetop, **Salvatorian Formation Programs** led by members of all three branches include initial formation, as well as ongoing formation for full-fledged Salvatorians. As a family: *Salvatorians are called and sent in mission to proclaim the Gospel message to all people, everywhere and at all times, through whatever ways and means the love of Christ inspires.*



Watch for more about *Years on Fire* in future issues of the *Salvatorian News*, in our monthly eNews, and on our website at sistersofthedivinesavior.org

2017 Woman of Faith was called to find Christ — behind bars

Hearing Linda Pischke's story might change your heart, just as hearing the stories of women behind bars changed Linda's.

This Milwaukee suburban wife, mother and social worker thought she knew her place in the world, until God's plan led her to a place most unfamiliar. For more than 16 years, Linda has served with St. Dismas Jail Ministry. That's when she began hearing the stories that inspired her 2011 book, "The Women of Block 12."

Kay Styza nominated Linda for the Woman of Faith Award, and shared the history behind Linda's book and her Joyful Souls aftercare program for women released from prison.

"For 10 years Linda led a Christian-based creative writing class at the Waukesha County Jail. She shared the Good News with women who felt unloved and undeserving of God's forgiveness. She invited them to write about how God was helping them find new hope." With their approval and blessings, Linda wrote the book that shares their heartbreaking life journeys.

"Linda also saw that these women lacked a healthy support system upon release from jail. With the support of St. Dismas Ministry, she founded Joyful Souls." The women meet every Friday evening at the St. Vincent de Paul store in Waukesha to share a meal, prayer, Bible study, fellowship and fun. Kay says, "The group is thriving," and after more than five years, none of the longtime attendees have returned to prison.

John Waymel, president of Waukesha County's St. Dismas Conference, says Linda is one of their longest-serving members. In a letter supporting her nomination for the Woman of Faith Award, John wrote, "Linda has a deep understanding of our Christian mission to love unconditionally. She demonstrates a solid witness of faith in God and the Holy Spirit that is so crucial to inmates and their families."

"I began my ministry believing it was my job to take Jesus to the jail, but he was already there waiting for me."

— Linda Pischke



Linda encourages the women to be accountable for their actions, but not define themselves by past mistakes. Kay says the women often refer to Linda as "our tough, but loving mom who doesn't let us get away with anything." Sadly, many of the women didn't grow up with a tough, but loving mom, and have struggled with addictions and mental illness.

The beauty of Joyful Souls is that women serving as mentors often receive inspiration, hugs and prayers from the women they come to serve. Linda recruits mentors from local churches, including Christ the Servant Lutheran, where she worships. Kay says, "Linda motivates us all to use our God-given gifts to help each other and give back to our brothers and

sisters in Christ. Our Joyful Souls group, by the grace of God, has helped work miracles."

One of those miracles met Linda more than 10 years ago while in custody. She supported Linda's Woman of Faith nomination with this testimonial:

Linda was a light that shined in that gloomy place. She saw something in me that I didn't. She stayed in touch with me while I went to prison, and gave me strength to get through. When I was released, she helped me get back on my feet. She continued to pray, mentor and love me no matter what. She never gave up on me. As I look back, Linda has shown me a love I never got from my family. She's an amazing woman of faith.

Read about our Woman of Faith Award at sistersofthedivinesavior.org/2017wof



WOMAN OF Faith AWARD

Please join us to honor

Linda Pischke

Founder of Joyful Souls ministry

Bridging the gap for women rebuilding their lives after prison

Thursday, September 21, 2017 • 7:00 p.m.

SDS Community House • 4311 N. 100th Street, Milwaukee

Please register for this free event by September 16

Go to sistersofthedivinesavior.org/2017wof or call 414-466-7414

Special thanks to Catholic Financial Life for their Premier Partnership in this event.

