

# Community helps faithful deepen their relationship with Christ

*“All my hope is in Your mercy, Lord.”*  
— St. Augustine

The Sisters of Jesus Our Hope was established in the Diocese of Metuchen by Bishop Edward T. Hughes on June 6, 1992. The Sisters are consecrated women who live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience within the common life of a religious community which flows into an apostolate of faith formation and catechesis.

People today are desperately longing for witness to prove with their lives that God “is” and that he can be known, that he can be loved, that he can be followed until the last breath, and that there is something beyond that last breath, that heaven is for real and that it is worth sacrificing everything on this earth to attain.

The Sisters seek to be those witnesses as they bring to others their charisma of hope in the merciful love of Jesus Christ. The Sisters embrace a vibrant community life lived in hope as well as a mission of proclaiming hope in Jesus Christ. They seek to lead people to the most precious gift of all — a personal relationship of faith in Jesus Christ, who is the only source of hope that does not disappoint.

The Sisters live their religious consecration in three convents within the diocese. Their life is one of prayer, participation in the sacraments, and communion with their Sisters. Going forth from this prayer and communion, they serve in various parish ministries as well as in campus ministry.

Sisters Claire Marie and Judith bring the love and hope of Jesus to sick and homebound members of St. Peter the Apostle University and Community Parish, New Brunswick. Along with Sisters Clare and Lorraine, they also host evenings for women from the Catholic Center at Rutgers, also New Brunswick. These events are always an experience of the love of Christ in prayer as well as a joyous time of shar-

ing a meal and friendship together.

Sister Lorraine Doiron has a great heart for young people and for the Lord so she brings both loves together as she serves as a campus minister at the Catholic Center. It is with much enthusiasm that she fills this role, which includes the pastoral care of women students, the teaching of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process at the Center, and the training of readers and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion who serve the many campus Masses each Sunday. Her goal is to help them know how to proclaim the Word of God as well as to respect the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Sister’s life is a busy one, but it is filled with great joy!

Having been the parish catechetical leader at St. Cecilia Parish, Monmouth Junction, for nine years, Sister Clare Yosco not only greatly enjoys the international flavor of the parishioners, but they also enjoy her highly creative approach to everything — the children’s sacramental preparation classes and the family catechesis arrangements. But perhaps one of her own favorites each summer is “Camp St. Cecilia,” which is Sister Clare’s own creation — a delightful combination of faith and fun, of prayer and play.

For the past 15 years, several Sisters have served in the ministry of faith formation at St. Magdalen de Pazzi Parish, Flemington. Sister Barbara Haworth and Sister Gloria Pighini bring a strong pastoral presence to the parish on several levels and Sister Pat Vayda brings the love of God to those she encounters at Our Lady of Hope House, an outreach of the parish that distributes food, clothing, and furniture to the needy with the help of parish volunteers who work with her. Sister Pat is also responsible for overseeing outreach to the homebound, to a bereavement group and to children suffering the loss of a parent by death

or divorce. She often says, “I tell my volunteers that those who come through our door just might be Jesus in disguise.”

Sisters at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Jesus Our Hope in Bloomsbury serve in various ministries in the surrounding parishes. The Motherhouse community, including Sister Christine Quense, Sister Julia Jamink, Sister Carlotta LaRocca, Sister Eileen White, Sister Donna Marie Lasota, and Sister Ellen Kraft, has hosted mornings of prayer for local women’s groups and open houses for families, visited the sick of the area, assisted at the nearby Life Choices Center, and provided adult faith formation events at nearby parishes.

Currently, Sister Ellen is also serving as a religion teacher at Saints Philip & James School, Phillipsburg,

where she not only leads the students to appreciate the truth, beauty and goodness of God on several levels, but also to grow into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as their savior and friend.

A highlight in the ministry of the Sisters is their annual Lenten Day of Prayer for Women, which they have hosted for the past 15 years at St. Magdalen de Pazzi Parish. At the event, about 250 to 300 women gather for Mass, a keynote address given by a prominent Catholic laywoman, quiet prayer, and a choice of workshops given by the Sisters. In this and in each of their ministries and outreaches, the Sisters strive to help others deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, whose Merciful Love is the source of all our hope.

— Sister Christine Quense

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By Sister Christine Quense

My experience of the love between my mother and father, as well as that of being the youngest of eight children with 35 nieces and nephews, had impressed upon me the beauty of married life. It looked good and I wanted it!

So, when someone suggested that I might have a vocation to religious life my response was, “If Jesus wants me as his spouse, he is going to have to ask me out just like any other guy!”

A bit bold you might say but it was really the cry of my heart. I wanted to know from deep within that I was loved by the one who would be my spouse.

Then, while on retreat, I did experience Jesus not only asking me out on a date but inviting me to be his bride! It was not with words or a vision but through a profound experience of knowing his love in prayer before the

### Reflection by a Sister of Jesus Our Hope

Most Blessed Sacrament. That experience of Him opened a space within me that I knew could only be filled by him — and I wanted only him as my spouse!

Moving forward to enter the convent became relatively easy. I had been taught by some of our Sisters and knew them well. The beauty of their prayer, community life, and witness to the hope that we have in Jesus were so captivating to me that I never even visited another community.

I often share with others that “I am one of the happiest people I know!” It’s true! The love of Jesus continues to sustain me through the ups and downs of life and my Sisters inspire me to keep giving my whole self back to my spouse.

This call to religious life is a beautiful vocation. Young people should ask the Lord for his guidance as they discern their own vocation. Taking time each day with Jesus in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to be their guide will be of greatest importance. Receiving the grace of the sacraments, especially daily Mass and frequent confession, are key in discerning God’s plan as is the help of a spiritual guide whose wisdom will be of great assistance as they discern.