

# THE VIEW FROM THE BLUFF

## DECEMBER 2017

SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

*Moments In Ministry*

*Gibbstown, New Jersey*

*1954-1976*

The Catholic population in the United States increased significantly during the 1950s. Consequently, Bishops and pastors appealed to religious congregations for Sisters to serve not only in existing parishes, but especially in newly established suburban parishes.

Mother Mary Bernard received numerous such requests. Among them was a letter written on November 2, 1953 by Reverend John J. Duffy, Pastor of St. Michael's Parish, Gibbstown, Diocese of Camden, New Jersey. Father Duffy stated that Bishop Eustace had given him permission to build a convent and catechetical center provided he could get sisters to come. Having heard of the work of the OLMs in Hightstown, NJ, he asked: "Could you possibly send three sisters to this mission in September,



Mother Mary Bernard Campbell, Sr. Maureen Tzinieris, Sr. Caroline Wright, Sr. Alphonsus Gaffney, September, 1954.

1954?" On December 18, 1953, following a visit to Gibbstown, Mother Mary Bernard and Council, with the approval of Bishop John J. Russell of Charleston, accepted Father Duffy's invitation. Sisters Alphonsus Gaffney, Caroline Wright, and Maureen Tzinieris arrived in Gibbstown in September 1954. Two years later on May 25, 1956, an article in THE CATHOLIC

STAR HERALD described the accomplishments of the three "pioneers", and, announced that the parish planned to build a grammar school. The OLMs remained in Gibbstown until 1976.

Feast of the Holy Souls, 1953

Reverend Mother  
Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy  
Charleston, S.C.

Dear Reverend Mother:

This letter is coming to you from a parish priest who is desperately in need of your help.

I have been pastor of St. Michael's parish here in Gibbstown, N.J. for three years. During that time, I have resorted to every possible means to build up the spiritual life of the people; after much prayer, I have come to the conclusion that the only way in which this can be accomplished is to have Sisters come to this parish. I have spoken to the Bishop who realizes most keenly that we need the Sisters and he has given permission to me to go ahead with the building of a new convent and catechetical center on one condition - that I get the promise of Sisters to come here.

Reverend Mother, I realize that I am making this request at a time when Sisters are very hard to get; I know of the cry for them from so many priests who are in situations akin to mine. However, I have a deep conviction that God wants Sisters to come to this parish, and I feel that He will give the proper inspiration.

I have heard a great deal of the work of Mother Ignatia and your other Sisters in Hightstown, N.J. When I think of what has been accomplished there, I am filled with hope at the prospect of what can be done here. Our Bishop Eustace of Camden, wishes us to have a catechetical center here for about four years and then to build a grammar school after the people have been grounded in their religion. There are over two hundred children here who come from homes where there is little or no knowledge of the fundamentals of our faith. The fields are indeed ready for the harvest!

I beg of you to consider this request very carefully; much prayer goes with it and only God Himself can know how much depends on your acceptance. I would be glad to come and see you if you wish. Please let me know if you could possibly send three Sisters to this mission in Sept. 1954; I can assure you that they would receive every convenience necessary and would be a tremendous blessing to all of us.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Rev. John J. Duffy*  
Rev. John J. Duffy  
St. Michael's Rectory  
Gibbstown, N.J.



<b>CLASS OF SERVICE</b> This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1 style="text-align: center;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p>	<b>SYMBOLS</b> DL=Day Letter NL=Night Letter LT=Int'l Letter Telegram VLT=Int'l Victory Ltr.
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MOTHER MARY BERNARD; SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY=68 LEGARE ST CHARLESTON SOCAR=

MANY PRAYERS WILL BE SAID TODAY ASKING GOD TO MAKE YOUR COUNCIL SEE THE NECESSITY OF SENDING SISTERS NEXT SEPTEMBER. IF WE HAD TO WAIT LONGER SO MANY THINGS COULD HAPPEN FOR EXAMPLE OVER LONG PERIOD OF TIME YOUR ORDINARY COULD CHANGE HIS MIND AND I COULD LOSE DESIRABLE LAND OR ANY NUMBER OF THINGS. WILL TELEPHONE YOU TONIGHT=

FATHER DUFFY=

SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy  
 68 Legare Street  
 Charleston 4, South Carolina

C O P Y

December 18, 1953

Reverend John J. Duffy  
 St. Michael's Church  
 Gibbstown, New Jersey

Dear Father Duffy:

It pleases me to inform you that his Excellency John J. Russell, our Ordinary, has consented to our erecting a house in Gibbstown in the Diocese of Camden. To this arrangement our General Council has given its approval. We, of course, understand that the erection of the house is acceptable to the Ordinary of the Camden Diocese.

With best wishes for a holy and joyous Christmas,

I am

Sincerely in Our Lady of Mercy

Mother Mary Bernard

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH  
 523 W. BROAD ST.  
 GIBBSTOWN, N. J.  
 July 3, 1955

Dear Mother Bernard,

It was with great pleasure and satisfaction I learned that you have decided to leave the same Sisters in Gibbstown for next year. As I am not unmindful of your problem in trying to meet so many demands for Sisters, I hasten to express my sincere gratitude for your kind consideration of St. Michael's.

It seems more convincing than ever that it was God's Will that you send Sisters here. The tremendous change in the spiritual life of the parish is due, in a great measure, to the untiring sacrifices of the Nuns, and I know no Community more capable of doing this than your Sisters.

There is also a personal reason for my gratitude. As you know, I had been doing battle very much alone up to September. The strain was great and had already taken its toll on my health in general. Had it not been for the understanding and patience of the Sisters, I could never have discharged the responsibilities that are inseparable from the daily life of a Pastor. They have assimilated my ideals, convictions, and objectives, so that they have become quite competent. It is hardly possible to adequately indicate the extent of the good which the coming of the Sisters has accomplished.

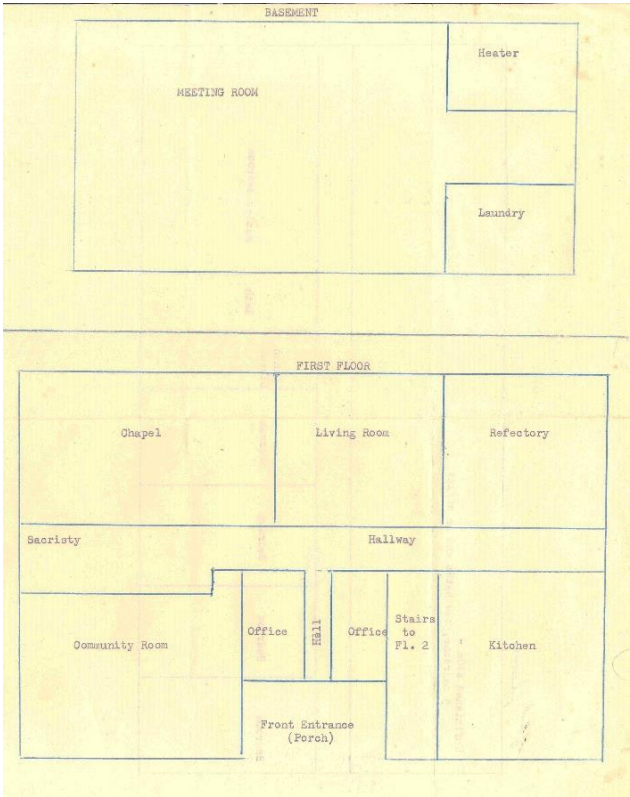
May I remind you again, Mother, that it is our hope and prayer that you will send us an extra Sister in September if it can be arranged. I need not tell you that the work here and the life of the little Community would surely gain by having a fourth Sister.

Again, I want to say thanks for all you have done to assist me and to renew my promise of remembering you at the altar.

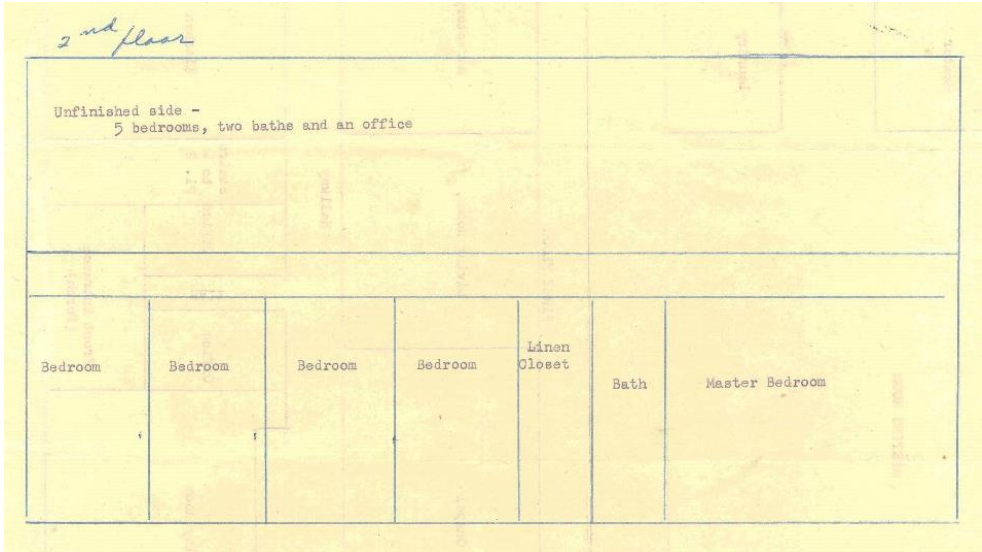
God bless you.

Devotedly,

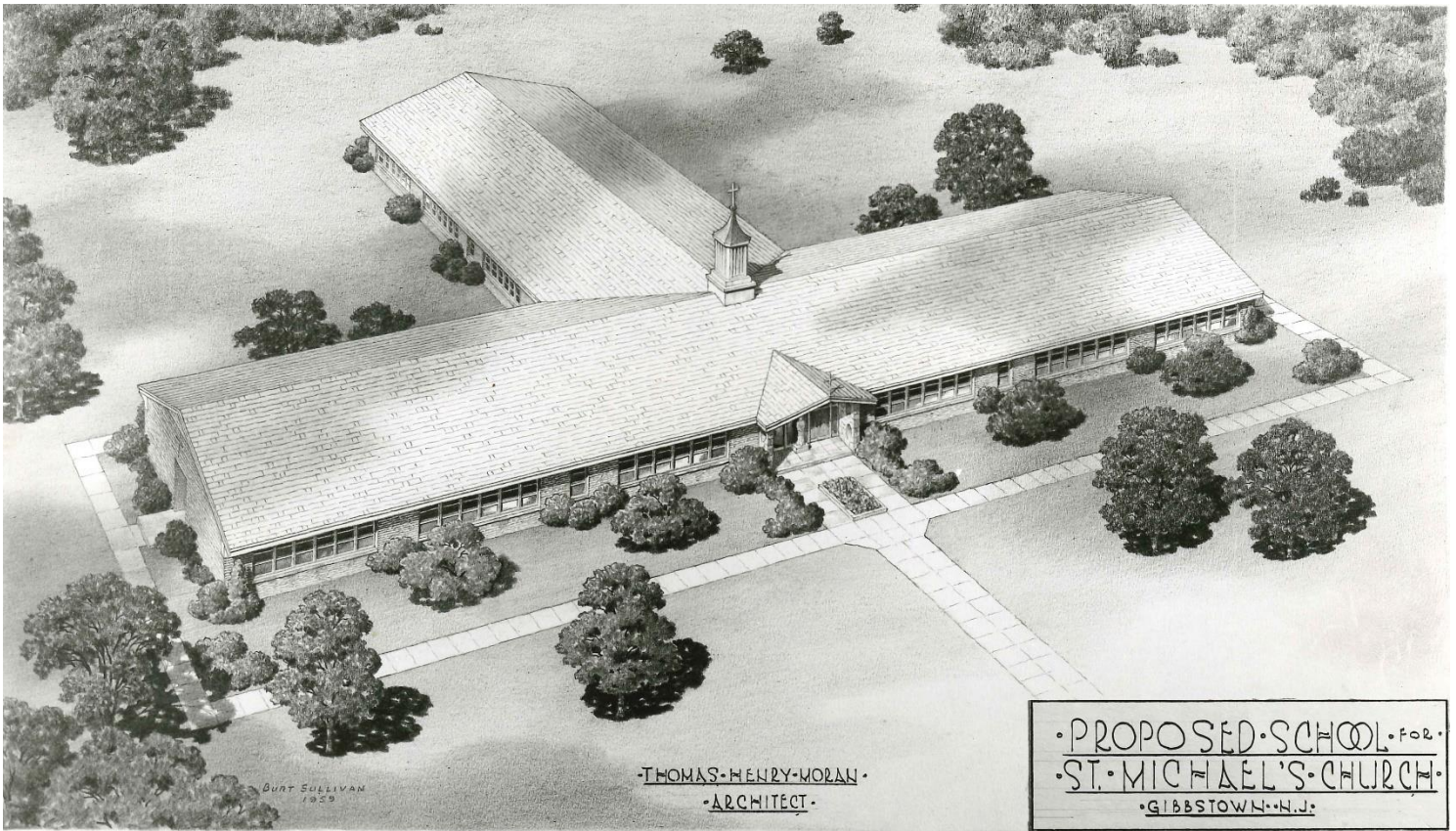
Rev. John J. Duffy



This floor plan of the St. Michael's Convent was sent to Mother Mary Bernard and Council in order for them to have a sense of what the convent would be like.







Sr. Maureen Tzinieris, OLM with her class

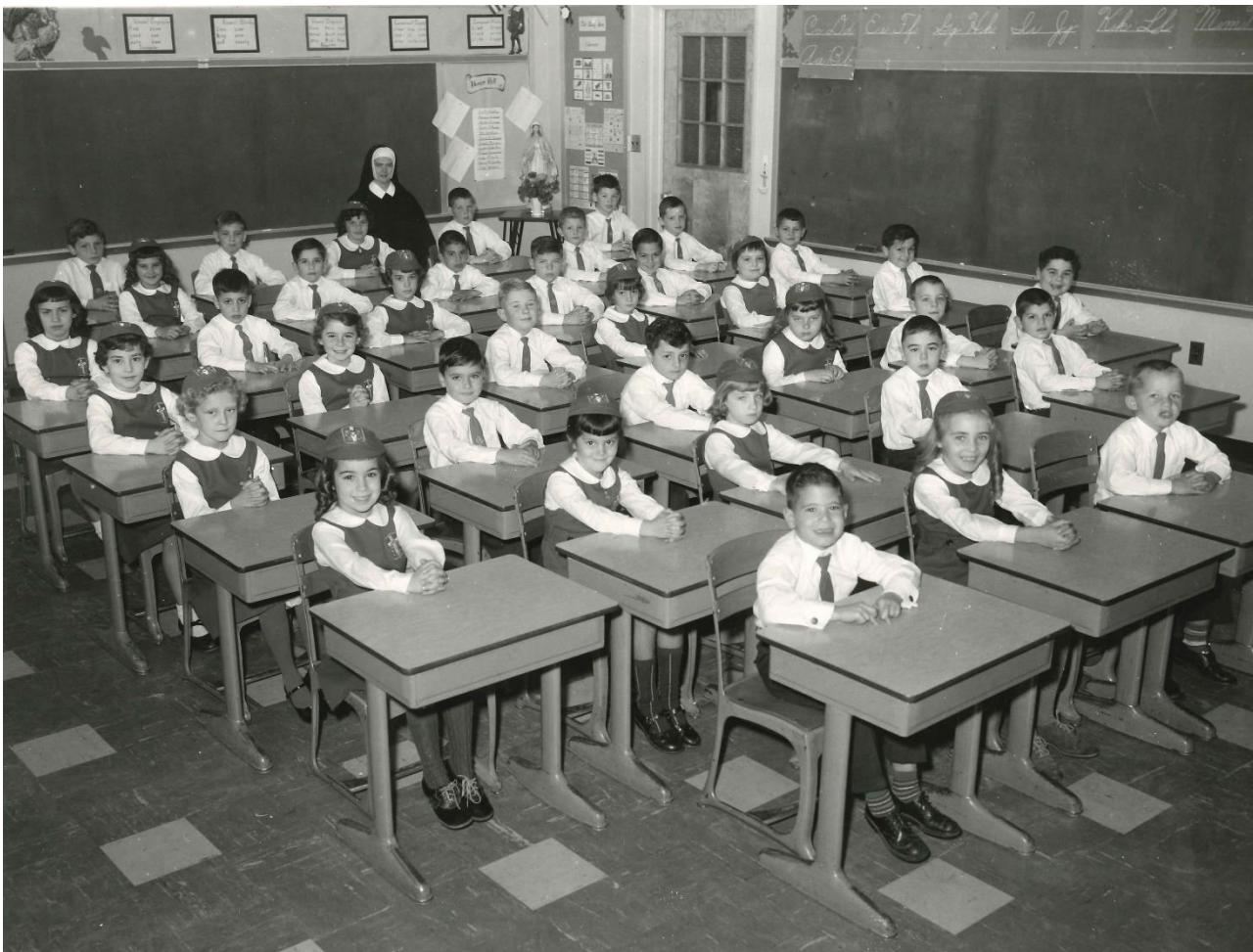


SISTERS OF CHARITY OF OUR LADY OF MERCY

## Order Serving in Gibbstown



Sr. Alphonsus  
Gaffney, OLM with  
students.



Sr. Jean  
Marie  
O'Shea,  
OLM with  
her students



Sr. Columba O'Sullivan, OLM in her classroom with students.



Sr. Ignatia Gavaghan, OLM with students.







GIBBSTOWN public school pupils on their way to released-time religious instruction at convent of Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy. Nuns, from left, are Sister Maureen, Sister Alphonsus, Superior, and Sister Caroline. (Largemoor photo.)

## Steaks at the Door, That's How Gibbstown Takes to the Sisters

**GIBBSTOWN**—Finding steaks at the back door isn't an uncommon occurrence, said Sister Alphonsus, Superior. "We never run out of eggs, either, and we always have plenty of vegetables during the season."

Looking after the convent table needs is one way the parishioners of St. Michael's Church show their appreciation for the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy, who came here a little less than two years ago primarily to look after the catechetical needs of the children and lay the groundwork for a school that Father John J. Duffy, pastor, hopes to build before long.

The Sisters were quite a novelty when they first hit town, but friendliness took hold with little strain, and now it's just part of the routine daily scene when Sister Alphonsus, Sister Maureen and Sister Caroline escort the parish children from the public school building to the convent down the street for their released-time religious instruction, everybody praying the Rosary enroute.

**OVER AT NEIGHBORING Repaupo and Bridgeport** the town-folk no longer stare in curiosity as the Sisters unlock the doors to the firehouse and take their groups of children inside for catechetical training. The Sisters transport many of the children by car.

The area presented a challenge of educational pioneering when the nuns established their community here in September, 1954, but it was a task that seemed to be in keeping with the unique history of the Sisters of Charity.

**CHILDREN** of St. Michael's Church in Gibbstown receive two hours of religious instruction per week in classrooms in the basement of the convent. Grades six through eight are instructed on Mondays and Wednesdays, the lower grades on Wednesdays and Fridays. This is done during the released-time period granted by the board of education. At Bridgeport and Repaupo, where released time has not been approved, the classes are taught after school.

High school students receive instruction in the convent on Monday evenings. In all, the

Sisters instruct about 300 pupils.

As an instruction aid, the Sisters have acquired a 16 mm. movie projector and a slide projector and have invested several hundred dollars in a library available to the pupils in the basement of the convent.

In addition to catechetical work, the nuns assist Father Duffy in convert and census activities and prepare children and adults for reception of the Sacraments.

Father Duffy had a new convent ready for the Sisters when they arrived in Gibbstown, and it already has been cleared of debt. Parish financial activities now are directed toward the erection of a school.



### 1961-62 Faculty Members

Seated-Sisters Jean Marie O'Shea, Vincent Casey, Columba O'Sullivan

Standing-Mrs. M.M. Failing, Miss Joan Donovan, Sr. Maureen Tzinieris, Mrs. Carol Cinaglia





Dedication of St. Michael's Church

Sisters Roberta Bridgeman, Vincent Casey, Magdalen Dwyer, Carmelita Boyd, Mary Cyril Murray, Mary Paul Hogan. Others from other communities standing behind OLMs.



Sister Caroline Wright and Sister Alphonsus Gaffney with students at Church dedication.





**Summer 1965**

**First row: Sisters Carmelita Boyd, Benedict Higgins, Bridget Sullivan**

**Middle Row: Sisters M. Clement Fine, Vincent Casey**

**Back Row: Sisters Mary Paul Hogan, Maureen Tzinieris**



**1976 Appreciation Ceremony**

**OLMs L-R**

**Sr. Marie Cecilia Ferro**

**Sr. Ann Billard**

**Sr. Maureen Tzinieris**

**Sr. Ann Marie Strange**

**Sr. Mary Rose White**

**Sr. de Lourdes Eassy**





Convent 1970's and today. Also used for parish activities

The Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy served in Gibbstown from 1954-1976

The Regional School of  
St. Clare of Assisi and St. Gabriel Parishes



Pre-K 3 – Grade 3 Campus  
150 South School Street  
Gibbstown, NJ 08027

*The mission of Guardian Angels Regional School is to nurture, encourage, and educate the body, mind, and spirit of each child to foster spiritual, social, and intellectual growth by providing a quality and challenging academic education permeated by Gospel values in the Catholic Franciscan tradition.*

4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus  
717 Beacon Avenue  
Paulsboro, NJ 08066



Guardian Angels Regional School, located in Gibbstown, New Jersey, opened its doors in 1957 as St. Michael's School. St. Michael's School closed in 1987 due to a change in demographics. In 2000, the Bishop of the Camden Diocese, Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, requested that St. Michael's School re-open in order to meet the needs of the increasing catholic population in the South Jersey area. On September 4, 2001, St. Michael's School re-opened as Guardian Angels Regional School. In October of 2006, Bishop Joseph Galante announced the expansion of our campus to the former school of St. John's in Paulsboro. Located 3 miles from Gibbstown, this campus is used to accommodate grades 4 through 8. Guardian Angels School serves many areas of Gloucester and Salem Counties. The school is subsidized by St. Clare Parish, a newly merged parish consisting of the churches of St. John's, St. Joseph, St. Michael, and St.

Gabriel's. The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Infant Jesus, along with our devoted lay teachers, maintain a school environment which promotes learning and encourages Catholic Christian values.





### **SISTER ANN BILLARD REMEMBERS....**

St. Michaels Gibbstown NJ 1966-68; 1970-1971; 1976

It's been 51 years since I first arrived at St. Michael convent in Gibbstown NJ. I was a young 21 year old Junior professed Sister when missioned to teach in the school. Some memories are still vivid. That first year I recall the experiences that went with immersion into the Italian- American community that made up

St. Michael's parish. I remember and savor again the homemade pasta and sauce often accompanied with homemade wine, and, of course, the meatball sandwiches parents often made for the students and faculty. Who could forget yard duty in the cold windy winters with only a blanket shawl to warm us, or Saturday morning breakfast with the pastor, then rushing off to Villanova for Saturday class, Sunday morning teaching CCD and afternoons counting the collection? That first year was filled with fun times and challenging times. I was to spend two years when I was transferred south only to return again two more times. Over the years, I still remember the class trips to New York City and Hershey Park, as well as the trip to the Billard family farm in northeast Pennsylvania. Who could forget the roller skating parties and football games as well as the Shopping trips to Philadelphia during the holidays? There was also the experience of being missioned to St. Michael for summer school attending Glassboro State College. It was an enriching community experience with Sr. Margaretta as our superior. Sister spoiled us with a delicious meal as we returned from classes accompanied by lively table discussions as this was post Vatican II time. Many a weekend day we got our exercise by going to a local truck farm and picked either fruit or vegetables to be eaten during the week. Another summer I can recall Sr. Mary Albert tutoring me most afternoons in College Trigonometry. Thanks to her I passed. Now as I reflect back on those experiences, I find myself recognizing some valuable lessons learned. I recall The sisters who taught me the value of prayer in staying the course when life is challenging. Sr. Maureen often sang while we did the dishes. She taught me in her creativity that one can move beyond the momentary stress. Sr. Mary Paul's dry sense of humor often cut the tensions of community and school life. As I look back they and many others who were companions during the four years provided support and encouragement to me, who, at times, didn't know how to live life on life's terms. Finally, in 1976 I had my first experience in bringing an OLM ministry to its completion as we withdrew from St. Michael's School. The Gibbstown experience yielded a rich harvest in lessons learned: The value of creative adaptability, the importance of a non- judgmental attitude in new situations, the power of prayer, and the joy one can have in knowing the mission goes on without us OLMs.



### **SISTER MAUREEN TZINIERIS REMEMBERS....**

I spent 17 years in Gibbstown! When we arrived, St. Michael's was a wooden church and Rev. John Duffy was the Pastor. Sister Alphonsus, first superior and principal, and Sister Carolina and I were the first OLMs there. We were situated in a new three storied building about a mile away. There was a Blessed Mother statue on the front lawn. It had a front entrance and a side entrance. There was another door on the third floor—but only a

door. The lower level contained rooms for teaching CCD, and the laundry. We met the children at the



public school, at the end of its day, and walked them down. We released them when classes were over. The second story contained the chapel, kitchen, dining room, parlor and recreation room. The third story had bedrooms on one side-about five; the other side was unfinished. We used it for different things. We also went to Bridgeport, NJ, weekly, to teach CCD. St. Michael's was mostly an Italian parish, young and old. We often had good spaghetti and meatballs! We often went to Philadelphia to a good religious store there. Some went to Villanova, weekly by the "sure kill" expressway—fast driving for many miles. The real name of the highway has the same sound but I can't spell it! We eventually got a new school that had eight grades. We had both Sisters and a few lay teachers. Eventually, Father (not Fr. Duffy, already deceased) built a lovely new church, so we had the church, convent, and school next to each other. A new rectory was built across the street. I enjoyed my time in Gibbstown. 1954-57, CCD Teacher, 1957-1963, Teacher, 1964-1967, Teacher, 1971-1976 Teacher and Principal.

## Advent Program at May Forest



### UNWRAPPING THE GIFTS OF ADVENT:

*Hope, Humility and Humor*



***Saturday, December 9, 2017***

***9:30am-2:00pm***

#### ***Facilitators***

**Sr. Susan Schorsten, HM** has served for many years in leadership positions within her own religious congregation, with the Diocese of Charleston and in health care ministry. At present, she is serving as a consultant with religious congregations in the area of planning and elder care. She also leads retreats for women.

**Sr. Gay Rowzie, HM** is an educator who has taught special education, elementary school and doctoral students. She has ministered at the diocesan and parish levels, in education and health care and is currently leading retreats programs for women.

***RSVP to Margaret Berard by December 4th  
at 843-795-6083 ext. 300***



## THE "O ANTIPHONS" OF ADVENT

The Roman Church has been singing the "O" Antiphons since at least the eighth century. They are the antiphons that accompany the *Magnificat* canticle of Evening Prayer from December 17-23. They are a magnificent theology that uses ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but present ones as well. Their repeated use of the imperative "Come!" embodies the longing of all for the Divine Messiah.

### December 17

O Wisdom of our God Most High,  
guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

### December 18

O Leader of the House of Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

### December 19

O Root of Jesse's stem,  
sign of God's love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!

### December 20

O Key of David,  
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:  
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

### December 21

O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness  
and in the  
shadow of death.

### December 22

O King of all nations and keystone of the  
Church:  
come and save man, whom you formed from the  
dust!

### December 23

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!

—From *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*



### *Who is the Virgin of Guadalupe?*

The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico. She is depicted with brown skin, an angel and moon at her feet and rays of sunlight that encircle her.

### *When did she first appear?*

According to tradition, the Virgin Mary appeared to an indigenous man named Juan Diego on Dec. 9, 1531. The Virgin asked that a shrine in her name be built on the spot where she appeared, Tepeyac Hill, which is now in a suburb of Mexico City. Juan Diego told the bishop about the apparition and request, but he didn't believe him and demanded a sign before he would approve construction of the church. On Dec. 12, the Virgin reappeared to Juan Diego and ordered him to collect roses in his tilmátlí, a kind of cloak. Juan took the roses to the bishop and when he opened his cloak, dozens of roses fell to the floor and revealed the image of the Virgen of Guadalupe imprinted on the inside. The tilmátlí with the image is on display in the Basilica de Guadalupe.

### *What influence has she had on Mexico and the world?*

The appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to an indigenous man is said to be one of the forces behind creating the Mexico that we know today: a blend of Spanish and native blood. Her dark skin and the fact that the story of her apparition was told in the indigenous language of Nahuatl and in Spanish are said to have helped convert the indigenous people of Mexico to Christianity at the time of the conquest. She is seen as having a blend of Aztec and Spanish heritage. Her image has been used throughout Mexican history, not only as a religious icon but also as a sign of patriotism. Miguel Hidalgo used her image when he launched his revolt against the Spanish in 1810. She could be seen on the rebels'



banners and their battle cry was “Long Live Our Lady of Guadalupe.”

Emiliano Zapata also carried a banner of the Virgen of Guadalupe when he entered Mexico City in 1914. Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego in 2002, making him the first indigenous American saint, and declared Our Lady of Guadalupe the patroness of the Americas. *Source: Latino Voices*



Love it (like when you’re curled up by the fire) or hate it (when you’re on the road), snow is a major part of winter for many people. Get to know the flurries and flakes on a deeper level with these 15 interesting facts.

### 1. Snowflakes aren’t the only form of snow.

Snow can also precipitate as graupel or sleet. Not to be confused with hail, graupel (or snow pellets) are opaque ice particles that form in the atmosphere as ice crystals fall through freezing cloud droplets—meaning cloud particles that are colder than the freezing point of water but remain liquid. The cloud droplets group together to form a soft, lumpy mass. Sleet, on the other hand, consists of drops of rain that freeze into small, translucent balls of ice as they fall from the sky.

### 2. Syracuse tried to make snow illegal.

America’s snowiest major city has an impressive arsenal of plows, but in 1992 it tried a new trick to control white stuff. The city’s Common Council passed a decree that any more snow before Christmas Eve was illegal. As it turns out,

Mother Nature is a scofflaw—it snowed just two days later.

### 3. It’s a myth that no two snowflakes are exactly the same.

In 1988, a scientist found two identical snow crystals. They came from a storm in Wisconsin.

### 4. The largest snowflake might have been 15 inches wide.

According to some sources, the largest snowflakes ever observed fell during a snowstorm in January 1887 at Montana’s Fort Keogh. While witnesses said the flakes were “larger than milk pans,” these claims have not been substantiated.

### 5. Snow is translucent, not white.

Snow, like the ice particles it’s made up of, is actually colorless. It’s translucent, which means that light does not pass through it easily (like it would transparent glass), but is rather reflected. It’s the light reflected off a snowflake’s faceted surface that creates its white appearance.

But why white? The reason we see objects as colors is because some wavelengths of light are absorbed while others are reflected (remember, light is a spectrum of colors). The object takes on whatever color light is reflected. For example, the sky is blue because the blue wavelengths are reflected while the other colors are absorbed. Since snow is made up of so many tiny surfaces, the light that hits it is scattered in many directions and will actually bounce around from one surface to the next as it’s reflected. This means no wavelength is absorbed or reflected with any consistency, so the white light bounces back as the color white.

### 6. And, in fact, it doesn’t always appear white.

Deep snow can often appear blue. This is because layers of snow can create a filter for the light, causing more red light to be absorbed than blue light. The result is that deeper snow appears blue—think about how your snowy footprints



compare to the surrounding landscape. Snow can also sometimes appear pink. Snow in high alpine areas and the coastal polar regions contains cryophilic fresh-water algae that have a red pigment that tints the surrounding snow.

### **7. Each winter in the U.S., at least 1 septillion ice crystals fall from the sky.**

That's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000—24 zeros!

### **8. The most snow to fall in a 24-hour period in the United States is 75.8 inches.**

In 1921, over six feet of snow fell between April 14 at 2:30 p.m. and April 15 at 2:30 p.m. in Silver Lake, Colorado.

### **9. Colorado also holds the record for the most snow to fall in a single calendar day.**

On December 4, 1913, 63 inches of snow fell on Georgetown, Colorado.

### **10. Snow has never been reported in Key West.**

The coldest temperature on record for the Florida city (reached on January 13, 1981, and January 12, 1886) is 41 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **11. Not every big snowstorm is a blizzard.**

In order to be classified as a blizzard, a snowstorm must meet a very specific set of qualifications. Winds must blow at least 35 miles per hour and the snowfall must reduce visibility to less than 0.25 miles for a period of at least three hours.

Other common types of snowstorms include a snow squall (an intense snowfall accompanied by strong winds that only lasts a short time) and a

snowburst (a brief, intense snowfall that results in rapid accumulation of snow).

### **12. Igloos can be more than 100 degrees warmer inside than outside.**

And they're warmed entirely by body heat. Since fresh, compacted snow is approximately 90 to 95 percent trapped air (meaning it can't move and transfer heat) it's a great insulator. Many animals, such as bears, dig deep holes in the snow to hibernate through the winter.

### **13. Nova Scotia holds the record for the most snow angels ever made simultaneously in multiple locations.**

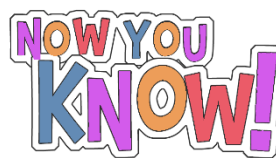
In 2011, 22,022 Nova Scotia residents in 130 separate locations all plopped down in the snow to make snow angels.

### **14. North Dakota holds the record for most snow angels made simultaneously in one place.**

Back in 2007 it was 8,962 people in North Dakota who plopped down in the snow to waggle their arms and legs to make snow angels.

### **15. Feeling more devilish? The largest snowball fight on record took place in Seattle.**

Exactly 5,834 snow fighters came together to exchange frozen barrages to create the largest snowball fight in the world on January 12, 2013.



Just a little!

