From Our Provincial Leader

Sr. Rosemarie Sommers

Dear Friends and Family,

In the fall of 2017, I mentioned that the process of selling Sacred Heart Villa (our former Motherhouse) would move slowly. At the time of penning this letter in October 2019, we continue with our plan that we hope will conclude with the sale of our property, a sale which hinges on many factors and may not be complete for a few more years.

Focusing on our Sisters’ present needs and the long term reality of the sale of SHV, the MSC Leadership Team has made definite living arrangement decisions regarding our 16 Sisters who presently reside at Sacred Heart Villa. We have asked 10 of the Sisters to move to St. Joseph Villa, the retirement home of the Bernardine Sisters on the campus of Alvernia University in Reading, PA. Tucked in next to their convent, the retirement home provides pleasant surroundings and 24-hour care for ill, aged, handicapped and convalescent Sisters. The Bernardine Sisters have warmly welcomed us to share their home and want us to make it our home, too. Our Sisters have visited St. Joseph Villa and are pleased with the accommodations and with the Sisters and staff they met. We all can understand how difficult this move is for our Sisters and ask you to please support them with your prayers and make an effort to visit and be in touch with them as much as possible.

As of November the following Sisters have begun the move to St. Joseph Villa in small groups: Annunzia Kollar, Bernette Ball, Bernice Domitrovitz, Francine Fehrenbach, Georgette Casavecchia, Josanne Huber, Rosemarie Mullen, Theresa Lepera, and Virginia Chnapko. Their mailing addresses will be: St. Joseph Villa, 464 St. Bernardine St., Reading, PA 19607.

Sisters Mary Anne Bigos, Bernard Overkamp, Lorraine Molchanow, Marie Janesch, Mary Seibert and Nane Wisser will continue to reside at Sacred Heart Villa for now and Sr. Mary Anne will remain the local coordinator.

The Sisters who will reside at St. Joseph Villa will have one of the councilors as their contact person to insure that all their needs are met and that they remain integral to our community and our mission.

During this difficult transition we remember the words of our founder Fr. Linckens who said: “We can be

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House of Little Wings

by Sr. Lisa Valentini, MSC

I arrived in Tucson, Arizona on October 14 as one of many Sisters from Congregations throughout the country who have responded to the call from the LCWR (Leadership Conference of Women Religious) to be present to those who continue to cross our border seeking refuge and a safe place for themselves and often their families to live. Once entering legally, guest are brought to Casa Alitas (House of Little Wings), a Welcome Center for migrants under the auspices of Catholic Community Services in the Diocese of Tucson.

Once inside the welcome center, guests find themselves surrounded by brightly painted walls decorated with works of art including scores of pictures colored by the many children who have passed through. Although most people stay only 24 to 48 hours, the goal of Casa Alitas is to be a place of respite, joy and peace where people feel safe and experience God’s loving care as they prepare to continue their journey to meet their sponsors and eventually reside and work in the U.S.

continued on page 2

$10,000 PRIZE

Did you know that for three years we have been running a $10,000 prize raffle drawing? Relatively new, this $100 per ticket opportunity to win $10,000 may arrive in your mailbox in late January or early February of 2020. If you want to be sure you receive this mailing send an email to cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org as soon as possible or call 610-929-2802 to leave your name and address. YOU could be the winner, but you must PLAY to WIN!

Want to “Be Green?”

To receive Connections in email format only, contact: cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org

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IN MEMORIAM

Sister Catherine Cellini, MSC
1942 - 2019

Sister Catherine was born and grew up in Philadelphia. She attended St. Henry parish school where she was taught by our Sisters and graduated from Little Flower High School. She herself became a teacher but after one year felt God calling her to be a Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart. When asked: Why do you want to become a Religious, she responded: “God gave me a happy life filled with love and I would like to repay Him by giving myself to Him.” And so she entered our community in 1960 and two years later made her first profession of vows.

After her studies at Cabrini University Sister Catherine taught Math and Science in several local Catholic high schools in Reading, Allentown, and Pottsville. She was an excellent teacher, very patient and kind, and had a special gift to teach these challenging subjects in such a way that all her students could understand.

Sister Catherine had the heart of a missionary and volunteered for service in our foreign missions. In 1973 she wrote to the Provincial: “The reason I entered the MSC Community was because of its missionary activity. Father Linckens said we are to be missionaries always and everywhere and if I am not qualified then I will accept the place where obedience sends me as my personal missionary field. My prayer is that God’s Will be done.”

In 1977 Sister Catherine’s desire was fulfilled and she was sent to our mission in Papua New Guinea where she served in a place where obedience sends me as my personal missionary field. My prayer is that God’s Will be done.

In 1977 Sister Catherine’s desire was fulfilled and she was sent to our mission in Papua New Guinea where she served as a teacher and director of religious education until 1984. After her return to the USA she spent several years in part-time ministry in Philadelphia while caring for her aged and infirm parents. Sister Catherine also served as our Provincial Archivist from 1995 – 2000.

With her missionary heart and love for the poor Sister Catherine was happy to be sent to our mission in San Ramon Parish, Mexico City and then to the Soboba Indian Mission in San Jacinto, California. During her three years in Mexico and her seven years on the Soboba Indian Reservation Sister Catherine truly was a loving and compassionate presence for the people she served. From 2012 to 2017 Sister Catherine was engaged in Hispanic ministry at St. Joseph Parish, Reading, where she was the Director of Religious Education. In August of 2017 she began her term of office as a member of our Provincial Council. It was at that time she received her cancer diagnosis and began treatment.

Sister Catherine was very talented and creative and she was generous in sharing her gifts with her Sisters in community and with others. She cooked delicious meals, baked scrumptious desserts, was a very good seamstress, loved to read and kept her mind sharp with puzzles and word games. And she often had the right “words of wisdom” to share with us at our council meetings. Even though we will miss her physical presence, we are grateful that Catherine no longer has to endure her pain and she is enjoying her well-deserved reward with all the saints and angels in Heaven.

House of Little Wings continued from page 1

In addition to being available for translation at any given moment, I spent most of my time with many children of all ages. At Casa Alitas there are six great play areas for the kids, both inside and outside which offer a basketball court and space for the little ones to ride scooters and tricycles. While I was there, some Mormon volunteers, a group from Catholic Charities in Rochester, NY and several of the guests built above ground gardens with flowers and herbs and comfortable seating where people could sit and have a conversation surrounded by beauty.

Volunteers at Casa Alitas are amazingly diverse. They come from all over the country and for many different reasons but all feel called to help people in need. Every time I turned around, there was someone new offering art classes, making the shower area a little more private, bringing homemade brownies, doing laundry, preparing travel bags etc. Their ages ranged from teenagers to senior citizens in their eighties. The verses from Chapter 25 of the Gospel of St. Matthew: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” and “Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me”, were my constant companions.

Some days I taught English to the children who were anxious to learn words they would need for school. Most of them, no matter how young, already knew how to say their numbers and colors in English. We put together puzzles and I read books to crowds of children; Cinderella and Curious George were the favorites.

Traveling with my guitar, I often sat with the children to sing. Of course, it wasn’t long before the parents joined in as well! It was wonderful because most often they already knew the songs: “Yo Tengo Un Amigo Que Me Ama Su Nombre Es Jesus” (I have a Friend who Loves Me; His name is Jesus), “El Amor De Dios Es Maravilloso” (The Love of God is Marvelous) and so many more. Last Tuesday, a priest from West Virginia celebrated Mass for anyone who wished to participate and I gathered a little children’s choir to help with the singing.

Almost daily I was part of the team responsible for taking families to the Greyhound bus station for the final leg of their journey, which for most meant two or three days and often several bus changes. Imagine traveling as a family of four, unable to speak English, with all your worldly possessions in a backpack or two, a bag of food containing three peanut butter and jelly sandwiches per day for each family member, snack crackers and one bottle of water per person to be refilled from water fountains at various bus stops. It was not easy to say goodbye as people got on their buses. Some of the children had begun calling me “Abuela” (Grandma). When I hugged one little guy and said “Adios”, he sat down at the bus stop and told his Mom and Dad that he was going to stay with me! (Is it possible that we were having too much fun?)

Those in charge at Casa Alitas asked if I could stay—and believe me, if I could have, I would have. We as MSC Sisters are called to be the heart of God on earth, and welcoming the migrants who arrive at Casa Alitas with hugs, smiles, and words of encouragement gave me a unique opportunity to do just that. Please pray for the volunteers, our brothers and sisters in Tucson who give so much of themselves in their service to God’s people. And pray hardest for these migrant families who have come to our country so full of hope. May God bless their pursuits through the kindness of the people they meet along the way—people like you and I.
Join MSC Sisters, Family and Friends for Oktoberfest in April on Sunday, April 26, 2020 2:00-6:00 PM
Celebrate with Us!
Your $65 reservation ($120 per couple/$60 pp for table of 8 or 10) benefits the mission and lives of the MSC Sisters and includes a cocktail hour, plated German dinner, music and dancing with the Josef Kroboth Band, awards for the best male and female Bavarian outfit, and the announcement of our $10,000 raffle prize winner.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE FUN!
Dance, sing, eat, laugh... Oktoberfest in April will bring together more than 300 MSC Sisters, clergy, former students, colleagues, family, friends, vendors and supporters to celebrate the MSC mission.

Consider participating in any way you can.
BECOME AN EVENT SPONSOR
Review opportunities by visiting www.MSCreading.org or by contacting Carrie Whitmoyer at 610-929-2802 or CWhitmoyer@mscreading.org.

HONOR A SISTER WITH YOUR RESERVATION OR DONATION
When making your reservation or sending a gift, simply include the name of the Sister(s) whom you wish to honor or remember and your thoughtful support will be recognized in our event program.

MSC Volunteer Spotlight
Name: Marcella Shaver
When and Why I became an MSC Volunteer: I was familiar with the MSC Sisters back in the 70’s as teachers at my grade school, Sts. Cyril & Methodius in Reading, PA. I was reintroduced to the Sisters as an adult during my first Fireside Chat in the fall of 2012. There I learned about the annual Nun Run and I chose to participate for the first time in 2013. After that I started attending more MSC functions like the Advent & Lent Agapes, additional Fireside Chats and the annual fundraising dinner. During those encounters with the Sisters I listened to them share their stories about their callings, their careers and their travels. I was fascinated. I came to appreciate them as amazing women living out their mission doing God’s work. It was also at that time I learned how they give their all and are not financially taken care of by any Diocese. In that moment I knew I wanted to help and volunteer.

What I do as an MSC Volunteer:
As a volunteer I help raise funds for the MSC Oktoberfest in April event and the annual Nun Run 5k/Walk held each September. I seek out Sponsors, gift items and donations from local shops, restaurants and businesses for each of the events. I am the co-chairperson for the Oktoberfest dinner and assist with event planning and décor. During Nun Run festivities I don my hat as the ice cream captain and serve up ice cream scoops and smiles. An added bonus to working with the Sisters has been creating new friendships with the other volunteers. I have never worked with such devoted and endearing individuals. In 2016 I was invited to join the Development Advisory Board for the MSC Sisters. I love promoting and sharing information about the MSC Sisters and their international ministry.

Beloved Volunteer Moment to Date:
It’s hard to pinpoint just one moment when I have had so many in the last 7 years: I am constantly inspired by Sr. Virginia Longscope and her work with those in recovery; I was touched to meet Sr. Marcia’s niece Marcia Finisdore at the Spring Into Mission dinner in 2015. Ms. Finisdore’s aunt, Sr. Marcia Gasdaska, MSC, was my grade school teacher; I was extremely grateful when Sr. Rosemarie Mullen took the time to visit my cousin in the hospital and play her harp for her; I dearly miss speaking with Sr. Marianne Baker and the great advice she provided me and her stories about growing up in Gettysburg; I remember my surprise to find out there were MSC Sisters living under the Big Top – Sisters Dorothy & Bernard have shared with me some interesting stories about their life and serving others through circus ministry. I would be remiss to leave out Sr. Rosemarie Sommers who can not only carry on a conversation about the Holy Spirit, but also can have a spirited conversation about Philadelphia sports teams. She was one of the first Sisters my husband met and he was hooked instantly. I continue to be delighted and inspired by the charm of the MSC Sisters and my small part in enabling their mission to succeed.

You can join us on our events committee or our development board.
If you’d like to talk about this potential volunteer opportunity, contact Carrie at cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org.
Our volunteers and our Sisters would love to welcome you.
UISG Plenary in Rome from May 6-10, 2019

Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC, along with Sr. Marife Mendoza, FDNSC, attended the Union of Superior Generals (UISG) Plenary Assembly. Held every three years in Rome, more than 820 superior generals from various parts of the world participated this year. With the theme: “Sowers of Prophetic Hope”, the assembly featured inspiring and thought provoking presentations; namely, A Vision for the Future of Religious Life, Our Responsibility in Caring for Creation, Living Interculturally, and the Call to Inter-religious Dialogue.

The experience was energizing and hope-filled. It reaffirmed our call as religious women to be “Sowers of Prophetic Hope” and to collaborate and network in responding to the urgent needs of our times. The highlight of the week was a private audience with Pope Francis and the launching of the 10th Anniversary of the Talitha Kum Campaign: “Nuns Healing Hearts”, an International network of Consecrated Life against trafficking persons.

“Jesus is our sincere friend. He makes no exceptions of persons. No matter where we might be nor what has happened to us his love will always be genuine.”
– Jules Chevalier, MSC (Founder)

Sr. Marie Raymond Gazo who currently serves as a member of our Provincial Council will be taking on the position of Archivist for the MSC Community. Previously held by Sr. Marie Janesch since 2008, this person is responsible for collecting, organizing, and researching any and all information related to members of the MSC Community for perpetuity.

Healing Hearts

Sr. Virginia Longcope’s program at Stephen’s Place in Bethlehem, PA includes the First Phase Program which takes 90 days for each of its residents to complete. In May and July of 2019 Sr. Virginia celebrated this first milestone with two residents, Duane and Jaquan. Both male parolees reached this milestone by accomplishing three goals: beginning outpatient treatment for substance abuse, finding gainful employment and complying with all rules at Stephen’s Place.

Each time Sr. Virginia celebrates such milestones with the residents, she is renewed in her mission at Stephen’s Place: “to facilitate the healing of their hearts, that their consciences will be awakened.”

For more than 25 years, Sr. Virginia has provided male parolees with substance abuse issues the program and the encouragement to succeed. The reward of watching these men transition successfully back into the community is powerful and inspiring. Please pray that Stephen’s Place may continue to save lives and repair relationships as long as the need exists.

What is a donor advised fund (DAF) and how can we use one to help the MSC Sisters?

A DAF allows donors to create a centralized fund from which to make charitable contributions, receive immediate tax deductions, and then recommend grants to their favorite charities whenever they like or to create an automated schedule of giving. To learn about how and why a DAF can work for you and the charities you love and/or to make a donation from your existing DAF, visit mscreading.org.

New Room Options Available
Starting at $2,315 at Sacred Heart Villa!

Located in Muhlenberg, Sacred Heart Villa offers a full range of services from Independent to enhanced Personal Care. Call to join us for a tour and come see our newly available room options starting at $2,315 today!

610.929.5751
www.sacredheartvillapa.org

No Longer Collecting Cancelled Stamps

For years now many of you have been collecting cancelled stamps so that we could prepare them for a collector and make a modest amount of money to support our missions. Now that we are fewer Sisters, we will no longer be doing this. Thank you for your assistance with this over the years—you have made a difference for us!
As our benefactor, YOU enable the wonderful stories shared in this newsletter to happen; YOU are the key to the MSC Sisters accomplishing our mission to be the Heart of Christ for others. Please continue your generous relationship with us so that we may continue to positively impact peoples’ lives with the love of Christ.

“Thank you Sister Agnes Flatley for all your prayers and support to my family over the years.” – Mike

“In gratitude and appreciation to Sister Mary Ann Lawrence for her many years of tutoring and befriending our daughter Maria.” – Joseph and Dorothy

“How can YOU play a vital role in the MSC mission?

- Pray for the MSC Sisters and all whom we serve.
- Become a Lay MSC Associate.
- Join our monthly giving club.
- Remember our Sisters in your estate planning
- Honor a loved one on our Tree of Life.
- Attend and/or volunteer at our events, on our committees or on our Development Advisory Board.

For all information, visit www.mscreading.org or email cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org

Looking for a way to live your spirituality among friends?

Become an MSC Lay Associate.

Men and women of all walks of life are invited to share in the spirit, charism, and mission of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Join the Sisters in bringing the compassionate love of Christ to all people by living out gospel values in your own life.

Contact Sr. Lorraine Molchanow, MSC at 610-372-1753 or lorrainemsc@aol.com, or visit www.mscreading.org.

SOAR Emergency Grant Provides New Roof

So grateful we are to the folks at SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious) who provided the MSC Sisters a $25,000 Emergency Grant to repair the roof at the Motherhouse in Reading. SOAR has kept our Sisters warm, safe and dry and the repairs, both inside and outside, are beautiful.
From Our Provincial Leader continued from page 1

missionaries in all our activities, whatever they may be, in health and in illness, through work, recreation, rest, through desires and prayers, through the activities of the mind and of the heart, through physical labor and trials of the soul." Living these words, regardless of where we reside, ensures that we continue to live our MSC mission.

Thank you, friends and family, for your prayerful support and your ongoing stewardship. We are very much in need of and grateful for your companionship on this challenging journey brought on by diminishing vocations to the religious life. Recognizing that we all face challenges as we age, may we continue to hold close to one another and to the God who formed us and who holds us in the palm of his hand.

With love and prayers,

Sr. Rosemarie Sommers, MSC
Province Leader

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BE IMPACTFUL!
Consider Membership in our Monthly Giving Program

- Your tax deductible gift arrives automatically each month and is recorded on your monthly statement
- Your monthly commitment serves as an impactful stream of guaranteed income for our MSC Sisters
- Your gift benefits every MSC Sister and every person served by an MSC Sister
- Your electronic gift is green

To consider membership, visit www.mscreading.org for information and registration or contact Carrie, 610-929-2802 or cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org.

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Engage with the MSC Sisters by liking us on Facebook — https://www.facebook.com/MSCSisters and visiting www.mscreading.org

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Update from India

by Sr. Soly Mathew, MSC – District Superior, India

Blessing of Linckens Home for the Elderly

On 22nd April, 2019, our MSC Sisters in the District of India had the blessing and opening of the Linckens Home, a Home for the Elderly, in Bangalore. Rev. Fr. Joseph Menezes, Rector and parish priest of Infant Jesus Church blessed the house. Sr. Ancy, MSC officially opened the Home and Sr. Veronica Mary, MSC unveiled the foundation stone. Sister is a nurse and with a team of sisters she will be responsible for the care of the elderly.

We are extremely happy and grateful to God and to all our benefactors, particularly to our sisters in different provinces—including the United States—for supporting us generously with financial support and with your prayers.

The purpose of Linckens Home is to provide a true home for the elderly where they feel cared for and loved. It is a new ministry that our Sisters have undertaken in response to the need within our society. It is our hope and prayer that God will bless this ministry and enable us to make his love known to the elderly and all those we encounter through this ministry.

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We’re Moving

Their mailing addresses will be:
St. Joseph Villa, 464 St. Bernardine St., Reading, PA 19607

Sr. Annuntia Koller Sr. Bernette Ball Sr. Bernice Domitrovitz Sr. Francine Fehrenbach

Sr. Georgette Casavecchia Sr. Josanne Huber Sr. Rosemarie Mullen Sr. Theresa Lepera Sr. Virginia Chnapko

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Engage with the MSC Sisters by liking us on Facebook — https://www.facebook.com/MSCSisters and visiting www.mscreading.org
Thank You for participating in our TENTH ANNUAL NUN RUN 5k and Fun Walk!

Because of the generosity of our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and participants, we have collected $29,000 which will be used to supplement our Sisters’ mission and retirement costs. Whether as a participant, sponsor or volunteer, YOU have made a difference for not only our Sisters, but also for the people to whom they minister. YOU are impactful and we appreciate you!

We thank our NUN RUN Committee Members for their generous commitment to its success:
Rita Phillips, Chair;
Andrea Bensusan; Joni Garza;
Sue Kasopsky; MJ McClennan;
Courtney Moody; Nancy Chaiko;
Carol Noga; Marcella Shaver;
Barb Spinka; & Carm Sosik.

Thank you to the following who provided IN-KIND gifts for our NUN RUN:
The Jewelry Source
Dan’s Restaurant
Kate Goodman, Caliber Collision
Cross Keys Insurance
Chris Earl & Geri Wernicki
Paula Fiumaro
Kegel’s Produce
Rosanne McCoy
Dutch-Maid Bakery, Temple
Chick-Fil-A, Broadcasting Road
Weis Markets
Monte Lauro European Gourmet
Health Calls Home Health Agency
Rosemarie Sandman
Joni Garza
Barb Spinka
Mary Jane McClennan
Chris Mesaros
Nancy Chaiko
Courtney Moody
Andrea Bensusan
Marcella Shaver
Sue Kasopsky
Rita Phillips
Carol Noga
Carm Sosik

In Memory of Mark Richel

Diego & Linda Calderin
Doug & Helen Didyoung
Jim & Susan Daly

Marcella & Bryan Shaver
Tony & Ellen DiGirolamo

In Memory
Sr. Bridget Ulincy, MSC
& John & Irene Ulincy

Stitzel Family Funeral Homes ♦ Queen City Family Restaurant ♦ Orlando Law Offices, PC
Power System Associates ♦ St. Mary’s Church Kutztown Ladies Auxiliary
Atty. Frank Yandrisevits ♦ Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Anewalt’s Landscaping Contracting ♦ Tom & Leslie Durilla ♦ Brian & Loryn Hofa
Family of Sr. Rosemarie Sommers ♦ Virgil A. Kahl, CPA, CFP ♦ Hildebrand Cousins H2+ Clover Farms Dairy ♦ Knights of Columbus, St. Francis DeSales, Council #15778
Celebrate Together Event Rentals and Design ♦ East Penn Manufacturing Company
Family of Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC ♦ Fox Rothschild LLC ♦ Jeffrey & Lorraine Miller
M&M Mechanical ♦ Mark & Joni Garza ♦ Wilkin Family ♦ Kevin & Victoria Shearer
Health Calls Home Health Agency ♦ Knights of Columbus, St. John’s Ottsville, Council #4545

“Special thanks to you and your crew for putting on a great 10th Nun Run 5k. This run remains one of my favorite—great course, great post-race food and the money raised goes to a great cause. Again, thank you!” Sincerely, John
Advance the Missionary work of the MSC Sisters beyond your own lifetime...

Remember the MSC Sisters when making or changing your Will.

Our official title is:
Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Inc.
2811 Moyers Lane, Reading, PA 19605

If you would like to donate a gift of stock to the MSC Sisters, please contact us at 610-929-2802 or cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2019

Nov. 20  Advent Wreath Art at Sacred Heart Villa, 6:00 PM doors open, 6:30 program begins.
Dec. 3   Advent Agape & Tea with the MSC Sisters — 6:30 PM at Sacred Heart Villa. All are welcome! RSVP to cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org.
Dec. 25  Our Sisters welcome you to join them for Christmas Mass; call ahead for the Mass schedule at 610-929-5751.

2020

January  Heart of Mission $10,000 Raffle — Play to win BIG! $100 per ticket. Winner announced April 26 at Oktoberfest in April.
Feb. 27   Lenten Agape & Tea with the MSC Sisters — 6:30 PM at Sacred Heart Villa. All are welcome! RSVP to cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org.
Feb./March We welcome you to attend our Lenten Masses; call ahead for Mass times 610-929-5751.
April 26  Oktoberfest in April — Enjoy a Polka Mass and authentic German dinner and music! Visit www.mscreading.org for deals.
June 28   Feast of the Sacred Heart — On this date the June Calendar Sweepstakes $500 prize winner will be drawn. Be sure to play to win!