

June 2013

Dear Friends,

This is a special year for the Sisters of Social Service. We are celebrating 90 years of ministry, mission, and service in the Spirit to people in need. As consecrated and professionally trained women, we serve the Church and secular society. Through a variety of ministries, we work for evangelization and the welfare of women, children and families. Under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, we seek to hasten the reign of God by identifying the needs of society and responding to them in the most suitable ways.

Many of you have been strong supporters of our mission and of our sisters through the years. I invite you to join us in remembering where we came from and how our ministries have blossomed.

Sister Margaret Slachta and a small group of women founded the Sisters of Social Service in 1923 in Budapest, Hungary. The community spread to Slovakia and Romania, as well as to the United States, Canada and Cuba. The Sisters were instrumental in saving approximately 1000 Jewish lives during World War II. Many sisters joined the order during the Nazi occupation and, in secret, under Communist oppression, when participation in religious life was illegal. With the Soviet take-over after the war, many of our sisters were imprisoned for extended periods of time, but never lost faith in God or a better life to come.

Our ministry in the eastern US was established by those who fled Communism. The US district, headquartered in Buffalo, NY, sustained hope in the sisters of Eastern Europe and Cuba (whose community we helped found) who suffered under Communist regimes by giving them financial assistance and moral support. After the fall of Communism, the Buffalo community of Sisters gave leadership to the entire Society and helped to rebuild congregational life and ministries. We continue to do so.

It has been our great privilege to serve the people of God in the U.S. in a variety of ways, living out our charism through work in dioceses in New York, Ohio, Florida and Puerto Rico. These ministries have included parish social and pastoral work, home health care, elder care, hospitality, social justice activities, social work education, and individual spiritual guidance.

As we celebrate this 90th Anniversary, we give thanks to God for the countless blessings He has bestowed on us. And we thank YOU – our generous supporters – for your friendship, love and sharing in our mission of caring for the poor and marginalized of our society.

We have been earnestly – and joyfully – engaged in our service through the Spirit and continue to work as much as we can. We also recognize the fact that, after many years of dedicated service to others, many of our sisters are elderly and require care themselves. To help us meet both of these needs we are again turning to you, our dear friends for help. We ask for your prayers and for whatever financial support you can give us. We are very happy to pray for your concerns as well, if you will list them on the back of your return card.

May the blessings of the Spirit be on each of you in this special year of 2013!