

## SISTER MIRIAM CLAIRE (1935 - 2022)



Sister Miriam Claire Kowal died at Holy Redeemer Hospital in Meadowbrook, PA on September 16, 2022, after a brief illness. She was born in 1935 in Auburn, NY to Michael and Justine Orysyk Kowal.

Sister entered religious life at 17. It was then that her life's mission began with the Order of St. Basil the Great. After earning a Bachelor of Arts and Master in Education from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Sister spent several years teaching at St. George School in New York City.

She served as Director of Admissions and Registrar at Manor College 1962 - 1972 and Academic Dean 1972 - 1976. Always eager to do more than fulfill the minimum requirements of any task assigned to her, she excelled in her work, inspiring those around her to reach for greater goals and dream greater visions.

As President of Manor College 1976 - 1985, Sister Miriam Claire began several new initiatives to elevate the school's profile and make it more competitive with other nearby institutions of higher learning. Additionally, she sought and achieved new goals to augment and enhance her multi-faceted sense of mission. Among these were to preserve and hand on Ukrainian culture, values, and traditions. To this end, she established the Ukrainian Heritage Center at Manor College, along with Dr. Ivan Skalchuk, Dr. Stefania Pushkar, and Sister Dia Stasiuk.

Participating fully in the life of her religious community, Sister Miriam Claire served on many chapter committees, both in the Province and in Rome. In 1985 she was elected Provincial Superior. It was during her decade-long tenure that Holy Trinity Chapel was built and the Basilian Spirituality Center established. Sister Miriam Claire also re-established ties with the Sisters of St. Basil in Ukraine soon after the country proclaimed its independence in 1991.

Sister's mission took her to Canada in 1995 where she earned a Certificate of University Studies in Theology, with a specialty in Eastern Christian Studies, from St. Paul University in Ottawa. In 2006 Sister was elected General Superior of the Basilian Sisters worldwide, serving until 2012. She traveled globally, visiting personally with each Basilian sister. Returning to Fox Chase, Sister again served as House Superior until 2021.

She will be missed by her Sisters in religious life as well as her brother David and nephews and nieces.

## Jubilarians

**71 YEARS**  
Sister Marina Bochnewich

**70 YEARS**  
Sister Mother Georgianna Snihur, Contemplative Nuns of the Order of St. Basil the Great  
Sister Miriam Claire Kowal †

**65 YEARS**  
Sister Maria Rozmarynowycz  
Sister Dia Stasiuk, Holy Trinity Province in Ukraine

**60 YEARS**  
Sister Susanne Matwijiw  
Sister Germaine Senita

**25 YEARS**  
Sister Teodora Kopyn  
Sister Demetria Tydir, Holy Trinity Province in Ukraine

## SISTER LAURA PALKA (1929 - 2023)



Sister Laura Palka, musician and composer, left her earthly home on January 21. Sister had been in poor health for a few weeks after suffering a stroke. She was born Lillian Mary in 1929 to Michael and Anna (Pawelczak) Palka of Cohoes, New York. Her family belonged to Ss. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Cohoes where she was baptized and chrismated.

Sister Laura entered the Basilian Convent on August 21, 1949; took her first vows August 21, 1951; and made Solemn Profession August 26, 1954. She attended Potsdam State Teachers College and earned a Bachelor of Arts in music education at Immaculata College. She also did graduate work at the University of Notre Dame, DePaul University, Villanova University, and Manor College.

Sister Laura taught at two grade schools, St. Nicholas in Chicago and Ss. Peter & Paul in Cohoes (her home parish), as well as Saint Basil Academy and Manor College in Jenkintown. She served as Provincial Councilor 1995 - 2005 and Provincial Superior 2005 - 2010. Additionally, she was a Trustee of Manor College and Saint Basil Academy, Director of Basilian Associates, and Director of Renewal. She also worked as a summer catechist and served as House Superior.

One cannot memorialize Sister without recounting her many talents in the field of musical composition, performance, and directing. Most noteworthy would be her cantata based on excerpts from Bohdan Lepki's poem, "In the Cathedral of St. George" and her Christmas prayer, "A Child Was Born". She trained and directed a choir of Basilian Sisters from the US and Ukraine that toured Chicago, Parma, Pittsburgh, Stamford, and Philadelphia.

Sister's sensitive personality drew many to her. As Sister composed, directed, and sang music on earth, now in heaven she continues to sing the praises of God. Music was Sister's life!

She is survived by her sister, Joyce Vellutino (Frank); her niece Anne Ellis; and great-nephew Michael Dantz (Katherine). She is predeceased by a nephew, Michael Francis Vellutino.

## LEAVING A LEGACY

The Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great invite you to unite your legacy with theirs by joining the **Mother Helena Langevych, OSBM Society**. Membership is reserved for generous souls who remember the Sisters in their will or estate plan. Your bequest ensures your lasting participation in the Sisters' work.



Mother Helena (1881-1916)

Suggested wording for a bequest is as follows:

"I give and bequeath to the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great - Jesus, Lover of Humanity Province, located in Fox Chase Manor, PA, \_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or the sum of \$\_\_\_]."

We ask that you please inform us if you have remembered the Sisters in this special way so that you can be formally enrolled in the Mother Helena Langevych Society and enjoy the benefits of membership.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact our Development Director, John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA. He may be reached at (215) 379-3998, Extension 34 or [developmentdirector@stbasils.com](mailto:developmentdirector@stbasils.com).

Newsletter for the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great | Jesus, Lover of Humanity Province

## MEDIA COVERAGE

The Philadelphia Inquirer

The Philadelphia Inquirer ran a wonderful piece on April 17 about the clothing and medical supplies that our Sisters and Basilian institutions collected for Ukraine.

Reporter Jeff Gammage writes, "For the sisters, the Russian attack on Ukraine has turned the motherhouse into an action center, spurring to new, rigorous duty an Order that came to Philadelphia more than a century ago to serve immigrants and orphans."

The logistical challenges led numerous other well-meaning groups to an impasse; they found themselves inundated with clothing and supplies yet unable to get them overseas. In contrast, our history of collaboration with Holy Trinity Province (based in Lviv) made things a bit easier. We, the Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great, are an international group, as Gammage rightly notes. Our existing networks of relationships expedited the transfer of humanitarian aid.

**In Jenkintown, an order of nuns works to get medicine and supplies to Ukraine. The prayers ship free.**

"People have really opened their hearts," said Sister Teodora Kopyn, who was born and raised in western Ukraine



by Jeff Gammage and video by Astrid Rodrigues



The Philadelphia Inquirer Article: Sister Dorothy Ann and Sister Joann stand in the Faculty House where clothing, medicine, and supplies were stored until being sent to Ukraine.

Photos below Article: (Left): Sister Joann examines a shipping container full of necessities bound for Ukraine. (Center): Sister Teodora and Sister Diya collect donations for Ukraine on the Motherhouse grounds. (Right): The Sisters sit for an interview with reporter Jeff Gammage from The Philadelphia Inquirer.

## LETTER FROM THE PROVINCIAL

Dear Friends,

The world watched with shock and horror as Russian forces attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022. This was the latest stage of a conflict begun in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea. During the last six months, the Sisters of St. Basil the Great have tirelessly prayed for peace and worked quickly to provide tangible help overseas. The SBA Alumnae and Manor College communities wasted no time in joining these humanitarian efforts. Together we filled three shipping containers with clothing and other critical items that were sent to war victims.

Ukrainian ties run deeply through each of our hearts as well as our Basilian institutions. The Jesus, Lover of Humanity Province was created in Philadelphia more than a century ago by our founding Sisters who came from Yavoriv, Ukraine. Since then, we have always remained spiritually close to Ukraine and collaborated with Holy Trinity Province, which is based in Lviv but covers the whole country.

The Sisters of St. Basil the Great are committed to assisting Ukrainian war victims for the long-term. If you would like to donate to our efforts and/or volunteer, please contact the Motherhouse (215) 379-3998. May we continually keep the peace of Christ on our minds and petition God to end this senseless destruction.

Saints Basil and Marina, Pray for Us!

Sister Joann Sosler, OSBM  
Provincial Superior

## Inside This Edition

- 2 • Support Ministry Update
- Sisters Attend Report & Benefit
- Pilgrimage 2022
- 3 • SBA Alumnae Association
- SBA Class of 2022 Celebrated
- Basils at the Beach
- Manor College News
- 4 • Obituaries
- Jubilarians





Sister Teodora and Support Ministry volunteers break for a photo while assembling food packages for those in need.

## SUPPORT MINISTRY UPDATE

The St. Basil Support Ministry was launched in December 2020 and currently provides food to about 35 households per month. Most of these households are served by weekly distributions which take place on Fridays, 10 am – 12 pm, rain or shine. Additional clients, often without cars, contact Sister Teodora throughout the month to make other arrangements such as home deliveries.

Sister Teodora draws from her background in social work as well as her language capabilities to help those she meets. Many are Ukrainian immigrants, and there are even families who have recently arrived in the Philadelphia area after fleeing the war.

The Support Ministry is always accepting food, clothing, and other necessities. Seasonal requests include water bottles in summer and knitted hats/scarves/gloves in winter. Additionally, socks and underwear are consistently in demand. Finally, food items like grains (e.g., buckwheat/kasha), proteins, and produce are always needed.

For more information or to donate/volunteer please contact Sister Teodora Kopyn at (215) 429-0560.

## SISTERS ATTEND REPORT & BENEFIT



Sisters of St. Basil attended the Archeparchy of Philadelphia's Report and Benefit Luncheon on October 9 at the Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center. This was the first of two such events held this fall.

*L to R: Sister Teodora Kopyn, Metropolitan Borys Gudziak, Sister Joann Sosler, Archbishop Nelson Perez, Sister Dorothy Ann Busowski, Rev. Joe Campellone, OSFS, and Rev. John Ciurpita (Chaplain).*

## PILGRIMAGE 2022

As is tradition, the 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the Mother of God took place on the first Sunday in October. This year's theme was "Mary, Mother of God, Our Protectress." Confessions were heard throughout the day, and the Most Rev. Paul Chomnysky, OSBM, Bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford, gave the homily. Notably, Bishop Paul is also a Basilian.

Afterwards, attendees enjoyed delicious, homemade Ukrainian fare under the tent. Various devotional and spiritual programs took place simultaneously, including a presentation on the Theotokos and the Old Testament by Sister Jocelyn Edathil, MD, PhD, FACP. Sister Jocelyn belongs to the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ (SIC), another Eastern Catholic group of religious Sisters. They are part of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and are located just down the road from the Basilian Motherhouse. Pilgrims departed shortly after the Blessing of Cars and Buses at 4:15 pm.

Many pilgrims, perhaps the majority, were Ukrainian immigrants, and the war was the day's primary focus of prayer. This year's theme of "Mary, Mother of God, Our Protectress" underscored the role of the Theotokos as defender of the persecuted. The icon for this Marian devotion depicts "Mary holding her veil or cloak...associated with protection from war and natural disasters among Eastern Christians."<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Christina Lee Knauss, "Centuries-old Marian icon offers solace, protection amid horror of war," *Catholic News Service*, Mar 6, 2022.

## SBA ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION

The Saint Basil Academy Alumnae Association brings together graduates of all ages for fellowship, friendship, and service. The Association hosts in-person events throughout the year, like the annual "Basils at the Beach," and is active on Facebook and LinkedIn. For more information or to submit class notes contact [sbaalumnae@stbasils.com](mailto:sbaalumnae@stbasils.com).



## SBA CLASS OF 2022 CELEBRATED



Members of the Class of 2022 take a photo outside the former Academy building on May 15, 2022.

The Saint Basil Academy Alumnae Association held a "Senior Recognition Day" on Sunday, May 15 at the Basilian Spirituality Center. The event officially welcomed the Class of 2022 as the Association's newest members. More than 80 donors helped raise nearly \$3,000 to cover expenses. Some of the funds were used to provide a graduation gift package to each senior, including a tote bag that read "Once a Basil Girl, Always a Basil Girl", coffee mug, koozie, white and gold tassel, and certificate. Rev. Joe Campellone, OSFS and former Principal Connie D'Angelo presented the gifts as Hollie Havens '94 read graduates' names aloud.

The SBA Alumnae community has grown closer in the first year after the Academy's closing. A "Prayer Service & Donation Drop off" was held on Palm Sunday, April 10. Attendees contributed diapers, children's clothing, medical supplies, and other things to be sent to Ukrainian war victims. Later that month a group of seniors at Villa Joseph Marie who transferred from SBA took prom pictures on the Motherhouse grounds. Then, in June, former Basilianettes carried the SBA flag at St. Hubert's graduation. Together these expressions of the Basilian community represent the sentiment beautifully expressed by Kathryn Quigley '85, "We are all sisters."



## BASILS AT THE BEACH

The Saint Basil Academy Alumnae Association's annual "Basils at the Beach" event took place on July 23 at Seaport Pier in North Wildwood. Alumnae, family, and friends, along with former faculty and staff, were all invited. More than \$1500 was raised through ticket and koozie sales for war victims and was wired to Ukraine and Poland.

"I look forward to this event each year, it's wonderful to have so many of our alumnae together at one time," remarked Sister Joann. "The spirit of the Academy is still very active, strengthening friendships and serving those in need."

Attendees enjoyed the beautiful weather and ocean views while reconnecting with classmates and teachers, including some of the Sisters themselves. This year's iteration was deemed an all-class reunion, and every decade from 1950 - 2020s was represented. Alumnae traveled to North Wildwood from as far away as North Carolina, West Virginia, and Maine.

Rev. Joe Campellone, OSFS reflected proudly on the SBA Alumnae community. "In this first year after the Academy's closing, our women have come together in ways that are just incredible—especially in their humanitarian efforts. I am thrilled to see that the Gospel values they were taught on Fox Chase Road continue to yield fruit." The next "Basils at the Beach" will take place on Saturday, July 22, 2023.



- Mark your calendars for "Basils at the Beach" which will be held on Saturday, July 22, 2023!
- For more SBA Alumnae Association information or to submit class notes contact [sbaalumnae@stbasils.com](mailto:sbaalumnae@stbasils.com).

## MANOR COLLEGE NEWS

Manor College hosted a Ukrainian Relief Drive in the spring for the Sisters' humanitarian efforts. The results of the Drive contributed to the three shipping containers sent overseas. Remarkably, Manor has gone even further by offering special scholarships and other aid to Ukrainian refugees who wish to continue their education in the US. To learn more about the school's work for Ukraine go to [manor.edu/supportukraine](http://manor.edu/supportukraine).