

Celebrating the Season with Catholic Religious

December at Glastonbury Abbey in Hingham, Massachusetts is a busy — and magical — time for the Benedictine monks who live there.

Brother David Coakley, OSB, said that he has always considered the weeks of rehearsing, shopping and baking to be “part of the gift I am preparing for the Lord.”

All over the world, Catholic religious have their own set of traditions to mark the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

Each year for Advent, the Sisters of the Living Word in Arlington Heights, Illinois begin the season with a prayer service, and Sisters and associates write and share reflections for their annual Advent book. In early December, the Sisters and staff decorate a Christmas tree and leadership sets out the crèche.

For the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose in Fremont, California, planning starts early — in July!

Over the summer, Sisters and volunteers gather in the Motherhouse kitchen to mix and bake 1,300 holiday fruitcakes, where Sister Florence Cumbelich, OP, a 90-year-old dynamo, has led the effort for many years.

Sister Florence runs an energetic enterprise preparing the cakes, storing them, and later in the fall decorating each cake and boxing them for the Sisters’ annual holiday boutique.

The Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Hamden, Connecticut, also start their preparations early, with their craft fair in November. Retired Sisters at Sacred

Heart Manor contribute many handmade items, and the sales benefit the retirement fund for the Manor.

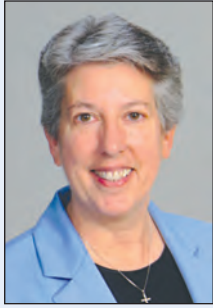
The Manor itself is decorated from top to bottom for Christmas, and, as the Sisters prepare for the holiday, they pray a Christmas novena. On Christmas Eve, one of the older Sisters, with reverence and joy, carries the baby Jesus to the crib at Vespers. Midnight Mass is celebrated at the Sisters’ provincial house up the road.

Sisters Elaine Lattanzi and Clelia Mazza, ASCJ decorate the Christmas tree.



Father Timothy Joyce, OSB sings Christmas carols at Glastonbury Abbey.

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Dear Friends of SOAR!

Dear Friends,

Did you ever get a song stuck in your head? Or maybe a jingle? Lately, the classic Ben E. King song, *Stand By Me*,

has been playing in my mind. It's said to be the fourth most played single on American radio. One part goes like this: "If the sky we look upon should tumble and fall . . . I won't cry, I won't shed a tear as long as you stand by me."

The people whose lives were uprooted by hurricanes and fires across the United States in recent months must have felt as though the sky was falling. I hope and pray they know that we stand by them and we pray for them. I want you to know that retired Sisters in Puerto Rico, Houston and South Florida felt your support, felt you stand by them. Thanks to you, our faithful benefactors, SOAR! sent immediate financial help to five congregations of women religious who live at the center of the hurricane and flooding disasters. When the calls came asking for assistance, I didn't hesitate to say, "Yes, Sister, SOAR! will help you." I had confidence that you would want me to stand by them.

I'm sharing some photos of our recent awards dinners in New York and Washington, DC. We celebrate religious life at these events and honor special individuals for their leadership and service. Visit our website www.soar-usa.org/events for more photos.

Thank you for your faithful support, your generosity and your concern for our aging religious. I wish you a blessed Advent and Christmas season and good health and happiness in the New Year.

Merry Christmas!

In gratitude,

S. Kathleen Lunsmann, IHM

Sister Kathleen Lunsmann, IHM
President

Sharing Our Stories

Wally Probst first learned about the needs of retired religious in 1986.

He knew then that they were not living "in the lap of luxury," but an article in the *Wall Street Journal* that year opened his eyes to the immediate needs of many congregations of men and women religious.



WALLY PROBST

"I came to learn that many orders were struggling to afford necessary improvements to their retirement homes and health care related facilities," he said. "These are the needs that SOAR! has existed to fulfill."

For him, responding to the mission of SOAR! has been easy.

Wally attended Catholic schools from Kindergarten through college — Sacred Heart Grammar School in the Bronx, Rice High School in Manhattan, and Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York.

And throughout his life, he has been blessed to have been inspired by many Sisters, Brothers and Priests and called them friends.

At the SOAR! New York Awards Dinner in September, he said, "Religious congregations serve God and all of us by their selfless ministries in schools, hospitals, missions and in the many varied aspects of parish life."

"I have witnessed their work in food pantries and outreach programs, offering comfort to the needy with gracious and unwavering support and help."

Working with SOAR! is his way of saying "thank you" to the religious men and women who shaped his life.

Wally Probst received the Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award at SOAR!'s Awards Dinner in New York this year. He is now retired after nearly 50 years at Merrill Lynch, and lives in New Jersey with his wife Kathy.

If you would like to share a story about how religious have nurtured you and why you support SOAR!, call (202) 529-7627 and speak with Eleanor La Prade or drop us a note at info@soar-usa.org.



Jane Sullivan Roberts and **Cardinal Theodore McCarrick** were honored at the SOAR! Awards Dinner in Washington, DC on November 3.



From left, **Michelle Haworth**, **Kelly Wevley**, **Craig Wevley** and **Kathryn Caballero** enjoy the annual awards dinner in Washington.



Awards Dinners in NY and DC

Helene Shepard accepts the inaugural Dorothy Day Service Award at the SOAR! New York Awards Dinner on September 28. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York and Wally Probst were also honored at the dinner.

Your gift to SOAR! before December 31 may benefit you by reducing your income taxes while providing needed support for aging religious.

Thank you for your generosity!

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On Christmas Eve at Glastonbury Abbey, the monks are also busy as they prepare the church and set out their handmade nativity set; friends and guests will fill the church soon for the first Christmas Mass that evening.

The monks do not exchange gifts until after evening prayer on Christmas day, when they have met their responsibilities and they can finally relax.

"Later that evening, when the dishes are done and table linens are in the washers, we can each thank the Lord again — more personally — before retiring to our rooms, tired but happy!" says Brother David.



Sister Kris Vorenkamp, SLW poses with Sisters of the Living Word's crèche.

Sister Florence Cumbelich, OP prepares Christmas fruit-cakes for the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose.





IN GRATEFUL MEMORY

Let us remember in prayer our dear Legacy Society members who have died this past year. *May they rest in peace.*

James J. Capone • Leonard E. Moriconi
Matthew F. Murphy • Frances S. Schueler

YOUR GIFT CAN BE A LASTING LEGACY

You can help strengthen the impact of the important work of SOAR! through a commitment to the SOAR! Legacy Society. This special group of people has named SOAR! as a beneficiary in their will or planned gift. Please let us know if you are remembering SOAR! with a legacy gift, so we can thank you. Your generosity and example may inspire others to make a planned gift to ensure that aging Catholic religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests live in safety and with the comfort and dignity they so deserve.

To review SOAR!'s Legacy brochure, visit www.soar-usa.org or call the office at (202) 529-7627. Our legal title is Support Our Aging Religious, Inc. and our federal tax ID number is 52-1485481.

In all matters regarding estate or planned charitable giving, please consult with your attorney or professional financial or tax advisor.

SOAR! recognizes the following SOAR! Legacy Society members who have informed us that SOAR! is part of their estate plans:

Jose Andrade
William G. Bergan
Barbara A. Busch
Ralph A. Cipolaro
Deborah Dowling
John Fackeldy

Ellen Gavin
Austin H. Henry
David Karas
Alice E. Kinsman
Joseph Krizmanich
Michael Lake

Dennis and Pam Lucey
Joseph F. McCarthy
Richard J. Meyers
Daniel and Joan Moran
Elwood Morton
Michael Natale, II

Rev. Vincent J. Sheehy
Anthony P. Smarekar
David E. Thompson
George S. Trovato
Joan Zelten

Please consider remembering SOAR! in your will or estate plans. Our legal title is Support Our Aging Religious, Inc. Our federal tax ID number is 52-1485481.

Did you know? SOAR! is a participant in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Federal employees and military personnel can designate Support Our Aging Religious (SOAR!) to receive their contributions to the CFC. Our CFC number is 10041.

A CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION SERVING ELDERLY SISTERS, BROTHERS AND PRIESTS SINCE 1986.



The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate the mission and needs of SOAR! and to express our gratitude to our donors.

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