

# St. Joseph College Alumnae Celebrate Bicentennial Reunion



Photo by Kathleen Graham

The St. Joseph College Alumnae Association Memorial Mass in the Basilica of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a highlight of the 121st annual reunion.



Photo by Kathleen Graham

A plaza outside the former college chapel, now the Fallen Firefighters Chapel, contains bricks inscribed with the names of women who attended or taught at St. Joseph's College, St. Joseph's High School and St. Joseph's Academy.



Photo by Kathleen Graham

Members of the Class of 1969, marking 40 years since graduation, enjoy tea at the home of Mount St. Mary's President Dr. Thomas Powell and his wife Irene during the reunion weekend.

*Kathleen Graham, SJC '68*

More than 300 graduates and former students of St. Joseph College gathered here and in Gettysburg April 16-19 for their 112th alumnae reunion. Although the college closed in 1973, the alumnae of St. Joseph's are an active, philanthropic group and return each year to renew ties with one another. This year's assembly celebrated "Two Centuries of Women Learners in St. Joseph's Valley," and many of the weekend events revolved around that bicentennial theme.

The college evolved from St. Joseph's Academy and Free School, founded in 1809 by Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton and her Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, the first community of Roman Catholic religious women native to the United States. Mother Seton was elevated to sainthood in 1975 and her remains are enshrined at the basilica in Emmitsburg that bears her name.

One of the first reunion weekend activities took place on April 17, when a large group of St. Joseph alumnae gathered in the museum of the Seton Shrine Center to dedicate a memorial scone and plaque donated by the St. Joseph College Alumnae Association through its Women Learners' Fund. "This

beacon represents you and me and every woman learner in St. Joseph's Valley for the past two centuries," said Kathleen Graham, Class of 1968, who led the service. "May all who pass by this light learn of the women of St. Joseph's, and may our flame never be extinguished."

A picnic at the log cabin on the former college campus followed the dedication, and that day and throughout the weekend, alumnae, some escorted by their husbands, other family members and friends, toured the campus, now headquarters of the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an entity of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

On Friday afternoon, alumnae visited St. Joseph's Provincial House, where they sponsored a tea for the Daughters of Charity, who were affiliated with the college. Early that evening, the alumnae's golden jubilee Class of 1959 gathered for Mass in their former campus chapel, now the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel. During the liturgy, classmates spoke endearingly of their deceased members and presented roses in their memory. Afterward, they gathered at the Carriage House for dinner

and viewed a video of their class, a project begun by classmate Barbara Saganowich Quinn, and completed by her two daughters, after their mother's sudden death last year.

On Saturday, the women learners gathered for lunch at the Eisenhower Inn, where they heard from Sister of St. Joseph Carol

"Friendship's links may  
n'er be broken  
Bright is its chain  
Tho' the parting words  
be spoken  
Through the years we'll  
meet again."

— From "All Together" (St. Joseph College alma mater composed in 1926 by the Dorothy Graham SJC Class of 1926)

Jean Vale, president of Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia. Sr. Vale, who attended St. Joseph College for one year, spoke about Catholic education, which traces its roots to Emmitsburg and the first free school founded by Elizabeth Seton.

Later that afternoon St. Joseph alumnae were the guests of Mount St. Mary's University President Dr. Thomas H. Powell and his wife Irene, at a tea in their home on Old



Photo by Kathleen Graham

Sister Juliana Kowal, DC, a member of the Class of 1938 and a former science professor at St. Joseph College, chats with Susan Flanigan Conrad, Class of 1965, during an Alumnae Association tea at St. Joseph's Provincial House.

Emmitsburg Road. The annual event helps to maintain the close ties that the women of St. Joseph's have with the Mount, through marriage to Mount graduates and the education of their children and grandchildren at the Mount.

The weekend's spiritual highlight was a Mass Saturday afternoon in the Seton Basilica, planned by an alumnae committee and celebrated by Archbishop Harry J. Flynn, retired head of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Archbishop Flynn, who graduated from Mount St. Mary's Seminary and later served as its vice rector and rector, is well known to many St. Joseph's graduates. Clergy and seminarians from the Mount, joined the archbishop at the liturgy, and St. Joseph Alumnae served as

greeters, banner-bearers, readers and ministers of Holy Communion. The Mount St. Mary's Chorale and singers from the St. Joseph's alumnae were accompanied by professional musicians during the Mass, which memorialized deceased alumnae and commemorated the legacy of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

Following Mass, a banquet was held at the Eisenhower Inn. Janet Reed Buckley of the Class of 1939 received a standing ovation, as she marked the 70th anniversary of her graduation from St. Joseph's. Members of the 50th jubilee class and the 60th anniversary class presented generous financial gifts to Sister Claire Debes, provincial superior of the Daughters of Charity, to benefit the sisters of the Emmitsburg province.

At the banquet's conclusion, the alumnae of St. Joseph's College stood and sang their alma mater, "All Together." Somehow, some way, the time they spent as students in Emmitsburg has kept them all together, kept them returning to the Valley of Emmitsburg. Women Learners of St. Joseph's, keep coming back!

*Publisher's note: To listen to "All Together," recorded in 2008 by the Mount St. Mary's University women's chorale, please visit [http://www.sjcalumnae.org/about\\_song.php](http://www.sjcalumnae.org/about_song.php) and click on the "Listen" icon.*

*To learn more about the St. Joseph College Alumnae Association, visit their website at [www.sjcalumnae.org](http://www.sjcalumnae.org).*



Photo by Kathleen Graham

Archbishop Harry Flynn of Minneapolis, former rector of Mount St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, greets Pat Hultberg Hyde, St. Joseph College Class of 1948, after Mass at the Basilica of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.



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Members of the Class of 1972 celebrate with 300 other SJC Alumnae during the Saturday evening banquet.