“Jesus, I Trust in You”

The 35th Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes, France

In May 2020, the Order of Malta, American Association, will journey to Lourdes France for our 35th Annual Pilgrimage. We are humbled and honored to be the co-chairs for this upcoming pilgrimage. Personally, it will be our 19th pilgrimage and each year that we’ve participated has been a wonderful gift from God and our Blessed Mother.

By serving our Malades and Caregivers, we witness the different ways Jesus and Mary touch each one of them. All pilgrims leave Lourdes with some special memory of how this journey of faith provides hope, peace and comfort to deal with whatever challenges life presents. Mary’s faith and trust in God, Her “yes to become the Mother of Jesus” reaffirms our pilgrimage prayer, “Jesus, I trust in You.” Just as Mary said at the wedding of Cana “do whatever Jesus tells you” (John2:5), Her trust in Jesus exemplifies our journey in life and pilgrimage to Lourdes.

(continued on page 3)

Please visit our website at: www.orderofmaltaamerican.org to find the latest information about the American Association, our local Areas, and the Order of Malta. Links are also available to other Association websites and the Sovereign Magistry in the “About the Order” section.

Since its redesign, the Order of Malta, American Association mobile app continues to be updated regularly with new photos and user friendly improvements to its features such as daily prayers and the member directory. This app is available for Android and iOS devices in the app store when you search "Order of Malta, American Association".
As the end of summer is upon us, it is a good time to review all that has occurred since my last email update in May.

In June, we had our leadership conference in NYC. Our Chancellor, Ed Delaney, developed a new format for the meeting that was very well received. It allowed our Area leaders to share best practices and many successful ministries. As I watched everyone taking copious notes, I realized that this meeting would lead to growth in all of our areas.

The next event was the Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help in Wisconsin. In an attempt to make the most of our trip to Wisconsin, Jeff Trexler and I decided to stop in Salina, Kansas and Fargo, North Dakota (locations with new members) on our way to Wisconsin to meet with the Bishops of those dioceses.

We had great conversations with the Bishops and they are both interested in supporting the creation of an area in their diocese. The Bishop of Salina will be invested as a chaplain in the Order in November.

When we finally arrived in Wisconsin, we were happy to be among 254 pilgrims including 31 children from all three Associations. Our Association had almost 100 people attend. It again reinforced a unity of the three Associations in the US within a retreat atmosphere. This year, we shared our time and space with veterans from a nearby residential facility and with some of the retired priests from the Green Bay Diocese.

The new multipurpose building that was constructed since our last pilgrimage was fully operational — it houses a Hospitality/First Aid Center that was donated by all 3 Associations and will be staffed by medical and nonmedical members of all 3 Associations. You should have received an email with details on how you can volunteer.

I would encourage you to consider volunteering at the new Hospitality/First Aid Center and also to mark your calendars for this pilgrimage next year (August 6–9, 2020) when the American Association takes over leadership.

During the summer, the Strategic Planning Committee has been actively creating a plan that will provide direction for the future of the Association. They will be preparing a preliminary report to the board in September and, hopefully, a final report will be presented at the Annual Meeting in November.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of an important book by Bishop Robert Barron, Letter to a Suffering Church. Bishop Barron gives a wonderful argument on why now is the time to stay in the Church and work for change where it is needed. The book makes a compelling case for sticking with the source of true change, the Mass, the Eucharist, and the rest of the Sacraments. I urge you to read it. People who have read the book have said that it helps to put things in historical perspective while challenging each of us to take a role in the change that is needed.

Finally, I would like to update you on our activities concerning the three initiatives I mentioned at the beginning of the year.

We successfully promoted the movie, Unplanned, to support our prolife/anti-abortion initiative. It is now available on DVD and I encourage you to continue to promote this movie. We are also planning the Pilgrimage for Life on January 23–24, 2020 in Washington DC and I would ask you to seriously consider joining my wife, Linda, and me and hundreds of thousands of others to march and to pray to support life.

We are in the process of beginning a palliative care ministry called “Dignity Therapy” which has been successfully implemented by the Order of Malta in Australia. As I mentioned in previous emails, this is part of our attempt to fight physician-assisted suicide. You will hear more about this initiative at our Annual Meeting in November.

The last initiative is human trafficking which is a focus of the worldwide Order of Malta. We are actively investigating with the Western and Federal Associations possibilities for our members to assist the victims. This assistance ranges from mentoring victims to helping them be productive members of society to medical and legal assistance. We are also investigating ways to support housing for the victims.

Our final event at the end of the summer was our retreat in Medway, Massachusetts. This was a wonderful opportunity to recharge our spiritual batteries as we returned from our vacations rested physically.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting and Investiture on November 15th. It will be at a new venue, the Barclay Intercontinental Hotel, which will provide an atmosphere similar to the Waldorf.

God bless you and all you do,
Lourdes Pilgrimage  
(continued from cover)

When we take that advice, we can never go wrong! Our pilgrimage will begin on Tuesday, April 28, a day earlier than last year and will end on Tuesday, May 5. The extra day (suggested by the medical team) is to support the Malades and Caregivers (and all pilgrims) as they transition from an overnight, trans-Atlantic flight. A schedule for that day will be forthcoming.

Our chartered plane will leave from and return to Newark airport. We will be carrying over 400 Knights, Dames, Auxiliary, clergy, doctors, nurses and, most important, our 50+ Malades and their Caregivers.

Supporting this effort, we will rely on the generosity of our members’ donations to the Lourdes Pilgrimage Foundation. We ask you to be as generous as possible, especially if you can’t make the pilgrimage this year. As many of you know, we do not ask our Malades and Caregivers to pay for any portion of the pilgrimage. We would be grateful to have as many of you as possible consider one of the categories of giving as listed in The Order of Malta Pilgrimage Foundation website: https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/pilgrimage-foundation-lourdes.

As an alternative for Malades who cannot travel to Lourdes, we have a special category called “Malades in Spirit,” where we ask for a photo and name and address of those who cannot physically make the trip to Lourdes. Those of us on the Pilgrimage will send postcards to the Malades in Spirit and pray for their healing to Our Lady.

We invite you to join us for the 2020 pilgrimage next May. Again, it will be the 35th since the American Association began to travel to Lourdes. You should be receiving or have already received a letter and registration form. We encourage you to return the registration form as soon as possible, but no later than December 1, 2019 since the limited spaces tend to fill up quickly. When your registration is approved you will begin to receive logistical information for the 2020 pilgrimage.

If you would like to sponsor a Malade please complete and return the appropriate form by December 1, 2019. Please keep in mind this should be someone you know personally.

The Lourdes Pilgrimage can be a life changing experience in many ways.

Let us pray to our Mother, Mary: “Guide us in our upcoming journey and fill our lives with hope and peace as we look to fulfill our life long commitment to the Order, to take care of our Lords the poor and the sick and defend our Catholic faith.”

“Jesus, I trust in You”
Our Lady of Lourdes, Pray for Us

Cathy & Bill Besgen
2020 Lourdes Pilgrimage Co-Chairs
HIGHLIGHTS

The Spirituality in Action Resource Guide
A Treasure Not Meant to Be Hidden

TWO QUESTIONS:

1) Are you looking for a new activity in which to become involved or to introduce in your Area?

2) Where are you looking for that information?

Many members of the Association are probably not aware of the treasury of activities compiled in a book on the Association website called The Spirituality in Action Resource Book.

The resource book was first compiled in 2008-09 as a very valuable tool under the direction of the then Hospitaller and Vice Hospitaller, Joseph Metz and Mary McCooey. The book, called the Works and Ministries Book, was completed through the efforts of the Area Chairs, Area Hospitallers and the members in the Areas who took the time to complete the information forms for each work and ministry in their Area.

As in any organization, there are changes every day — the book is kept up to date with tools developed for the specific purpose. The book can be updated through the website whenever needed by completing an electronic form, also available in the Members Only section. Also there is a form that captures the information when a new project is introduced in an Area. Area leaders regularly update their section of the book with names of project leaders, contact information and a description of each activity that is listed.

The book has been used in many circumstances including with the Bishops of Dioceses, with potential new members, with members, and with the leadership of the Order of Malta. The content of the book has been used at worldwide meetings of the Hospitallers and with members of the Sovereign Council. The book is now only available in electronic form on the Association website in the “Members Only” section.

While it is clear that the book has many useful purposes, its greatest value is for Area leaders who might be looking for ideas on projects for their Areas and for members who might want to know more information about Area projects which are listed in the book. You can go to the Members Only section of the website, log in and find the Spirituality in Action Resource Book in the right hand navigation column. Open the book and prepare to be amazed — over 150 projects, representing 75,000 volunteer hours with an estimated value of $800K and estimated contributions for Area and Association grants of more than $500K.

Camille Kelleher, American Association Hospitaller said, “Hands-on activities in the service of the sick and the poor and in witness to our Faith are the substance of our charism; to grow spiritually through that work is the path members of the Order have chosen to give honor and glory to God and to enhance their spiritual lives. The Resource Book gives our members easy access to the information they need to learn about the many opportunities provided through the Areas to engage in hands-on work.” It is through these projects that members follow Blessed Gerard and join members throughout the world in the Order’s special charism.

Recently, a letter went to all members from Camille Kelleher and Vice Hospitaller, Kenneth Craig, asking for information about two areas of service to the sick and the poor which, because the service is often not directly associated with the Order of Malta, is not captured completely or at all in our data-gathering efforts: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (Eucharistic Ministers) and service on Boards of Non Profit organizations which minister to the sick and the poor. Members were asked to complete a short survey, electronically, if you are involved in either of these activities, which are fulfilling the mission of the Order in a meaningful way. If you need access to the survey, please contact the New York Office for assistance.

The Spirituality in Action Resource Guide and the forms for updating it can be found in the Members Only section at https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/site/login/.
At no time since the Supreme Court’s Roe vs Wade decision in 1973 has there been such a diversity of legal actions around the issue of abortion. Some states have passed or are considering legislation that expands the right to abortion virtually up to the moment of birth (or beyond). Other states have passed or are considering legislation that restricts the rights to abortions. Meanwhile an average of several thousand babies are aborted each day in the US.

The Pilgrimage for Life focuses our action on a peaceful march and on prayer. It is neither political nor aggressive in its tone or its purpose. We go to Washington, pray together as a group in front of the Blessed Sacrament; then we share in the Eucharistic Celebration at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to whom our country is dedicated. The next day, we celebrate Mass in the morning and then we march in the City of Washington from the Mall to the Supreme Court. We pray, we sing, we walk in peaceful contemplation as we seek God’s intercession and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring light to the tragedy of abortion and to the sacredness of life.

“Come pray with us” is our constant theme. The registration materials will be released on October 1. Please review them and consider if a prayer-filled walk with your fellow Knights and Dames might be a way to live the charism of the Order — to assist the sick and the poor and give witness to our faith. We hope you will join us on our Pilgrimage for Life on January 23 and 24.

Nancy Graebe
Robert Graebe, MD
Joseph Dutkowsky, MD
2020 Chairs — Pilgrimage for Life
### Association Calendar

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 19, 2019</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Board of Councillors Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1, 2019</td>
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<td>All Saints’ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 14, 2019</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Board of Councillors Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15, 2019</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Annual Meeting, Investiture, Annual Dinner</td>
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<td>November 16, 2019</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Mass for Malades, Caregivers, and Malades in Spirit</td>
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<td>November 16, 2019</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Subpriory Mass</td>
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<td>November 17, 2019</td>
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<td>World Day of the Poor</td>
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<td>November 28, 2019</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>December 8, 2019</td>
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<td>Feast of the Immaculate Conception (celebrated December 9)</td>
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<td>December 25, 2019</td>
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<td>Christmas</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1, 2020</td>
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<td>Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God – New Year’s Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 23-24, 2020</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>Pilgrimage for Life</td>
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<td>January 28, 2020</td>
<td>Naples, FL</td>
<td>Board of Councillors Meeting</td>
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<td>Jan 31-Feb 2, 2020</td>
<td>Lutz, FL</td>
<td>Association Retreat</td>
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<td>February 10-11, 2020</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Chaplains’ Convocation</td>
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<td>February 11, 2020</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Lourdes, World Day of the sick</td>
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<td>April 5-12, 2020</td>
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<td>Holy Week and Easter</td>
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<td>April 28-May 5, 2020</td>
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<td>Lourdes Pilgrimage (note extra day at start of pilgrimage)</td>
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<td>May 21, 2020</td>
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<td>Ascension Thursday</td>
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<td>Board of Councillors Meeting</td>
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<td>June 11-12, 2020</td>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>Area Leadership Conference</td>
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<td>June 24, 2020</td>
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<td>Feast of Saint John the Baptist</td>
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<td>August 6-9, 2020</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help</td>
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<td>Feast of the Assumption</td>
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<td>August 20-31, 2020</td>
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<td>Association Trip to the Mediterranean</td>
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<td>September 8, 2020</td>
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<td>Feast of Our Lady of Philermo</td>
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<td>September 17, 2020</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>Board of Councillors Meeting</td>
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<td>September 25-27, 2020</td>
<td>Medway, MA</td>
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On the first Wednesday of each month, there is a Spiritual Outreach call at 11AM ET.
Our Lady of Good Help
A Voice of Quiet Strength in a World of Too Much Noise

The American Association joined with the Federal and Western Associations to share the Tri-Association’s fourth Annual Pilgrimage to Champion, Wisconsin. More than two-hundred fifty pilgrims from the three Associations participated in the pilgrimage under the title banner of “The US Associations”, another step in the ongoing cooperation among the three Associations. Dr. Kelly, Frá Thomas Mulligan, and Michael Grace, the Presidents of the three Associations represented the leadership across the country.

Mostly sunny skies prevailed for the pilgrimage although a strong rainstorm rattled its way through the cornfields and over the Shrine late Saturday afternoon. Summers in the Midwest can be hot; but, the pilgrims enjoyed more favorable weather while they visited the Shrine at Champion as well as the National Shrine of Saint Joseph on the campus of Saint Norbert College. (In 2015, the Norbertine Community of St. Norbert Abbey returned the crowned statue of St. Joseph to Old St. Joseph Church on the St. Norbert College campus — the site where the weekly novena to St. Joseph first began in 1888. The statue had been moved to the Abbey in 1969 when the Old St. Joseph Church was being renovated.)

It was not the weather that drew pilgrims from twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia to Green Bay and then on to County Highway K to 4047 Chapel Drive. The draw for the US Association pilgrims is the same desire that draws over one hundred fifty thousand pilgrims annually to Wisconsin and millions to other apparition sites around the world — to be in the space where the Heaven and Earth touched in the person of the Blessed Mother. The holy ground of the Shrine in this rural community holds a special allure for travelers who have been to Lourdes, Fatima, even to the tiny village of Knock in Ireland — this Shrine is currently devoid of any retail encroachment by vendors seeking to serve and profit from the pilgrims who show up. The sign on the adjacent barn belies a dormant commercial venture as there are no hot dogs, soda or even fruits and vegetables to be had next door.

The Shrine has expanded its capacity in 2019 with a multi-purpose building that can handle 1,500 for Mass or other spiritual services. It provides the capacity for meetings, luncheons, conferences with breakout sessions and a variety of activities that would require space at a Marian Shrine. Yet the center of focus is the Chapel and the little graveyard found to the right of the Chapel. In the basement, the Apparition Chapel marks the place where the Blessed Mother appeared to Adele Brise — at that time in 1859, it was woods in a ‘wild land’. Between two trees, the Blessed Mother appeared and the Chapel rests on the spot. The Adoration Chapel can probably hold 50 people (who would definitely feel the space was crowded). The Chapel above it can hold about 300 — again, that would be standing room only. The building next to the Chapel houses a residence, a small gift shop and a small café.

More recent additions to the property include a welcome center which
houses a small theater where a video about Adele, the apparition, and the Shrine provide some background for the pilgrim who makes it to the center. There are articles of historical significance as well as storyboards telling the story of Adele and the Lady. Saint Paul spoke of becoming “all things to all people.” The statue of the Blessed Mother, based on Adele’s description, is very different from the Renaissance portrayals, different from Bernadette’s picture of the “Immaculate Conception” and the picture of Our Lady presented to the world on the tilma at Guadalupe. A blond young woman, clothed in white with a yellow sash was the way Adele described her and helped the artist to depict her as she was seen.

The 2019 Pilgrimage welcomed some additional visitors as veterans from the Wisconsin Veterans’ Home and retired priests joined the Pilgrimage on Friday. Bishop Ricken, in response to a request from the Pilgrimage leadership, had identified the Veterans and retired priests as two underserved populations in the Green Bay Diocese. They were met as they arrived by Pilgrim volunteers who gave them a tour of the grounds and provided them with a name and a face for the day.

The visit to the Shrine was followed by lunch and recognition of these special guests at the Riverside Ballroom; then it was on to a healing service and the opportunity for confessions at the Shrine of Saint Joseph. The Veterans were each given a medal of the Shrine as a memento of their visit. Retired priests of the Diocese were also invited to participate and a number of them concelebrated one of the Masses. This small addition to the pilgrimage was a great success. Plans are already being considered to increase the numbers and level of participation of the Veterans next year.

The planning process for the 2020 Pilgrimage, which is scheduled for August 6–9, 2020, has already begun. The American Association will provide the leadership for the next three years; but, the pilgrimage will continue to grow as a US Association Pilgrimage.

One interesting note for this year’s pilgrimage was the presence of thirty-one children among the 250+ pilgrims. The Pilgrimage continues to be an excellent opportunity for families to come together in prayer, peace and fellowship. With less than one year until the next pilgrimage to Wisconsin, you can get it on your family calendar now. Early August is an ideal time for many families to travel together for some peace, quiet and prayer.

For more information on the Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Help, you can go to the Association website: https://orderofmaltaamerican.org/spirituality-in-action/annual-pilgrimage-national-shrine-lady-good-help/.
Adele Brise –
Messenger for
Our Lady

Adele Brise was chosen as the messenger by Mary — we do not know why but Mary’s choice is often made from those whom others may not even see in society. A poor young woman of very limited education and status, Adele was what Our Lady found to be the right person for her message.

The shrine marks the Apparition site where Mary appeared to Adele in 1859. The following is from a poster in the Welcome Center at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in Champion, Wisconsin:

“Little is known about Adele prior to the Brise family arriving in the United States in 1855 and settling near present-day Champion, Wisconsin. Descriptions of young Adele that do exist recall her fervent piety and simple religious ways. As a youth in Belgium, Adele and several of her companions had promised to join the community of sisters who had prepared them for their first Holy Communion. Learning her family wanted to start a new life in the United States along with other Belgian settlers, Adele was hesitant to put aside her promise to join her family. Her confessor, however, advised Adele to follow her parents’ wishes.

After the apparitions and following Mary’s instruction, Adele would venture as far as fifty miles to teach the children. She was undeterred by weather, fatigue or ridicule. Even after building a chapel and school, Adele and her companions often did not know from where their next meal would come. Adele would gather in the chapel and ask for Mary’s help. Before morning, a bag of flour or supply of meat would arrive at the door. She was persistent and dedicated in her mission until her death in 1896.”

Another remarkable event was the protection of the Shrine from the Peshtigo Fire in 1871. The fire was the deadliest wildfire in U.S. history, burning through 1.2 million acres in Wisconsin, and killing 1,200 people. The story is told on the Shrine’s website:

“12 years after the apparitions, the same firestorm that devastated Peshtigo, Wisconsin threatened the Shrine. Its story reminds us that journeys are not always what we expect. Forests can become thick and paths uncertain. But, if you listen closely for a soft breeze, glimmers of sun will break through the rustling canopy of leaves. It will cast a brilliant, and perhaps unexpected light upon your path.

The Sisters, the children, area farmers and their families fled to the Shrine’s chapel for protection from the unprecedented fire. In defiance of the inferno, they lifted the statue of Mary and carried it around the sanctuary. When wind and
fire threatened suffocation in one direction, they turned in another direction to pray.

Hours later, a downpour began to extinguish the raging fire. The area surrounding the Shrine’s grounds was destroyed and desolate. Though the fire charred the chapel fence, it had not harmed the chapel grounds. The only livestock to survive the fire were the cattle farmers led to the chapel. Though the chapel well was only a few feet deep, it gave the cattle outside all the water they needed to survive the fire, while many deeper wells in the area went dry.

Adele asked those assembled at the chapel to retire to the convent. There, they were made as comfortable as possible for the rest of the night. The Belgian pioneers needed no more proof that Mary’s promise to Adele was genuine.”

For more information about the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, visit their website at https://www.shrineofourladyofgoodhelp.com.
2019 Board of Councillor Elections

Once the Board completes its September 19th meeting and approves a slate of candidates for the election, the candidates who were considered will be notified of the Board’s decision. American Association Secretary Karol Corbin Walker will then notify all members of the approved list and open the process for additional candidates to present signatures to get on the ballot. The window will close in early October and ballots will be prepared and distributed electronically to those members who have an email address on file. The electronic balloting materials will include the candidate biographies and a link to a personal ballot — the process is simple, straightforward and very efficient. Paper ballots along with the biographies will be sent by mail to those without an email address on file.

The election process will again be handled by our consultant, Intelliscan, who will secure the process and insure complete transparency throughout the balloting period. Prior to the ballots being distributed, Intelliscan will send emails to the distribution list provided by the American Association, to test the addresses to ensure a smooth process. Only after the ‘polls close,’ will the Secretary and the Executive Director receive a report on the voting outcome — during the election cycle, Intelliscan only notifies the New York office of the total ballot count; no reports on individual tallies are provided until the election is over.

Intelliscan will maintain the list of those who have voted during the election cycle and will send periodic reminders to those whose ballots have not yet been received.

Secretary Karol Corbin Walker reminds members that voting is a responsibility and a privilege: “The voting process has been made as simple as possible; I hope all our members will take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the election process — we are choosing leaders who will serve for the next three years and who will have an important impact on the future direction of the Association.”

The election results will be announced at the Annual Meeting on November 15th; members will be notified by email or mail of the results following the Investiture weekend.