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February 18, 2019

Sister Kathleen C. Keating, SSJ to receive 2019 Hibernian Christian Charity Award at Communion Breakfast

**“The most enduring Irish gifts to me were: the lesson of perseverance in spite of obstacles; an Irish sense of humor; and most of all my faith. The strong faith that I inherited was part of the Irish story which has been a cornerstone of my life.”-Sr. Kathleen C. Keating, SSJ**

The Ancient Order of Hibernians James A. Curran Division One and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division Two of Hampden/Hampshire Counties will present the 2019 Christian Charity Award to Sister Kathleen C. Keating, SSJ (Sister of St. Joseph) at the Annual Communion Breakfast at the Warehouse?, Holyoke, Sunday March 10, 2019. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be held at St. Patrick's chapel of St. Jerome Church at 8:00 A.M. The breakfast will take place after Mass. The award is an outgrowth of the organization's mission to recognize those in the community who "truly seek to improve the quality of life for the people of Hampden/Hampshire Counties." The past recipients of this award are: Barbara Bernard, (2014), Monsignor David Joyce, (2015), Reverend Mark Mengel, (2016) Karen Blanchard, (2017), and Sister Margaret Mc Cleary (2018).

The featured speaker at the breakfast will be Brigadier General John J. Driscoll of the Massachusetts National Guard. Driscoll was the 2015-2016 City of Springfield, Mass. Veteran of the Year and the 2016 National Security Fellow, Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. Driscoll was born in Boston and currently resides in Springfield with his wife of 26 years, Dr. Merribeth J. Morin.

Sister Kathleen Keating stated upon announcement of her award: "When Hibernian President Paul Hogan called to ask me to accept the Christian Charity Award, I was surprised and moved but also thought of many, many others, especially many Sisters of St. Joseph who were far more qualified for this award. But I am happy to receive it for all the good works performed by my sisters in Western Massachusetts and beyond. I am especially glad that this award comes from the AOH/LAOH because I have found the members to be fine people who not only treasure their Irish heritage, but serve their local community well. I feel a sense of gratitude to all of you."

The Hibernian's honor over six decades of Sr. Keating's exemplary community service: assistant professor of History at Elms College from 1966-1975; President of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Springfield, Mass. from 1979-1987; ministered in Nicaragua 1989-1993 and served as the seventh President of Elms College from 1994-2001. While President at the Elms she established the Irish Cultural Center and the Polish Cultural Center. In 2009, she was recognized by the Irish Voice Magazine as one of 100 Educators "who share a common bond and a deep pride in their shared heritage and made a significant contribution to keeping students enlightened and eager to discover more."

Keating continues to make a difference. Elms College President Harry Dumay said of her in October of 2018: "Sr. Kathleen's contributions are not relegated in the past-her wisdom is very much sought after in the present, as I have turned to her counsel on more than one occasion for decisions that require a firm grasp of the college's history and the guidance of one who has travelled that road before."

Sr. Kathleen's Maternal Grandparents came from Kerry and her Paternal Grandparents had Tipperary roots. Sister's parents were both born in this country. Her father was a scholar of Irish history and language. Her maternal Begley grandparents brought several relatives over from Ireland who became part of their lives: "So when I was growing up I heard many stories of the Irish struggle for freedom and independence as well as their faith. I listened to the talk of heroism in the face of persecution, war, and hunger. Although it was made clear to me that my national identity was American, yet the Irish heritage was important."

The Annual Hibernian Communion Breakfast is part of the festivities surrounding the 2019 Holyoke St Patrick's Parade. For tickets contact Attorney John "Jay" Driscoll of Holyoke at 413-534-0445 by March 8, 2019. Tickets are \$25.00 per person.