Dear Mission Partners,

Happy New Year, Immaculata Community!
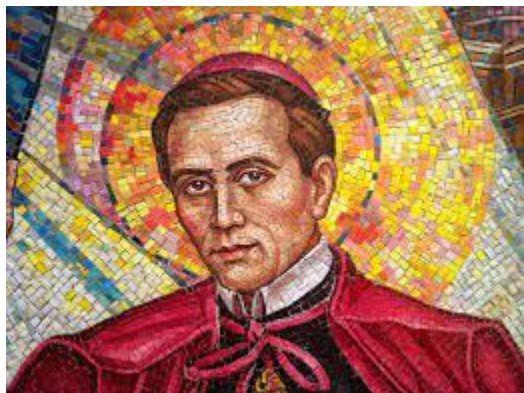Blessings of true peace to you in 2023!

During the first week of the New Year, on January 5, we celebrate the feast day of St. John Nepomucene Neumann, CSsR. St. John Neumann was born in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) on March 28, 1811. He was ordained a priest in New York and took up the pastoral care of people in the vast area around Niagara Falls.

In 1852, at the age of 41, he was named bishop of Philadelphia. At that time the Philadelphia diocese was huge – its territory included most of Pa, some of western NJ, and Delaware. His thoroughfare on horseback was along the Susquehanna River.

St. John Neumann had a wonderful influence on religious life of the United States and promoted devotion to the Eucharist. He had worked with the Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore. He invited the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to his diocese in 1858 and they agreed to his invitation to travel east and establish a mission at Susquehanna, PA. and then another in Reading, PA. in 1859.

In just seven years, he built many churches, as well as hospitals and orphanages. As a bishop, St. John Neumann was untiring in visits to his vast diocese. He created the first diocesan Catholic school system in America. When Bishop Neumann came to Philadelphia, there was only one Catholic school, soon there were more than 200!

*On January 5, 1860, at the age of 48, Bishop John Neumann died suddenly of a stroke while walking on Vine Street in Philadelphia. He was beatified during the Second Vatican Council on October 13, 1963, and canonized on June 19, 1977, the first male saint in the US. He is the patron of emigrants and of sick children.*

We see how St. John Neumann figured in the history of the IHM Sisters. He opened the doors to Catholic education in PA and helped sow the seeds for Immaculata University.

May he intercede for all of us who call Immaculata our "Home under the Dome!"