



FRANCISCAN CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter of the Associates of the
Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

"Sharing in a Franciscan way of life and a healing Spirit"

Volume 14, Issue 1

February 2019



Pictured above is the anniversary symbol designed by Sister M. Theodora (Japan Province) which features Our Lady of Grace Chapel (Telgte, Germany) surrounded by the flags of the five nations of the Sisters' Provinces

Celebrating an Anniversary

By Sister Mary Ann Minor, OSF

This year marks the 175th anniversary of the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. The story began on July 2, 1844, when Father Christopher Bernsmeyer, OFM, a pastor in Telgte, Germany welcomed a few young women to help him care for people in their homes who were ill. From this simple invitation, a Franciscan Religious Order began that expanded its presence across the globe. The development of the Order is a story of the Holy Spirit inspiring young women to respond to the needs of the poor, the sick and the dying.

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Associate Office

By Nancy Davis

But I Want to Be the Boss

A large part of our natural humanity is based on self-preservation. God gave the human race instincts to help it survive. Sometimes, however, these instincts go awry, and we can forget that this self-preservation doesn't mean total control of people, our environment or life circumstances. It is easy to forget that God is the one that is really in control. When I looked up the word control in the dictionary, there was a long list of synonyms. As I scanned the list my first thought was that these words are not very attractive: restraint, dominion, limitation, subjection, supremacy, force, and manipulation, to name a few. After pondering these synonyms and the definition of control, I asked myself why it is such an issue for me.

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Celebrating An Anniversary -

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The International Congregation is comprised of five Provinces: Germany, Poland, America, Japan and India. Each Province has a governance structure and an administrative team that is responsible to a General Governance and Administration team in Muenster, Germany. The Charism and Mission of the Sisters, the Rule of St. Francis, the General Constitutions and the International symbol worn by all the Sisters, unite the Sisters into one Congregation. Presently there are 702 Sisters in the Congregation whose charism is to be and to bring Christ's Healing Presence to others.

This healthcare community of Sisters has served in many ways including hospitals, homes for the elderly, clinics and dispensaries, schools, social work and in missions. In addition to the five countries and their primary locations, Sisters also served in The Netherlands, China, Taiwan, Arizona, New Mexico, Louisiana, Missouri, Haiti, Tanzania, South Korea and Kazakhstan.

From the foundation in Germany, the number of women who joined the community continued to grow. When a typhus epidemic broke out in Silesia/Poland in 1848, a few of the first German Sisters responded to this need and cared for the sick. In 1875, when the Diocese of Alton, Illinois requested Sisters to care for the healthcare needs of the people, 20 Sisters from Germany volunteered. In 1925, the American Province celebrated its 50th anniversary and established a mission in China. Following the devastation of WW II, the conditions in China and Japan declined. The Chinese Sisters came to America for their safety and two American Sisters who had served in China went to Japan in 1948 to care for those in need. Soon after their arrival, young Japanese women joined the community and in 1977 Japan was established as a Province. The mission in India began on January 6, 1973, when Sister Vulmara, of the German Province, settled in Pithora, India. Two German Sisters joined her and they established an Orphanage and Kindergarten. In a short time, young Indian women joined the community and the Indian Mission became a Province in 2013.

As Father Christopher was inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit to serve the poor, sick and the dying, so too have our Sisters followed his inspiration. In gratitude for these 175 years, please join us in celebrating and giving thanks to God for all the graces and blessings that have been and continue to be bestowed on the Congregation. ❖



WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER ...

- Mary Jo Wasser (Springfield) whose brother passed away
- Peg Oravec (Highland) whose brother-in-law passed away
- Ruth Sparkman (Highland) whose brother-in-law passed away
- Vikki Warren (Springfield) whose father passed away
- Pat Goldsmith (Springfield) whose brother-in-law passed away
- Darlene Bedei (Streator) whose husband passed away
- Pat Wright (Streator) who has been undergoing medical treatment
- Kathy Lohman (Highland) who is undergoing medical treatment
- Debbie Waitkus (Springfield) who is undergoing medical treatment
- Paula Minwegen (Springfield) who is undergoing medical treatment
- Brother of Jerry Harcharik (Streator), who is seriously ill
- Our Hospital Sisters ❖

Being Franciscan . . .

Jane Herman

(Effingham)

Year of Commitment – 2017



My name is Jane Herman. I reside in Effingham, IL, and I became an Associate of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in 2017 for a few reasons included being intrigued with the life of St. Francis and St. Clare. Since committing to the community, I have started daily prayers with the Bible and am trying to practice the teachings of St. Francis. I was sponsored by Betty Boos, also of Effingham, who is a very spiritual believer and has a deep prayer life. I admire her greatly.

I try to live the Franciscan spirit in daily life by keeping God first in all that I do. I thank him throughout the day for all of his blessings. I try to pray first thing in the morning to start my day with the right frame of mind. I so enjoy attending our monthly Associate meetings and discussions. I volunteer at our local elementary school mentoring a third-grade student. Almost every Tuesday my husband and I host a chess game and dinner with a widowed physician. I participate in events at my parish. On Sunday evenings during the summer my husband and I host a family dinner. We also foster dogs for a local animal shelter until that can find a home.

I enjoy travel, gardening, sewing, and reading.

I have been married to Bill for 26 years. We have no children because we got married later in life. We enjoy living in our retirement home located on Lake Sara near Effingham. ❖



Shirlene Kassing

(Highland)

Year of Commitment – 2017



My name is Shirlene Kassing. I have lived most of my life in Freeburg, IL, where I am a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church. I am an adult convert to the Catholic faith. I love the Catholic faith and my Catholic friends and family. My year of commitment was 2017.

I am a registered nurse and was employed by HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital In Belleville, and now in O'Fallon, IL, for 40 years. So I was exposed to the Franciscan way for all of those years. I love my profession and I am very proud to say that I was fortunate enough to serve in an HSHS hospital. I believe in the mission of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis and have strived to carry out that mission during my nursing career. As a Franciscan Associate, I hope that my desire to serve God and others continues to be an important part of my life. I feel that It is important to bring the healing presence of Jesus to others. To be a Franciscan Associate means that I will embrace the Franciscan values of prayer, conversion, and simplicity.

My sponsor was Sister Marilyn McCormick. It was a privilege to spend time with her on the commitment weekend. She graciously shared her wisdom and compassion on that weekend journey. I now try to look at the sacredness of the presence in all things. She made me feel accepted, and that I was good enough.

I volunteer at HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital every Monday morning and serve as Eucharistic minister two Sundays a month. I also serve as Eucharistic minister at our local assisted living facility. And I work at funeral luncheons for my parish. I volunteer at

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Musings from Chiara

By Dan Frachey



Sacred Seeing

Following the Franciscan Nativity Festival as people's collective attention turns toward the approaching holidays, the Chiara Center gets blissfully quiet which makes it a perfect time to take on long-awaited projects. Upstairs in the Emmaus room of Chiara Center is a section of shelves that had grown somewhat disheveled with old magazines and art materials. With the magazines now properly archived in the library, I was able to clean up and organize the art & drawing materials, leaving one section empty.

The empty shelves now contain objects such as an hour glass, a Nautilus shell, a spool of thread and needle and even a piece of cement grout that fell from the Portico to the TB sanitarium. I assembled and displayed this assortment of objects to create a visio divina (sacred seeing) area to serve as prompts for contemplation, prayer and journaling. Each item sits with a small name card to provide a straight-forward almost technical definition. For instance, someone might take up the plumb bob (a weight that is suspended from a string and used as a vertical reference line, or plumb-line) and contemplate what or who forms a sure boundary or fixed means of measuring where or how one stands with others. One could search out any of the numerous references of the straight measuring line in the scriptures or pray about how to be better aligned with God's plans and desires.

If you attended Father Murray Bodo's presentation in November, you might have heard him indicate how Francis saw into things that allowed him to encounter God's love. The next time you're visiting Chiara Center, be sure to ponder this wondrous, strange and curious

assortment of visual prompts. Say a prayer to the Holy Spirit that God would draw your attention to one of these objects and trust that God desires to reveal some deeper meaning that could help you gain some clarity, insight and perhaps even some peace. ❖

Shirlene Kassing –

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St. Vincent De Paul in East St. Louis, IL, mostly working in the thrift store. An hour at our weekly Adoration is a way for me to sit and pray and be with Jesus. I participate in a weekly Bible Study. My faith journey is ongoing.

I play the piano, or I should say I have picked up piano lessons where I left off as a child. I like to read, and since I retired, I have more time for that and have joined a book club. I read books that I never would have picked otherwise. Daily exercise is important for me and I bike outdoors on the country roads with a friend when the weather permits. She and I talk about the good things from God on those rides, like the Illinois com, the green grass and trees that we see.

I am the oldest of six children in my family. My husband of 40 years died in 2009. Little did I know before then how important my faith would be in this journey. Two years later one of my brothers died also. I have two adult children, both are married and have families. I have three granddaughters. My oldest granddaughter and her husband are in the Air Force and are going to bless me with a great granddaughter in April. ❖

News Bits . . .

The Associates in Springfield collected \$595.00 for their Annual Christmas donation. This year's benefactor was Catholic Charities. Sister MaryAnn Falbe was very grateful for the donation as their ministry was particularly short on diapers at the holidays. Diapers are such a basic necessity and she was thrilled to be able to provide funds for them to purchase an ample supply. ❖

Associate Office

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I don't want to be domineering, supreme, forceful or manipulative. Why is giving up control to God and not trying to micromanage his plans for me so hard? Why do I always want to be the boss?

A meditation I read during Advent really made me think about this. It came from a book entitled, "Rejoice! Advent Meditations with Mary" by Fr. Mark Toups and Mark Moyers. This particular meditation talked about how Mary lived her life, "out of control." She truly lived everyday as if God was in control of her life. She said "yes" to every day. Her "yes" was birthed out of her "no." She said "no" to living life on her terms. She said, "no", to "being her own woman." She said "no" to control because she knew it to be an illusion. She trusted God, not because of what he asked, but because of who was asking. The questions for meditation were, "What issues, relationships, or dreams are you trying to control? Do your daily actions reflect control or trust?" It suggested that we ask Mary to show us how she lived "out of control" and ask her to help us live that same way. It really is a matter of trusting enough in God's will to let go of the need to control. I have found that when I release some of my attempts to control, many of the worries that I carry around are gone. I have heard it said that if you want to make God laugh, just tell him your plans. So, one of my spiritual focuses for 2019 will be to live my life more "out of control" like Mary. Maybe my Bible verse for the year should be Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans of the human heart, but it is the decision of the Lord that endures." ❖

Moment of Reflection . . .

A Communion of Hearts

By: Jean Vanier - Adapted from "Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the gospel of John"

To love people as Jesus loves them
is to wash their feet, to serve them in humility;
it is to help them rise up in truth and love.
Here Jesus is revealing something more:
to love is to lay down one's life for others,
to place their interests before our own.
It is to give them life.
That can mean accepting difficulties,
danger and even deaths
so that they may live and grow in love.
To love is to live in communion with other,
to transmit to them the life and love of Jesus.
It is to reveal to them that they are loved,
loved by Jesus.
In this way we become their friend
because we are a friend of Jesus.
In this friendship nothing is hidden or secret.
Jesus has shared everything he has heard from the
Father; all is given.
The barriers that separated the finite from the
Infinite,
The temporal from the eternal,
The human from the divine,
have disappeared.
At times is it necessary for us to live an austere life,
like John the Baptizer,
and to seek a certain separation from our bodies,
to strain to reach God through our efforts.
But God has appeared in the flesh,
has become vulnerable
in the flesh.
He has come to offer us his friendship,
to invite us to become his beloved.
He has become little and vulnerable,
to live a communion of hearts with us
and to join him in giving life to others. ❖

Justice and Peace Connection

By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC



World Day of Social Justice

Since 2009, every February 20 has been the UN (United Nations) observance of World Day of Social Justice. The purpose is to focus on the plight of social injustice throughout the world and to press for improvements and solutions. Social justice is defined, for the purpose of the observance, as including issues of poverty, unemployment, and unfair exclusion that results in economic harm or social ostracism/shunning or ignoring, especially due to dress and income. The Border Cries ought to move us to action and prayer.

As we go about our daily life, what does that mean to you and to me? At times, we seem to talk about us and them. Yet, we are all one body and the story of the Good Samaritan reinforces that we are not separated, but linked and solidarity binds us to all. Thus, I cannot keep the goods of this world all for myself...we are formed to share. To do otherwise is sin ...separateness. "Blessed are you who are poor for the kingdom of God is yours" (Lk6:20). Ponder Mary standing at the cross with her Son, oneness. We are reminded in Laudato Si (16) that everything in the world is connected... meaning Integral Ecology. This encompasses the need to "promote personal, social, and ecological harmony, for which all are called to a personal, social, and ecological conversion (cf. L.S. 210)."

So? What can I give to those who hurt? I can pray and give alms. Only a heart open to conversion will be able to hear the cries of the poor. Only when we are aware of how our lifestyles and the ways we produce, trade, consume and get rid of or discard, affect the life of our environment, and our societies can we initiate a mandate to change our direction. Let us remember the Widow's mite...she gave from her

poverty not from her abundance...for in fact she was not living on an abundant income. This conversion of heart has to include creation...our rivers, lakes and streams and oceans; our forests. The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face (LS 233). Yes, the one who knows how to contemplate the "goodness present in the realities and experiences of this world" discovers the intimate connection of all things and experiences with God (LS234). Recycle covers it all...from material goods we can donate to a Good Will or to recycling our cans/plastics to save our oceans. Listen and you will know in your heart what you must do for the sister/brother in need. ❖

IN LOVING MEMORY . . .

SISTER MARCIANA LYNCH

BORN: 10/26/1922

FIRST PROFESSION: 10/4/1941

DIED: 11/12/2018

ASSOCIATE PEGGY TREGONING

(SPRINGFIELD)

BORN: 12/21/1945

COMMITTED: 2006

DIED: 01/08/2019

**May they share with Jesus the joy
and peace of heaven . . .**

Franciscan Connections Newsletter

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Associates at Christmas . . .



Decatur



Highland



Streator



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Upcoming Events at Chiara Center . . .

Companions on the Journey: (Lunch & discussion for seniors at 11:30 a.m.) – February 4, March 4, April 1

Enneagram Weekend Retreat - with Jessie Vicha – February 1-3

Spirituality in Recovery Retreat: *The Next Step* on February 15-17

Death Café: (Honest conversations about death over cake & tea) March 12 at 10:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.

Ah Days of Quiet: (Time for you to enjoy a day at Chiara Center) – March 19

Food & Faith Series: *JOY! A Spirituality of Vocation* – March 14 at 6 p.m. with a showing on April 4 of the film *Finding Joe* which helps people discern their primary life's purpose

Tai Chi Classes - with Cindy Cannamela - Five-week sessions offered Mondays at 5:30 p.m. and Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. beginning April 22 & 23

Spirituality in Health Care Seminar: *Intergenerational Collaboration: Communities of Caring* on April 25

To register for any of the Chiara-sponsored events, visit the Events section of our website or call us at 217-523-0901. There is a 10% discount for Associates.

Please view us on Facebook and click Like