



# 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 3

May 2019

## New Provincial Council

Congratulations to the 2019 - 2023 Provincial Council. From left to right: Sister Janice Schneider, Provincial Councilor, Sister Maureen O’Connor, Provincial Superior, Sister Christa Ann Struewing, Provincial Vicaress, and Sister Rosily Menachery, Provincial Councilor. The Provincial Superior represents the American Province of the Hospital Sisters, its establishments



and interests while responsible for directing the Province in spiritual life and its ministries. The Provincial Vicaress assists the Provincial in the Province business and in the absence of the Provincial Superior, she assumes her responsibilities. The two Provincial Councilors, together with the Superior and Vicaress, form the leadership team that directs the Province business. In addition, the Provincial Superior and her Council serve as Members of Hospital Sisters Ministries, the public juridic sponsor of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSBS) and Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach in which they have Reserved Powers.

The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is an international congregation of Franciscan Sisters founded in Germany in 1844, and their Provinces include Germany, Poland, USA, Japan, and India. The

**Continued on Page 2**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Associate Office  
By Nancy Davis
- 3 Being Franciscan . . .
- 4 Care for Our Common Home . . .
- 5 Jubilarians
- 5 Musings from Chiara –  
By Dan Frachey
- 6 Justice and Peace Connection . . .  
By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC
- 7 Associates In Ministry . . .
- 8 Upcoming Events . . .

## Associate Office

By Nancy Davis

### Will They Know You Are Christians by Your Love?

During Easter and the 40-days of Lent, a question kept reoccurring in my prayer time. “Will they know I am a Christian by my love?” Yes, I am a child of post-Vatican II when the hymn, “They’ll Know We are Christians”, was the anthem of that season of change in our Church. However, I have to say I always was moved by the lyrics and wondered if I was really living my life as a Christian. You know how it goes? We are one in the spirit... Am I one in the spirit – working toward unity with my brothers

**Continued on Page 2**

**Associate Office –  
Continued from page 1**

and sisters who are unlike me? We will walk with each other... Am I walking with others – the wounded, the grieving, the marginalized, the immigrant, the stranger? We will work with each other.... Am I working with others - focusing on commonalities instead of polarizing differences? All praise to the Father.... Am I praising the Father with others – seeking to discover ways that people of different faiths worship? Does the world know me by my love? You have probably heard this question, “If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” Right along these same lines, is my faith visible to others beyond my cross pendant? Would a stranger sense that I am Christian by my welcome? Our culture, our world, has become so polarized. We are bombarded daily in the news and social media of scandals, shootings, hate crimes, and disrespectful behaviors. Evil seems to be winning the day. There no longer seems to be room for civil debate, respect, honor, or the ability to agree to disagree. Anger and fear seem to be the overriding emotions of our times. Both of them are very contagious and these pervasive negative emotions are contrary to our Christian witness. Fear breeds suspicion. Anger breeds contempt. Neither of these encourage encounter or welcome to those unlike ourselves. Neither of them encourages unity, walking together, or working together. It seems we are quite far away from the lyrics of the song. Author Matthew Kelly, pointed out in his book, “The Biggest Lie In the History of Christianity”, that as Christians we can change the world, but we have to find ways to differentiate ourselves like the early Christians. They lived differently, loved differently, worked differently, expressed kindness and generosity differently and welcomed people differently. We have to stop blending in if we are going to be a changing force for the good. In other words, we need to behave in ways that show the world we are Christians. If we remain complacent, Christianity will continue to move farther and farther from the mainstream to the periphery and become less and less relevant in our time. Will they know YOU are Christian by your love? ❖

**New Provincial Council –  
Continued from page 1**

American Province, based in Springfield, IL, was founded in 1875 when Sisters from Germany arrived and began a healthcare ministry. The Province is the Founding Institute of Hospital Sisters Ministries which is the public juridic sponsor of HSHS – a multi-institutional health care system in 14 communities in Illinois and Wisconsin with 15 hospitals, health centers and clinics, nearly 2,300 physician partners, and more than 14,600 colleagues. In addition, the Province sponsors Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, a recovery and world-wide distribution of medical supplies and equipment, and operates Chiara Center, a Franciscan Place of Spirituality for individuals and groups seeking a retreat and conference center. ❖

**WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER . . .**



- Sue Smith (Decatur) whose brother passed away
- Susie Ferguson (Springfield) whose father passed away
- Joan Eggers (Effingham) whose sister passed away
- Debbie Waitkus (Springfield) whose father passed away
- Sally Steiner (Highland) whose daughter passed away
- Pat Wright (Streator) who has been undergoing medical treatment
- Paula Minwegen (Springfield) who has been undergoing medical treatment
- All our Hospital Sisters ❖

## Kathy Lohman

(Highland)

**Year of Commitment –  
2017**



My name is Kathy Lohman, I'm from Highland, Illinois and I made my commitment in 2017. I started working for St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland in 1975 as a secretary and transferred to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Belleville, retiring in 2007. I have been around the Sisters for quite a number of years experiencing the charism of St. Francis that they portrayed and feel very blessed to have witnessed them living their vows and inspiring me through their faithfulness. Sister Marilyn McCormick was my sponsor and I will always cherish her quiet demeanor and the inspirational talks we shared during my commitment weekend. She showed me how God can be found in absolutely everything around us, whether it be nature or an inanimate object.

I was married for 43 years to Don who became a Franciscan Associate in 2009 (he passed away in 2016). I have a daughter and a son who are married and a granddaughter and grandson

**Continued on Page 5**

## Donna Chase

(Springfield)

**Year of Commitment –  
2017**



I was proud to become an Associate of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in 2017. While working at HSHS for 16 years, and at the Motherhouse for almost 14 years, I have witnessed the compassion of the Sisters as they go about helping others as well as the devotion they have to their faith. Since becoming an Associate, I know my faith has become stronger as I find myself saying more silent prayers and asking God's help when I am troubled about something, which I never did before. I feel more inclined when someone I know is sick to offer to pray together and I try to encourage them in faith, that God will see them through.

I have always enjoyed helping in any way that I can whether it be co-workers, friends or family members. One ministry I participate in through my church is a program that helps our members in several ways: providing meals during an illness or death, providing transportation to

**Continued on Page 4**

## Pam Achten

(Springfield)

**Year of Commitment –  
2017**



My name is Pam Achten and I have been a Franciscan Associate since 2017. After working 40 years for HSHS, I came to appreciate the Franciscan values of our Sisters. I humbly attempt to carry on their mission, and I became an Associate to enhance my spiritual journey. Reading "The Living Faith" booklets along with

the daily scripture readings has helped me focus on my faith. The monthly Associate meetings are like mini-retreats and help me to focus on various aspects of religion. Our Associate group volunteers monthly at St. Vincent De Paul and participating makes me grateful for the generous spirit of our local community and all that God has given to me and my family.

Sister Annice McClure was my sponsor during my candidate sessions and she shared her amazing knowledge of Frances and Clare. Karen Skaletski (a fellow Associate) was my sponsor during the Commitment Retreat.

**Continued on Page 4**

## **Donna Chase – Continued from page 3**

physician appointments, helping with light housework and sometimes just being that presence in their lives. Many times, it is just to talk and be there for people.

I have learned that a part of being a Franciscan Associate is helping those who need it, as did St. Francis did. This is my way of carrying on the Sisters' mission and healing charism. I was honored to be sponsored by Sister Jomary Trstensky with whom I worked with at HSHS and at the Motherhouse where I still work part time. I felt Sister Jomary's compassion when I worked with her at HSHS. I have learned so much from her about faith and how to be compassionate toward others.

My family is my world. I am the proud mother of four children, grandmother to 14, and great grandmother to eight. I try to see them often but two of them now live out of state, so I don't get to see them as much as I would like, but this makes for great vacation trips. ❖

## **Pam Achten – Continued from page 3**

Karen was my first mentor when I started as a graduate nurse at St. Vincent Hospital.

My hobbies include reading, cooking, outdoor walks, sudoku puzzles, and gardening. My family includes my husband Jay, two married daughters and two grandchildren. My 89-year old mother is a source of inspiration to me on being young at heart.

Retiring last December enhanced my Franciscan Spirit since I've been purging our home and donating to local charities. Participating as a Eucharistic Minister and recently with the funeral lunch ladies in my parish helps me feel more connected to my fellow parishioners. Growing up on a dairy farm always made me appreciate God's hand in our daily lives. I pray He will show me His will for my future. ❖

## **Our Sister Jubilarians will Celebrate in June**

### **80 Years Professed – Ruby Jubilee**

Sister Elvon Huser, OSF

### **75 Years Professed – Jeweled Crown Jubilee**

Sister Elreda Huser, OSF (Japan Province)

### **70 Years Professed – Grace Jubilee**

Sister Jolinda Snyder, OSF

Sister Jonette Devlin, OSF

Sister Rachel Jost, OSF

### **60 Years Professed – Diamond Jubilee**

Sister Gertrude O'Connor, OSF

Sister Helen Marie Plummer, OSF

## **Care for Our Common Home**

*"God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity."*

### **The Church in the Modern World, #69**

- We believe that the Earth is "Our Common Home". Our ecological future depends upon us all. As such we must be good stewards of the planet entrusted to our care.
- We affirm that water is vital; indispensable for human life and supporting healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies. It is essential to manage water wisely through both times of plenty and scarcity.
- We support measures that respect our world's climate as a common good, belonging to all and meant for all, which must be preserved and protected.
- We advocate for environmental justice that embraces subsidiarity and global solidarity when addressing ecological issues, so as to hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

From: <https://www.cacatholic.org/care-for-our-common-home> ❖

## Musings from Chiara

By Dan Frachey

### Plastic: A Curious Franciscan Response



I'll start by saying that I was inspired by Nancy's article within this issue. Truly, the essence of our relationship to God can be found in this little phrase: *God invites and we respond*. So if LOVE invites us to live-into all that Nancy articulated from the song she mentioned, our task is to prayerfully respond in accord with what the Spirit says to each of us – and all of us.

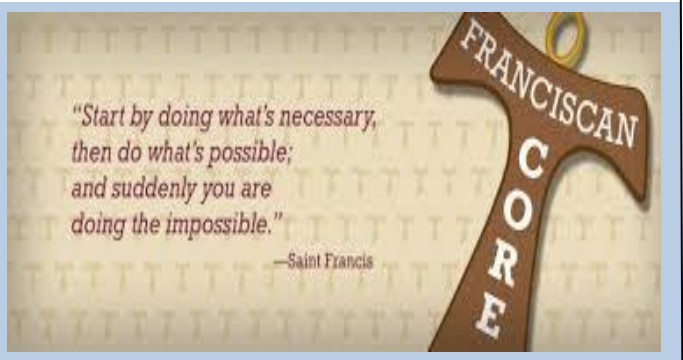
Collectively, God is gesturing our attention toward the earth who sustains all life and casts a gaze upon the immensity of plastic that we have created over the past several decades. I imagine Francis sitting on a beach in the Dominican Republic with a myriad of plastic objects swirling about him with every successive wave. He wouldn't need to say a thing, would he? If we weren't paying attention, he might begin singing his canticle and pause after singing, "Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste."

This is my new zeal and so I need to share that I'm on a crusade against any excessive use of my own plastic consumption. I'm like a kid who is so excited about foregoing the plastic liners in my office garbage and recycling containers. This choice places me in a new kind of covenant relationship with our housekeepers who empty these containers for me. It means remaining mindful of how I need to keep them clean enough to avoid the need for a liner. Another example is a conversation I had with my young server at a restaurant when she asked me if I wanted a straw. This became an occasion for gratitude when I thanked her for

asking before refusing. We had a very cool 90 second conversation about how we all can act to take care of the earth. Rather than go on with what I choose to do, I hope you'll sit with me amidst the debris on that beach alongside Francis and contemplate how our actions affect others. We would then break into songs of gratitude and hope for how God could summon us together to form a loving response that our sister mother earth would smile upon. ❖

### Kathy Lohman – Continued from page 3

who are 14. I have begun purging my life of needless things trying to live more simply but will never get to the level of St. Francis' simple life. I am very active in my parish of St. Paul serving as a cantor and in the adult choir for over 25 years. I am a Eucharistic Minister at church and to the patients at St. Joseph's Hospital, volunteer as a sacristan, in the school cafeteria, as a monthly coordinator for Perpetual Adoration, lead a Communion service monthly at an assisted living facility and at church when needed, have been secretary of the KC Ladies Auxiliary for several years, participate in weekly faith sharing groups and a Bible Study and am active in Cursillo. I try to bring the Franciscan spirit to everyone I encounter every day. Every morning I tell God what I have on my schedule but ask Him to open my eyes, ears and heart to where He wants me to serve Him that day. That prayer has brought some challenging situations my way. ❖



## **Justice and Peace Connection**

**By Sister Mary  
Shaw, ASC**



### **Challenges and Change**

May 3, 1983 the American Bishops (later named, USCCB) wrote the Pastoral Letter, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*. Fast forward to May 2019 and we are well aware of the challenges to peace: the sex abuse scandal in the Church, the rich who are not in touch with the poor, global warming, violence of all sorts, human trafficking, immigrants around the globe but especially at our border, and the list goes on. Let us not separate the cries of the earth and the cries of the poor, for they are one. Pope Francis realized this when he released *Laudato Si'*, in May 2015: "Everything is connected" (LS 91). So no matter what our good intentions and actions are, they will all be in vain if they are not nourished by inner conversion. This means we all need an ecological conversion whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ becomes evident in our relationship with the world around us (LS 217). There seems to be a disconnect between our self, God, and one another. We fail to see our oneness..."as long as you do it to these, the least ...you do it to me" (Matt 25).

For some, the response to peace-challenges is violence evidenced by building walls, physical barriers or labelling migrants as criminals; others intone "send them back, put them in jail, take their children" ... the list grows. Stop, pause and ask ourselves, where is my heart in all of this? Challenges call us to change.

The Pastoral Letter is being revisited. Growing in the Christ and the Spirit, we all are called to change/ be transformed. The Letter spoke of the "Just War Theory" and many today, including Pope Francis will say, "Faith and violence are incompatible" (Vatican gathering 2013). The Letter reminds us: "all the values ... in this letter rests ultimately in the disarmament of the human heart and the conversion of the human spirit to God who alone can give authentic peace" (# 284). Pope Francis called it right: "Faith and violence are incompatible." True peace calls for reverence of life ...all life forms. We will never have peace if we have hate in our hearts.

The encyclical *Laudato Si'*, calls to: "accept each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full" (LS. 226). May we recognize the need to stop and listen to God in creation, in the poor and in our own hearts and respond to the cries by our actions that flow from a contemplative heart. "Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated.... everything is related..." (LS 92). May our contemplative heart empower us toward the other in a non-violent stance. Nothing can justify our violence. Perhaps, it will be our relationships that save us and the world. May our tenderness soothe the multiplicity of cries in creation. ❖

### **IN LOVING MEMORY . . .**

#### **ASSOCIATE AGNES (AGGIE) HAYNER**

(SPRINGFIELD)

BORN: 11/21/1940

COMMITTED: 1988

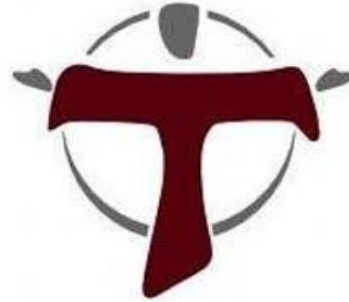
DIED: 01/25/2019

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

## Associates In Ministry . . .



**Gerardo Valdes** (Springfield) visiting with **Sister Jolinda Snyder**



**Don't miss out on these Associate volunteer opportunities.**

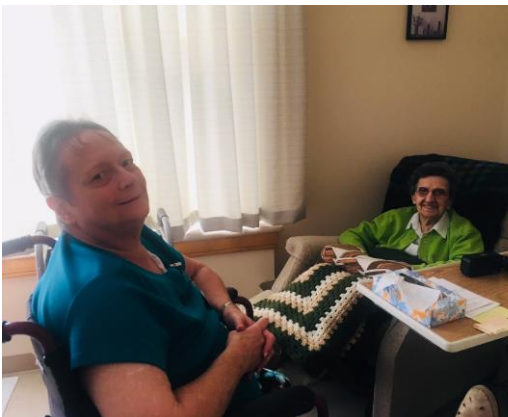
**Mission Outreach Associate Volunteer Day** - Saturday, May 18, 2019 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Loretto Home Volunteer** - Orientation session on Saturday, May 11, 2019 from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. or to be arranged with Sister Marilyn McCormick at (217) 522-3386, Ext 432.

If you would like to spend more time in this wonderful place, getting to know our Sisters, this is the perfect opportunity. There is no minimum time commitment involved but monthly is encouraged. What a great way to live out our Franciscan charism of healing, as well as enriching your sense of community with the Sisters. ❖



**Leo Lenn** (Springfield) visiting with **Sister Joan Winkler**.



**Martha Metternich** (Springfield) visiting with **Sister Mary Frances Luty**.



**Mike Mueller and daughter with Michelle Wood** (Springfield) volunteering at Mission Outreach.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

### Upcoming Events at Chiara Center . . .

**Father Murray Bodo is coming back to Chiara Center** – May 2 at 7:00 p.m.

**Companions on the Journey** – (Lunch and discussion for seniors at 11:30 a.m.) – May 6, June 3, July 1

**Ah Days of Quiet** – (Time for You to enjoy a day at Chiara Center) – May 13 & July 9

**Labyrinth Nights with Sister Moon & Brother Fire** – May 17 & June 17 at 8 p.m.

**Hearing Anew, Speaking Anew: A Retreat for Men with Father Richard Chiola** – June 7-9

**Death Café** – (Honest conversations about death over cake & tea) June 11 at 10:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.

**Summer Directed Retreat** – June 16-21

**Summer Weekend Retreat: Who Are You as a Christian in an Evolving Universe?** – July 12-14

To register for any of the Chiara-sponsored events, visit the Events section of [www.chiaracenter.org](http://www.chiaracenter.org) or call us at 217-523-0901. There is 10% discount for Associates.