



# 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"*

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August 2025



## Hospital Sisters of St. Francis Celebrate Jubilee

The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis celebrated Jubilee, the anniversary of a Sister's profession of first vows, of four Sisters on June 14, 2025, in the St. Clare of Assisi Adoration Chapel. Pictured are: (seated) Sister Thomas Kundmueller (75 years); (standing) Sisters Anna Phiri, Assistant Superior, Marilyn McCormick (60 years), MaryAnn Falbe (60 years) and Maureen O'Connor, Superior. Not pictured: Sister Carol Sue Daniel (60 years). The Eucharistic Liturgy was celebrated by the Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki, Bishop, Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. ❖

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#### **The Good Samaritan – A Deeper Look**

While many are familiar with the Good Samaritan parable. As with scripture in general, it may reveal a different message upon each reading based on the circumstances of our lives. Naturally, we assume that we are the Good Samaritan, the one who did the right thing in sacrificing for his brother and acting as God desired. However, we may be guilty of the opposite at times in our lives. I believe that it can be helpful to look a bit closer at the other characters in the parable. You might be surprised but also enriched by placing yourself in each role of the other characters in this parable.

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## **Associate Office –**

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We may not identify with the priest and the Levite because they chose to ignore someone in need. They saw this victim of violence but chose to do nothing. Of course, there are many possible explanations for not helping. Maybe they did so because they did not want to be ritually impure, they were in a hurry, they did not feel equipped to deal with the injuries, they assumed that someone else would help, or maybe the victim had different clothes or skin color. Might any of these reasons sound familiar in our efforts to come to the aid of our brothers or sisters in need?

The central character in the parable is The Good Samaritan. He was a man who lived in Samaria (a city in the central region of ancient Palestine located between Galilee to the north and Judea to the south). In Jesus' time, animosity between Jews and Samaritans was fierce, and not only did Jews avoid traveling through Samaria, but they spoke unkindly about them. Although the Good Samaritan was a stranger to the victim, his kindness was shared because he cared. This act of kindness likely occurred because this soul was predisposed to action and had been prepared for this encounter by other opportunities that had arisen in his life. Quite possibly his heart was inclined to help the other after being in need himself. He not only knew the right thing to do, but he did it. How many times do we know what to do but fail to do it? What stops us from doing the right thing?

Lastly, let us suppose that we are the victim in the parable. Imagine being attacked and lying nearly dead by the roadside. You are too weak to get up and are totally dependent on the kindness of others. Fortunately, someone who cares arrives. This stranger tends to your wounds, puts you on his donkey and takes you to a safe place. He also pays for your care. You might be asking: Why was I attacked and what did I do to deserve the kindness of this stranger who is a Samaritan?

We are all the victim in this story because we are constantly being picked up and cared for by Jesus. Do we realize the love he has for us and thus wholeheartedly, receive and experience his unending mercy and care? It is not possible to give mercy to others or become the Good Samaritan unless we sufficiently receive and appreciate this mercy that God rains on our lives daily. There is a supernatural component to giving mercy – we must realize it is not due to our efforts but that of Jesus acting in and through us.

“It will not bother me in the hour of death to reflect that I have been ‘had for a sucker’ by any number of impostors, but it would be a torment to know that one had refused even one person in need.” – C.S Lewis ❖

**Gratitude at Jubilee** We, the Jubilarians, thank the Associates for your prayers, cards, and gifts – especially the bouquet of roses. It was a beautiful celebration for us, and we are grateful for the thoughtfulness and kindness. Your presence and words are appreciated and treasured. ❖

### ***Franciscan Connections Newsletter***

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# Justice and Peace Connection

By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC



## Centrality of the Human Person

Where do you see the value of life or the dignity of someone who does not look or act like you? The answer should serve as a foundation for how we live.

People either choose their parents' political party or the opposite. Whatever the reason, those who profess to be Christian should embody the Gospels of Jesus by supporting migrants, refugees, the vulnerable, and the poor.

Much is said today about immigrants in our country and the accusations of their felonies, murders, and rapes. These accusations intend to coerce people into seeing the immigrant as not a human who is created in the image of Christ. Pope Francis called us to encounter one another, to create a culture of life and not death; to engage and to see the richness that immigrants bring to our shores. Choosing to ignore the value of life or the dignity of the immigrant makes us part of the problem. These attacks on deportation are also attacks on the poor and vulnerable, along with our healthcare and democracy. Deportations are not meant to make America great again but to keep the rich richer and the poor poorer.

If we accept the Word of God, we must be part of the solution. We must be Christ's presence and support the poor, the suffering, the outcast, and the voiceless. On his deathbed, Pope Francis wanted to be close to those in prison, even if he could not wash their feet. He recognized their humanity; their God-given dignity like you and me; that they, too, are His children. Pope Leo XIV made it clear before

his election, "There is no hierarchy to loving." We are called to love everyone.

A seamless garment of love for all is grounded in human dignity; we are called to be a religious voice. As Christians, we strive to give public witness to our faith and the cries of the poor. We engage in being a field hospital to all who are wounded and support them.

Let us be Christ to one another and be peacemakers like St. Francis by ending the polarization and divisiveness, engaging in synodal ways of being in communion for the common good, and participating in public witness to be an antidote to tyranny and dictatorial leadership. Above all, let us strive to live the mission of Jesus, who had a preferential option for the poor.

Pope Francis' Easter message must be our motivation: On this day, I would like all of us to hope anew and to revive our trust in others, including those who are different than ourselves, or who come from distant lands, bringing unfamiliar customs, ways of life and ideas! For all of us are children of God! The light of Easter impels us to break down the barriers that create division and are fraught with grave political and economic consequences. It impels us to care for one another, to increase our mutual solidarity, and to work for the integral development of each human person. (Ubi et Orbi 2025) ❖

## WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER . . .

- Gloria Guy (Decatur) who is being treated for medical problems
- Mary Wilquet (Green Bay) who is being treated for medical problems
- Linda Marti (Highland) who is caring for her ailing mother
- Kathy Kovell (Eau Claire) who is being treated for medical problems
- Mary Reiser (Springfield) who is in hospice care
- For all Hospital Sisters and Associates
- For peace and justice in our world ❖

## **SPIRIT MATTERS:**

### **Immerse yourself in nature's green medicine**

**By Jerrilyn Zavada  
Novak  
Associate (Streator)**



I am a die-hard Autumn fan.

The colors, crisp air, coziness, comfort, and yes, melancholy nourish me in ways the other seasons don't and can't. I savor this season of the soul while it is here, and I look forward to it the rest of the year.

Winter is a close second, and if it weren't for the sometimes bitterly cold temperatures it brings, it might be tied with Autumn. For me, Winter is time of rich incubation for creativity. By turning down the dial on exterior distractions, the soft darkness allows my soul to listen with greater depth and clarity.

As I age, though, I treasure more the limitless shades of green that abound in the spring, and especially now, in the fullness of summer. The next time you are in a natural setting, pay attention to the subtle shades of green everywhere. It is enchanting. Who knew green could have so many varied expressions?

Green has a soothing, healing quality, particularly for those with depression, nervousness and anxiety. We painted our shared workspace at home a sage green, and decorated with natural elements, making this a space of calmness, peace and refuge.

Because nature's greenness is so soothing, I take every opportunity I can to drive scenic routes, to immerse myself in its spiritual medicine. If that is not possible, I am fortunate to be able to look out the window into our

backyard to lush vegetation that does the trick every time.

According to color-meanings.com, green symbolizes harmony, safety, growth and health. The color revitalizes, balances, relaxes and encourages.

"Green soothes with its gentle and peaceful undertones," the website says. "Green squelches chaos, making it a force to be reckoned with."

Did you catch the weight of that last sentence? "Green squelches chaos, making it a force to be reckoned with."

It occurred to me this morning the difference in tactics between what I will call "elements of darkness" and "elements of light."

While darker forces create nothing but noise, division and chaos, the forces of light 'soothe with their gentle and peaceful undertones.'

St. Francis embodied that gentleness and peace, and it is a significant reason he is so deeply revered by those of faith, and those of no faith, 800 years after his death.

Here is Psalm 19:1-3:

***The heavens are telling of the glory of  
God;***

***And their expanse is declaring the work of  
His hands***

***Day to day pours forth speech,  
And night to night reveals knowledge.***

***There is no speech, nor are there words;  
Their voice is not heard.***

Divine Beauty doesn't have to scream and shout. Rather, God captivates with quiet wisdom and sublime beauty.

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# The 150th Anniversary of the Sisters . . .

## 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picnic :

On July 6, the Sisters hosted a picnic as part of the celebration in Bon Hall. The guests included Sisters, current employees (along with Food Service and Diocese), previous employees, Associates, Ursuline Sisters, Franciscan Friars, Norbertine Fathers, and former members. The event was very well attended and there was great fellowship among the Sisters and the guests – the sense of family was evident. ❖



## Sacred CONCERT



September 21, 2025  
4 p.m.

St. Clare of Assisi Catholic  
Church Choir  
(O'Fallon, IL)



St. Francis of Assisi Church  
4875 LaVerna Road  
Springfield, IL 62707



Free | Open to the public



**150<sup>th</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY  
*With joy and thanksgiving*



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis



## May Crowning . . .

On May 15, 2025, a May Crowning was held in the Family Room for Sisters and Associates. The ceremony included Marian hymns, readings, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and intercessions during which time attendees held red votive candles and offered intentions. Mike Sgro led the rosary, and Mary Lewis crowned the statue of Mary. During the ceremony, God blessed the gathering with a rainbow in the sky that could be seen over Mary's head through the window. The last time the Associates hosted a May Crowning was in 2005. ❖



## Associate Volunteer Opportunities

by Nancy Davis



As we continue with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in America, additional volunteer opportunities have been identified and include:

- Spice Packing Ministry - Sister Annice is assisting HSHS St. John's Hospital Nutrition Department in packaging spices for cardiac patients on August 20, 2025, from 10-11:30 a.m. with lunch to follow. This will be a monthly project on the first and third Wednesday of each month for four volunteers.
- September 17, 2025 - Adorers in the St. Clare of Assisi Adoration Chapel from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with either 30-minute or one-hour opportunities available.
- September 21, 2025 - 8 volunteers are needed for the concert in St. Francis of Assisi Church to be guides from 3-5:30 p.m.
- November 7, 2025 - Adorers in the St. Clare of Assisi Adoration Chapel from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with either 30-minute or one-hour opportunities available.
- Spend time with our Sisters in Loretto Home. Please contact Sister Emerencia, Coordinator of Community Life, at 217.522.3387, ext. 542 or [etirkey@hsosf-usa.org](mailto:etirkey@hsosf-usa.org) ❖

### IN LOVING MEMORY . . .

#### **SISTER MARY EVELYN LAMB, OSF**

BORN 12-27-1922

FIRST PROFESSION 6-13-1952

DIED 6-21-2025

#### **ASSOCIATE ERMA RUBENACKER (DECATUR)**

BORN: 09-09-1925

COMMITMENT: 1996

DIED: 01-23-2025

**MAY THEY SHARE WITH JESUS THE JOY  
AND PEACE OF HEAVEN.**

## FOR FOUNDATION DAY . . .



Candy was shared with the Sisters as they celebrated Foundation Day on July 2, 2025. Their community was founded on July 2, 1844. ❖

## Spirit Matters:

### Continued from page 4

In fact, we usually have to quiet ourselves and turn down the noise in our own hearts to be receptive to the grace the forces of light wish to pour out on us.

This is why dedicated time to prayer, meditation and thoughtful reflection is essential in the spiritual life. If we don't remove ourselves from the prevailing chaos around us, we will be swallowed up by the negative forces that are like bulls in a China shop, destroying everything in their way.

As the noise and chaos in the news continues to distract and destroy our peace of mind, we can quietly resist by immersing ourselves in the soothing Sacred Presence hidden in plain sight – in the lush, abundant, fertile greenery of Mother Nature.

**SPIRIT MATTERS** is a weekly column by Jerrilyn Zavada Novak that examines experiences common to the human spirit. Contact her at [jzblue33@yahoo.com](mailto:jzblue33@yahoo.com). ❖





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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

### **Your assistance is needed: Associate Candidates**

Do you know anyone looking to deepen their faith? Is there someone who could use a spiritual boost or has the desire to be part of something bigger than themselves? We will start a new class of candidates in the fall. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please have them contact Nancy Davis at 217-522-3387, ext. 664 or [ndavis@hsosf-usa.org](mailto:ndavis@hsosf-usa.org). Is God calling you to reach out to someone with this invitation? Do you feel a nudge from the Holy Spirit to be an evangelizer? Please pray about it and then share the gift of being Franciscan. ❖

### **Upcoming Associate Events. . .**

**August offering: August 21, 2025** – Associate Meeting in the Family Room at 6:30 p.m. Fr. Stephen Boyle, O.Praem, will discuss discernment.

**September offering: September 3, 2025** - Sister Rebecca Ann Gemma, OP, will discuss racism at 10 a.m. in the Family Room

**September 18, 2025:** Associate Meeting in the Family room at 6:30 p.m. A Dominican Sister will discuss Jubilee Farms.

**September 21, 2025:** 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary sacred concert in St. Francis of Assisi Church at 4 p.m.

**October 3, 2025:** Transitus in the St. Clare of Assisi Adoration Chapel. (Information to follow)

**November 2, 2025:** All Souls Day Prayer Service in Crucifixion Hill Cemetery at 6 p.m.