



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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Sister Margarete is re-elected

On September 14, 2024, Sister M. Margarete Ulager, OSF, was re-elected 11th General Superior of the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. She is picture above with the other Sisters elected to the General Leadership team. Left to right: Sisters Teresa, Lima, Margarete, Rita, and Hiltrud. Sister Margarete’s first term as General Superior began in 2018.

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Associate Office

By Nancy Davis

The Principle of Social Proof

I recently learned a term called the principle of social proof. Social proof is a psychological phenomenon in which people assume the actions of others reflect correct behavior. An example would be you are standing at a busy crosswalk waiting for the traffic sign to turn green so you can walk, but several other people approach and decide to walk despite the red warning sign, so you do the same.

Social proof, also known as informational social influence, is a psychological term coined by Robert

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Associate Office –

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Cialdini in his 1984 book, *Influence*. The idea is that people assume the actions of others are correct based on the frequency they see those actions, and they copy the actions. This may also be referred to as herd mentality.

This phenomenon of social proof can be observed in many aspects of life, including fashion trends, investment decisions, political affiliations, and social media. Social proof, or informational social influence, can have an impact on a person's psychology in negative ways. Some of the dangers include adopting the beliefs of the group, replacing one's values which can lead to poor decision-making that lacks critical thinking, reducing fear of repercussions that create invisibility and invincibility in a large group (thus reducing the fear of being held accountable for one's actions), and conforming to harmful stereotypes or engaging in risky behaviors. Herd mentality was a driving factor in historical events such as the killing of millions of people in Nazi Germany and the genocide in Rwanda. Good people made very bad and life-altering decisions based on social proof and the desire to conform or fear of non-conformity.

As Christians, how much does this phenomenon impact you? Do you tend to be a crowd follower? Do you have deep roots and convictions about who you are and what you believe? Amid the influence of all forms of media, we must have courage in our beliefs and the willingness to take a risk to stand up for them. Do you assume that someone will call 911 when you encounter an accident, or do you stop to help? Are you the one who offers the homeless person conversation to see what is needed or the one who ignores the person? Have you familiarized yourself with Catholic social teachings so you can know where the Church stands on social issues and how they can guide your actions, or do you

choose not to be aware? Do you maintain the status quo or are you courageous to carve out a path that might not be the one everyone else is following? Jesus had no patience for the status quo, and he expects his followers to be doers of the word, not just hearers (James 1:22). As Franciscans are we willing to be fools for Christ as Francis was?

The principle of social proof can be a powerful force if we let it, and awareness is the first step in examining our behaviors. To combat the tendency to follow the crowd, begin by examining your life and be the one who stands out when God demands it, remaining strong in your faith and your beliefs. My parents said, "If everyone else jumps off the bridge are you going to jump too?" That was a question that is at the heart of this phenomenon. Hopefully, you are not the bridge jumper.

"Radical love demands that we not look simply at what everyone else is doing. It demands we gaze at Christ." Eric Clayton. ❖

WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER . . .

- Gloria Guy (Decatur) who is being treated for medical problems
- Pat Wright (Streator) who is being treated for medical problems
- Denny Kirchgesner (Springfield) who is being treated for medical problems
- RuthEllen Davis (Springfield) who is recovering from surgery
- Vikki Warren (Springfield) who has several family members with cancer or other significant medical issues
- For peace and justice in our country and for the election of leaders who will lead with integrity and with attention to the common good.
- For our world and especially for the people of Gaza, Ukraine, and our southern borders
- For our Hospital Sisters and all Associates ❖

Justice and Peace Connection

By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC



Jubilee 2025: Prayer, Hope and Love



This logo has four stylized figures to indicate all of humanity from the four corners of the earth. They embrace one another, indicating the solidarity and brotherhood that must unite peoples, and the first figure is clinging to the Cross. The underlying waves are choppy to indicate that the pilgrimage of life is not always on calm waters. The Cross is not static but bending and indicating it will be with humanity.

(Vatican News)

This year brought the invitation from Pope Francis to “intensify our prayer,” our intimate connection and relationship with God. Perhaps we prayed for our country amidst divisiveness in preparing for the election. November is also the time we celebrate saints, souls, veterans, Diwali (Festival of Lights), the birthday of Dorothy Day, World Day of Prayer, and so much more. Our prayer continues and we intensify our efforts to continue to pray for the common good and to live the litmus test of all: loving one another regardless of our political aspirations, race, color, or creed. Together we are pilgrims of

hope, wounded healers, and called to be Christ’s healing presence. Pope Francis reminds us that there are many reasons and ways to pray but at the root of prayer is the desire to be open to God’s presence and his offer of love - to be his love.

On the Vatican’s Jubilee website, it states that on Christmas Eve, that holy night, when the “hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight,” Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica. The Holy Door is significant since the aim of the pilgrim is to pass through it. In crossing the threshold, the pilgrim is reminded of the passage from Chapter 10 of St. John’s Gospel: “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” Passing through the Holy Door expresses the decision to follow and be guided by Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

At this time, may we en flesh Fratelli Tutti by recognizing our oneness and our one family as exemplified in Laudato Si. Let us continue to celebrate 800 hundred years of Franciscan spirituality as we chant the Canticle of Creatures and reverence the symbol: the world. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new Earth (cf. 2 *Pet* 3:13) where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony and in joyful expectation of the fulfillment of the Lord’s promises. A blessed season to all and Jubilee blessings.❖

In Loving Memory . . .

Sister Anne Carlino, OSF

Born: 03/15/1936

First Profession: 6/13/1957

Died: 09/04/2024

May she share with Jesus the joy and peace of heaven .

Living the Franciscan Charism in a Fractured World . . .

By Nancy Davis



The annual Sister and Associate retreat was held at the Evermode Institute on September 21, 2024. The theme was “Living the Franciscan Charism in a Fractured World” and was presented by Angela Senander, PhD. Angela brought her experience in Franciscan teaching/spirituality with an expertise in the crossroads of ethics and the Catholic Church. She invited us to look at the world as St. Francis and St. Clare knew it amid the social and armed conflicts of their time. She challenged us to look at how their lives are an inspiration and how they shape the way we strive to live the Gospel. Angela also encouraged us to consider the incarnation and the nativity at Greccio. We explored how the love of Christ was brought into the world in the time of Francis and Clare and how we can bring the love of Christ into our world despite the overwhelming darkness at times.

The afternoon session was on creation and St. Francis’ spiritual connectedness to everything God made. We looked at one work of creation, spending time looking, touching, and examining it, and then discerned ways to care for creation.

In the final session, we discussed the healing ministry of Francis and Clare and consider ways that our world needs healing. We considered

Catholic social teachings and how to discern what it means to vote for the common good, using resources from Pope Francis and others.

The day ended with Mass in the St. Clare of Assisi Adoration Chapel celebrated by Father Gregory Dick, O.Praem. The feedback from the retreat was positive even though there were conversations that were difficult to hear amid the strife that people are experiencing. ❖



Lighting The Lantern Within

By Jerrilyn Zavada
(Streator)

Year of Commitment – 2019



You are the light of the world...your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. ~ Matthew 5:14, 16

I think we all know it when we meet them. They are the few and far between that glow from the inside out.

If the eyes are, indeed, the windows to the soul, their souls act as lanterns for the rest of us.

When we meet them, or see them, we might not be able to put into words exactly what it is we experience in their presence, but our hearts recognize it, as if what they have, who they are, is something imprinted on our internal Global Positioning System – something we were designed to look for and desire to emulate, from ancient days.

One thing I have come to know for sure in this life, is that most of the time, the light that shines forth from these people – although it is part of their interior, part of their being – is not lit by a random fluke.

These people have, through whatever difficulties or challenges they have encountered in their lifetimes, opened themselves up to the reality of a Spiritual Power that in its very essence is love, is light.

These people have surrendered their struggles, their pride, their anger, their self-righteousness, their greed, their envy, their lust, their addictions – whatever hostile forces formerly controlled them – and humbled themselves, at some point acknowledging they do not, in fact, have all the answers to life,

and they just might need a bit of help to figure things out. They have opened themselves to allow that love, that light, to shine through the darkness that once clouded their spiritual vision.

Of course, for most of us, that light does not come in one shot and stay brilliantly lit all the time. It comes in stages. The more we seek that Love, that Light, the greater that Light shines through us.

I have found the easiest way to become more consumed by that light, that love is through the simple act of prayer.

When you commit your life to prayer, you begin an adventure before unimaginable. It takes you places you never would have – never could have – gone on your own.

One thing I think we all need to remember, is that we cannot put prayer into a box. We cannot say what works for me will work the same for someone else. Just as our souls are unique and mysterious, the way that Love, that Light communicates with each of us is unique, mysterious, and most of all, intimate. That Presence knows us better than we will ever know ourselves. In fact, it is that very Presence that, if we spend one-on-one time with it often, will reveal who we are inside.

Through the years, I have used various aids to prayer: candles, rosaries, touchstones, Mass, music, spiritual retreats, sacred reading and more. Just as we all have various seasons of life we live through, so our prayer life experiences changing seasons as well. At this time in my life, I find the way that I can most deeply be receptive to that Presence is through quiet contemplative prayer.

There is a verse in one of Saint Paul's letters in the New Testament that says, "he must increase, and I must decrease." When I practice contemplative prayer, that is what I

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Sister Margarete . . .

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Sister Margarete was born on November 4, 1956. She professed First Vows with the German Province of the Hospital Sisters on May 1, 1981. She holds a diploma in nursing and served more than 20 years as a nurse in ICU, Anesthesia, and Nursing Administration. She also earned a master's degree in global management from the University of Salford Manchester. From 1997-2001, she served on the Provincial Council of the German Province and from 2001-18 she served as General Treasurer of the Congregation.

Bishop Dr. Felix Genn, Diocese of Muenster, Germany, joined the delegates to the 21st General Chapter for the election of the General Superior on September 14. With the voting completed, they traveled by bus to the Motherhouse Church. To the sound of the church bells ringing, Sister Margarete walked down the aisle with Bishop Felix to a standing ovation. Sister Margarete took the oath of office and Bishop Felix presented her with the seal and the key of the congregation.

In the afternoon, back at the Chapter Hall, the new councilors were elected: Sister M. Rita Edakkoottathil, OSF, General Vicar (Indian Province), Sister M. Lima Arackal, OSF (Indian Province), Sister M. Hiltrud Vacker, OSF (German Province), and Sister M. Teresa Wawrowicz, OSF (Polish Province).

Attending the General Chapter from the U.S. Canonical House as delegates were Sisters Maureen O'Connor, Anna Phiri, and Ines Schlathölter. Sister Nichola Truong, a member of the Japan Province who is in Springfield studying English, was also a delegate. Brian Blasco attended as a guest and member of the media team.

General Superiors

Sr. Josephine Elkmann, OSF (1852-66)
Sr. Bernhardine Wehage, OSF (1866-97)
Sr. Cherubine Döring, OSF (1897-1921)
Sr. Pulcheria Braems, OSF (1921-39)
Sr. Wistremunda Schemann, OSF (1939-52)
Sr. M. Odilia Berkel, OSF (1952-70)
Sr. M. Barthola Thoben, OSF (1970-76)
Sr. M. Angela Schrudde, OSF (1976-94)
Sr. Mary Ann Minor, OSF (1994-2006)
Sr. Sherrey Murphy, OSF (2006-18)
Sr. M. Margarete Ulager, OSF (2018-30) ❖

Lighting The Lantern

Within . . .

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I am hoping for, that the Mysterious Presence that keeps the Universe in order will increase in me, and that my short-sighted, proud ego that is always seeking to have its way, will decrease.

By opening my heart, my soul, to that Love, that Light in the quiet, I am hoping to become one of them – those people that glow from the inside out, whose souls act as a lantern for the rest of us.

SPIRIT MATTERS is a weekly column that examines spirituality in The Times' readership area. Contact Jerrilyn Zavada at jzblue33@yahoo.com to share how you engage your spirit in your life and in your community.❖

Are You Getting the News?

Do you receive emails from Nancy Davis, and/or Brian Blasco? These might be news items, meeting notices, circular letters, obituaries, or pertinent information. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact Nancy Davis at ndavis@hsosf-usa.org or call 217-522-3387, ext. 664 so your email can be verified or added. ❖

The 100th Container Celebration for HSHS Mission Outreach

By Nancy Davis

On August 15, 2024, Erica Smith, executive director of HSHS Mission Outreach, shared information on the same day that Mission Outreach sent its 100th container of medical supplies. Mission Outreach staff, HSHS colleagues, volunteers, and the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis celebrated over several days and it was exciting for Erica to be with the Sisters and Associates that day. This 100th container was sent to Burundi, a country in east-central Africa, which was fitting since the first container was sent to Tanzania. ❖



Congratulations to Sister Emerencia and Brian

The Sisters recently embarked on a new structure with one person who is the Coordinator of Community Life with responsibilities for all the Sisters (St. Francis Convent, Loretto Home, and those living elsewhere) and Sister Emerencia Tirkey, OSF, will serve in that role for three years. Sister Emerencia is a member of the Indian Province of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis who professed First Vows in 1986. She is a registered nurse and registered mid-wife. From 2004-16, Sister Emerencia served in nursing, along with physical therapy, in Loretto Home. She returned to India in 2016 and since that time served in Provincial leadership, served as Community Superior at St. Francis Convent (Kurkuria, India) as well as a nurse in a few locations.



Brian Blasco has been appointed the Assistant Coordinator of Community Life and will serve with Sister Emerencia for three years. Born and raised in Streator, IL, he served at St. Mary's Hospital (Streator, IL) from 1991-2004 in public relations and he became an Associate in 2000. In 2004, he began his ministry of communications at St. Francis Convent and in 2014, he also became the Archivist. He will continue his work in communications and archives in addition to his new responsibilities. ❖



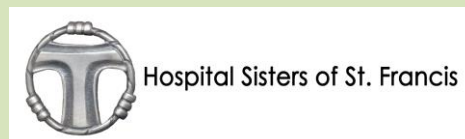
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Upcoming Events . . .

November offering – On Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., Fr. Augustine Puchner, O. Praem, will discuss Advent. We will meet in the Convent Family Room.

December offering - On Thursday, December 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., (second Thursday of the month instead of the third, due to Christmas) we will have our Annual Advent Christmas Bingo Celebration. This year's theme will be "Follow the Star."



2025 is the 150th anniversary for the Sisters and four of their hospitals: St. John's, St. Elizabeth's, St. Francis, and St. Anthony's Memorial. 150 years ago, November 6, 1875, 20 Sisters from Germany arrived in Alton, IL. ❖