



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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Nine Sisters celebrated their Jubilee on June 23 in St. Francis of Assisi Church. Pictured: (seated) Sisters Marie Chang, Anna Clara Rick, Viola Swoboda, and Leonardine Sconzert (70 years); (standing) Sister Jocelyn Serwatka (75 years), Sisters Joseph Wu and Chaminade Kelley (70 years), Sisters Maureen O'Connor and Sherrey Murphy (50 years). ❖

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Associate Office

By Nancy Davis

Do I Have To?

(Matthew 5: 43-44, 48) You have heard it said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

An important question Christians must answer in the midst of today's events is, "Can I really show love for Christ if I bear any hate for those who I view as enemies, strangers, aliens or immigrants?" There are over 50 verses in the Bible that reference treatment of the enemy, orphan, and the alien. None of them encourage anything less than fair

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Associate Office –

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treatment, care, and love. Zechariah 7:10 says: “Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.” I find that everywhere in our cultural milieu I am faced with others who are supporting mistreatment of our fellow man yet proclaim to be Christians. It seems that many times this stance is based on fear. What is it about the immigrant, the foreigner, or the person with different color skin or a different faith that threatens us? Our lives are generally seen through the lens of scarcity, meaning that if our lifestyle is threatened, we tend to hoard as a defense against scarcity and it steels us against change. We may inadvertently subscribe to some of the myths of scarcity such as... “There is not enough to go around,” or “More is better.” Are we afraid the stranger will take our food, our homes, or our jobs? Is it lack of trust in God to provide, not just for us, but for all mankind? When we see the world through the lens of abundance as St. Francis did, we trust in God’s provision, which eliminates unreasonable fear. I came across this quote recently that gave me pause, “The willingness to surprise our adversary with compassion, with love, with forgiveness - with justice according to the heart of Christ, in other words – performs a far more efficient and constructive task. It puts evildoers at the risk of being converted, and it dynamizes the whole of society by introducing into it the most divine of principles: self-giving at all costs.” (Erasmus Levia-Merikakis). Are we willing to give of ourselves and not weigh the cost? Are we willing to risk knowing and caring for the other? Can we adjust our lenses and see the world through a lens of abundance truly trusting in God’s ability to provide for not just us, but everyone thus eliminating much of the fear that can trigger oppression and hatred? Can we see the other as brothers and sisters in Christ and love them as Christ loves them rather than feeling threatened by those whom we don’t know? Richard Rohr proposes, “They represent what we are most afraid of and what we most

deny within ourselves. That’s why we must learn to love what first seems like our ‘enemy’.” Unless you can answer yes to these questions you still have work to do in order to show the love of Christ. Jesus makes it crystal clear, “love your enemies.” Period. No excuses. ❖

Eucharist: Diamond in Our Midst



On May 18-19, 2018 the annual Associate/Sister retreat was held at the Chiara Center. Our guest presenter was Sr. Edna Michel from the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Charity, Tiffin, Ohio. The topic “Eucharist: Diamond In Our Midst” was interesting, entertaining, intriguing, and spiritually enriching for all who attended. Sr. Edna presented the facets of the Eucharist to include: The Hungers of the Human Heart; The Body of Christ; The Dignity and Destiny of All Creation; Eucharist as Sacrifice; The Paschal Mystery in Our Lives; and Eucharist as Gratitude. She helped attendees to see that the Eucharist is like a finely cut diamond – as you turn it, every surface gives off a beautiful vision. Her goal at the onset of the retreat was to help her listeners discover a love for the Eucharist in their own life, here in the 21st century. She fulfilled her mission in her enlivened presentations that included songs, slide shows, and handouts that kept the retreatants engaged throughout the weekend. Each retreatant took away something very valuable from Sr. Edna’s presentations and we will look forward to having her again sometime. ❖

Sister Jonette Is Honored By The Franciscan Federation

By Brian Blasco



Sister Jonette Devlin, OSF was among 31 Franciscan Sisters and Brothers honored during the 2018 Franciscan Federation Conference in Buffalo, NY. These honorees embody the best of the Franciscan teaching tradition and the values of being incarnational, personal, communal, and transformative while engaging the heart and developing servant-leaders.

In her nomination, we stated that Sister Jonette embodies the Franciscan spirit by observing an openness to the other in her previous service in nursing and also at the New Community Shelter (Green Bay, WI) along with her current service as a volunteer at HSHS St. John's Hospital and St. John's Breadline. Founded in 1929 at St. John's Hospital by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, the Breadline continues its mission through Catholic Charities and serves more than 200,000 meals annually. Sister Jonette's Franciscan spirit is shared with the guests as she provides them a meal and through her mindfulness of showing respect to all.

Sister Jonette entered the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis on September 8, 1946 and professed First Vows on June 13, 1949. She is a graduate of St. John's Hospital School of Nursing and earned a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in nursing from St. Louis University.

From 1954-69, she served at St. John's Hospital and St. John's Hospital School of Nursing as a clinical instructor, organized the first Intensive Care Unit that opened on May 3, 1965, and was the supervisor. From 1971-2013, she served at St. Vincent Hospital (Green Bay, WI) as a Clinical Nurse Specialist of the three Critical Care Units. She was the first clinical nurse specialist at St. Vincent Hospital and was responsible for

teaching the registered nurses in the hospital's adult Critical Care Units and throughout the hospital. She also taught at local nursing programs and was a preceptor for students in master's programs for colleges in Wisconsin and Michigan. While at St. Vincent in the 1970s, she developed the renal dialysis program and the organ donation program – both of which continue today. Also, in the 1970s, she provided outreach in the community by offering pacemaker clinics and blood pressure screenings and working with the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin. ❖

Associate Candidates? . . .

Do you know anyone looking to deepen their faith? Is there someone in your life that could use a spiritual shot in the arm or that might have the desire to be part of something bigger than themselves? We will be starting a new class of candidates to become Associates of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis in the fall. If you know of anyone that might be interested, please have them contact Nancy Davis at 217-544-3386 x664. Is God calling you to reach out to someone with this invitation? Do you feel a slight nudge from the Holy Spirit to be an evangelizer? If you don't ask, who will? Please pray about it and share our best kept secret, being Franciscan. ❖

Franciscan Connections Newsletter

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Musings from Chiara

By Dan Frachey



Demolition

As I begin to write this article, I just came from watching the machinery breaking into the walls of the old Loretto home. I could feel the jarring thud of metal on brick and could hear the subsequent crashes as bricks fell to the earth. Even as I was aware of the feeling of nostalgia that fills such moments of change, I could imagine what the new landscaping would look like that will gradually emerge once the demolition is over. In accord with the Paschal Mystery of the Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, this very same process is a necessary part for each of us on the spiritual journey.

Over the past few months, I have encountered three older adults who shared with me a profound statement that goes something like this: *"I want to live more intentionally and avoid spending my time on what really doesn't matter."* There was a heightened sense of intentionality and passion that arose from what seemed to be a combination of life-acquired wisdom, coupled with the awareness that their time on this earth is limited. I felt a holy sense of awe and admiration as each of these began to share what they intended to do with their lives along with what they intended to cut off and move past.

In his 2011 book, *Falling Upwards*, Richard Rohr sees this as a crucial awakening of some new thresholds that we all must meet when moving toward what is next. *"There is a deeper voice of God, which you must learn to hear and obey in the second half of life. It will sound an awful lot like the voices of risk,*

of trust, of surrender, of soul, 'of common sense,' of destiny, of love, of an intimate stranger, of your deepest self...The true faith journey only begins at this point." (page 48).

So, when a moment or even a prolonged period of demolition occurs, the hope and challenge is to see beyond the circumstances to find the loving and intentional hand of the master architect who is redesigning, reconfiguring and yes, reimagining you in the midst of this thing called the journey. ❖

WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER . . .

- Sr. Ann Mathieu whose sister passed away
- Mike Sgro who had surgery
- Debbie Waitkus (Springfield) who is undergoing medical treatment
- All our Sisters in Loretto Home ❖

Sisters' Foundation Day . . .



In honor of the Sisters' Foundation Day on July 2, Associate Coordinator Nancy Davis along with Associates Bonnie Flynn, Margie Sgro and Mike Sgro (pictured above), prepared a basket of assorted candy for the Motherhouse Sisters and individually packaged sweet treats for the Sisters in Loretto Home. ❖

Justice and Peace Connection

By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC



Gaudete et Exsultate: Rejoice and Be Glad

This is the latest apostolic exhortation released by Pope Francis in April. As we read it, we begin to realize that we, the least of God's children, are called to be holy and that holiness is just being about the ordinary tasks of life in an extraordinary way.

It takes patience to be a good parent, a good teacher, a good religious, a good citizen. But just how do I know if I am holy? For me, sometimes in my quiet I ponder the questions posed by St. Ignatius of Loyola: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to be doing for Christ? Normally we would reply, I'd do anything for Christ but it's those folks at the crossroads looking for a freebie, a meal, a job or above all money that get to me.

Catholic Social Teachings have gotten a bad reputation due to it being regarded as something radical or extreme. But if we go to the basics, radical does mean rootedness and roots are necessary for life. Thus, to be holy, it would help if I am rooted in God's word. For the Word is a light that allows me to read the signs of the times. When we encounter the Word or better still allow It to encounter us, we are changed. A good litmus test is Matt.25 "... whatever you do to the least of these you do to me," says the Lord. For St. Francis of Assisi this meant meeting and greeting the lepers of everyday life. "Holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full" (Benedict XV1 Catechesis, General Audience of 13 April 2011).

In simple, daily practical living it is what love looks like in public. I dare to leave my comfort zone and agenda to meet the one in need and respond to his cries or those of Mother Earth. If I do not respond to the cries of the poor and the cries of Mother Earth, I am lacking in holiness/wholeness. So, grab a copy, get with a few who will keep us honest and continue on your path of holiness. Above all, rejoice and be glad for in the good times and the not so good times God is with us and loving us into being. Name and claim your holiness for in so doing you are giving God the glory. ❖

News Bits . . .

The first round of orientations for our new Associate Volunteer Ministry in Loretto Home has been completed. We have 10 volunteers that have participated in the orientation process and are now beginning their ministry. If you are wanting to learn more about Franciscan spirituality, have a desire to spend more time with the Sisters, or just have a heart and the time to serve, please consider becoming an Associate Loretto Home volunteer. The time commitment is entirely up to each volunteer. Your life will most certainly be enriched by this ministry and you will be blessing the lives of the Sisters as well. If interested contact Nancy Davis at 522-3387 x664 or email at: ndavis@hsosf-usa.org for more information.

Please check out our Facebook page for updates on the activities of the Associates, inspirational quotes and stories, and other information concerning our Associate group. We can be found on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/AssociateoftheHSOSF/> or just click on the Facebook icon in any email message from Nancy Davis, which will take you directly to the page. We love to use pictures of Associates in ministry so send in your pictures. If you have other items or suggestions for the page, please contact Nancy at: 522-3387 x664. ❖

Why I want to be an Associate of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis . . . (Formal Commitment – October 12-14)



“I have been looking for ways to grow closer to God and to deepen my relationship with him. After hearing about the Franciscan Associates through a dear friend of mine, I decided this was a place I needed to be. I have been blessed to meet and spend time with many great Sisters, men and women. Their stories, examples, and devotion to Our Lord have been an invaluable resource for me in my spiritual journey. I look forward to spending time in this wonderful spirit-filled community and am filled with great joy that I can pursue this opportunity.”

**Susie Ferguson
Springfield, IL**

“I am drawn to be Franciscan to grow closer to the spirit and mission of St. Francis, St. Clare, and the Sisters. I also want to continue to grow in holiness on my ongoing spiritual journey. I have been connected with the Sisters for over 40 years and want to continue to build that relationship. Recently I was able to participate in the Franciscan Pilgrimage to Assisi and Muenster which stirred a curiosity in me and left me wanting more.”



**Helen Essenpreis
Breese, IL**



“Spending nearly 44 years with Hospital Sisters Health System allowed me to grow spiritually, personally and professionally. By becoming an Associate, I hope to continue this growth while giving back.”

**David Kerwin
Springfield, IL**

“The reason I want to be a Franciscan Associate of the Hospital Sisters is I want to serve God and learn how to live more simply.”

**Sheila Weber
Highland, IL**



“I converted to Catholicism as an adult. I received a Jesuit education at St. Louis University and was fascinated by the depth of the Catholic faith. My view of church was that it was static and joyless. I knew nothing about saints and I was drawn to their lives, faith, and wisdom. This led me to the study of St. Francis and I was told by friends that there is so much to learn from the Sisters and their history and their devotion. I feel so blessed that there are so many ways to grow in my faith.”

**Karen Rehkemper
Highland, IL**

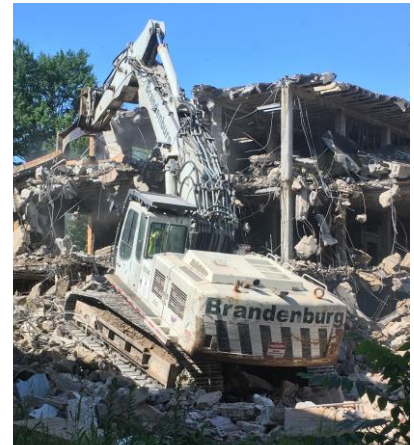
Deconstruction of Loretto Home

By: Nancy Davis

Those who live or work in the St. Francis Convent can't help but notice all the activity surrounding the deconstruction of the old Loretto Home. The sounds and sights of this project change on a daily basis and the work is expected to be completed in by the end of the summer.

Since 1934, an area at St. Francis Convent has been designated for Sisters who are provided nursing care. Originally named Our Lady of the Angels, the area evolved over the years until 1971 when the building named Loretto Home was opened. This name was chosen in recognition of The Holy House of Loreto - a Basilica in Loreto, Italy that enshrines the house where the Blessed Virgin Mary is believed to have lived.

Over time, the building started showing the wear and tear of aging. Much planning was put into renovating the 2004 Assisi building, and on March 13, 2018, the Sisters were moved to a new Loretto Home. Below are some pictures of the demolition. The landscape is certainly changing. ❖



General Chapter

By: Nancy Davis

As an Associate of the Hospital Sisters, you may not be aware of the workings of the international Congregation of the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis.

The Sisters' will hold their General Chapter of Elections and Affairs from September 6-22, 2018. The General Chapter, the highest decision-making authority in the Congregation is held every six years to elect the leadership team and provide direction for the international Congregation. The General Council, the leadership team, is headquartered in Muenster, Germany with Provinces in Germany, Poland, America, Japan, and India – currently more than 700 Sisters. Each Province has a leadership team (the Provincial Council) who report to the General Council.

There are 26 elected delegates to the 2018 General Chapter with representation from each Province. Due to property limitations, this is the first time in the Sisters' 174-year history that the Chapter will not be held in Germany and so it will be held at the Chiara Center. The outgoing General Superior is Sister Sherrey Murphy, a member of the American Province.

During September there will be many international guests at the Chiara Center to include Sisters, translators, and others associates with the Chapter. With this in mind, the Associate meeting on September 20 will be held in the St. Francis Convent Family Room. Please enter through Convent Entrance and someone will guide you.

The Sisters appreciate your prayers for the safety of travel and success of the Chapter. ❖



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Upcoming Events at Chiara Center . . .

Labyrinth Nights with Sister Moon & Brother Fire at 8 p.m. - July 27 & August 26

Companions on the Journey at 11:30 a.m. (Lunch, presentation & discussion) - August 6 & October 1

Where Three Paths Meet Retreat with Norma Roberts - August 10-12

Ah Days of Quiet - August 13 & October 23

FOOD & FAITH: Joy! A Spirituality of Dogs - August 30

Tai Chi Basics & Flow (next step) classes - Cindy Cannamela, Instructor

Mondays at 5:30 & 6:30 p.m. Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Tuesdays at 10:30 & 11:30 a.m. Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Getting to Silence Retreat with Pastor Don Follis - October 2 & 3

Touched by the Holy: Women in Watercolor Conference Retreat with Sr. Clare D'Aubria, OFM

October 5-12 (Full seven days) or October 7-12 (five days)

Death Café No. 1 of 3 - October 16

Fall Directed Retreat - October 28 through November 2

Beneath Scandals, Beyond Policies: Men & Women at Work Together (1 day seminar) November 1

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

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