



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

August 2019



2019 Jubilarians - Seven Sisters celebrated their Jubilee on June 15 in St. Francis of Assisi Church. Pictured: (Seated) Sisters Rachel Jost (70 years), Elreda Huser (75 years), and Jolinda Snyder (70 years); (standing) Sisters Jonette Devlin (70 years), Helen Marie Plummer (60 years) and Gertrude O'Connor (60 years). Sister Elvon Huser (80 years) is not pictured. ❖

The Sisters would like to extend their "Thank you" to everyone for the Jubilee cards, prayers, notes and (for some) birthday greetings. May our Lord bless each of you.

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Associate Office

By Nancy Davis

Respect and Reverence - Are They Still Relevant?

Two memorable lessons I was taught as a child were: to respect my elders, and to be quiet in church. Of course, as a child I had no idea why, but I imitated what my parents taught. These two things are intimately related and are becoming lost in our current culture. Are they even still relevant? Over the past few years, there seems to be a severe degradation of both respect and reverence. Today I see very little respect for life, lack of reverence toward God or a higher power, lack of respect for

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Associate Office –

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parents, the elderly, teachers, public officials, law enforcement and clergy, lack of respect for mother earth and for each other. I found it very interesting that the dictionary meaning of the word respect is: esteem for, or a sense of worth or excellence; and also deference to a right, privilege, or someone or something considered to have certain rights or privileges. I believe what seems to be a dichotomy is exactly what my parents were trying to teach me. I was taught not to determine one's worth before deciding whether they deserved respect and even if I determined they did not seem to deserve respect, sometimes I have to show it anyway. I will never forget a conversation I had with my then 4th grade son when he had a difficult teacher who really was not earning much respect from students or teachers. Helping my son deal with her in a respectful manner despite her actions was difficult but necessary. I guess I have always felt that there are situations in life where we must treat someone respectfully whether we want to or not and that there is value in that. It seems that I might be in a minority these days as I watch the news and often come away feeling that people bashing has become our favorite national pastime. I recently had a friend who said that she believed respect should only be given after earning it and that really made me take a closer look at my feeling about this. In his book, "Learning the Virtues that Lead You to God", Father Romano Guardini says, "Reverence in the everyday form, is respect. Respect is the most elementary thing that must be perceptible if people are to associate with each other as human beings." This is not to say that people must possess particular talents or opinions that align with mine in order to earn my respect. Simply put, people deserve respect because they are human. Reverencing God happens in much the same manner. Sister Dominic Mary Heath writes, "It's frightening to realize how deliberately irreverent our secular culture is. Irreverence is intrinsically disordered and, despite its seductive hold on our culture is

basically ugly. If we cultivate it by choice, it chokes out the movements of charity, religion, and holy fear in us." Hasn't the loss of reverence for the holy brought with it a loss of respect for the human? Once while at Mass in Mexico an elderly priest was the celebrant. After communion he had to turn and climb a couple stairs back into the sanctuary. As I watched, a young man approached and took the arm of the elderly priest and assisted him back up the stairs. This was a very poignant moment for me witnessing the reverence this young man showed to this elderly priest and to God. It was most certainly a moment of grace that I have never forgotten. There was respect and reverence there as well as humbleness on the part of this young man. Jesus Christ was criticized for hobnobbing with the sinners. The Pharisees constantly looked down their noses at this supposed Messiah who ate and drank with sinners. Being bold in proclaiming their opinions, they had neither respect nor reverence for him. Scripture says, 1 Peter 2:17, "Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor." To walk the path of Jesus I have to treat each person as a human being, "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27) regardless of differing opinions or cultures or religions. Sister Heath goes on to say, "Reverence opens our eyes to beauty in the order of creation, in the wholeness of human persons and in the mystery of divine providence – beauty that is inaccessible to irreverent eyes." Secular leaders were not ignorant to this necessity either. On March 30, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln wrote, "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven...But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue on our own." May God give us all the grace to treat each human being as we wish to be treated...respected and revered. ❖

Justice and Peace Connection

By Sister Mary Shaw, ASC



Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

August 23 is the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. Why? To engrave the catastrophe of the transatlantic slave trade in the memory of all and to raise our level of consciousness toward our biases.

I was privileged to attend a workshop in March at the St. Louis Marriott entitled Racism: Through the Prism of Social Justice. We were invited to examine the roots of systemic racism and explore the difficult work of purging ourselves, our communities and our country of the sin of racism and its destructive affects. It became clear that one cannot talk about racism without also addressing white privilege. Our group felt we had to recognize white privilege first and how it keeps systemic racism going. This can be disturbing, and it will call each of us out of our comfort zone. It is also crucial to see that racism goes beyond black and white. Racism can refer to any person of color or one of a different culture. We hide behind such remarks as, it's just a joke; don't blame me, I never owned slaves; racist mascots that seem socially acceptable to a white person but to another culture, not so. Also, let us not forget mass incarceration. LCWR Winter 2018 Resolutions to Actions stated "Mass incarceration is a racist public policy. At every level of the criminal justice system: Deployment of police, traffic and pedestrian stops, juvenile programs, fines for infractions, warrants, plea agreements, length of sentences, death penalty, the race of the defendant correlates directly with the harshness of treatment."

What to do? Where to start? Seems like there is a call here to change the system. But, perhaps it

is more realistic to begin with changing one's self and one's attitude. What can I do to dismantle white privilege? Here are few resources: The Bishop's Pastoral Letter Against Racism: Open Wide Our Hearts; America's Original Sin: Racism and White Privilege by Jim Wallis; and Network's Lenten Series on Racism and Immigration. Above all, become aware. Take notice of who is usually stopped and searched leaving a store or pulled over for a missing taillight. Get involved and dismantle your own negative attitudes and snide remarks about another culture. You will be amazed and hopefully find yourself dining at your home with a person of color. Wholeness! Reconciliation! The beginning of dismantling remnants of racism in my own heart and community/family. Lord, heal us into freedom. ❖



Recently restored Lourdes Grotto dedicated as part of the Foundation Day activities.

Franciscan Connections Newsletter

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Design and Layout

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Franciscan Connections is published quarterly.

The deadlines for submission to the Associate Office are January 2, April 2, July 2 and October 2. Contributions will be used as space permits.

Musings from Chiara

By Dan Frachey

The Universal Christ & Babette's Feast



"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." - Colossians 1:15-17.

Let's admit it - this is not one of those scriptural passages that most of us would have had in our Sunday school classes and I'll wager that we've not heard this preached upon at church. What is Paul presenting here? If you study his letters to the early Christian communities, you'll find that he most often uses the term "Christ" when referring to the second person of the Trinity. One might wonder why this is so important, especially for us today.

Richard Rohr, the Franciscan priest and author has just released what may be his final and quintessential book, "The Universal Christ." In it he writes at length about who the Christ truly is. He would certainly identify Jesus as God incarnate who we in our humanity can love in person and yet he offers a notion of the expansive Christ. This is not a case of either/or but both and more. The reason I think this is so crucial is because of how the world can hold both Jesus and the church in contempt, not because of who he truly is but because of how we as his disciples have clung to and offered the world but a tiny messiah and savior.

This reminds me of the movie "Babette's Feast" about an exiled woman during the French Revolution who was given a home by two pious

Dutch women. Babette became their servant; obediently cooking the same plain meal every day for years. Years later when Babette unexpectedly won a lottery, she wished to show her gratitude by preparing a luxurious dinner of the best that French cuisine had to offer. The two women and their religiously stoic dinner companions were fearful of eating these strange new foods thinking they would betray the religious strictures passed on to them by their revered pastor of treasured memory. In the end, the timid band of dinner guests began to savor the fine wines; realizing how splendid they were. They went from nibbling and tasting to full-on feasting. Soon the fear and smallness would give way to great gladness found only in true friendship.

In her book "Prayer to Eve", Kathleen Norris said, "Bless our metaphors so we might eat them." I hope this taste of Richard Rohr's new book might give you more of a Franciscan world view that expands your sense of the Christ who *is*, who *was* and who *is to come*. Consider visiting <https://universalchrist.cac.org/> to taste for yourself. ❖

WE SUPPORT IN PRAYER . . .

- Pat A. Wright (Springfield) whose mother passed away
- Mary Jo Seiz (Springfield) who is undergoing medical treatment
- Paula Minwegen (Springfield) who is undergoing medical treatment
- Vikki Warren (Springfield) whose brother-in-law passed away
- Our Hospital Sisters ❖

IN LOVING MEMORY . . .

SISTER JOSEPH WU

BORN 12-12-20

FIRST PROFESSION 10-04-48

DIED 06-04-19

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

Foundation Day was a grand celebration . . .

By Nancy Davis

Tuesday, July 3, 2019 was a very special day at St. Francis Convent. Our Hospital Sisters around the world celebrated the founding of their congregation 175 years ago by Father Christopher Bernsmeyer, OFM in Telgte, Germany. In the Our Lady of Grace chapel on July 2, 1844 he welcomed the first young women to what would go on to become an international healing ministry beyond his imagining. As they say, "the rest is history", but what a miraculous and God fashioned history it is. The day started with Mass in St. Francis of Assisi Church with music to include a brass quintet, Sister Anna Phiri on the African drum, Brian Blasco on the organ and his brother, David, as the cantor. Father Dennis Koopman was the celebrant and his homily touched many hearts.



I was privileged to be able to experience this beautiful and prayerful day with the Hospital Sisters. I have heard it said that being on a pilgrimage means to recognize our need for each other and to discover that our brothers and sisters are gifts to us, a richness in our lives. I can say that this was certainly evident at this momentous celebration of the lives of these Sisters, who have together, in community, for 175 years, dedicated themselves to the Lord and to the healing ministry that has characterized their mission around the world. Thank you, Hospital Sisters and happy anniversary. ❖



Following Mass everyone proceeded to the newly completed Christopher Garden for a blessing by Father Dennis. A linden tree and the recently restored Lourdes Grotto were dedicated. A restored wayside shrine in honor of Father Christopher was also blessed. With each of these blessings, there was the beautiful history of each location and how it was associated with the Hospital Sisters. After the blessing ceremony all were invited to experience the Telgte Pilgrimage. It began at Pieta of Telgte where the Hospital Sisters story began and ended at the Shrine of Our Sorrowful Mother in St. Francis of Assisi Church.



In honor of the Sisters' Foundation Day on July 2, Associate Coordinator Nancy Davis along with Associates Bonnie Flynn, Margie and Mike Sgro (pictured above), prepared a basket of assorted candies for the Motherhouse and Loretto Home. In addition, a bouquet of fresh flowers was also provided in special celebration year. ❖

Why I want to be an Associate of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis . . . (Formal Commitment – November 15-17)



“My hope is to become an Associate to continue my service to others. To join these dedicated individuals and use the gifts I have been given by God – to listen, to comfort, to care and to serve – so that I might further the work of St. Francis and St. Clare, to grow in a stronger knowledge of my faith and to build a more peaceful spiritual inner self.”

Mary Bonner
Springfield, IL

“A very good friend invited me to an Associate meeting. I would like to have a stronger relationship with St. Francis and the Hospital Sisters.”



Bernie Curry
Decatur, IL



“I am not a stranger to the HSHS healthcare system. I received cancer treatments at St. John’s during most of 2005 and spent nearly three months of 2012 in the Transitional Care Unit at St. John’s after a life-threatening accident. Through these medical events, I came to know and appreciate the benefits of the Franciscan mission of healing and spiritual care. I also served on the Board of Directors for the St. John’s Foundation for nine years and chaired the Toast of the Town fundraiser two different years to further the work of the Sisters. I have been inspired by a number of past clients who are Hospital Sister Associates and decided it was time for me to join them.”

Jane Lacasio
Springfield, IL

“I want to become an Associate to be more like the Franciscans whom I have interacted with throughout my life. Everyone from Sister Jo Giarante, the nun in my dorm at college, to Sisters Maryann Berard and Mary Immaculate Creedon. I also admired the Order Leaders in Haiti and appreciated Sister Janelle Athorp greeting me before each radiation appointment at the St. John’s Pavilion. My own spirituality dovetails nicely with the Franciscan way of life and I have been nourished in my prayer over the years at retreats at the Chiara Center. My vocation as a wife and mother was also strengthened by attending a Marriage Encounter weekend. Together with Mike, we are a team for God, and we can participate in the Associates together.”



Linda Mueller
Springfield, IL

“I first met a few of the Hospital Sisters at Sacred Heart Hospital in 2004 when I started working for them. I was very drawn to Sister Miriam Therese. She always had a light in her eyes and a kind word for everyone. I believe with all my heart in the mission the sisters started, and I want to be sure that their mission and values continue for many years to come. My first trip to Springfield was when I met Sister Renita and she had a wonderful way of describing Francis and Clare and the relationship to our Hospital Sisters. Each year I returned to Springfield I could feel the love our Sisters had for humanity and the commitment they showed to their hospitals and colleagues. As I struggled with what God wanted me to do in my life I kept coming back to the care of humanity and prayer. The Associates program will offer me the ability to learn and grow on my own spiritual journey but will also keep the mission and values of the community and its commitment to care for the sick, poor and needy as a center focal point.”



Peggy Pendergast
Eau Claire, WI



“Franciscan spirituality is special to me because I see it as a very pure way of living the Gospels. The Sisters demonstrate this beautifully in the love and joy with which they have lived their lives serving others. They are an inspiration to me, and I learn a little more about how to live my own life in a way that brings me closer to God every time I see them. I think it is crucial to have the support of a community to incorporate greater simplicity, service, and prayer into one’s daily experience, as these aspects of Franciscan life are not always valued in our society. I am grateful to have these opportunities to meet and learn from the Sisters and Associates, and I hope to continue this journey with them.”

Alicia Shapinsky
Springfield, IL

“I was invited by Nancy Davis to explore formation as a Lay Associate with the Streator Associate group. I am a spiritual columnist for The Times Newspaper in Ottawa, IL. I am especially drawn to St. Francis’ simplicity, his love for animals and the environment. Most of all, I hope to share in the Sisters’ healing charism in my life.”



Jerrilyn Zavada
Streator, IL

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. ❖



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Upcoming Events at Chiara Center . . .

Companions on the Journey at 11:30 a.m. (Lunch) - Aug. 5, Sept. 9, Oct. 7

Ah Days of Quiet – Oct. 29

Encountering Clare of Assisi: Inspiring Wisdom for Today's Challenges Retreat – Aug. 4-9

Special evening presentation on Saint Clare of Assisi – Aug. 7 at 7 p.m.

Celebrating the Sultan and the Saint: Dinner/Movie/Discussion – Aug. 13 at 6 p.m.

Fall Tai Chi Classes - Sept. 5, 12, 19 & 26

Food & Faith No. 1 - Racial Reconciliation – Sept. 26

Forest Healing: The Kinship of Trees Retreat – Oct. 18-19

Silent Retreat/Directed Retreat – Oct. 27-Nov. 1

Death Café at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. – Oct. 29

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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