



Franciscan CONNECTIONS

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Sisters Embrace Socially Responsible Investing

The Dubuque Franciscans' commitment to social justice extends even into their investment portfolio.

For many years, Sister Jordan Dahm worked with the late Father Mike Crosby, OFM Cap, undertaking shareholder action in keeping with Franciscan values. While they were treasurers, Sisters Mary Clare O'Toole and Kate Katoski attended to some of this work.

"I quickly saw that the effort demanded the involvement of more people who had the time and the commitment to research the issues in order to be in communication with the companies in an effective manner," said Sister Kate. "So I asked Sister Judy Sinnwell to initiate a group to work on socially responsible investing (SRI) for the congregation."

Since 2016 the SRI Working Group comprised of sisters, staff, Charitable Trust members, and Franciscan Associates have been engaged in "acting with a social responsibility in the selection of investment vehicles," as stated in the congregation's supporting documents.

"Our role is to study SRI issues, advise congregational investor action, and educate the community regarding congregational consumer action," said Sister Judy Sinnwell.

The group meets four times a year and



Associate Director of the Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment Christopher Cox talks to Sister Judy Sinnwell at the SRI Working Group's meeting in October of 2018.

includes Nancy Dunkel, Sister Camilla Hemann, Sister Maureen Leach, Jane Shey, Linda Tacke, and Leanne Golinvaux.

"When we first came together, we had to decide who we are and what we are about – so we wrote foundational documents using our congregational history as well as scripture," said Sister Judy. "We wrote them from the perspective of SRI as a ministry."

The SRI Working Group is now zeroing in on five issues: water impact, immigration, political action/lobbying, drug pricing, and gun violence and examining what companies are doing to promote those issues in a positive way as in alignment with the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis. The group can then suggest to the Dubuque Franciscan Leadership Team that the community ethically invest, take shareholder action, or divest.

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Sisters Embrace Socially Responsible Investing continued

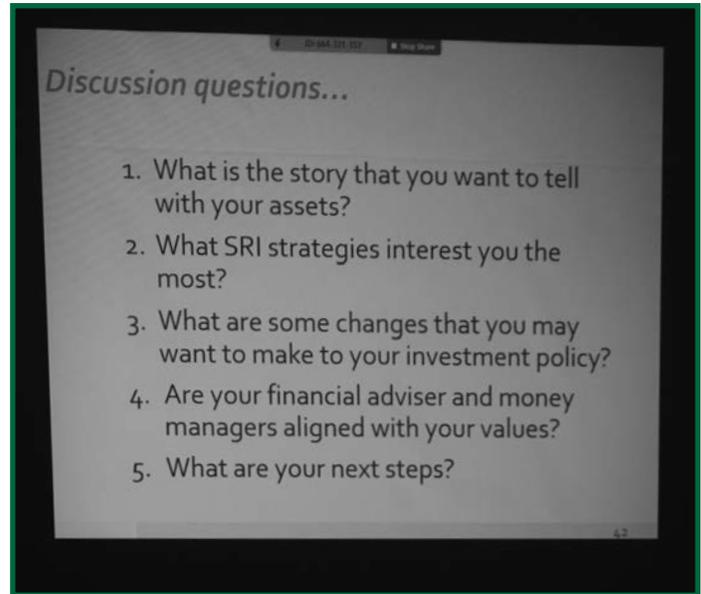
“It is not a fast process,” said Sister Judy. “It takes time and study.

The SRI Working Group ministry works in collaboration with Seventh Generation, a Midwest association of religious groups working as part of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR).

“Their resources and involved groups around the country enable us to be part of the larger whole of religious groups, pension funds and investors working for justice in the corporate world,” said Leanne Golinvaux, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the Dubuque Franciscans.

After each quarterly meeting, sisters and associates receive minutes from the SRI Working Group and Sister Judy said the responses have been positive.

“We appreciate the affirmations for the work this group is doing--putting our voice at the table



A PowerPoint slide from the SRI Working Group's most recent meeting.

for social justice and concern where we would not have a voice,” she added. ■

The Convenience and Simplicity of Donor Advised Funds

By Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF

Your financial and charitable goals are a reflection of your commitment to support the future of your loved ones, charitable organizations you value, and the greater community. But sometimes it can be difficult to keep track of the organizations you wish to support and the documents required to receive your benefits from charitable gifts. A convenient and easy-way to organize your charitable intentions is to create a donor advised fund. Consider it one-stop giving.

How It Works

- You open a donor advised fund by a written agreement at your community foundation or sponsoring organization. Most donor advised funds require a minimum gift to open your fund, although additional contributions may be less.
- You can make contributions to your fund at any time. Your contributions are invested by the sponsoring organization, which provides a regular accounting to you.
- You make the recommendations that various amounts be distributed to charitable organizations of your choice, such as the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa.
- You qualify for a federal income tax charitable deduction for gifts to your donor advised fund.

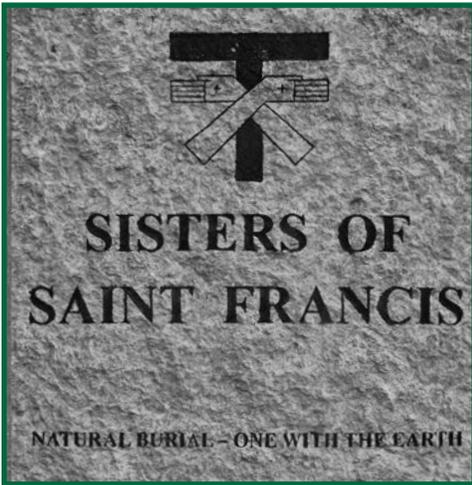
Tips for Choosing Where

1. Evaluate the sponsoring organization carefully. When you make a gift to a donor advised fund you irrevocably give away your money or property. Make sure the organization you select is one that supports your values.
2. Understand the fund's policies and procedures. Minimum contributions, as well as the amount and frequency of grant recommendations, all vary depending upon the sponsoring organization.
3. Consider costs and investment. All donor advised funds charge administrative fees that can vary considerably. In addition, investment performance will vary from one donor advised fund to the next, affecting the amount that will actually be distributable to a charitable organization.

Your Benefits

- Convenience. Setting up a donor advised fund qualifies you for federal tax benefits (and state in Iowa if donated to a Community Foundation).
- Simplicity. You can support a number of charitable organizations without having to retain records for separate contributions.
- Family philanthropy. Families can build a tradition of giving and teach their children the values of philanthropy by involving them in the decisions about which grants to recommend. ■

Natural Burial Option Available to Dubuque Franciscans



The natural burial monument at Mount St. Francis Center.

In 2009, the Dubuque Franciscans began looking into natural burials. Natural burial is the practice of returning the body to the Earth in a simple biodegradable container or wrap, without embalming fluid or a

concrete grave liner.

Sister Marge Staudt, who was part of the Leadership Team in 2009, said they learned other congregations in the area had begun to offer natural burial options for their sisters.

“It was important to offer to our own sisters because of our reverence for Earth,” said Sister Marge. “So we set up a committee to discuss it.”

The committee spent years researching city, county, and state regulations as well as visiting with funeral directors and other congregations offering natural burial to learn how to implement it for the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters.

One issue for the sisters was that their burial site at Mount Calvary in Dubuque did not allow for natural burial due to the requirements of a concrete vault.

So after much research and discussion, it was determined that the land of the former power plant on the grounds of Mount St. Francis Center would be designated as the natural burial site.

Natural burial was offered to the sisters beginning in 2015. The first sister to have a natural burial was Sister Julie Coyne in 2016.

Sisters who choose natural burial are encouraged to discuss it with their families as sisters must be buried within 48 hours after death.

The funeral director cleans and disinfects the body, dresses it, and then places it in a simple pine box, built by the Maintenance Department at Mount St. Francis Center. The sisters then hold a burial service and a Mass of remembrance is held when the family can all attend at a later date. ■

Sister Water Project Video Wins National Award

A video featuring the Dubuque Franciscans’ Sister Water Project was honored with a Lumen Award by the National Catholic Development Conference (NCDC) on September 18.

“The Lumen Awards were created to acknowledge excellence in the ministry of fundraising and to enrich the Catholic development community through sharing this excellence,” reads the NCDC website. The award name “Lumen,” which is Latin for “light” or “candle,” was chosen for the name of the award to highlight “fundraisers doing God’s work in the world, holding the light set as example for Catholic fundraising community through their good work.”

The video was created in 2017 with the help of Loras College Productions to highlight the Dubuque Franciscans’ Sister Water Project, which seeks to bring safe water to villagers in Tanzania and Honduras. In August of 2018, the video received a First Place Lumen Award in the “Donor Enhancement” category. At the annual conference held in Chicago September 16-18, the video was on display with 17 other first place winners in a variety of categories. The 600

attendees at the conference voted the Sister Water Project video as the “best in show” overall winner.

“We are grateful to Loras College who created the video for us in 2017 and to all who support our passion and commitment to this ministry!” said

Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski of the honor.

The NCDC is the largest membership association of charitable religious fundraisers in the United States, with members from religious communities of men and women, shrines, social service agencies, schools, parishes, dioceses, seminaries, and international relief agencies.

To view the Sister Water Project video, visit www.osfdbq.org/sisterwaterproject. ■



The Lumen Awards.

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Sisters of St. Francis Dubuque, IA

3390 Windsor Avenue • Dubuque, IA 52001 • (563) 583-9786 • fax (563) 583-3250 • www.osfdbq.org

Email: development@osfdbq.org
Editor: Jessi Russo

Director of Development:
Sr. Cathy Katoski, OSF

Mission Statement of the Dubuque Franciscans

Rooted in the Gospel and in the spirit of Francis and Clare, the Sisters of St. Francis live in right relationship with all creation.



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Dubuque Franciscans Recognized at Briar Cliff University's Commencement Ceremony



The Sisters of St. Francis were honored as this year's Briar Cliff University Medal recipients at the 2018 commencement ceremony.

"Briar Cliff University stands here today because of the vision of the Sisters of St. Francis, a vision that began in 1929: a Catholic college for women," said President Rachelle Karstens.

"The Sisters' leadership has continued to have a significant influence on the day-to-day education, service and sense of community that occurs here on The Cliff," she added.

Established in 1973, the Briar Cliff Medal recognizes human services by persons who have made great contributions to Briar Cliff or have made significant contributions to education, religion or government. ■

From left to right: Sister Ruth Schock, Sister Mary Jane Koenigs, Sister Janet May, Sister Shirley Fineran, Chair of the Briar Cliff Board of Trustees Steve Freeman, Sister Kate Katoski, President Rachelle Karstens, Sister Marge Staudt, Sister Marie Cigrand, and Sister Pat Doody at the 2018 Briar Cliff University commencement. Contributed photo.