



# Franciscan CONNECTIONS

Summer 2019

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## Sisters Sign Conservation Easement to Protect 68 Acres of Land



From L to R: Sister Kathy Knipper, Sister Marie Cigrand, Erin Van Waus and Anita O'Gara from INHF, Sister Kate Katoski, and Sister Mary Lechtenberg.

On Friday, May 17, the Dubuque Franciscans signed the establishment of a conservation easement of 68 acres of their property with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF).

Under the agreement between the Dubuque Franciscans and the INHF, the Sisters will continue to own the 55 acres of prairie and 13 acres of woods of the north portion of their property (bordering on Roosevelt Road).

"Since 1879 we have shared a unique relationship with this parcel of land on the north end of Dubuque," said Sister Kate Katoski. "We were called to cherish and care for the gift of land entrusted to us, and as part of our legacy, we are now called to leave it for future generations." The easement designation, which was signed during a prayer service, limits future development for residential, commercial or industrial purposes, even if the property were to change hands.

"On behalf of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, I accept the perpetual responsibility of monitoring the use of this land and ensuring that the protective measures written in your conservation

easement are upheld," said Erin Van Waus of INHF in her remarks at the prayer service. "The conservation easement you are signing permanently protects the land forever – for future generations – for all creation – for water quality. This is who you are and this is who we are – a perfect partnership. INHF is honored to be entrusted with the responsibilities of this conservation easement. The people of INHF will be forever grateful for the protection you have placed on your land."

Sister Marie Cigrand hopes others consider preserving land.

"I would just encourage anybody and everybody to if they have land to preserve for future generations, especially prairies, because so much of our land is being used now for buildings, cropland and so on," said Sister Marie.

"It's rewarding to work professionally now with women of faith whose land ethic is so beautiful, wise and an expression of the right relationship with God, the world, one another and future generations," said Erin. ■

## Conservation Easement History The North Prairie and The Woods

### 1998

Enrolled 80 acres in CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) and planted the land in prairie and wild flowers.

### 1998

Published our "Covenant with Creation"

### September 2016

Composed our "Land Ethic"

### October 20, 2017 - Gathering

As part of the "Long Range Planning Updates" a panel presentation informed the sisters about the option of creating a "conservation easement" with a portion of our property currently in prairie. Erin Van Waus and Anita O'Gara presented for the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Brian Preston for the Dubuque County Conservation Board. A Q&A period followed. Responses from the sisters were generally positive about this option as part of future planning.

### April 2018 - Gathering

The congregation approved a proposal that the Leadership Team move toward establishing a conservation easement on the north 55 acres of prairie and 13 acres of woods that border Roosevelt Road.

### Summer and Fall of 2018

Conversations were held with Chris Hiher and Olivia Rauen of the Natural Resources Conservation Services to develop plans to improve both the prairie and the woods. These plans, which call for actions over a three-year period, will be implemented

beginning the summer and fall of 2019.

### October 29, 2018

Erin Van Waus and Anita O'Gara of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation met with the Prairie Subcommittee to explain the process and options for drafting a conservation easement on the north 68 acres. Erin agreed to draft a statement early in 2019 and send it to us for editing.

### April 2019

- Draft of easement was received from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.
- Minor changes were made to the draft of the easement.
- Both civil and canonical lawyers were consulted.
- An abstract and title opinion were received.
- Final wording of the conservation easement was approved by the Leadership Team.

## Covenant With Creation - 1998

*WE BELIEVE that Clare and Francis, in their love and reverence for Jesus the Incarnate One, were led to experience all the created as holy and family, the dwelling place of Christ.*

*Awed by the generosity of the Most High,  
They were moved to praise.*

*They nourished this loving relationship by*

- \*serving all with reverence, especially those who are poor*
- \*seeking always to strengthen communion*
- \*mending broken relationships*
- \*restoring lost dignity.*

*With Clare and Francis, walking in the footsteps of Jesus, we believe in the Franciscan worldview:*

- \*all life is gift*
- \*all life is interrelated and has intrinsic value*
- \*we are sisters and brothers with all in creation*
- \*we are called to sustain one another*
- \*we are called to seek the common good for all in creation.*

*This worldview calls us to on-going conversion:*

*from dominating, devaluing and possessing  
to serving, reverencing and sharing.*

*Whenever possible we will educate and make choices based on:*

- \*intrinsic value of all life*
- \*interconnectedness*
- \*sisterhood/brotherhood with all creation*
- \*serving, reverencing, and sharing*
- \*sustaining the whole ecological community*

*For the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, IA*

## BCU President Rachelle Karstens Receives Blessing from Dubuque Franciscans Before Inauguration

As part of her week-long inauguration activities, President of Briar Cliff University, Rachelle Karstens visited Mount St. Francis on Monday, April 22. During her time at Mount St. Francis Center, Rachelle gave the sisters a presentation about the state of the university and discussed the events of her inauguration week which carried the theme of, “Igniting Faith, Inspiring Service and Empowering Learning.”

“We are honored and humbled to carry out the mission you created,” said Rachelle in her remarks to the sisters.

Rachelle also attended Mass with the sisters where she was blessed by the community.

On Friday, April 26, Rachelle was inaugurated as the 11th President of Briar Cliff University.

“It’s just a great place to be,” said Rachelle after the event. “It really is that caring community that the sisters of Saint Francis envisioned 89 years ago.”

“When she served as interim president of Briar Cliff University, Rachelle demonstrated her



*Rachelle Karstens (left) greets Sister Elvira Kelley and Sister Jeanine McDermott (right), who both ministered at Briar Cliff University. leadership and a number of other fine qualities that made her a good fit for the position on a permanent basis,” said Sister Kate Katoski. “She is a person of faith who brings a passion for education and excellence to the position, and she is well-respected on campus for the work she has already done in previous leadership roles.” ■*

### The Dubuque Franciscans’ Ministry Fund

By Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF

One option on our donation envelope is the “Ministry Fund.” The “Ministry Fund” was established on Foundress Day, December 3, 1987, from an anonymous donation of one million dollars, with the request that it be used to serve people who are poor. The fund has grown to \$18 million through donations from supporters making contributions through the Development Office, congregational contributions, and earnings from investments.

Several types of grants are supported by the Ministry Fund, with priority given to salaries for the Sisters of St. Francis who are working among those who are poor and projects which are connected to a member of this Congregation.

In 2018, \$554,000 was awarded to various Ministry Fund Grants. There are Salary Grants, Direct Assistance Grants, Collaborative Ministry Grants and Leadership Designated Grants.

The salary grants paid salaries to 14 sisters in Honduras, St. Lucia, Mississippi, Texas, and Dubuque, Sioux City and Waterloo, Iowa. Direct Assistance grants were made to projects connected to

14 sisters and Franciscan Associates. Six Collaborative Ministry Grants were awarded. These are grants connected to projects of other religious congregations and organizations.

Leadership Designated Grant are funds managed by the Leadership Team often for response to critical needs beyond the congregation, often for areas of major disasters or critical needs.

The Ministry Fund also supports a portion of the expenses of the long-term Franciscan Common Venture volunteers with stipends, room/board, insurance and transportation.

The number of our sisters in salaried full-time active ministry declines as we age. Currently less than one-quarter of our sisters fit in this category. Your donations to the Ministry Fund enable us to continue these vital ministries with persons who are in poverty situations, and projects that work for systemic change around poverty issues.

Always, we are most grateful for your ongoing support of our life and ministry! We promise you a remembrance in our prayers! ■

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#### 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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## DBQ Franciscans Accept Two New Candidates In Honduras

In January the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters accepted two women in Honduras as candidates in ongoing discernment toward membership with the congregation.

The candidates are Katy Meylin Orellana Deres from El Salvador and Perla Primavera Martinez Avalos from Mexico. Both women will share community life and participate in ministry with our sisters in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras under the direction of Sister Pat Farrell.

“We are most grateful for the generous spirit of Sisters Erika Calderon, Nancy Meyerhofer, Carol Hawkins, and Pat Farrell who will journey with these women in life and ministry,” said Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski. “We promise them our prayerful support.” ■



*From left to right: Sister Carol Hawkins, Sister Nancy Meyerhofer, Katy Meylin Orellana Deres, Sister Pat Farrell and Perla Primavera Martinez Avalos in Honduras. Contributed photo.*