

Footprints



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Published quarterly, Footprints reflects the mission, spirit, and values of the Sisters of St. Francis, Dubuque, Iowa.

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Cover Photo



Lisa Schmidt (left) presents Franciscan Associate Kathleen Schiltz with a San Damiano cross in honor of her 25th year of being an associate.

Footprints

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A message from *Leadership*

This issue of *Footprints* centers on relationships – mainly on the associate relationship with the Sisters of St. Francis but also on relationships with a parish and with institutions. My focus will be on the associate relationship.

When you hear the word, “associate,” what comes to mind? For me it is someone who I interact with on a more casual basis, such as a business associate. Associates of religious congregations share a deeper relationship. On the Sisters of St. Francis webpage is this description of Franciscan associates: “...women and men from all walks of life who share the values and spirit of St. Francis. Together they embrace the charism of St. Francis and St. Clare as they live the Gospel in their daily lives.”



As you read these articles, you will find amazing examples of women and men who are living the Franciscan values in meaningful ways: faith sharing, praying, shared study and service, and, of course, celebration. Their relationships with the Sisters of St. Francis continue to evolve and deepen. Some men and women come to know one Franciscan sister and because of that relationship desire to know more about Francis and Clare and to deepen their bond with the entire Franciscan congregation through association. Some associates are/were employees who interact with the sisters on a daily basis and breathe in the Franciscan spirit. Others have come to know the Franciscans through groups they belong to such as parish committees or volunteer opportunities. No matter how the relationship begins, there is a common desire to live the Franciscan values. Franciscan associates share the mission of the Sisters of St. Francis committing themselves to ongoing conversion.

May their stories challenge all of us to live more fully the Franciscan values in our daily lives.

--Sister Marie Cigrand, OSF

Our Mission

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

Focus 2014 - 2020:

In our personal, communal and public life, we commit to ongoing conversion as we: deepen our relationship with Mother Earth and Sister Water | stand with persons who are poor | make peace and practice nonviolence.

This is who we are; this is what the global community can expect of us.

Leadership Team

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Sister Marie Cigrand
vice president

Sister Mary Lechtenberg
vice president

Sister Kathy Knipper
vice president





Sister Doris Recker hugs new Franciscan Associate Marianne Cursio at the liturgy celebrating 30+ years of the Franciscan Associate relationship on September 10.

Celebrating 30+ Years of the Associate Relationship

By Jessi Russo

During her reflection at the Mass celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Dubuque Franciscan Associates on September 10, **Lisa Schmidt** admitted she made a mistake.

“We are actually celebrating 31 years of the Franciscan Associate relationship,” she said to those gathered in the Mount St. Francis chapel who responded with laughter.

Whether 30 or 31 years -- the celebration is justified. The program that began in 1985 with 7 associates has grown to 132 associates in 12 states and three countries.

In her reflection, Lisa, who is the Associate Coordinator, spoke about the conversion that took place within the congregation to form the associate

program. In 1970 when two former members approached the congregation, the congregation did not believe there was enough interest to begin associate relationships. The subject was tabled for many years afterward, explained Lisa.

“Then in the 1984 Chapter of Affairs the congregation approved the associate relationship and therefore another conversion began: by accepting lay people to journey with this wonderful congregation of women religious and to partner in service in all parts of the world. You, the sisters, were able to branch out like the younger brother in today’s Gospel reading and try something new in accepting associates to journey with you,” she said.

(Continued on the next page.)

After Lisa's reflection, six new Associates were commissioned: **Marianne Cursio, Kelly Freilinger, Mary Catherine Harris, Father Dan Knepper, Margie Larmon, and Carol Marrone.**

Sister Kathy Knipper, OSF, presented each associate with a Franciscan pin. "We ask you to wear it as a reminder of your commitment to grow in the Franciscan spirit and to live a life which witnesses to the values of Francis and Clare," she said. After signing their names in the book of Franciscan Associates the new associates were blessed by the congregation.

"As I reflect on the celebration, the word that comes to me is 'oneness,'" said new Franciscan Associate **Mary Catherine Harris.** "Becoming one with Jesus as Christ in the Eucharist; assembling and being led as both religious and lay; erasing boundaries of faith traditions (I am Baptist); receiving and offering the Franciscan blessing of oneness within God; experiencing over all the Spirit and spirits of openness, inclusiveness, graciousness and love."

After the new associates were commissioned, **Jean Basinger, Susan Green, and Kathleen Schiltz,** were recognized for their 25 years as Franciscan Associates and each received a San Damiano cross.

"There are so many good things about Susan," said her bonding sister, **Sister Rita Green, OSF.** "She is intelligent, spiritual, gentle, compassionate. She's always interested in what you're doing."

Sister Virginia Jennings, OSF, bonding sister for



New Franciscan Associates commissioned at the September 10 Mass (L to R): Carol Marrone, Marianne Cursio, Margie Larmon, Kelly Freilinger, Mary Catherine Harris, and Father Dan Knepper.

Jean Basinger and Kathleen Schiltz, echoed those sentiments.

"Jean Basinger and her late husband, **Bill,** (who was also an associate) have devoted their lives to the poor, marginalized and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Their lives have been a lived expression of the Franciscan charism in all the ways they have been about the work of peace and justice in our world. Jean continues to be very involved in prison ministry, especially in the area of restorative justice.

Kathleen Schiltz, who is a native of Bancroft, Iowa, was taught by Dubuque Franciscan Sisters and so the seeds of the Franciscan charism were planted early in her life. She continues to flourish in the many ways as she cares for God's poor and vulnerable."

After Mass, associates and sisters gathered for a special meal in the Francis House dining room where the associates presented a check to the Sister Water Committee.

"I was deeply touched by the generous gift from the associates," said Sister Kathy Knipper. "The contribution to the Sister Water Project embodies the Franciscan value of standing with people in need and caring for Mother Earth." ■



Lisa Schmidt, Jo Myers-Walker, Sheri Hosek, Sister Judy Sinnwell, Nancy Knipper, and Sister Kathy Knipper receive the check of the funds the Franciscan Associates donated to the Sister Water Project.

Associates: A Timeline

1970

Two former members submit a proposal to the congregation expressing their desire to live a religious life form through the free association with members. The proposal includes a promise to live in the spirit of the community; a sharing of ideals and worship; professional and personal availability; and a sharing of material goods while remaining financially independent. The proposal is considered but not acted upon because no other former members expressed interest.

1972

The Franciscan Prayer Affiliate Program is initiated. It is a way of sharing community in Christ and with family members of the sisters, with other laity, and clergy through the ministry of prayer. The program evolved from the 1972 Chapter decision to research forms of bonding with the congregation through relationships other than vowed membership.

1974

Interest in a closer relationship through associate membership keeps surfacing among both sisters and laity. A Task Force on Associate Membership is approved by the 1974 Chapter to research possibilities of a formal relationship.

1976

Two recommendations are made to Chapter based on task force research. One recommendation proposes a formal associate program. The second advises strengthening existing structures that share Franciscan life without beginning a formal program. The Chapter endorses the second recommendation.

1976-1982

The congregation's Vocation Office and other sisters receive requests for more than an informal relationship with the congregation.

1983

In August, sisters and interested laity meet. The experiences and desires shared make the sisters aware that, "association is going on right now in very meaningful ways but needs to be ritualized."

1984

Another proposal is submitted to Chapter for associate relationship and is approved.

1985

Joan Leonard is the first Franciscan Associate and is bonded with the congregation on February 5. Six more associates join before the year's end.

1988

The Chapter body approves participation of Associates as supportive members in the congregation's Chapter of Affairs.

1990

There are 52 associates in 13 states and Mexico.

1996

160 women religious from various congregations, and their associates from 22 states, gather at Shalom Spirituality Center in Dubuque for sharing of their respective programs.

1999

There are 45 associates in 7 states.

2000

First associates commissioned in Guatemala.

2009

First associates commissioned in El Salvador

2011

The Charism Team develops the "Franciscan Way of Life" program for those wanting to become associates to learn more about the lives of Sts. Francis and Clare.

The first associate is commissioned in Honduras.

2016

There are 132 associates in 12 states and Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.



South Carolina Associates from left to right: Janet Beck, Lynn Hulseberg, Tim Collins, Mary Beth Collins, John Hever, Jean Hever, Linda Menzel, and Ann McCord.
Contributed photo.

Carolina Associates

By Jessi Russo

In Greenville, South Carolina, **Sister Margie Hosch** was hoping to meet people who could become associates and follow in the footsteps of Francis and Clare in an intentional way.

“I wanted to find people who could companion me in my Franciscan calling to stand with and to serve the poor,” said Sister Margie. “I personally invited each associate to consider association because of the gifts I saw in them.”

The group of Carolina Associates meet once a month with Sister Margie, who ministers in South and North Carolina through providing Wholiness Retreats. At each meeting, they pray and share from the readings. Then the group may share what service and outreach they have provided since the last meeting or they plan for future service. The group also offers support to each other in their needs and helps plan for retreat and days of reflection.

Associates from South Carolina include **Janet Beck, Lynn Hulseberg, Tim Collins, Mary Beth Collins, John Hever, Jean Hever, Linda Menzel, and Ann McCord.** **Mary Catherine Harris**, the newest Associate who was commissioned September 10, 2016, joins from North Carolina.

“What is life giving for me is the growing awareness of how the associates are standing with the poor,” said Sister Margie.

Together the Carolina Associates have given outreach service efforts in a variety of ways. They

have traveled to Honduras with Franciscan Common Venture to assist in completing the home for the sisters; traveled to New York with Franciscan Common Venture to assist in hurricane clean up; traveled to Haiti to offer assistance to an orphanage; made 200 Teddy bears to send to Solwezi, Zambia, for orphaned children; and raised money for 159 pairs of shoes sent to Solwezi, to be passed out by Bishop Kasonde when he visits the missions.

The group is also standing in solidarity with the Dubuque Franciscans in their corporate stance against human trafficking. They attended a human trafficking seminar to become more aware of the issue in South Carolina and how they can help.

Sister Margie has also witnessed the associates’ individual service outreach. “Among them are senior companions; hospice volunteers; and directors of galas to raise money for tuition for impoverished children. I know some help with Feed America and take the intakes at our free clinic.”

“My hope for the Carolina Associates is that they will continue their Franciscan Spirit in standing with the poor and stay connected with the Associates of the Sisters of St. Francis,” said Sister Margie. ■



Sister Virginia Jennings (left) with Des Moines area Associate Susie Tierney.

Des Moines Area Associates

By Sister Virginia Jennings, OSF

How blessed are the feet of those who bring the Good News.”

When I think about our Associate Group, those words from Romans 10:15 come to mind. Each person has their unique way of “bringing the Good News” of God’s love and care to God’s people.

Over the many years of our bonding together I have been deeply inspired by their commitment to the Franciscan way and to the vision and mission of our congregation.

When my own motivation could be a bit lacking or I feel a need for “shot in the arm,” I have only to look to their lives for inspiration and challenge. Our associates live the works of peace and justice, care for our common home, and have open hands and hearts to reach out in love and compassion.

Our Des Moines area group has been fluid over the years. In about 1995, I was bonded with **Mary Ann Koch** and **Kathleen Schiltz**. Before long, our group expanded to include the late **Mary Sawyer**, **Susie Tierney**, **Carol Pearson** and **Maria Downs**. A few years later, **Anne Wandrey** moved to the area and joined us. Anne was instrumental in providing formation for **Nancy Mohlis**.

Jo Myers-Walker and **Nancy and Gary Guthrie** were with us for several years until Jo moved to Iowa City and Nancy and Gary started mentoring a group of prospective associates in the Ames area. More recently, **Jean Basinger** joined us. Jean and Kathleen are celebrating their 25th anniversary of association with our community. The witness of Jean and Kathleen inspires many to live lives of greater compassion and inclusion of all God’s people.

For most of our history we have been quite regular in meeting together – taking turns at each other’s home with the host providing the prayer and content for discussion. About two years ago, we finished a two and a half year commitment to “EngagingSpirituality.” EngagingSpirituality is one of the programs offered through JustFaith. I think we would all agree that of all the things we have done together, EngagingSpirituality brought us closer together and affirmed our commitment to the values of Francis and Clare.

I am grateful for our group and have been richly blessed by each one. They have been “Good News” for me and so many others. ■



Sister Nancy Meyerhofer (second from right in the back) with Guatemala Franciscan Associates from left to right: Lurve Rodas, Andy Estrada, Brígida Lizano Vargas, Magdaly Estrada, and Olga Aurora Barrenos Acabal.

Guatemala Associates

By Sister Nancy Meyerhofer, OSF

Our associates in Guatemala are a unique group. I always think of them as missionary and also as persons who by their lived witness attract other seekers. They are also unique because our congregation is not present in that nation, and yet their number keeps growing!

Our first two associates were **Lurve Rodas** (a Guatemalan) and **Brígida Vargas** (from Costa Rica), two ex-Carmelites for whom the Franciscan spirituality was totally new. They were friends from our time together in El Salvador, and when they left their congregation and moved to Guatemala, we kept in touch. A few years later they asked about the associate relationship. I sent them cassettes which I taped with the requisite formation.

They then invited a good friend, **Father Mario Domínguez**, (their pastor at the time) to see if he was interested. He was! And so gradually more and more people have become associates, all of them attracted by the example

of Lurve and Brigida.

The group numbers eight in full-time association, with another to be added this year in December, and five more who are candidates.

This “community” asks that we sisters have two sessions with them a year, one of which is a weekend of formation--such as Franciscan spirituality, how to work with people who have addictions, etc.--and the other experience is a retreat at the end of the year.

They have done an immersion experience visiting a rehabilitation center and this year worked into the catechesis (many of them are catechists) information about drug addiction and alcoholism. Two of them have also formed a children’s group of about 25 members which is receiving formation and doing good works.

I always feel inspired and challenged by our Guatemalan Associates, and am happy to accompany them, however possible. ■



Sisters and Associates gather together for a meal in Gracias, Lempira, Honduras in 2015. (Contributed photo.)

Honduras Associates

By Sister Pat Farrell, OSF

There are five Franciscan Associates in Honduras:

Juanita Reyes has the longest relationship with our sisters in Honduras. **Sister Nancy Meyerhofer, OSF**, rented space in the first floor apartment of Juanita's home when first arriving in Gracias, joined there later by **Sisters Brenda Whetstone, OSF** and **Erika Calderon, OSF**. A fast friendship developed among them all, which included many a shared game of dominos! However, it was the values she shared with the sisters which led her to become an associate. Juanita works as an anesthesiologist at the hospital in Gracias and is very active in the parish of San Marcos in Gracias.

Suyapa Diaz has been involved in a variety of social movements for many years. She has a special interest in the causes of the indigenous peoples of Honduras and has been very active locally and nationally in the women's movement. Suyapa was elected to local government leadership and currently serves as a "regidora," or city council member in Gracias. She is also the director/administrator of the home health care organization for the elderly initiated by Sister Brenda. In addition to her friendship with the sisters in Honduras, she has been a source of much guidance in wisdom in dealing with issues and organizations and with life in general in Honduras.

Nena Diaz is a sister to Suyapa and a faithful companion to sisters and associates alike. She serves as a Eucharistic minister in the parish of Gracias and shared the reflection meetings of that ministry with Sisters Brenda, Nancy and Erika. Nena works in the reception office of the hospital. She juggles work and family commitments expertly, allowing her to always find time for the associate gatherings.

Doris Menjivar is the principal of the Institute Ramon Rosas, the largest junior high and high school in Gracias.

She is a woman of many talents and commitments. Her concern for students and issues related to their lives recently won her an opportunity to participate in a program in the Holy Land, hosted by the government of Israel. The event focused on helping at-risk youth living in environments of violence. Doris is now doing what she can to implement programs in Gracias to address that kind of need. She has opened the doors of her own home to several people in need of a place to live.

Betty Grissom came to Gracias as a long-term Common Venture volunteer and lived with the sisters for about a year and a half. Anticipating that the house there would be needed for formation purposes, she chose to create a place of her own, building a home just across the street. She continues to be companion and friend, at only a slight distance. She shares a dog and Sunday dinner with the sisters, but more importantly continues to be an ongoing community of mutual support and shared values. Betty has lived in many countries around the world where she worked in education, a vocation she continues to enjoy in the classes she teaches at a bi-lingual school in Gracias.

John Donaghy, while originally from Philadelphia, has a long history in Iowa, having served in campus ministry at Iowa State University for over 20 years. He joined our sisters in El Salvador during a sabbatical and that relationship has continued to this day, now as an associate. John has lived in Honduras for almost 10 years, serving in a variety of capacities, including sub-director of Caritas and pastoral associate in the parish of Dulce Nombre, Copan. He is affectionately known as "Hermano Juancito" and his passion is to be of service to the most poor and marginalized. That vocation became concretized in his recent ordination to the permanent diaconate, only the third person in Honduras to assume that role. ■

How are you living the mission of the Dubuque Franciscans?

“With God, with people who serve Him and the human family, I serve to free South Sudanese Citizens taken into Jihadi slavery in the Islamist Sudan and return them home to family community and church. In addition, I assist in helping the victims of the Christian genocide in the Islamic Middle East.”

--**Reverend Heidi McGinness,**
Denver, Colorado

“I retired this year from 10 years of ministry as a licensed funeral director. This ministry far exceeds the traditional funeral services in that I always put the family first and offered services that were simply not available to others. I also frequently visit the deceased sisters at their final resting place and each time I am more impressed than the last with the dedication to those in need, their prayer lives, and gratitude for all that has been gifted by the Creator.”

--**Reverend Dr. Claudia Windal**
St. Paul, Minnesota

We have continued to meet with our local group of associates on a monthly basis, attended gatherings when calendars permitted, volunteered through Franciscan Common Venture and other organizations to be with the poor, and strive for a better prayer life.

--**Chuck Glatz**
Ames, Iowa

“I have been making quilts for the Mission and other needy people.”

--**Mary Ann Fabricius**
Dubuque, Iowa

“Partnering with **Sister Helen Nelson, OSF**, we are volunteers for the Cedar Valley patient/family and hospice home; serve on the St. Edwards Parish Social Concerns Committee; volunteer for sister parish mission trips to Grison-Garde, Haiti and Okolona, Mississippi; volunteer with Heart-to-Heart and taking meals or giving transportation to families with acute illness/injury or inability to drive; baby-sit at our local House of Hope. My association with the Dubuque Franciscans has challenged and helped my faith during these years--through both difficult times (such as my divorce) and the celebration of so many joys over these years.”

--**Patricia Connell**
Waterloo, Iowa

“Participating with a group within my church, I engage in various projects for those on the margins of our community, including helping to provide a weekly meal for the less privileged. A friend and I are committed to keeping an eye out for ways we can offer random acts of kindness for those who most often go unnoticed and unattended in the community. Within this commitment, we have met with the director of children’s services at the Department of Social Services and have responded to some of the needs expressed, with intention to continue this companionship.”

--**Mary Catherine Harris,**
Warrenton, North Carolina

“I have become attracted to the values of St. Francis, especially helping the poor. I have been exploring how to use my talents and gifts to serve others who are less fortunate than I am. As part of this, I am serving a three year term as a Stephen Leader for the Ames Catholic Community Stephen Ministry. Along with my husband, Chuck, I have gone to Okolona, Mississippi, to volunteer with the Excel program.”

--**Kathy Glatz**
Ames, Iowa

“I became involved with people in prisons and their families and that is where I devote the majority of my time now.”

--**Jean Basinger**
Des Moines, Iowa

“I try to live out the mission of the Dubuque Franciscans in the care of my family and friends; by being aware of the call of St. Francis in the care of our environment; in the Crossing Borders group I meet with to work for immigration reform; in the social justice committee of my parish; and of course by following the example I see constantly with the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters.”

--**Gwen Nilles**
Dubuque, Iowa

“I have been a facilitator for several Iowa spiritual retreats sharing our Franciscan values, with an art component. I also facilitate the Franciscan way of life group in Iowa City.”

--**Jo Myers-Walker**
Iowa City, Iowa

How have you witnessed associates living the mission of the Dubuque Franciscans?

"I witnessed **JoAnn Gandy**, the Franciscan associate with whom I am bonded in Oklahoma, become inspired to serve the poor after attending the 'Bridges Out of Poverty' program a couple of years ago. She came back to Tulsa and immediately expanded her Volunteer Visitor role in the Pastoral Care Department at St. John Medical Center to include establishing and maintaining a clothes closet for poor patients in need of clothing upon discharge from the hospital. She was tireless in organizing and stocking the Pastoral Care Department clothes closet which was so successful in meeting a need that it ultimately became an ongoing hospital-wide endeavor."

--**Sister Julie Manternach, OSF**

"**Mary Helen Easterly** of Maquoketa, Iowa, was one of the first to become an associate. Over several years we had become friends. When the associate program was started, she signed up. Her gift to our Franciscan Community was a daily holy hour in which she prayed for us Sisters. We remained friends until her death. She always considered us Sisters special people in her life. Around 25 years ago I invited **Mary Stephany** and **Susan Green** to be associates. From Maquoketa they remain very involved in our mission as Dubuque Franciscans."

--**Sister Millie Leuenberger, OSF**

"**Don and Caroline Koppes** of Dubuque are more active than ever in their 'retirement.' Former teachers, they still engage with a variety of people through their many volunteer efforts. Don worked with a young man from Ethiopia named Argaw, teaching English as a Second Language at the Presentation Lantern Center and a special relationship developed. As a result of striving to 'live in right relationship,' Don has traveled to Argaw's village multiple times and has established a non-profit to bring water and needed school supplies. Caroline 'lives in right relationship' by volunteering to work with people with special needs as well as dog sitting and political advocacy efforts."

--**Sisters Michelle Balek and Alice Errthum, OSF**

"**Jack and Cheryl Bartz** of Oak Brook, Illinois, have been carrying out the Dubuque Franciscan mission in so many ways. Over the years, Jack and Cheryl have given residence to various friends and relatives needing a place to live temporarily.

Jack and Cheryl are very committed to their church and serve as Eucharistic Ministers, lectors, coordinating funeral services, and officiating at wake services. Jack and Cheryl journey with persons in hospice and also volunteer serving meals to the homeless. Their help is invaluable for those persons trying to stay independent in their homes. They give assistance to persons when the need arises. Jack and Cheryl feel God has given them many gifts and so they share freely of themselves, and their material belongings to persons in need."

--**Sisters Jan Hrbues and Nila Meyerhofer, OSF**

"Our Franciscan Associates in Sioux City/Briar Cliff University, **Gil Ridenour, Michael Crowley** and **Heather Craig Oldsen** are very involved in helping with our Franciscan Way of Life Classes, assisting in the leadership. They also are involved in teaching some classes to students on Franciscan values. Gil and Michael are members of the Franciscan Awareness Team, a team that is responsible to help educate the campus on the Franciscan charism and values. Heather is now retired from Briar Cliff but still stays involved in a Franciscan Way of Life group. She has recently been involved in her town of Ponca with a Food Packing Day. Each of these associates takes responsibility for sharing the Franciscan values with others on campus and in the area."

--**Sister Janet May, OSF**

"**Sisters Mary Kenneth Hemann, OSF, Marie Therese, OSF,** and I are bonded with five associates in Dubuque whom you would be privileged to know: **Jan Cody** is an oncology nurse with Medical Associates and lives compassionately with every client their department sees. **Bill Hickson** serves the Jail and Prison Ministry in the Dubuque Archdiocese. He does many things, but always works with persons who are recently incarcerated and now trying to make it out of jail. **Dee Maahs** serves as an education nurse at Unity-Point Hospital and is active with the Haiti Committee of St. Anthony's Parish. **Darlene Mauss** works with Hillcrest Family Services helping persons with disabilities in their work places. **Bill Mauss** works at Stonehill Franciscan Services in the spiritual formation chaplaincy. We meet monthly and have learned well how to share on a significantly spiritual level!"

--**Sister Carol Hemesath, OSF**

Franciscan Friendship

By Dianne Heim, Franciscan Associate

Do Sisters have ‘pets?’ I would like to think so! In 1953 when I was in 7th grade I met **Sister Ramona Colling, OSF**. She was my teacher and I knew I was her pet because I got to clean the blackboard, clean the erasers, empty the wastebaskets and I was picked to be the Sacristan. Me!!! Sister would take me to the church basement and show me what color vestments to set out for Mass for the priest and to prepare the altar for Mass. Plus I got to be near all the altar boys. Did I just say that?

After 8th grade and four years at ICA, I married one of those altar boys. I remained in touch with Sister Ramona because not even marriage was going to break up this friendship. The truth is my husband fell in love with her, too.

When she came to Dubuque every summer for visits or a retreat one thing was for sure—she would come to our home for dinner. Fifty-six years later and she has never missed joining us. In just a few short years our family numbered five children. She followed all their activities and problems that come with a family. Sister Ramona and my husband, **Dick Heim**, would talk for hours about his meatpacking business and any other subject he threw at her. He always told me, “that sister is a genius.”

She always knows each child’s name and what they were doing. There are 30 in our family now and I am sure she still knows every name plus where they are and what they are doing. Even to this day when the grandchildren come home we go to Mass at the Mount to see and hug the famous Sister Ramona.

Time has only made our friendship stronger. Now that she is retired, we receive an added bonus: on our anniversary and birthdays, Sister Ramona and my 5th grade teacher, **Sister Susann Rogers**, invite us for Mass and brunch. We would not miss that for the world.

Sister Ramona is an avid reader and puzzle solver. I told her she should go on Jeopardy and win millions for the convent. She said it would not work out because she does not know movies or movie stars. That is about the only subject she does not know. You will always find her with a pocket full of questions and answers from Jeopardy.



Many years ago we began playing a tile game called Rummikube. Once again she is brilliant at it and when I win a game I go home and gloat all evening.

Sister has had 95 years of wonderful health but recently moved to Clare House. It was a hard decision but she knew the timing was right. Once there I asked her how she liked it and her answer was, “Wonderful! All my friends are here! They all are my generation!”

When we are together (regularly) we laugh a lot and I fill her in on all the news in our family and she listens intently.

This past June Sister Ramona experienced some discomfort in her health. When it was determined she needed surgery, she handled it with her usual positive attitude and was ready to do whatever it took to make things better. She recuperated at Clare House without a whimper. (By the way—when I went to the hospital to see her it was the first time EVER I saw her without her veil on. Remember when I was in her class back then--we didn’t even know sisters had hair.)

She told me that surgery did not cure the problem so she would continue to live each day to the fullest. I told her we had a lot more Rummikube to play and she better not leave me! Her eyes got so big and she took my hand and said, “Do not deny me heaven. I have waited for 95 years to get there so rejoice with me.” I would not have expected any other answer from this angel of God. She has filled my years with awe and joy and a realization that we are put on this earth for all those reasons and our only goal is to enjoy eternity with Jesus.

She is a teacher in all ways. I just hope we can continue our Rummikube in heaven.

“Our song will end, but the music will linger on,” said Irving Berlin. Well, so much for all this, I need to call her and set up our next Rummikube contest. I hope I can win at least one game. Love you Sister Ramona! ■

Sisters Marilyn Freking and Ann Rubly Say Farewell to Chicago Ministry

by Jill Kruse for *The Witness*

When Sisters Marilyn Freking and Ann Rubly prepared to leave Chicago to return to Mount St. Francis this summer, the two women said they felt like they were returning home, and yet they very much felt like they were saying goodbye to home, too.

“Both places are our home; we’re leaving one home for another,” reflected Sister Marilyn.

She and Sister Ann have, between the two of them, served Corpus Christi Catholic Church, a predominately African-American parish in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago’s South Side, for nearly 100 years. The two retired in June.

Sister Marilyn spent the majority of her 53 years at Corpus Christi leading the parish’s social services program. Sister Ann began serving at Corpus Christi in 1972. During her time at the parish, Sister Ann worked with the homebound and brought them Communion; she visited hospitals and nursing homes and provided transportation to those who couldn’t drive.

“It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve these wonderful people,” Sister Ann said of her 44 years working with Corpus Christi’s parishioners.

Corpus Christi was established in 1901 and originally served a community that was primarily ethnically Irish. With the Great Migration of the early 20th century, which saw many African-Americans relocate from the rural South to urban centers in the Northeast and Midwest, the community, along with the parish, transitioned from one that was mostly Irish to one that was almost entirely African-American.

In 1932, priests of the Franciscan Province of the Sacred Heart, who were serving Corpus Christi at the time, invited the Dubuque Franciscans to teach at the parish’s new school. The Franciscan sisters accepted the invitation and began sending members of their community to the Bronzeville parish to serve as teachers and in other roles, and would continue to do so for more than 80 years.

Sister Marilyn said that though she and Sister Ann both grew up on farms in rural Iowa, they didn’t experience much of a culture shock when moving to one of the largest cities in the country. “We were focused on doing our ministry at the parish, and that was the same kind of ministry whether it was being done in a small town in Iowa or in Chicago,” she said.

The parishioners of Corpus Christi also helped make the transition easy. “The people of the parish went out of their way to welcome us,” she said.

Sister Ann agreed. “The people of Corpus Christi were so warm and welcoming,” she remembered. “They have always treated us like family.”

The sisters said that through the years, parishioners invited them to join their families for holiday gatherings and to be part of important celebrations, such as weddings and baptisms. Parishioners would even invite Sister Ann over to their homes to watch her beloved Chicago White Sox play baseball on television.

The number of parishioners at Corpus Christi has declined compared to when the two sisters began serving there. The high school was already closed when they arrived, and the elementary school was forced to do the same in 1993 because of low enrollment. Today, the parish consists of approximately 100 families served by priests from the Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria.

Sisters Marilyn and Ann are the last two Franciscan sisters serving Corpus Christi and their retirement and departure mark the end of an era for the parish.



Jason Stapleton, a parishioner at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, chatted with Sisters Ann Rubly (left) and Marilyn Freking, alongside his wife, Ivy, and toddler daughter, Aria, after a recent farewell Mass for the sisters. Photo by Mitch Dudek/Chicago Sun-Times.

(Continued on the next page.)

A farewell Mass was held at Corpus Christi on June 5 to honor the two sisters and to thank them for their years of service. Many of the parish's families and former members were in attendance.

After Mass there was also a meal. Sister Marilyn said parishioners went to great lengths in preparing the food and in decorating to make the occasion more festive. "It was a beautiful celebration. The people from the parish did so much to make it a special day. It really showed how much love there is in this place," she said.

During the celebration, some parishioners took the opportunity to share their favorite memories of the two sisters. One story retold that day was the account of Sister Ann stopping a would-be robber who was trying to steal bingo money from the church. As the thief attempted to flee with the cash, Sister Ann grabbed his leg and held on until police arrived to arrest him. "It happened decades ago," Sister Ann said with a laugh, "but people still like to talk about it."

A few weeks after the farewell Mass, Sisters Marilyn and Ann returned to Mount St. Francis. The sisters said they are looking forward to retirement, but are not entirely sure yet what retirement will look like. Both agree they are excited to see old friends and also plan to do some volunteering. They anticipate a little more leisure time, which they hope will allow them the chance to play more cards. "We like games like canasta and pinochle," Sister Ann said. "We're both very competitive."

Sister Marilyn said while they look forward to retirement, there are many things they'll miss about life in Chicago. She mentioned Lake Michigan, the view from atop the city's skyscrapers and the local food as some of the things she was sure she would miss. She said, though, "it's the people and the parish we'll miss the most. Without a doubt, it's the parish and the wonderful people." ■

This article first appeared in The Witness.

Top right photo: Sister Ann Rubly with White Sox Pitcher Carlos Rodon. Photo courtesy of the White Sox.



Sister Ann Rubly Throws Out First Pitch at White Sox Game

On Sunday, June 26, **Sister Ann Rubly, OSF**, threw out the first pitch at the Chicago White Sox Game against the Toronto Blue Jays.

Sister Ann grew up loving the White Sox as her dad was a fan and they used to listen to Bob Elson call the games on the radio. A friend from Corpus Christi parish contacted the White Sox to arrange the ceremonial first pitch as a surprise for her in celebration of her retirement. When she arrived at the game with friends, she was told the news that she would be throwing out the first pitch.

"It was quite something," said Sister Ann. "Fame for a day."

Some of the parishioners from Corpus Christi and cousins from Willowbrook, Illinois, also surprised Sister Ann at the game to watch her on the mound at U.S. Cellular Field. The Chicago White Sox provided Sister Ann with a team jersey. She threw the ball to White Sox Pitcher Carlos Rodon who signed the ball for her afterward.

"I bounced the ball at the plate," said Sister Ann laughing. ■

DBQ Franciscans Host Institution Day

By Jessi Russo

“It’s inspiring to see people wanting to be involved and wanting to live our mission and values,” said **Sister Janet May, OSF**, of Institution Day on September 12 at Mount St. Francis.

The event brought together 42 staff and sister board members from Mount St. Francis and organizations affiliated with the Dubuque Franciscans: Alverno Apartments, Dubuque; Stonehill Franciscan Services, Dubuque; Shalom Spirituality Center, Dubuque; and Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, Iowa.

The day, which was titled, “Treasuring Our Franciscan Roots,” was facilitated by **Sister Nancy Schreck, OSF**, who led the group in reflecting on the qualities that make an institution Franciscan and the role that the leaders have in creating an atmosphere where this Franciscan vision is evident in the organization.

“Having staff and sister board members attend from our affiliate organizations allows them to establish relationships,” said **Sister Cathy (Kate) Katoski, OSF**. “They then learn from one another ways to pass on the Franciscan charism and values in their own institutions. We are blessed to have the employees of so many institutions historically affiliated with the Dubuque Franciscans committed to these values.”

For those unfamiliar with Franciscan charisms, Sister Nancy gave a crash course--teaching the group about the history of St. Francis and how the movement began. “I learned the love the Dubuque Franciscan community has for God’s people which motivates their work,” said one respondent on a survey given to attendees.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to dialogue with one another and share in what ways the mission of the sisters was being lived out in



Stonehill Franciscan Services Board Members Sister Lila Hellman (left) and Sister Camilla Hemann with Stonehill Franciscan Services Employees Peggy Stockel, and Susan Feldmann at Institution Day on September 12.

their institutions.

“Receiving the gift of leading in an organization affiliated with the Sisters of St. Francis is a humbling experience, one that I carry into the core of my work with high regard and with a great sense of responsibility,” said **Louise Paskey**, Vice President for Student Development at Briar Cliff University. “I am grateful for the vision and insightful planning of the sisters, and their work in being committed to building organizations that are of a high caliber and grounded in the Franciscan tradition. I left the workshop with a renewed sense of the importance for transformational leadership that embodies the values of St. Francis.”

Gretchen Brown, CEO of Stonehill Franciscan Services, agreed with Louise and said that working in an organization affiliated with the Sisters of St. Francis is an honor.

“I feel the privilege of ‘taking the baton’ from the sisters and sharing their core values,” said Gretchen. “To know we are going to sustain it is an incredible privilege.”

“It’s such a gift to witness the charism everyday,” shared **Leanne Golinvaux**, who is the CFO of the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters. “I’m fortunate to be part of spreading the Gospel beyond these convent walls.” ■

Donating from your IRA – a tax-saving way to help your favorite charities

by Sister Cathy Katoski, OSF

After periodic years in which benefactors could make donations from their IRA, last year Congress made permanent the opportunity to make a donation of up to \$100,000 from an IRA to qualified charitable organizations. If you are 70½ years old or older, you can take advantage of this simple way to benefit charities and receive tax benefits in return.

Why should you consider making a gift in this fashion?

- Your gift will be put to use today, allowing you to experience the joy of your generosity.
- You will pay no income tax on the gift(s) as you do on other distributions from your IRA. The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your deductions.
- This can be a wonderful win-win for people who would rather gift to charity than pay taxes. Experts estimate that heirs receive less than 25% of most IRA assets that pass

through estates. Making charities beneficiaries of your IRA after your death is thus also a very smart thing to do if you have such charitable intent.

If you have not yet taken your required minimum distribution for this year, your IRA charitable gift can satisfy all or part of that requirement. If you have taken your required distribution, you can anticipate donating part of your IRA distribution next year. The funds must be transferred directly from your IRA administrator to the charity.

Direct rollovers to a qualified charity can be made only from an IRA. Under certain circumstances, however, you may be able to roll assets from a pension, profit sharing, 401(k) or 403(b) plan into an IRA and then make the transfer from the IRA to charity. To determine if a rollover to an IRA is available for your plan, speak with your plan administrator. It is always wise to consult with your tax professionals if you are contemplating a major charitable gift. ■

Franciscan Associate John Donaghy Ordained as a Deacon in Honduras

Franciscan Associate **John Donaghy** was ordained as a deacon in Cucuyagua, Copán, Honduras, on Friday, July 15. John is the first permanent deacon for this diocese and only the third in the whole country of Honduras. “We share John’s joy in this confirmation of his vocation to serve, especially those who are poor and marginalized,” said **Sister Nancy Meyerhofer**, who attended the Mass. At Mass, John thanked those who have helped him in his vocation—including the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters, especially the six sisters who live and minister in Honduras. “Their dedication to the poor gives me strength to go forward,” said John. ■



Bishop Darwin Andino lays his hands on Franciscan Associate John Donaghy during the ordination Mass. Photo by Sister Nancy Meyerhofer, OSF.

Sr. Pat Farrell Gives Keynote Address at LCWR Annual Assembly

Sister Pat Farrell, OSF, gave the final keynote address at the annual Leadership Conference of Women Religious assembly in Atlanta August 9-13. Sister Pat is a past president of LCWR.

Sr. Pat shared her personal experience with contemplation and leadership. “It filled a deep hunger in me personally and seemed to enable me to respond to leadership challenges with some depth and creativity. In the silence and solitude something gradually expanded in me. I was aware of a slowly-growing ability to be more compassionate, less reactive and judgmental,” said Sister Pat.

There were 800 participants who attended the assembly, including the Dubuque Franciscan Leadership Team. This year’s theme was “Embracing the Mystery: Living Transformation.”

Sister Teresa Maya, president of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, was voted in as president-elect. LCWR has a three-member governing body of president, past president and president-elect. ■

Sister Pat Farrell, OSF, in Atlanta. Photo by Sister Mary Lechtenberg, OSF.



In Remembrance

Sister Julie Coyne February 8, 1937 - August 24, 2016



Julie Coyne, daughter of the late Thomas J. and Emma E. (Dixon) Coyne, was born February 8, 1937 in Anthon, Iowa. She was

baptized and confirmed at St. Joseph's Church in Anthon. She entered the Sisters of St. Francis in Dubuque from St. Joseph's Parish.

She was received with the name Sister Marie Peronne on August 12, 1957, and made her final profession of vows on August 12, 1962.

Sister ministered as an educator in Sioux City, Iowa, and Niles, Illinois. She also served as a pharmacist in Emporia, Kansas; Xavier and Mercy Hospitals in Dubuque; and Mercy Hospital in Sioux City. She ministered in various locations as a massage therapist and participated in a House of Prayer in Denver, Colorado; Albany, New York; Cherokee, Iowa; and Dubuque.

Sister is survived by her sisters Nancy Brown, Kathleen Deischel, Mary (Joseph) Casillas, Sheila Bradley, Jean (Gerald) Naughton and Colleen (Terry) Wright and brothers Thomas (Jeanette) Coyne, Michael Coyne and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared 59 years of her life.

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, her brother Francis who died in infancy, and her brothers-in-law Clarence Bradley and Henry Brown.



Three Dubuque Franciscans Receive 2016 Governor's Award



Sister Mary Clare O'Toole, Carol Hemesath, Jerry Weydert, Governor Terry E. Branstad, and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds. Not pictured: Sister Marian Klostermann. Contributed photo.

Sisters Mary Clare O'Toole, OSF, Carol Hemesath, OSF, and Marian Klostermann, OSF received a 2016 Governor's Volunteer Award from Governor Terry E. Branstad during a special recognition ceremony held in June in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Sisters Mary Clare, Carol, and Marian were acknowledged for over five years of service to the Jail and Prison Ministry program of Catholic Charities in Dubuque.

"I am pleased to honor those who have given the precious gift of their time to meet essential needs across Iowa," stated Governor Terry E. Branstad. "The commitment of these volunteers—and all volunteers—helps Iowa consistently remain in the top 10 states in the nation for its volunteerism rate."

"The dedication of the people selected for these awards often encourages others to become involved in service, and I am delighted to recognize them for their amazing contributions," said Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. ■

Rest in Peace

Dennis Rolling
Velma Ruth Rolling
Brother and sister-in-law of Sister Theresa Rolling

Vanita Raymond
Sister of Sister Marci Blum

Jo Ann Groetken
Sister-in-law of Sister Ella Groetken

Mel Klisart
Brother of Sister Mary Klisart

Ray Schaefer
Brother of Sister Alice Schaefer

Bill Bonert
Brother of Sister Bertha Bonert

James Hynes
Brother-in-law of Sister Eleanor Lambert

Aloysius John Vaske, Jr.
Brother of Sister Rosemary Vaske

Lucille Balek
Mother of Sister Michelle Balek

Sylvia Ginder
Sister-in-law of Sister Edna Ginder

Alberta Mary Van Nest
Sister of Sister Dolores McAllister

Jubilee 2016

The Dubuque Franciscan Sisters honored their Golden (50 years), Diamond (60 years) and Double Diamond Jubilarians (70 years) at celebrations on June 25 and 26 at Mount St. Francis Center in Dubuque.

“There was a call that each of these Jubilarians answered. It probably arrived as a visitor. It probably felt

Double Diamond Jubilarians - 70 Years



Front row from left to right: Sisters Romaine Pickart, Dolores McAllister, Veronica Schafers, and Eileen Schoenherr. Back row from left to right: Sisters Donalda Kehoe, Lucy Kurt, Marian Einck, Ruth Elsbernd, Priscilla Stork, and Mona Wingert.

Diamond Jubilarians - 60 Years

Front row left to right: Sisters Carolyn Thirtle, Joanne Streck, and Kathleen Orthaus. Back row left to right: Sisters Grace Ann Witte, Helen Huewe, Carol Hemesath, Lois Tilkes, Margaret Mary Feldner, and Madonna Friedman.



Golden Jubilarians - 50 Years



Front row left to right: Sisters Frances Nosbisch, Annette George, and Alice Errthum. Back row left to right: Sisters Marci Blum, Pat Farrell, and Mary Lee Cox.

Footprints



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Volunteers Travel to Honduras with the Sister Water Project and Franciscan Common Venture

The Dubuque Franciscans sent a team of 14 volunteers to Honduras with the Sister Water Project in September. In November, the Franciscan Common Venture program will send 6 volunteers to Honduras.

Volunteers for the Sister Water Project Service trip were **Tyla Cole, Rachel**

Dancer, Brian Gilligan, Sam Gilligan, Steve Kennedy, Zachary Little, Pastor Heidi McGinness, Erin McGrane, Sister Nancy Miller, OSF, Mary Beth Myers, Sister Terri Rodela, OSF, Jane Shey, Mary Stephany, and Sue Webber. The team joined **Sisters Pat Farrell, OSF, and Mary Beth Goldsmith, OSF,** in Honduras.

While in Honduras from September 23-30, 2016, the team helped make potable water accessible to people in the rural village of La Iguala, near the town of Gracias in Lempira by digging trenches, laying PVC pipes, and installing a water tank and pump.

Volunteers for the service trip to Honduras in November with Franciscan Common Venture are: **Kathy Allman, Dan Allman, Dan Shea, Brandon Walls, Cindy Kobusch, and Joe Schockemoehl.**

From November 19-27, 2016, members of the service trip team will assist in building a parish retreat and training center near Gracias, Lempira. Work will consist of clearing land, making cement and adobe bricks, and other construction tasks.



Sister Water Project Honduras Service Trip Team 2016

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 28

Shalom Shenanigans Benefit Dinner and Auction, 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Shalom Spirituality Center, 1001 Davis St., Dubuque. This event features a social hour, plated dinner, auctions and entertainment. For tickets, call (563) 582-3592.

NOVEMBER 2

November Memorial Liturgy

NOVEMBER 2

"Grieving the Loss of a Loved One," Facilitator: Betty Takes, 7 p.m., Shalom Spirituality Center. To register, call (563) 582-3592.

NOVEMBER 6

November Memorial Liturgy

NOVEMBER 22

Reading that Matters Book Discussion with Sister Eileen Miller, OSF. Book: "The End of Your Life Book Club," 7 p.m., Shalom Spirituality Center. To register, call (563) 582-3592.

DECEMBER 6

Shalom's Annual Advent Evening for Women, 6 p.m., Shalom Spirituality Center. To register, call (563) 582-3592.