

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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Photo by Sister Karla Kloft

Footprints

Winter 2018-19 | Volume 52 | Number 3

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Water project #206 was completed in November.

A message from *Leadership*

This issue of Footprints focuses on one of our congregational commitments: to stand with persons who are poor. St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi hold up to us their radical lives of poverty. Their conversions called them to a state of total dependency on God. Francis, the Later Rule (6:1-4): Let the brothers and sisters not make anything their own, neither house nor place nor anything at all as pilgrims and strangers in this world...May we faithfully respond to the graces you have given us, knowing that without you we can do nothing good.

The Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Francis direct us to stand with persons who are poor:

- Acknowledging that all is gift from a loving Creator, we express our Franciscan poverty through dependence on God.
- We are called to respond with love for all people and to struggle against oppressive poverty. We support...those sisters who choose to be one with those who are economically poor and oppressed.
- As a congregation, we contribute from our resources for the needs of the church, the substance of those who are poor and the changing oppressive social systems.

We strive to rely on God for all the goodness which creation/all life offers us. We are challenged to know our powerlessness, our reliance on God and to live uncluttered lives, thus living in a constant state of conversion.

In the summer of 2008, a small group of us decided to share with one another our commitment to stand with persons who are poor in an ongoing manner. Consequently, we have emailed monthly during these years. Sometimes we share an inspirational article we have read. Other times someone is handing out food to needy persons while another reflects on an immersion experience with homeless people. The most important aspect of this commitment is that we “show up” each month and are accountable to one another no matter how insignificant our efforts.

I invite you to join us regularly in praying the following petitions:

- For a deepening awareness of our need for you in our daily lives, we pray.
- For greater generosity in sharing with others what we have received, we pray.
- For greater courage to act in countercultural ways and to challenge the wasteful practices of our time, we pray.
- For greater willingness to engage in actions that bring about systemic change, we pray.
- For our Church, that our charity and generosity toward those most in need may be increasingly visible to bring about greater peace and justice in our troubled world, we pray.

In these pages, you will learn of the many efforts of our sisters and Franciscan Associates in walking with persons who are poor. May we all be inspired!

Blessings on you during 2019!

--Sister Mary Lechtenberg, 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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President

Sister Marie Cigrand
Vice President

Sister Mary Lechtenberg
Vice President

Sister Kathy Knipper
Vice President





Sister Carole Freking on a Common Venture service trip. Contributed photo.

Standing with Persons who are Poor

The Dubuque Franciscans' mission states that "in our personal, communal and public lives, the Sisters of St. Francis commit to ongoing conversion as we...stand with persons who are poor." In this issue of *Footprints*, we will look at some of the ways the sisters are honoring their mission to "Stand with the Poor."

Commitment Circle

At each Gathering held twice annually, sisters spend time meeting with their commitment circle of which there are three: Standing with the Poor, Sister Water and Mother Earth, and Peace and Non-Violence.

At the most recent Gathering in September the Standing with the Poor Circle chose to focus on learning more about mass incarceration and reform of the U.S. criminal justice system.

"It was once said by Gandhi, 'Start somewhere and it will take you everywhere,' so it has been with the work of our group," said Sister Dorothy

Schwendinger.

"We have heightened our awareness of hunger in the world, the tragedy of forced immigration, and we have advocated for programs like SNAP and aid for women and children. Over time it became more and more clear that a large segment of our world is poor because of economics, class bias and systemic racism. The U.S. locks up more people than any other country in the world and every year spends over \$80 billion to keep people incarcerated. The vast majority of these people are poor, many are mentally ill, and most are people of color. If we truly are serious about poverty, this issue needs our concerted attention," she stated.

The group invited Caprice Jones from Fountain of Youth in Dubuque, which is a program assisting those transitioning to life after prison. Three men and one woman who are working with Clarice shared how the program is helping them to change their mindsets, dream again, seek meaningful employment, and stay on the difficult journey back into society.

“Their testimonies were most compelling and were very well received,” said Sister Dorothy.

The commitment circle’s Gathering discussion inspired Sisters Dorothy, Teresa Jungers and Ginny Heldorfer to travel to Alabama to experience the Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, the Montgomery Lynching Memorial, and the Peace and Justice Center this fall.

“Our Gathering sessions are experiences that touch our hearts and move us into action. These heart-touching experiences in Alabama have lead me to reflect on what I can do,” said Sister Ginny Heldorfer. “I hope to visit our local jail in Dubuque and have another conversation with the local law-enforcement to see needs I could help meet. I also hope to volunteer at a local after-school center that focuses on lower income students who struggle in school. Education will certainly be one factor in keeping kids out of prison. I hope that in my ‘retirement’ years, I can help one child live a full life,” she added.

Immigration

For Sister Carol Besch, her ministry with immigrants was inspired by her her own experience as a foreigner in El Salvador.

“In the beginning, I was overwhelmed with the new language and culture. However, the people welcomed us and made us at home,” she said. “It is easy to imagine all the difficulties that the new immigrants face. I am eager to ‘welcome the stranger’ because I was once a stranger.”

Sister Carol uses her Spanish language skills to help Hispanic immigrants in Dubuque. She provides language interpretation and educates new arrivals on what services are available to them.

“I also accompany pregnant women to the maternity clinic to provide transportation and interpretation for their visits,” said Sister Carol. “I have been present during delivery. I also accompany mothers and newborn babies to the clinic with the wellness checkups and the WIC clinic and provide transportation and babysitting for the women who want to learn English.”

In her ministry at Holy Ghost school in Dubuque, Sister Mary Lee Cox teaches migrant and immigrant children.

“Teaching migrant and immigrant children English is a small way to support these children



Caprice Jones (bottom left) from the Fountain of Youth poses for a photo with the sisters after speaking about institutional/generational poverty struggles and helping youth avoid incarceration. Contributed photo.

whose parents have sacrificed so much to get them here to our country,” she said.

“Their parents are hoping that their children will have a better life here. As I work with these children I am very mindful of the children at our borders whose parents also hold the dream for a better life for their children who huddle around their parents for security. Every day and often throughout the day I pray that our broken immigration situation will be healed. The asylum seekers have their rights and we must protect those rights.”

Sister Helen Huewe is working with the Marshallese population of Dubuque in a variety of ways and as the need arises. “The poor are among us,” she said.

“As I learned more and more about the Marshallese culture, I learned about their needs and phone calls came to me such as: difficulties paying for rent or bills; unable to pay fees for burying a relative; facing eviction; children sleeping on the floor because they don’t have beds; or understanding the language and misleading nonverbal messages can be challenges and the list goes on,” added Sister Helen.

In serving the Marshallese, Sister Helen uses the philosophy her mother passed on to her.

“My mother taught me: ‘Love is stronger than death.’ She died but her love lives on at the invitation of Jesus when from the cross he looked at his mother and John and said: ‘Take care of each other, I am leaving.’ I cannot not respond to the needs of the Marshallese people.”

(Continued on next page)

Clothing the Naked, Feeding the Hungry

“One of the ways I try to live the commitment of Standing with the Poor is volunteering each Wednesday at the Dubuque Food Pantry,” said Sister Mary Lou Reisch.

“The philosophy there is ‘hand up, not a hand out,’ and the people are so grateful to receive the items in such a dignified, gracious manner,” said Sister Mary Lou.

Sister Helen Nelson also ministers at a food and clothing distribution center weekly in Waterloo, Iowa, called, “Eye of the Needle.”

“Many folks I meet are ‘down on their luck’-- persons who have just lost their jobs, been released from prison, have a family or new baby without the resources to care for them--uniforms, formula, diapers, basic food etc. and many other situations,” said Sister Helen. “At Eye of the Needle they are given the items needed without any questions asked.”

Sheltering the Homeless

In Waseca, Minnesota, Sister Lois Erpelding seeks to live in the example of Saint Francis. “Touched by God, filled by God, Francis now burned with a desire to help others believe in their own goodness. I, too, feel called to rebuild lives in God’s image,” she said. “God continues to invite me to be aware of my call to be a grateful steward.”

Sister Lois makes home visits to those in need

through the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Waseca.

“As I team with another Vincent de Paul member, I realize how graciously we are received into homes of those who are insufficiently funded. They beg for monetary assistance for electricity, gas, or rent. No matter if this is a first asking or repeated request, it still takes nerve and expectancy to beg. Our visit allows us to focus on the person’s goodness, their storying of family, needs, and appreciation for any assistance. I agree with Dave Koza: ‘Realize that they are all gifts God has placed in our lives to show God’s presence and grace,’” she said.

Sister Lois also advocated for the opening of “Bethlehem Inn,” which will provide transitional housing for women and children and is located at the former Sacred Heart Parish convent in Waseca.

“After months of preparation, Bethlehem Inn opens on January 2, 2019,” said Sister Lois.

Sister Lois explained that the financial support the Dubuque Franciscans provided Bethlehem Inn in order to hire a director was a “boost” the housing committee working on the project needed.

“They were beginning to doubt that their dream would be fulfilled,” said Sister Lois. “But with the Dubuque Franciscans’ grant they re-energized with renewed energy to dream again the possibility. Now this Christmas season we share the hospitality of a new Bethlehem Inn in Waseca.”



Sister Lois Erpelding (second from right) with advocates for Bethlehem Inn at the lease signing in Waseca, Minnesota. Photo courtesy of Dana Melius of Waseca County News.

Pastoral Care

Sister Renae Hohensee serves as pastoral care minister at the Parish of the Resurrection in Pocahontas, Iowa. But her ministry extends to the many people she encounters in various facets of life.

“The poor” have many faces and I meet them and converse with them everywhere; the library, bank, local grocery store, the care centers I serve, children and staff at school, etc. I meet them where they are, then conscientiously calm myself, become present to the moment, look into their eyes and listen with a compassionate heart,” she said. “Though I haven't the financial means to help, I can offer them my time and presence. I believe there are many people who can benefit from being heard.”

In her ministry at the parish, Sister Renae visits and gives weekly communion to residents of three care centers and one assisted living facility. One afternoon a week she plays card games with the residents of the Pocahontas Care Center.

“There are lots of laughs and companionship when we play,” stated Renae. “‘Standing with the Poor’ (lonely) doesn't have to be serious all the time!”



Sister Renae Hohensee with students. Contributed photo.

She also directs the parish's group choir; organizes music for funerals; and is a teaching assistant in the kindergarten and first grade classrooms at the parish's Catholic School.

“My training in pastoral care is invaluable at school as difficult situations often arise with families, staff and students,” she said. “One never knows what the day might bring. I try to remain attentive and open to all that surrounds me.”

Meeting the Needs of Others

While on sabbatical in 2014, Sister Carole Freking volunteered with the Burmese refugees in Waterloo, Iowa. It was then that she saw the need in the area for services.

“A small group from Waterloo was exploring establishing the ‘Bridges Out of Poverty’ program and I became part of that group,” she said. “We've formed ‘Getting Ahead in the Cedar Valley,’ which each spring and fall holds 18 classes assisting persons to become familiar with resources and methods to create a better future for themselves and their families.”

There have been seven groups that have graduated from the program.

“It's a real joy to witness some of the transformations that have occurred! My ministry is like a continuous immersion experience for me!”

Sister Carole has also sought out experiences of standing with the poor through the Dubuque Franciscans' Common Venture volunteer program.

(Continued on the next page)

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Sister Renae Hohensee



Sisters Nila Meyerhofer (left) with Sister Jan Hrubes at the Franciscan Resource Center in Melrose Park, Illinois. Contributed photo.

“Common Venture has been a marvelous avenue for me to connect with those less fortunate. Each year I ask the Common Venture Coordinator to contact me if there is a need for a sister on a team. This has led me to eye-opening ventures in Zambia, Texas, St. Lucia, and Mississippi, as well as Catholic Worker Farms and Dubuque Rescue Mission in Iowa.”

Empowering Through Connections

On Fridays at 7 a.m., you’ll find Sisters Jan Hrubes and Nila Meyerhofer standing outside of the Broadview (Illinois) Immigration Detention Center with an interfaith group of many persons. The group prays for families that are being torn apart by deportation and gives public witness to the injustices of immigration.

Back in Melrose Park, Illinois, Sisters Jan and

Nila minister to a variety of people of varying needs via the Franciscan Resource Center, a ministry they began in 2012.

“This non-profit program gives information to persons of Proviso Township seeking help with problems of homelessness, food pantries, clothing, counseling, assistance with immigration or other basic needs,” said Sister Jan. “There are 14 suburbs in Proviso Township along with many helping agencies that persons are unaware of. We are the ‘connectors’ between them and the needed resources. And our whole model is not about being a hand out--not enabling, but empowering persons to seek help.”

Guiding individuals to area resources in the western suburbs of Chicago required Sisters Jan and Nila to do their homework to learn what resources were available in the area.

“I worked in education for many years, but this was like a brand new ministry,” said Sister Nila. “We had to go out and visit each resource.”

Meeting and working with the staff of those agencies has been one of the highlights of their ministry.

“Communicating and networking with many area agency personnel, including those at Catholic Charities, St. Vincent De Paul Society, and Hines Veteran’s Hospital is a joy,” said Sister Jan.

Sisters Jan and Nila have kept intake files on their clients and have interviewed and referred over 2,000 men and women for help with their needs.

Some of those clients have come to them via the food pantry where Sisters Jan and Nila volunteer on Saturday mornings. Some of those same men and women have returned to the food pantry, and other places, to volunteer their assistance to others in need

“It’s exciting that they want to give back.” said Sister Nila. ■

What are some of the ways you support the commitment for standing with the poor?

"I give discounted massages at a clinic for people who have low incomes or who would not be able to afford a massage otherwise. I also give massages for hospice. I volunteer with the Interfaith Welcoming Coalition, which is a faith-based movement meeting the changing needs of asylum seekers, refugees and at-risk immigrants in collaboration with others. I interpret in Spanish and English to help groups better communicate."

--Sister Maureen Leach

"This commitment helps shape my whole life. I always pray for the many women in shelters or refugee camps, who don't even have a pillow for their heads, much less a mattress or blanket, every night before going to sleep—and thank God for the luxuries we have here."

--Sister Bernice Schuetz

"I pray for victims caught in any form of poverty, including the incarcerated, the immigrant, and human trafficking. I contact our legislators on fixing issues of poverty that includes our broken justice system. I was part of a small group that visited the Catholic Worker House in Davenport. We learned of their programs offered and visited each of the different sites."

--Sister Nona Meyerhofer

"Living in a rather poor neighborhood in Honduras is one way of standing with the poor. Our house has some leaks when heavy rains come through, we tend to shower in the afternoon when the water is a little warmer (we don't have hot water), and we try to separate trash into what goes into our compost pile and what doesn't. We go shopping with cloth bags and try to raise consciousness about caring for our Common Home. I have always felt an attraction to standing with the poor and am comfortable with that stance. I bring to prayer the many situations and people encountered every day, placing them in God's hands, hands that have room for everyone, and ask for guidance on how to proceed."

--Sister Nancy Meyerhofer

"I help my Sisters here who are disabled, with wheelchairs or walkers who might not be steady on their feet by carrying their dirty dishes after a meal. I assist my three companion sisters at Clare House by writing letters for them, reading to them, and playing games with them. I have also helped with retreats for 19 years for adult persons with diverse abilities. I embrace my own poverty by living simply without a lot of stuff in my room and I accept willingly my limitations of aging. This shapes my prayer life to pray for those less blessed than me."

--Sister Dolores Banowetz

"I stand with the poor by advocating for them daily by e-mailing the President, our Senate and Congressional leaders, and others in leadership roles. I also meet monthly with our Coalition Against Human Trafficking to learn how to create more local awareness of this human slavery and how to end it."

--Sister Lou Ann Killburg

"When looking back in my life, I am aware that there was always a space in me that was moved by people who had less, lived in situations that seemed so different from my experience. I recall being moved by the film the White Fathers showed at St. Williams Parish school in Alta Vista when I was a sophomore or junior about their work in rural Africa. The next years I had little exposure to those whose lives were so different from my northern USA rural-small town experience. That original empathy for those on the margin is now expressed as I read articles/books, pray, watch programs that teach me more and expand the insight gained in my ministry in Mississippi. Personal visits and submitting Ministry Fund grants for the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Mississippi keep me engaged with the rural community there. The advocacy work of the Dubuque Socially Responsible Investing Working Group (see more on page 14) for people/systems negatively impacted by corporate economic decisions is an engagement of my standing with the poor today."

--Sister Judy Sinnwell

Central American Associates Meet for Retreat in Guatemala

by Jessi Russo



Sisters and Associates at the second retreat for Central American Associates the weekend of December 7-9, 2018 in Guatemala. Contributed photos.

On the weekend of December 7-9, 2018, Central American Associates met in Salcaja, Guatemala, for their second retreat.

Traveling from Iowa to the retreat were Franciscan Associate Coordinator Lisa Schmidt and Franciscan Associate Nancy Guthrie. The retreat included seven associates from Guatemala, four associates from Honduras, and two associates from El Salvador, as well as Sisters Pat Farrell, Mary Beth Goldsmith, and Carol Hawkins, who minister in Honduras.

“The second Associates retreat exemplified our shared life or ‘convivencia’ together,” said Nancy Guthrie. “Whether over meals of wonderful typical Guatemalan food offered lovingly from our hosts, jokes, game breaks, or songs sung together, our life together for three short days was rich and full.”

The retreat was patterned after Gathering held in the fall for the Associates in Dubuque, said Lisa. This is to include the Central American Associates on similar practices as their American counterparts.

“The retreat included prayer, reflection and input culminated in expressions of care and support for our varied ministries across Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador,” said Nancy. “As one coming from Iowa, it was special to communicate our connection and desire as North American Associates and Sisters to share the values and

charisms of Francis and Clare in our daily lives. I hope more of us from the north will find ways to experience ‘convivencia’ with these special people. I am richer for it.”

For Lisa Schmidt, reuniting with the Central American Associates she met in December 2016 at the first retreat in El Salvador was very special.

“It is such a privilege to be with them again. To be in their space and be welcomed--the hospitality they showed us was amazing,” she said. “They view being Associates as their responsibility to carry out the values of Saints Francis and Clare. And at the retreat they are able to connect with others who have the same values and want to share the charism.”

The retreat is very important to the Central American Associates and they are committed to many hours of travel in order to be together. It took the group from Honduras 19 hours to reach the retreat’s location in Guatemala. But in the end, it was worth the long hours in the car.

“The gathering of Associates was a wonderful experience!” said Sister Mary Beth Goldsmith. “The spirit of Franciscan joy was so apparent through the sharing that occurred, the renewal of friendships and the laughter that could be heard throughout the weekend. I came away from the experience with a deep gratitude for the Franciscan spirit that lives in our Central American Associates!” ■



Nancy Guthrie (left) and Sister Mary Beth Goldsmith with a young boy from Guatemala.



Sister Carol Hawkins (bottom row, second from right) with Associates from Guatemala and Honduras and their friends.



From left to right: Associates Lurvelina Rodas and Brigida Lizano Vargas with Sisters Mary Beth Goldsmith and Pat Farrell.



From left to right: Associates Magdaly Estrada, Yesenia Estrada, and Nancy Guthrie hold hand painted gourds.



Associates Father Mario Dominguez (right) and Deacon John Donaghy say Mass at the retreat.

Volunteers Reflect on SWP Trip to Honduras

by Jessi Russo



Sister Water Project service trip volunteers from left to right: Kate Uhal, Asbury, Iowa; Pat Vogl, Arcadia, Iowa; Katie Lynch, Phoenix, Arizona; Katy of Honduras; Dennis Erickson, Dubuque; Karen Herreman, Omaha, Nebraska; and Art Roche, Dubuque. Contributed photo.

For Sister Brenda Whetstone, returning to Honduras with the Sister Water Project (SWP) service trip was like coming home.

“At the worksite, I was surprised to meet up with some of the people I had come to know from my previous time in Honduras,” she said. “What a gift it was for me to work shoulder-shoulder, shovel-to-shovel, with the people I had served pastorally in the past,” she said.

Sister Brenda was part of a 20-person team who traveled to Honduras August 18-26 to work with villagers in Mejocote, and Sisters Pat Farrell and Carol Hawkins, who minister in the country.

Mejocote was the site of the previous year’s service trip. The water source for the village is high in the mountains and villagers are working to connect it with 19 miles of pipes into their homes.

“I expected the work to be hot and hard, and I wasn’t disappointed,” said volunteer Art Roche of Dubuque. “I found I could work hard for short periods and then rest a few minutes and go back to it. I was wearing protective work boots, work gloves, and sweating constantly with the heat and exertion. None of the Hondurans wore gloves, and none appeared to be sweating, although they seemed to be working twice as hard as most of us! These men were inspiring and clearly dedicated to the project.”

Each Sunday, 50-100 men travel from the community to the work site where they stay for the week as they install pipes and haul sand to make cement pillars that elevate the pipes off the ground.

“I got a real appreciation for the magnitude of this project and the investment of sweat equity that the Hondurans were making,” stated Art. “We were there two years into the project, and they had been at it that long, with at least another year to go before they turn on the taps in Mejocote.”

Though the project is a test of endurance, the volunteers witnessed how the Hondurans rely on their faith.

“At the start of the day’s work, we would pray,” said Sister Brenda. “The Hondurans ALWAYS thanked God for the beauty of the day, for the love, care and support they feel from God, their neighbors and from their ‘new friends from North America.’ At the end of the day, more prayers were said to thank God, for God’s presence, loving spirit, and the work accomplished. They prayed for continued strength and solidarity in future endeavors for the project and were sincerely grateful for the support of the North American team that came to stand in solidarity with them.”

The appreciation shown from the Hondurans was what moved volunteer Wayne Green of Waverly, Iowa.

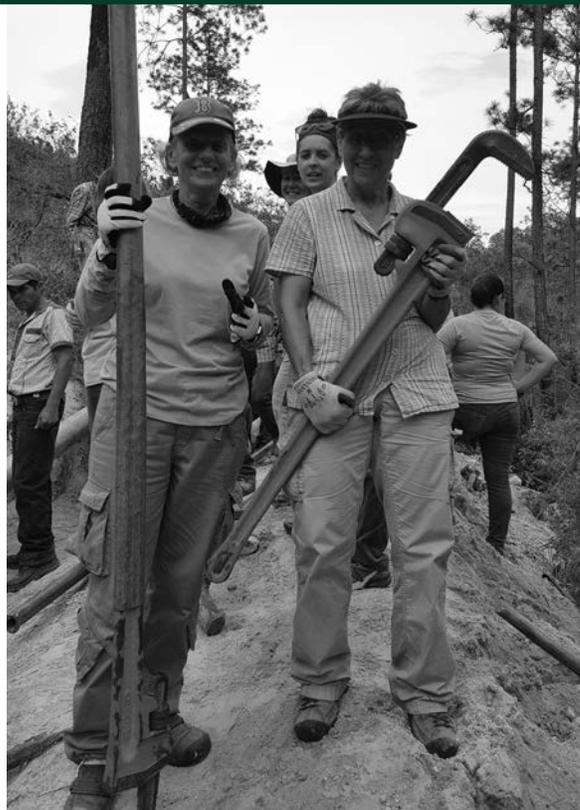
“In reality, the work we did on the pipeline was a tiny part of the total effort. But as was indicated to us, our presence was important,” he said.

During their time in Honduras, the volunteers had an opportunity to visit the prison where Sister Pat Farrell ministers as well as visit with a Honduran family from the local parish. This experience has stayed with volunteer Pat Vogl of Arcadia, Iowa.

“The highlight of the trip for me was being invited into the home of a parishioner’s family and experiencing their genuine hospitality and eagerness to show us their way of life.” said Pat. “Their love for God and love for their family was so evident in their actions and words.

Though the duration of the service trip was little over a week, volunteers recognized its life-long impacts.

“I was thrust into a situation where my needs were more simply defined--water, food, a good footing, a tool to use, encouragement from my co-workers, a feeling of accomplishment after a day of work, a good night’s sleep,” said Art. “I was able to get by with very little, and enjoy what I had fully. Now that I’m home, I’m finding



SWP Volunteers Karen Herreman (left), of Omaha, Nebraska, with Pat Vogl of Arcadia, Iowa, hold a pipe wrench and other tools used by villagers. Contributed photo.

that I can get by with less, especially if it’s a situation that will leave more for others.” ■



The Sister Water Project service team with Honduran villagers. Contributed photo.



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.

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, OFMCap, 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 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.

"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 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 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 benefits 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. ■

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.

In Remembrance

Sister Catherine Weisensel December 8, 1923 - August 30, 2018



Sister Catherine's life began on December 8, 1923 as the seventh child of 12 born to Amanda (Diedrich) and Erhardt

Weisensel in Stacyville, Iowa.

When Catherine was four, the family moved to a farm closer to Stacyville, and it was there she learned the importance of doing things well, whether it was milking cows or shocking grain. Even though there was always work to do, the

family had its share of fun times as well, playing together or staging "plays" in the winter.

Catherine started high school in 1937, and in her junior year she came very close to entering eternity. What they thought was an appendectomy turned out to be a ruptured cyst. The doctor told her parents, who were in the waiting room, that he couldn't save her. Her mother said, "You go back in there and try again. I'll pray." Catherine mentioned this incident because on the way to the hospital she told God that she would go to the convent if she lived through this, never having an inkling of the truth she was saying.

On August 25, 1941, Catherine entered the Franciscan community and the next year on August 12, 1942, she received the habit and the name, Sister Mary Eulalia. Sister began her ministry work in 1944 ministering in Iowa at Alton, Dubuque, Larchwood, Monticello, Bancroft, Remsen, and Sioux City. In Illinois, she ministered at Corpus Christi in Chicago.

Sister is survived by her sister Adella Attig, sister-in-law Joan Weisensel, nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 76 years of her life. ■

Sister Bernardine Dillinger November 9, 1923 - October 15, 2018



Sister Bernardine was the oldest child of Fred and Gertrude (Sihrer) Dillinger. She was born November 9,

1923, on a farm in Plankinton, South Dakota. Bernardine had three brothers: John, Thomas, and Vernon. The children had many good times together, hiking, picnicking, and playing on the ice on the Big Sioux River. One of Bernardine's favorite games was playing marbles with the boys, especially when she was able to capture the marbles from them.

Bernardine grew up in the Sioux City area. She attended the public school for three years and then transferred to Sacred Heart Grade School. She then attended St. Mary's Academy in Alton, Iowa for two years.

Bernardine said she "heard the call" from God to be a Franciscan Sister in Dubuque. So, on August 24, 1940, she became a member of the Franciscan community. On August 12, 1941, Bernardine was given the name Sister Mary Eudes.

Her ministry started as a homemaker during her senior year as a novice. Bernardine continued her ministry in Iowa at Dubuque, Rickardsville, Oyens, Sugar Creek, Bode, and Webster City. From 1974-

1977 Bernardine lived and worked at St. Cloud, Minnesota. Sister was also assigned to Chicago and Hazel Crest in Illinois.

Sister retired, and as she said, "resigned" from being a homemaker is 1991, but that didn't stop her from keeping busy. Bernardine would write letters and send cards to the sick, the lonely, and the elderly. And in 1996 she was very happy and proud to celebrate the ordination of her nephew, Joseph.

Sister is survived by her sister-in-law Toshiko Dillinger, nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 77 years of her life. ■

Rest in Peace

Isabelle Hatte
Sister of Sister Blanche Marie Haag

Jerry Meyer
Brother of Sister Melita Meyers

Roger Meyerhofer
Brother of Sister Nancy Meyerhofer

Sylvester Vortherms
Brother-in-law of Sister Theresa Jungers

Joseph Koob
Brother-in-law of Sister Dolores McAllister

Larry Schuetz
Brother of Sister Bernice Schuetz

Walter "Pete" Rethman
Brother-in-law of Sister Janet Taphorn

Pat McCauley
Brother-in-law of Sister Kate Katoski

Marian Rolling
Sister-in-law of Sister Theresa Rolling

Wilfred Kleitsch
Brother of Sister Ruth Kleitsch

Dorothy Hoversten
Sister-in-law of Sister Mary Colleen Hoversten

Dennis Eckerman
Brother-in-law of Sister Theresa Rolling

George Theis
Brother-in-law of Sister Mary Kenneth Hemann

Dr. Clemens (Clem) Full
Brother-in-law of Sister Camilla Hemann

In Remembrance

Sister Ignatia Rosenbaum July 31, 1928 - November 12, 2018



Helen Agnes was born on a farm in Ossian, Iowa, to John and Louisa (Bucheit) Rosenbaum on July 31, 1928. They were a

family of five children living on the farm.

All the children attended DeSales Catholic School. When Helen was eight years old her mother, Louisa, died. Her dad became mother and father for the children. He saw to it that the religious practices begun by both parents continued.

After graduation each one spent a year or two helping with the farm chores before they ventured out on

their own. After Helen had worked at home for two and a half years, her dad told her she could begin her life's work when she turned 21. Helen told him that she wanted to see if maybe she had a vocation to religious life. It was August 25, 1949, that Helen entered Mount St. Francis in Dubuque. The following year, on August 12, 1950, Helen was given the name Sister Mary Ignatia. After completion of novitiate training, which was quite different from family life on the farm, and quite an adjustment for her, she began her ministry as a homemaker.

Sister Ignatia's first mission was at Briar Cliff College in Sioux City, Iowa. The atmosphere from a quiet life at the Motherhouse to a college full of vibrant ladies eager for an education was quite a change for her.

After completing her stay at Briar Cliff, Sister Ignatia continued her ministry at Holy Trinity and Holy Ghost, both in Dubuque, and St. Anthony Home, in Sioux City. Sister then traveled by train to St. Joseph's Parish in Crescent City, California, before returning to Dubuque and completing her ministry at Holy Family Hall and Immaculate Conception Convent. It was here that Sister Devota Rensch taught her to care for the large raspberry patch and harvest black walnuts. After living and working at Mount St. Francis House for several years, Sister moved to Clare House in 2014.

Sister is survived by her sisters Florence (Donald) Gapinski and Ione Hartley, nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 68 years of her life. ■

Sister Mary Bosco Ryder November 9, 1923 - November 25, 2018



Mary Lou Ryder was born to William and Catherine (Ryan) Ryder, near Waukon, Iowa, and was baptized about a

week later at St. Pius Church, Cherry Mound, Iowa. She was the second oldest of three children. Mary Lou lived on a farm near Waterville, Iowa. She attended grade school and high school at Waterville Consolidated School, where she graduated in May of 1949.

St. Pius Church in Cherry Mound, six miles away from the Ryder family home, is where she attended Mass with her family every Sunday. Since there was no Catholic school in the area, Mary Lou attended religious instruction class after Mass every Sunday. The parish priest and some ladies from the parish taught the classes. Every summer the

Franciscan Sisters from Dubuque conducted a two week CCD program in Cherry Mound. This was Mary Lou's first acquaintance with the Sisters. When Mary Lou had completed her freshman year in high school, she met Sister Mary Ruth Agnes, who was the high school CCD teacher. They became lifelong friends.

Mary Lou entered Mount St. Francis on August 25, 1949, and was received into the community on August 12, 1950, at which time she received the name, Sister Mary Bosco. After her first profession of vows, August 12, 1952, she began her teaching ministry at Sacred Heart in Pocahontas, Iowa, followed by Holy Trinity in Dubuque. Before Sister was assigned to her new mission at Crescent City in California, on July 2, 1962, it was suggested she call her mother and talk it over because it would be five years before she could come back home to visit her family due to the

cost of travel. Her mom was very excited and happy for her and gave Sister her blessing. Her arrival in Crescent City was the first time she saw the redwood trees. She loved every inch of God's beauty there. While at Crescent City, she spent many summer weeks teaching CCD in parishes near Santa Rosa, California.

From the years 1958 through 2004, Sister Mary Bosco ministered at Sacred Heart in Monticello, Visitation in Stacyville, St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville, and St. Mary's in Waterloo. Sister retired to Mount St. Francis in the year 2004, and with her gift of lettering, found herself working in Sister Keith's craft shop, as well as her sister-in-law, Janette's, store in Waukon.

Sister is survived by her sister-in-law and her husband Janette (Ryder) and Jerry Blong, nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 68 years of her life. ■

In Remembrance

Sister Jeanne Wickham September 18, 1927 - November 25, 2018



Sister Jeanne Wickham was born at home in Dubuque on September 18, 1927, to Roseline (Delaney) and James Wickham. She was the

fourth of five children. Several days after she was born, she was baptized at St. Columbkille's Parish. Her father worked for the Illinois Central Railroad, and her mother was a school teacher before they were married. Both of them were very proud of their Irish heritage.

The Great Depression hit the family several years later. The city of Waterloo was much more of a railroad city than Dubuque, and her

father could get a steady job there, so they moved to Waterloo and attended St. Mary's Parish.

The summer of 1939 held big events. Jeanne was told that if she attended six weeks of summer school at Cedar Falls Iowa Teachers' College she could go from sixth grade to eighth grade, so she went. That same year, her youngest brother Tom was born, and her sister Rosemary left the family to enter Mount Saint Francis in Dubuque.

On August 25, 1944, after much soul-searching and near the age of 17, Jeanne entered Mount St. Francis. The following year on August 25, 1945, Jeanne was received into the community and given the name Sister Mary Joachim. Sister taught in Iowa for 10 years.

Her ministries included Sacred Heart in Templeton, Holy Cross, Sacred Heart in Sioux City/Riverside, Sacred Heart in Monticello, Holy Trinity in Dubuque, and St. Paul in Worthington. After her teaching years, Sister served a term as regional coordinator. She then received training in clinical pastoral education and served for ten years as a chaplain for Mercy and Holy Family Hall Health Centers in Dubuque.

Sister is survived by her sister, Helen McClain; her brother and sister-in-law, Thomas and Brenda Wickham; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 73 years of her life. ■

Sister Rosemary Wickham October 26, 1920 - December 8, 2018



Rosemary "Rosie" Wickham was born on October 26, 1920, in Dubuque to James and Roseline (Delaney)

Wickham. She was the oldest of five children: James, Helen, Jeanne, and Tom. As a child, Rosie loved traveling to Louisville, Kentucky, to visit her grandmother and to St. Louis, Missouri to visit other extended family. Because her dad worked for the railroad, they went by train as he got free rides for his family.

Rosie started school at St. Columbkille's in Dubuque. When she was in 3rd grade her dad received a promotion, and the family had to move to Waterloo. Thereafter, she attended St. Mary's in Waterloo through the 12th grade.

This is where she was influenced by the Dubuque Franciscans, especially Sister Catherine Ann. Since her youngest sibling, Tom, was born only a few months before Rosie left for Mount St. Francis, her mother wasn't in favor of her decision and begged her to wait at least a year. But Rosie remained steadfast to her call and entered Mount St. Francis on August 25, 1939. The following year on August 12, she was received with the name Sister Mary Perpetua.

Her ministry began with teaching assignments in the Iowa communities of Saints Peter & Paul in Petersburg, Sacred Heart in Pocahontas, and Holy Ghost in Dubuque. Early in her teaching career, she was delighted, though quite nervous, about being assigned to opening a new school in the fishing village of Crescent City, California. In her free time, she enjoyed berry picking in the

redwoods and clamming in the Pacific. From 1964 to 1970 she was assigned as the principal of the congregation's inner city school at Corpus Christi in Chicago. That ministry was then followed by teaching assignments in the rural Iowa farm communities of St. Boniface in New Vienna and St. John in Arcadia.

After 45 years as a teacher and principal, Sister Rosemary sought out a new adventure quickly finding her niche in the North Georgia Mountains as a Pastoral Minister at St. Anne's Parish

Sister is survived by her sister Helen McClain; her brother and sister-in-law, Thomas and Brenda Wickham; nieces and nephews, and her Franciscan sisters with whom she shared over 78 years of her life. ■

Five Franciscan Associates Commissioned



From left to right: Carole Grubb, Nancy Dunkel, Mary Hoeger, and Linda Schomburg Tacke.

This fall, the Dubuque Franciscans commissioned five new Associates: Mary Fischer, Carole Grubb, Mary Hoeger, Nancy Dunkel, and Linda Schomburg Tacke.

Carole, Mary, Nancy and Linda were commissioned at a Mass on September 22 and Mary Fischer at a Mass on October 28.

"These women are here to make this radical, risky commitment, another step in living in a deeper way the Franciscan values of conversion, humility, contemplation and poverty," said Sister Marie Cigrand in her reflection at Mass.

Sisters affirmed the Associates by extending a blessing to the women.

New Associates were part of the sisters' Franciscan Way of Life process for two years.

"Franciscan Way of Life instilled a new hope in me that I am changed and able to be more faithful to God's daily call in my life," said Associate Carole Grubb. ■



Mary Fischer receiving the blessing. Photo by Sister Phyllis Manternach.

Sister Gwen Hennessey Travels with "Nuns on a Bus"

Sister Gwen Hennessey traveled with Nuns on the Bus October 15-21 from Omaha to Ohio. The Nuns on a Bus: the Tax Justice Truth Tour traveled across the country, from California to Mar-a-Lago in Florida ahead of the 2018 midterms.

The goals of the bus trip was to help keep elected officials accountable for their votes in favor of the 2017 Tax Law and attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

"We participated in many 'Town Halls for Justice'-- a drama on tax justice where we literally walked to describe the disparity of income from dire poverty to the multinationals. This was very graphic for the audience to respond to and to get out the vote!" said Sister Gwen of the experience.

"Blessings on those beautiful women on the bus with their powerful building the Reign of God!" she added. ■



Sister Gwen Hennessey with her niece, Cathy Palmer, in Ohio. Contributed photo.

Tree Ritual Held at MSFC



Three diseased trees on the Mount St. Francis Center (MSFC) property were removed this fall. In the Sisters' efforts to live in right relationship with all creation, they gathered before their removal for a ritual in thanksgiving for each tree's gifts: its colors of leaves in autumn; providing homes and food to birds; and for shade and shelter.

Footprints



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Villagers from Sister Water Project site #206 react with joy to the installation of their well in the village of Mkundi-Kisaraka in Tanzania. Contributed photo.

Sister Water Project Completes Over 200 Water Projects in Tanzania

The Dubuque Franciscans' Sister Water Project completed construction on water project number 206 in Tanzania, Africa, in November.

"We have been blessed to partner with Safe Water for Life and Dignity in Tanzania and receive the support of so many organizations and donors for the Sister Water Project," said Sister Kathy Knipper. "To see the joy on the faces of the villagers in Tanzania and Honduras when they have access to clean water motivates our mission to this ministry."

For more information on the Sister Water Project, or to request a Sister Water Project Committee member to come to your parish, school or organization to speak about the project, contact Sister Kathy at (563) 583-9786 or knipperk@osfdbq.org.

Calendar of Events

JANUARY 12

Seasons In the Prairie: Explore & Contemplate the Beauty of the Prairie in Winter with Sister Meg Gemar, OSF; 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Canticle of Creation Center, 3390 Windsor Ave. \$15 offering.

JANUARY 15

Everyday is Earth Day Movie Night: "Happening: Clean Energy Revolution," 6:30 p.m., Canticle of Creation Center. Free will offering. Walk-ins welcome but RSVPs are appreciated by Friday, January 11.

FEBRUARY 19

Everyday is Earth Day Movie Night: "Before the Road," 6:30 p.m., Canticle of Creation Center. Free will offering. Walk-ins welcome but RSVPs are appreciated by Friday, February 15.

MARCH 8-14

National Catholic Sisters Week